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## Northern Itineraries

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2021

#### Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

#### Citation for published version (APA):

Nilsson, A. M. H. (in press). *Northern Itineraries: Johannes, Olaus and the Carta Marina (1539)*. Abstract from Renaissance Itineraries: Tracing Spaces and Places in the Early Modern World, Reykjavik, Iceland.

#### Total number of authors:

1

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# Northern Itineraries: Johannes, Olaus and the *Carta Marina* (1539)

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Maps have the power of inspiring possible itineraries, both real and imaginary. In my paper, I shall discuss *Carta Marina*, the famous map of Scandinavia drawn by Olaus Magnus, printed in Venice in 1539 and extant in only two known copies. *Carta Marina* depicts not only geography, but also northern customs, animals and people, sometimes even indicating actual, dated events. This makes it a map of many dimensions, simultaneously a map that shows reality and a map of wonders.

The map has a short commentary of its own, printed on the map. Olaus Magnus' work about the peoples of the north, the *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555), is however regarded as a commentary to the map, because it addresses much of what is depicted there. *Carta Marina* can also be connected to the *Historia de omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque regibus* (1554) by Olaus' older brother Johannes. Several countries on the *Carta Marina* namely have a tiny image of a king on his throne, accompanied by a Bible quotation. In a map that depicts sea monsters, strange animals and exotic northern customs, a king on his throne is strikingly normal, for want of a better word: it is neither exotic nor strange nor in any way particular to Scandinavia.

Olaus does address some aspects of kingship and government in his work, but the reference to kings, and the quotations, brings Johannes' work to mind, because there, questions of kingship and the important role of Christianity are addressed in abundance. The development of a king can of course be metaphorically described as an itinerary, and in this paper, my aim is to study how that kind of itinerary relates to the works of both brothers Magnus, as well as to other possible itineraries inspired by the map.