

Høgr in Norwegian names of mountains and other natural features

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*The cult site type horg (høgr m., pl. hōgar) belongs to the unsolved problems of Old Scandinavian religion, because the information conveyed by Old Norse and other Old Germanic texts points in many different directions. Horg is mentioned as a cultic building, an altar, an idol, a sacred grove, an enclosure of hazel branches at the assembly site, a mountain, a cultic site constructed from piled-up stones, etc. In later dialects, horg refers to a heap of stones, or rocky ground, or impenetrable forest, or a mountain with steep sides and a flat top, etc. Most scholars believe that horg originally referred to ‘rocky ground’ or ‘heap of stones’. As the problem seems unsolvable based on the textual / lexical information alone, the present study attempts a new approach. It examines Norwegian place names containing horg, especially names of natural features, which have hitherto received little attention, and analyses their locations in the landscape. It turns out that places with horg names are strongly connected to landscape barriers and borders. Through individual, typologically datable names, this naming pattern can be dated to the Early Iron Age or even earlier. This counts against the established etymology – ‘rocky ground’ / ‘heap of stones’ – which seems to form part of a circular argument and has, in fact, constituted a filter through which the material has been viewed. Instead, the alternative etymological connection with Latin *carcer* ‘an enclosed place, prison, barrier or starting-place in the race-course’ suggested by Noreen should be preferred. If we accept ‘enclosure, barrier’ as the essential meaning, most forms of horg can, as will be shown here, fit into one model of understanding.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Høgr* in the sources

I will generally use the Old (West) Norse form *høgr* when referring to the Old Scandinavian linguistic period, and the Modern Norwegian form *horg* as a generic, analytical term. Quotations in languages other than English will be translated by me without comment, and quotations in Old Norse will be normalized, also without comment.

Here follows a brief overview of the source material discussed in previous research (more in § 8). In the Old Norse sources, a *høgr* is in some cases a man-made, cultic stone construction, in other cases some kind of (at least partly) wooden cultic construction, possibly a building, and apparently tall (*hátimbraðr*, *Vøgluspá* 7 and *Grimnismál* 16. Cf. Fritzner 1883-96 II: 191, Vikstrand 2001: 207-25, Olsen 1915: 285-300, Olsen 1966: 103-115, 225-28, Rostvik 1967: 82-86, Sundqvist 2009). The best known example of *høgr* as a stone construction is found in *Hyndluljóð* 10, where Freyja says about the hero Óttarr:

Høgr hann mér gerði	‘He made me a <i>høgr</i>
hlaðinn steinum;	piled up with stones
nú er grjót þat	now those stones have
at gleri orðit; -	turned into glass;
rauð hann í nýju	he reddened the <i>høgr</i> anew
nauta blóði;	with blood of oxen;
æ trúði Óttarr	Óttarr always put faith
á ásynjur.	in goddesses.’

This *høgr* is usually understood as a heap of stones (a *røys* in Norwegian). In two stanzas of the 13th century Icelandic *Bergbúa þátr*, *høgr* is understood as a term for a mountain (*Bergbúa þátr* 1991: 444-46, stanzas 4 and 6, cf. Finnur Jónsson 1913-16: 312). The meaning ‘a mountain or cliff with steep sides and a flat top’ is common in some south-western Norwegian dialects recorded in modern times (Rostvik 1967: 89-91). In the Old Norse translation of part of the Old Testament, *Stjórn*, *høgr* a couple of times translates a Latin word for ‘high’ or ‘a height’ (*excelsis*, *excelsorum*; Rostvik 1967: 85, cf. 88). In Swedish dialects, *horg* / *harg* with the meaning ‘rocky ground’ or ‘heap of stones / cairn’ is common, and the meaning ‘heap of stones functioning as navigation mark’ is known from Gotland (ibid: 74-82, 89-91, 37). Old Swedish *hargher* is found in farm names, some of which are compounds with gods’ names: *Þorshargher* and *Odhinshargher* (in Uppland, Vikstrand 2001: 208; more examples in Olrik and Ellekilde 1926: 499). In Old High German, *harug* glosses several Latin designations for cultic places: a temple (*delubrum*, *fanum*), (sacred) groves, forests (*lucus*, *nemus*), and altars (*ara*).

The word is also used to refer to Rome's temple hill, Capitolium. In *Lex Ripuaria* (*Ribvaria*, *Ribuaria*) from around 800 AD, the word, in the form **harag* (or **harah*. Latinized form *haraho*, ablative of Latinized **harahus*), seems to be used to refer to an enclosure of hazel branches on the assembly site inside of which oaths were sworn (Meier 1950: 41-53, Schmidt-Wiegand 1967: 35.¹ Similar to Old Norse *véþond* n.pl. 'enclosure of hazel branches and a rope inside which the judges would sit at the assembly', see Fritzner 1883-96 III: 882). Old English *hearh* is used in meanings corresponding to the Old High German ones exterior to the *Lex Ripuaria*, and also in the meaning of 'idol' (Vikstrand 2001: 216, Olsen 1966: 75-77).

