

Chapter 12

NAMELESS PLACES

Simon Skovgaard Boeck*

place-names are prototypical spatial markers, and, as they are quite easy to detect in texts, place-names play an important part in spatial literary studies.¹ But the study of textual spatiality is not a subfield of literary onomastics, as spatiality is made up of other kinds of linguistic material than merely toponyms: common nouns, directional adverbs, adjectives describing origin and direction, and prepositions are among the many ways in which texts construct spaces and the spatial frames of narratives.² Apart from the title, the first spatial references in the *General Prologue* of the *Canterbury Tales*, for instance, are not place-names but the mythological name of the western wind, “Zephyrus,” and, in the following verse, “every *holt* and *heeth*” (“every copse and heath”). These references situate the text in an uncertain, generalized space that evolves with the mentioning of other spatial references:

- 1) Thanne longen folk to *goon on pilgrimages*
And *Palmeres* for to seeken *straunge strondes*
To fernē halwes, kouthē in *sondry londes*
[Then longen folk to go on pilgrimages, / And palmeres yearn to seek out foreign
strands / And distant shrines well known in sundry lands].

Then—in verse 16—the first place-names, **Engelond** and **Caunterbury**, are mentioned, and the text is hereby located in a specific English environment.³

Similar spatial dynamics can of course be found in other texts. And, in this chapter, I look at how a special kind of spatial reference—descriptive noun phrases—is used in some texts to create a sense of location without naming it.

* Simon Skovgaard Boeck (PhD Copenhagen 2009) is Senior Editor at the Society for Danish Language and Literature. Email: ss@dsl.dk; ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5334-7241>.

1 See, e.g., the section “Literary Onomastics” (part IV) in *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*.

2 See also Petrulovich, “The Multi-Layered Spatiality.”

3 Citations and translations from *CantApp: The General Prologue*, vv. 5–6, 12–14, 16. In citations here and throughout this chapter, spatial references are graphically emphasized. Place-names are rendered in bold, other references in italics (therefore, the marking of abbreviations in the text is rendered tacitly).

The question of why places occur in medieval literary and religious texts is crucial. The answer partly depends on genre: some texts thematize places as they report on wars, crusades, and travels. The East Norse chronicles refer to places quite numerous, in particular from the Baltic area, where kings conquered new territory. But other texts are occupied with more exotic places, less known to medieval Danes and Swedes, and, in some of these, singular exotic place-names are used as purely stylistic elements to signal an otherness, or for the sake of a rhyme. So, for instance, in the Old Danish epos *Hertug Frederik af Normandi* (*Duke Frederick of Normandy*), a person is mentioned:

- 2) ther kam jen grewe *aff askomyn*
 han war alt jen herræ fyn
 [there came a count from Gascony / he was a fine gentleman]⁴

The count is an extra character in the text, who serves only to demonstrate the grandeur of a wedding he is attending, and similarly the place-name—which was probably non-intelligible to medieval Danes—adds an element of otherness, while at the same time it serves as a rhyme.

In addition, the religious narratives are often situated in an exotic macrospace, unfamiliar to the medieval Danes and Swedes, but here place-names are not used as stylistic devices.⁵ Instead, places help to show the universal validity of the religious rites and the omnipresence of the deity. Therefore, quite often, religious texts simply lack place-names, other than the common biblical places that have become places of memory.

This lack of place-names is, of course, not unique to medieval religious texts. Quite a lot of other narratives function very well without verbally coded spatial orientation, but in contrast to medical or lyrical texts, for instance, religious texts often reflect locations that, without being linguistically marked, could carry a name but often do not. Churches, monasteries, and cities, as well as natural features, are examples of such entities that often remain unnamed in a religious narrative.

Moreover, when locations are named, it is often done so by the use of parenthetical relative clauses, signalling that the naming per se is less relevant to the text than the named feature itself:

- 3) eeth *beflutit land* som kalladhis **skariot** [a seagirt land that is called Skariot];
 4) een *stadh* som kallas **solena** [a city that is called Solena];
 5) thy *landzskap* som heter **thyro** [the landscape that is called Thyro];
 6) een *stadh* ther kallas **tuscia** [a city that is called Tuscia];⁶

⁴ *Hertug Frederik*, 145v. See also Skovgaard Boeck, “Der er en verden uden for Bern.” Unless otherwise mentioned, all translations are mine.