Horg also has quite a number of meanings that are hardly ever taken into account in discussions of the term. In the Old Danish chronicle of Øm Abbey, *horg* seems to refer to some kind of paddock: two horses have been handed out from a *horg* (*harughe*) near the abbey (*Exordium monasterii quod dicitur cara insula* 1922: 259². Pointed out by Skautrup 1944: 74, to my knowledge not mentioned by others). In Swedish dialects, *harg* / *horg* is common in the meanings of 'cluster of flowers', 'thicket of bush or young forest', and 'rugged, difficultly traversable or accessible terrain' (*olände* and the like) marked by uneven ground and / or concentrations of (large) rocks and / or standing or fallen trees, and / or thickets of undergrowth. In some cases, a *horg* is 'an end moraine' in Swedish dialects (Rostvik 1967: 32, 76), or 'a rocky hill' (ibid: 77), or 'a pile of ore' (ibid: 677). The meaning 'rocks fallen from a cliff' and the like is found in a few dialects in Sweden and Norway (Rostvik 1967: 76-77, *Norsk Ordbok* 1966- V: 597). In Hjelmeland, Rogaland, south-western Norway, the meaning 'man-made heap of stones on hill forts' is recorded (ibid). In south-western Norway, *horga* is found as an adjective with the meaning 'precipitous' (Rostvik 1967: 90). In both Swedish and Norwegian, the meaning 'a crowd of people' or 'a flock of livestock' (= *hurv* m.) is common (Rostvik 1967: 74-91. Some scholars count this *horg* as a different word [Torp 1919: 221], but most consider it the same [Rostvik 1967: 75, note 1]). In Norwegian dialects, *horg* used in the meaning 'chaos, nonsense' is quite common (ibid: 89), maybe deriving from the meaning of 'crowd of people or animals' (Torp 1919: 221). In Icelandic, *hörgur* means (in addition to 'cult site', which is probably a revival of the best known Old Norse meaning) 'a little mound', as in *það eru ekki uppi nema hæstu hörgar* 'the snow is covering everything except the highest *hörgar*'. The feminine plural *hörgur* (singular **hörga*) means '(withered), infertile stretches', and 'a lack of something'. The masculine derivation *hörgull* is found in the above-mentioned meaning of 'a lack' in addition to 'outermost border' and 'bumps on a snow-free but frozen road', and also as an adjective meaning 'poor in something' (Sigfús Blöndal 1920: 386). Variants of the same derivation are found in Western Sweden, in meanings common with *horg* / *harg*: a *horgel* is 'a crowd', 'cluster of trees or other plants', and a *hargel* is 'rocky ground, piles of rocks' (Rostvik 1967: 80-81).

In Finland Swedish, a variant of this derivation, *hargla*, is found in the meaning ‘outstretched bank (shoal)’ (Vendell 1904-06: 328). In English dialect, a *hurrock* (possibly borrowed from Old Scandinavian, Lloyd and Lühr 2009: 855) is ‘a piled-up heap of loose stones or rubbish; a collection of anything in a loose state’ (Wright 1923 III: 289, cf. de Vries 1962: 281).³

1.2. Previous research on *horg*

Some scholars are very cautious in their discussions of *horg*. Turville-Petre (1964: 239-40, cf. Simek 2006: 200) merely mentions the meanings that can be discerned from the texts and makes no statement about what the main or original form of *horg* was. But most scholars (e.g. Olsen 1915: 293, Olrik and Ellekilde 1926: 495-99, 487, 495, de Vries 1956 I: 377 ff., Olsen 1966: 110, Steinsland 2005: 284) say that it originally referred to a heap of stones, reasoning in the following way: “Now the word *hōrgr* in Old Scandinavian denotes a ‘heap of stones, small temple’ and if one accepts the etymological connection with Old Irish *carn* ‘heap of stones’, then this meaning must originally be attributed to the word in Germanic as well” (here de Vries’ formulation, 1956 I: 377). Taking this meaning of *horg* as a starting point, some scholars suggest how the *horg* developed from a heap of stones into a cultic building: idols were placed in a cultic heap of stones, then a roof was placed over them for protection from the weather, and this further developed into a building (e.g. Olrik and Ellekilde 1926: 495, de Vries 1956 I: 377 ff., Olsen 1966: 110). In archaeology, especially in Sweden, it is quite common to identify any heap of stones used as a cult site during the Iron Age as a *horg* (Modern Swedish *harg*. E.g. Fabech 2006, Bäck et al. 2012).