⁵ See Petrulovich, Backman, and Adams, “Medieval Macrospace through GIS,” on the concept of macrospace.

⁶ *Siælinna thröst*, 65, 90, 186, 364.

- 7) *en stadh* som hetir **nazareth** [a city that is called Nazareth];
 8) thet *land* som hetir **sydon** [the country that is called Sydon];
 9) *en stadh* som hetir **naym** [a city that is called Naym].⁷

This use of relative clauses is not restricted to religious prose. Indeed, the use is quite frequent in many other texts as well, pointing to a more general unawareness or lack of interest in (exotic) place-names.

Few others than philologists excerpting place-names for a gazetteer of medieval literature such as *Norse World*⁸ would probably reflect on the lack of place-names in religious texts. Quite often, however, places that could have been named are not; why is that? One possibility of course is that naming was never intended.

Genre probably plays a role in this, as some genres generally are more spatially orientated than others, and hence more apt to include place-names.⁹ Nevertheless, as I return to below, even genres focused on places, such as travel itineraries, show examples of place-name omission.

Textual criticism can help understand whether the omission of a place-name is intended or not, at least when a text survives in more than one manuscript, or when its sources are known. Unfortunately, most East Norse religious texts survive only in one manuscript, and sometimes the Latin or Middle Low German sources are not known. In other cases, however, it is possible to show that place-names are omitted as part of the textual transmission. I return to these examples at the end of the chapter. First, denotation without naming is discussed. This intriguing practice is found extensively in the short Old Danish itinerary *Vejleder for Pilgrimme* (*Pilgrims' Guide to the Holy Land*).

Denotation without Naming

As touched upon in the introduction, textual spatiality has many guises. The mentioning of a common noun such as “church,” “city,” “country,” etc. is a vague localization, but, since the use of parenthetical relative clauses with a name was rather frequent in East Norse literature, this option often lies in the back of the reader’s mind as a potential, yet untapped, way of localization. Why, then, does the writer simply settle for *en kirkje*, *en stath*, *et land*? Perhaps the lack of name bestows a universal validity to the text that, especially in religious treatises, is desirable. A miracle on the strength of belief is more

⁷ *Sermones sacri Svevice*, 106, 346, 376.

⁸ Petrulevich, Backman, Adams, Skovgaard Boeck, Holmlund, Marklund, Hartmann, Lecerof, and Ljungström, “Norse World”; see also Petrulevich and Skovgaard Boeck, Backman and Smith, and Petrulevich, all this volume.

⁹ Definitions of genre are legion, and I therefor refer only to two articles that discuss spatiality and genre: Falck-Kjällquist, “Genre-Based Approaches,” and Petrulevich, “The Multi-Layered Spatiality,” both with further references.

persuasive when it is not bound to a specific location, as in this example from an Old Swedish compilation of Saints' Lives (*Fornsvenska legendariet*):

- 10) Sīþan en dagh talar han tel hænnā/ ok bīþar hana skyt sitia .a. hæst/ ok rīþa mæþ sik *langa læt* ensamna: vndra hon hans buþ/ ok gør giærna som han bīþar ¶ þōn huila sik *en staþ .a. væghenom nær enne kirkio*: frun gar ensamen *in ii kirkiona/* ok bīþar sīna bōna firi varra fru bilætte tel hon somnar [One day he speaks to her and asks her to quickly sit on a horse and ride with him a long way alone. She is surprised by his command but willingly does as he asks. They rest on the way in a place near a church. The wife goes into the church alone, and says her prayers in front of an icon of Our Lady until she falls asleep].¹⁰

What is relevant here is not whether Old Swedish *staþ*, which can mean both “place” and “city,” is used in one or the other sense but that the church is undefined, and in fact the whole miracle tale—in which a knight is tempted by the devil but saved by Our Lady—is without any precise spatial features. This implies an unexpressed notion of universality; it could happen to you!

On the other hand—as the “*pilgrimages*” and “*ferne halwes*” of the General Prologue cited above show—medieval piety is to a high degree tied to specific places and characterized by spatial movement between them. Pilgrimages and crusades were both signs of dynamic and spatial worship, which implied that certain geographical entities became part of the common worldview and religious awareness: Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago de Compostella, and Cologne. Similarly, sites of miracles could become famous, as is the case with the so-called Tanzwunder (“dance wonder,” a bout of unstoppable dancing) in the German town Kölbigk, an event that also found its way into an Old Swedish religious treatise:

- 11) Thet skedhe j the *lladzskap* ther **sassen** hetir j eno *thorpe* som kallas **holt beke** [It happened in the country that is called Saxony, in a village that is called Holtbeke].¹¹

Whereas the unnamed and unlocalized wife of the knight demonstrated exemplary faith, in this case the concrete localization of the Tanzwunder rends the story credibility. And this is all the more important as this exemplum is not used as a model for religious behaviour but, rather, as an example of divine intervention. This is also the case in the *Fornsvenska legendariet*, wherein the Tanzwunder is relocated to Orkney and the church of St. Magnus.¹² The relocation and extension of the legend as an example of domestication of common cultural material calls for a spatial analysis, and *Fornsvenska*

¹⁰ *Fornsvenska legendariet*, 2:39–40.

¹¹ *Siællinna thrøst*, 105; for more information on identification of the place-name, see Norse World, “Thet skedhe j the lladzskap.” On the Tanzwunder in Swedish texts, see Strömbäck, “Den underbara årsdansen.”

¹² *Fornsvenska legendariet*, 3:568–76.

legendariet probably offers fruitful material for further research; even more so, since—as mentioned—this compilation also shows examples of nameless legends.

The two trends in medieval religious texts—the wish for universal, exemplary models and the need to secure trustworthiness via authentic, spatial settings—can be said to be in conflict. This might explain why a group of localities are described and paraphrased instead of named, as is particularly the case in the Old Danish itinerary *Vejleder for Pilgrimme*. This itinerary focuses on Jerusalem, and here periphrasis is often chosen over naming.

Vejleder is a short Old Danish text that, like many other Old Danish texts, lacks a proper title in the manuscript; instead, it has a descriptive caption on its first page:

- 12) Thettæ æræ the *stædhe*, som *peregrime* skule *søghe* for af løsn af theræ synder j **thet helliæ land** [These are the places that pilgrims ought to visit for absolution of their sins in the Holy Land].¹³

The explicit mentioning of places as the core subject of the treatise is reflected in the text itself. Strikingly often, though, the author chooses not to name the locations, and instead describes what makes them special. This is the case with, for instance:

- 13) fremdeles ær [a] **Syons biergh** ogh een *kyrkæ*, ogh then *kyrkæ* ær then *stædh*, som war fruæ giordhe sin[æ] bønær, som hwn hwer dau *søktæ* the *føræ* scrifnæ *stedhe a Syons biergh* [further on Mount Zion there is a church, and that church is the place where Our Lady made her prayers, as she each day visited the mentioned places on Mount Zion].
- 14) ther ær een *kyrkæ*, i hwilken then steen ær hōwe altar, som *ower* war hærras graf laa; han ær otte fōdher longer, fem fōdher breedh ogh half annen fod thiøk [there is a church in which the stone that lay on the grave of Our Lord is the high altar. It is eight feet long, five feet wide, and a foot and a half thick].
- 15) Thet *temple*, som *ower* then helliæ graf ær, thet ær cirschils trijnt, ogh *owerst* a ær thet obet [The church that is above the Holy Sepulchre is circular and open at the top].
- 16) *inwortes i closteret* ær een *capelle*, som sanctus Ieronimus *ligher i* [inside the monastery there is chapel in which Saint Jerome lies].¹⁴

Some of these are easily recognizable, while others demand scholarly scrutiny. Number 13) might be the Abbey Church of St. Mary of Mount Zion (Abbey of the Dormition). 14) probably reflects a medieval tradition placing the gravestone of Christ as the altar of the Church of St. Saviour on Mount Zion.¹⁵ 15) is undoubtedly the Church of the Holy

¹³ *Vejleder*, 209.

¹⁴ *Vejleder*, 215 bis, 217, 221, 222.

¹⁵ Pringle, *The Churches*, 3:367.

Sepulchre, and 16) is the chapel of Saint Jerome underneath the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.¹⁶ Whereas 13) is rather vaguely situated, to a modern reader, it seems as if the author of the treatise could just as well have used names to denote the locations in 14) to 16): ***Frælserekirkjen**, ***Gravkirkjen**, and ***Hieronymuskapellen**; none of these names, however, are known in Old Danish.

Sixty-two of the 209 precise spatial references in *Vejleder* have the form of an unnamed denotatum with a supplemented description—in particular, a biblical reference. With 30 percent of the attestations belonging to this category, *Vejleder* is extraordinary compared to other East Norse texts. Indeed, similar forms are found in other texts also, such as in the Danish version of *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, partly denoting the same places in the Holy Land as the ones referred to in *Vejleder*. But Mandeville has a broader perspective that brings its protagonist all the way to the Great Khan of China, and, as a consequence, the localities in and around Jerusalem make up only a smaller part of the toponymic references in this text. The occurrences in *Vejleder* and *Mandevilles Rejse* raise the question whether the periphrastic forms are characteristic of itineraries as a genre. No other East Norse travel description survives, but a West Norse geographical treatise, called *Leiðarvísir* (*Guide*), contains a few examples that might illuminate this question:

- 17) Þar er *kirkia* su, er gróf drottins er i, ok *stadr* sa, er cross drottins stod, þar ser glógt blod Christz á steini, sem ny-blétt sé ... hon heitir **Pulkro kirkia**, hon er opin ofan yfir grofinni [There is the church in which the grave of Our Lord is and the place where his cross stood, there clearly is seen the blood of Christ on the stone, as if it was newly bled ... it is called Church of the Sepulchre, and it is open above the grave].¹⁷

What this example demonstrates, however, is that, contrary to *Vejleder*, place-names play a significant part in *Leiðarvísir*.

This is also the case in the following example, in which the West Norse name of the Mount of Temptation reflects the Latin *Mons Quarantania*:

- 18) **Querencium fiallz**, þar fastadi gud, ok þar freistadi diofull hans [Mount Quarantania, there God fasted, and there he was tempted by the devil].¹⁸

The same mountain is mentioned in *Vejleder*, but without the name:

- 19) Ther ær thet *bieryg*, þa hwilket war herræ fastedhe i firæ tiuæ dawæ ogh fyra tiua natter [There is the mountain on which Our Lord fasted for forty days and forty nights].¹⁹

¹⁶ Pringle, *The Churches*, 1:142.

¹⁷ *Alfræði Íslenzk*, 1:22.

¹⁸ *Alfræði Íslenzk*, 1:22. The mountain (Arabic: *Jabal al-Quruntul*) is traditionally held to be a limestone peak in the vicinity of Jericho.

¹⁹ *Vejleder*, 225.

Thus, the use of periphrastic forms instead of—or as a supplement to—place-names can be seen as a peculiarity of itineraries. They are used to describe exotic places that have no established endemic name in the vernacular of the text. In fact, the assignment of standardized place-names to foreign places is a process running through the medieval and post-medieval centuries. Many Nordic names have etymologically evolved from non-proprietary noun phrases in a process that involves the fixation of a lexical unit in a standardized form. As the medieval and later material shows, this fixation is often hypothetical, as a large amount of orthographical variation is involved.²⁰ Even more important than the variation of name *forms* is the lacking of a unified *name* for a given location. Places—and perhaps especially the foreign places mapped in Norse World—are given different names by different users, at different times, and in different circumstances. In the medieval material there can be different textual reasons for this, as Petrulovich points out.²¹ But the use of periphrases to denote a foreign location should be seen in this context, that—from a medieval perspective—it is normal for a place to have a number of names.

When, then, did the church where Jesus was buried become *Gravkirken* in Danish? The answer to this question is not simple, as there does not exist a comprehensive dictionary of Danish exonyms, but the near-homonym common noun *gravkirke* is first known from the nineteenth century.²²

Attempts at fixation of foreign places with specific names are known from around 1700, when the Danish lexicographer Matthias Moth included place-names in his encyclopaedic dictionary. As his names differ considerably from modern versions, however, it is clear that the principles guiding the formation of exonyms have changed since then.

Abstraction

Not just the vocabulary of names but also that of common nouns changed considerably during the Middle Ages. And, in numerous medieval texts, periphrasis is used as an alternative to compounding; for instance: “oli af oliuæ” (“olive oil”), “oli af rosæ” (“oil from rose”), and “plaster aff mercke” (“plaster of water parsnip”).²³

The Danish philologist Peter Skautrup in his history of the Danish language found that some compound common nouns are first attested in the post-medieval period. In his account these are listed alongside examples of abstract appellations that also were new to the sixteenth century. It is not certain that Skautrup thought that the use of compound nouns was the result of an increase in abstract thinking, however.²⁴ One of

²⁰ See Gammeltoft, and Petrulovich, both this volume, on name variation.

²¹ See Petrulovich, this volume.

²² *Ordbog over det Danske Sprog*, s.v. *gravkirke*; note similar late occurrences in *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*, s.v. *gravkyrka*.

²³ *Harpestræng*, 25, 45; *Lægebøger*, 164. See also Skovgaard Boeck, “Word Formation,” 117–19.

²⁴ Skautrup, *Det Danske Sprogs Historie*, 2:245.

Skautrup's examples is directly comparable with the situation in *Vejleder*: the medieval periphrastic form "then fingær thær ær næst" ("the finger that is next [to the thumb]") is superseded by "pegefingeren" ("index finger") in the early sixteenth century.

In the sense that proper names such as *Peter* and **Church of the Pater Noster** denote specific individuals or concrete places in Saussurean *la langue*, they can be said to have a more abstract essence than determinated common nouns and periphrastic forms, which can denote specific individuals and places in *la parole*: "that man," or "een kyrki, som Cristus kændhæ apostolæ at bedhe och læsa pater noster" [a church in which Christ taught the apostles to pray and read paternoster].²⁵

Translation Aspects

The sources of *Vejleder* are not known, and until further research is available it is thus unknown if the periphrastic forms are simply borrowed from these. Most probably the text draws on one or more German sources, as some formulations in the text suggest. A supplementary Latin source is also highly probable, but so is—also—the possibility that the text is based partly on the Danish author's own visit to Jerusalem. German influence is visible in, for instance, this place-name with the Middle Low German preposition *to*:

- 20) I **Galilea** er then *brøøn*, som hedher **brøøn to Samaritanæ** [In Galilea there is the well, which is called the Well of the Samaritans].

Almost all East Norse literary texts are translations from Latin, Middle Low German, Old Norse, or French. Like all medieval translations, these are often the result of elaborate revision, and, for instance, the Old Swedish *Siælinna thrøst* (*Consolation of the Soul*) adds and subtracts parts of its Middle Low German source, *Seelentrost*, as well as incorporating material from other sources. According to Ivar Thorén, compared to *Seelentrost* the Old Swedish version expands noun phrases with attributives, adds adverbial phrases, and extends simple verbal phrases to more complex forms.²⁶ Do place-name phrases change in similar ways in the transmission from Middle Low German to Swedish? Apparently, place-names in the Middle Low German version are normally kept in the Old Swedish translation with only minor alterations.²⁷ The mentioned **Holtbeke** reflects a form found in a Middle Low German variant manuscript,²⁸ contrary to the **Kolbeke** of the manuscript K, on which the modern best-manuscript edition of *Seelentrost* is based. Overall, the rendering and omission of place-names in *Siælinna thrøst* can be explained by taking into consideration Middle Low German variant manuscripts. Thus, a few

²⁵ Christensen and Sørensen, *Stednavneforskning*, 11–12.

²⁶ Thorén, *Studier*, 119–22.

²⁷ For further discussions of place-name variation, see Petrulevich, this volume.

²⁸ Manuscript O; see *Siælinna thrøst*, 408. This variant is not mentioned in Schmitt's apparatus.

place-names that occur in Margarete Schmitt's edition of *Seelentrost* but are omitted in the Swedish version also lack in some variant manuscripts, showing that the Swedish version draws on a special textual tradition. This is the case here, where the Old Swedish text shows considerable variation with regard to the Middle Low German K manuscript, but less so compared to other Middle Low German versions. This part of the treatise is devoted to the fourth commandment, and this passage explicitly deals with the Lord's Prayer:

- 21) Du schalt ok dat weten, do vnse leue here dat Pater noster lerede, he ne lerede des nicht to *latine*, else yd de prestere *ouer* deme altare singen. He lerdet an der sprake, de man dar sprak *in deme lande*, dar he do was. He was do *in deme yodeschen lande*. Darumme so lerde he dat in der *yodeschen* tunghen. Hedde he *to dudesschem lande* wesen, he heddet *dudesch* geleret. Hedde he *to Ruslande* gewesen, he heddet *ruschen* geleret. He heddet yo also geleret, dat yd de lude hedden vorstan [You should also know that when Our Lord taught the Our Father, he did not teach it in Latin, as it is sung by the priests over the altar. He taught it in the language that they spoke in the country, where he was then. He was then in the Jewish country. Therefore he taught it in the Jewish language. Had he been on German soil, he had taught in German. Had he been in Russia, he had taught in Russian. He had thus always taught so that the people could understand].²⁹
- 22) Thu skal ok vita at war herra lærdhe ekki sinom discipulis Pater noster oppa *latino* / Vtan oppa thz maal som folkit taladhe oc forstodh *j thy landeno* som han tha war stadder / Oc thz war *j iudha lande* / Oc thy lærdhe han thøm pater noster oppa thera maal / Thy ær thz mit radh at thu læs pater noster som thu hona best forstaar [You should also know, that Our Lord did not teach his disciples the Our Father in Latin, but in the language that the people used and understood in that country where he was placed. And that was in the country of the Jews. Therefore he taught them the Our Father in their language. Hence it is my advice that you read the Our Father as you best understand it].³⁰

The omission of *yodeschen* (Jewish) might be caused by a wish to make stylistic variation, and the mentioning of Latin in the Middle Low German version might have been seen as an implicit critique of the clerisy. Overall, this citation has a proto-reformation notion to it. Most striking, however, is the omission of the hypothetical idea of Jesus being born in Germany or Russia. This passage is missing in eleven Middle Low German textual witnesses (MSS O, A, B, S, G, Dvt, H 1, H 3, as well as the incunabula a, c, d in the edition). It is noteworthy that three other Middle Low German manuscripts (MSS So, H 4, and C in the edition) point at **denemarken** and **swedenrike**,³¹ reflecting that these manuscripts

²⁹ *Seelentrost*, 157.

³⁰ *Siællinna thrøst*, 237.

³¹ *Seelentrost*, 157.

have a Scandinavian affinity. The omissions in *Siælinna thrøst* most probably reveal that the Swedish text is based on a manuscript related to one of the eleven, however.

A similar omission in three Middle Low German manuscripts (MSS B, S, and So of the edition) probably explains why *Siælinna thrøst* omits the name of a river in this exemplum relating to the corpse of Pilate that, first, was thrown in the Tiber:

- 23) Do bant men eme eynen molen steyn to deme halse vnde warp ene in de **Tibere**. Dar dreuen de ouelen geiste so grot vnstur, dat se en wedder vt wunnen vnde worpen en in eyn water, dat heit **Rodanus** [Then men tied a millstone to his neck and threw him in the **Tiber**. There the evil spirits behaved so wildly, that they [the men] drew him up again and threw him in a stream that was called Rodanus].³²
- 24) Tha bundo the een qwarnsten widh hans hals / oc kastadho han j **tibris** Æn diæflane drifwo ther swa mykla ostryro mz honom / at the matto *føra* han *thædhan* / oc *bort* / eeth annat watn [Then they tied a millstone to his neck and threw him in the Tiber. But the devils made so much impetuosity with him that they had to lead him from there and off in another stream].³³

Other German manuscripts point to the river Jordan, and the omission in the Swedish version probably reflects that a manuscript that did not mention either the Jordan or the Rhône was the source for the Swedish translator. But the question remains why in some cases the river was named, in others not. Perhaps the name “Rodanus” was not recognized, or perhaps, conversely, a geographically erudite copyist saw a difficulty in first lowering a corpse in the Tiber and later in the Jordan or Rhône.

The text-critical conclusion to these examples from *Seelentrost* is that, although three Middle Low German manuscripts probably were written in Denmark or Sweden (or for a Nordic audience), these belong to another string in the textual transmission, as does the Swedish *Siælinna thrøst*.

In the case of the Old Danish chronicle of Charlemagne (*Karl Magnus' Krønike*), the alteration of proper names has been used by philologists in textual criticism discussions of this text whose ultimate origin is a corresponding French *chanson de geste*. The Danish version shows certain added place-names not found in the West Norse or French sources. In other cases place-names are omitted, and, in the opinion of Poul Lindegård Hjorth, the Danish translator shows notably little interest in precise localizations.³⁴ The omission of the names of two important female characters in the East Norse tradition of the Charlemagne biography has recently been seen as characteristic of a gendered transmission of literary texts.³⁵ Omissions of foreign place-names cannot, of course, be seen as a similar result of a “monologic masculinity” that disregards non-masculine

³² *Seelentrost*, 182.

³³ *Siælinna thrøst*, 268.

³⁴ Hjorth, *Filologiske studier*, 65.

³⁵ Brandenburg, *Karl der Große*, 108–24.

figures in the texts. But many East Norse texts reflect the highly Eurocentric worldview of the writer as well as reader. This easily leads to omissions of foreign places, or—as is the case in *Vejleder*—to the mentioning of places without actual naming them. Obviously, the author of *Vejleder* deemed the names of the locations in the Holy Land irrelevant to his readers, and, indeed, the events that took place in these locations are of more importance than the names themselves. This choice is at odds with modern guidebooks, and—as shown—also with at least one contemporary itinerary (*Leiðarvísir*).

Concluding Remarks

As I have shown, there are many possible reasons why texts contain nameless places: some genres are more suited to including place-names than others, but the presence and absence of spatial information in different parts of *Fornsvenska legendariet* call for a caveat against seeing genre as a determinant of spatiality in texts. Instead, texts should be viewed individually. Some names are lost in the transmissions of texts, and exotic place-names in some cases do not capture the attention of the Eurocentric copyists. But, instead of asking why texts contain nameless places, it is more feasible to ask how. First of all, then, it is clear that a number of items remain unnamed, in particular in *Vejleder*: churches, chapels, and houses, but also natural features such as deserts and mountains are referred to in this manner. Most prominent, however, is the phrase “*thæn stath*” (“the place”) without a description of the kind of place to which reference is being made. This vagueness can perhaps be seen as an indirect witness against the idea that the Danish author had himself been to Jerusalem. The places pointed out in this way, presumably, had some kind of marking that would make them identifiable to pilgrims—as, for instance, in:

- 25) *wden stadhen wel so lanct som eet armbørst scud ær then stedh*, som Maria Magdalena com om mood war herræ [outside the city, perhaps as far as the range of a crossbow, is the place where Maria Magdalena met Our Lord].³⁶

This is pure speculation, but, on the other hand, the Danish author might have known the kind of marking that marked this spot, but considered the exact kind to be irrelevant to his Danish audience. Even though there probably is some kind of affinity between spatiality and genre, in the end the author/translator/copyist makes individual choices for dealing with spatiality and naming in the specific text.

Bibliography

- Alfræði Íslenzk: *Íslandsk encyklopædisk Litteratur*. Edited by Kristian Kålund. 3 vols. Copenhagen: STUAGNL, 1908–1918.
- Brandenburg, Elena. *Karl der Große im Norden: Rezeption französischer Heldenepik in den altostnordischen Handschriften*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2019.

³⁶ *Vejleder*, 225.

- CantApp: The General Prologue. An Edition in an App.* Edited by Richard North, Barbara Bordalejo, Terry Jones, and Peter Robinson. Saskatoon: Scholarly Digital Editions, 2020. www.sd-editions.com/CantApp/GP (accessed June 2, 2021).
- Christensen, Vibeke, and John Kousgård Sørensen. *Stednavneforskning 1: Afgrænsning-Terminologi-Metode-Datering*. Copenhagen: Universitetsforlaget, 1972.
- Der grosse Seelentrost: Ein niederdeutsches Erbauungsbuch des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts.* Edited by Margarete Schmitt. Cologne: Böhlau, 1959.
- Falck-Kjällquist, Birgit. "Genre-Based Approaches to Names in Literature." In *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, edited by Carole Hough, 330–43. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Fornsvenska legendarier*. Edited by Per-Axel Wiktorsson. 4 vols. Uppsala: Svenska fornskriftsällskapet, 2020.
- Harpestræng: Gamle danske urtebøger, stenbøger og kosebøger*. Edited by Marius Kristensen. Copenhagen: Thiele, 1908–1920.
- Hertug Frederik af Normandi*. Edited by Marita Akhøj Nielsen. <https://tekstnet.dk/hertug-frederik-af-normandi/metadata> (accessed June 2, 2021).
- Hjorth, Poul Lindegård. *Filologiske studier over Karl Magnus' Krønike*. Copenhagen: Schultz, 1965.
- Lægebøger-Bondepraktika-Griseldis*. Edited by Mette Nordentoft et al. Copenhagen: Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 1970.
- Mandevilles Rejse i gammeldansk oversættelse tillige med en Vejleder for Pilgrimme*. Edited by Marcus Lorenzen. Copenhagen: STUAGNL, 1882.
- Norse World. "Thet skedhe j the lldzskap ther sassen hetir j eno thorpe som kallas holt beke." <https://norseworld.nordiska.uu.se/index.php?type=attestation&id=1639> (accessed June 2, 2021).
- Petrulevich, Alexandra. "The Multi-Layered Spatiality of the Global North: Spatial References and Spatial Constructions in Medieval East Norse Literature." In *The Global North: Spaces, Connections, and Networks before 1600*, edited by Carol Symes, 91–114. Leeds: Arc Humanities, 2021.
- Petrulevich, Alexandra, Agnieszka Backman, and Jonathan Adams. "Medieval Macrospace through GIS: The Norse World Project Approach." *The Cartographic Journal* 57 (2020): 18–27.
- Petrulevich, Alexandra, Agnieszka Backman, Jonathan Adams, Simon Skovgaard Boeck, Jessica Holmlund, Felix Marklund, Jorunn Hartmann, Andreas Lecerof, and Rasmus Ljungström. "Norse World." www.uu.se/en/research/infrastructure/norseworld and <https://norseworld.nordiska.uu.se> (both accessed June 2, 2021).
- Pringle, Denys. *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus*. 4 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993–2009.
- Sermones sacri Svevice: The Sermon Collection in Cod. AM 787 4o*. Edited by Roger Andersson. Uppsala: Svenska fornskriftsällskapet, 2006.
- Siællinna thrøst*. Edited by Samuel Henning. Uppsala: Svenska fornskriftsällskapet, 1954.
- Skautrup, Peter. *Det Danske Sprogs Historie*. 5 vols. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1944–1970.
- Skovgaard Boeck, Simon. "Der er en verden uden for Bern: Stednavne og spatiale referencer i K 47." In *The Eufemiaviser and the Reception of Courtly Culture in Late Medieval Denmark*,

- edited by Anna-Katharina Richter and Massimiliano Bampi, 199–207. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2021.
- . “Word Formation, Syntax, and Style in Old Danish Medical Texts.” In *Beyond the Piraeus Lion: East Norse Studies from Venice*, edited by Jonathan Adams and Massimiliano Bampi, 107–22. Copenhagen: Selskab for Østnordisk Filologi, 2017.
- Strömbäck, Dag. “Den underbara årstdansen.” In *Festskrift till Jöran Sahlgren*, edited by Karl Gustav Ljungren et al., 431–46. Lund: Gleerups, 1944.
- Thorén, Ivar. *Studier över Själens tröst: Bidrag till kännedomen om den litterära verksamheten i 1400-talets Vadstena*. Stockholm: Gebers, 1942.
- Vejleder*; see *Mandevilles Rejse*.