As we can see, etymology has been an important tool in attempts to understand what a *horg* really was (see Lloyd and Lühr 2009: 855-57, Rostvik 1967: 145-55, Vikstrand 2001: 207-8, Falk and Torp 1903-06: 298-99, de Vries 1962: 281, Hellquist 1948: 337, Pokorny 1959: 531-32). Most scholars understand *horg* as a noun derived from an adjective (Proto-Germanic) **harugaz* ‘rocky’ – whose adjective-forming *-ug-* is believed to be preserved in Old High German *harug* etc. – derived from a word corresponding to Swedish dialect *har* ‘rocky ground’, from Indo-European **kar-* ‘hard’ (e.g. Vikstrand 2001: 207-8). In this understanding of *horg*, the word is usually linked to Old Irish *carn* ‘heap of stones’. The same essential idea underlies a less commonly favoured connection with Sanskrit *śárkarā* ‘gravel, grit, pebbles’ and Greek *krokē*, *krokálē* (κρόκη, κροκάλη) ‘pebbles on a beach’ (Lloyd and Lühr 2009: 856). An alternative suggestion is that *horg* is related to Latin *carcer* ‘an enclosed place, prison, barrier or starting-place in the race-course’ (Noreen 1894: 87, Zupitza 1896: 207, Meringer 1927: 188, Meier 1950: 47, Schmidt-Wiegand 1967: 35, cf. Lewis and Short 1879: 290, Walde and Hofmann 1938-56 I: 166), probably belonging to an Indo-European root meaning ‘enclosure’ (compare Greek *kirkos*

[κίρκος] ‘a ring’. Vaan 2008: 92). There have been no formal objections to this etymology, but it has been rejected for semantic reasons: ‘the essential meaning [of *horg*] is not enclosure, but heap of stones’ (Walde and Hofmann 1938-56 I: 166).

To the first etymology, rocky ground, Rostvik objects that *har* is an unlikely starting point because it is known only from the north-eastern part of the Swedish-speaking area, compared to *horg* which is known all across the Germanic-speaking area, and that the German material does not really support the *-ug-* derivation theory. When place names are included in the Old German material, *-ug-* is less common than *-eg-*, *-ag-* or no vowel (*harg*, *harc*), and this variation corresponds to a development known to be uniquely German: in the dialects in question, a vowel of varying quality commonly developed in the consonant cluster *rg* (thus **harag* alongside with *harug* in the examples in § 1.1), but less commonly in Bavarian, where forms with no vowels are found (*harg*, *harc*). Rostvik therefore, with Karsten (1906: 191), understands *horg* as an old *u*-stem, from Proto-Germanic **harguz* (**harg-u-z*, where the *-u-* is a stem suffix), derived in a different way from *har*. He does, however, admit that *horgr* is declined as an *a*-stem in Old Norse (like e.g. *armr*, Proto-Germanic **arm-a-z*), but points out an Old Swedish place name in which *hargher* seems to be declined as a *u*-stem (with *i*-mutation *-hergh-*) and that quite a number of nouns declined as *a*-stems in Old Norse originally were *u*-stems (Rostvik 1967: 151-52). Lloyd and Lühr ascertain, seemingly independently from Rostvik, that the *-u-* in Old High German *harug* does not demonstrate an *-ug-* derivation but is a German dialectal anaptyctic vowel. Thus, *horg* should be reconstructed as Proto-Germanic **harguz* (**/xaryuz/*; Lloyd and Lühr 2009 IV: 855, with reference to Braune and Reiffenstein 2004 § 69b). They also raise some objections to the other etymologies: Old Irish *carn* seems to belong to a different root from **harguz* (see also Meier 1950: 46), and the link to Greek *krokē*, *krokālē* presupposes metathesis in the Greek words, which would be unexpected. Even so, they do not digress from ‘heap of stones’ as the etymological meaning of *horg* and give Sanskrit *śárkarā* as a basis for this. Within Germanic, they mention Old Saxon **hara* / Middle Low German *hāre* ‘hill, hillock’ as the closest relatives (Lloyd and Lühr 2009 IV: 856).

In the field of onomastics, there has been some scepticism as to whether *horg* has a religious meaning in place names, corresponding to the sceptical attitude to sacral place names in general during the post-war period (see Vikstrand 2001: 31-33). In 1964, Sandnes argued that the five *horg* farm names in western Norway and Trøndelag (central Norway) do not reflect cult (and by ‘cult’ he seems to mean ‘anything religious’) because they appear to have their names not from cult sites referred to as *horgs* but from nearby cliffs or mountains, which bear *horg* names or could have been referred to as *horgs* in the sense of mountains. In 1967, Rostvik attempted to make a similar case for all Scandinavian *horg* place names: they all are derived from nearby mountains, cliffs, boulders, or rocky ground, and thus *horg* names only

have a profane meaning. Typically for his time, he argued that ‘the cultic *horg*’ is entirely literary; it developed when translators of Latin religious texts used a word meaning ‘a height’ – namely *horg* – to represent Latin words for cultic buildings and cult sites because they often were located on heights. This meaning of *horg* never entered everyday language, Rostvik argues (ibid: 88-89, 96). A study by Nordland in 1969 provided an exception to this trend. He argued that a high number of *horg* mountains in Hordaland county (Norw. *fylke*), Western Norway, are associated with (summer) farm names starting with (in two areas) *Helga-*, which often means ‘holy’ or ‘inviolable’, or with laudatory names starting with *Sol-* ‘sun’, *Smør-* ‘butter’ or *Gull-* ‘gold’, and with other names reflecting beliefs in supernatural beings (Nordland 1969: 82-91, 96-97. The article contains some highly speculative claims, but the observations mentioned here do seem correct.)

Vikstrand (2001: 215) rejects Rostvik’s explanation of *horg* names because it is not specific enough. A mountain, hill, cliff, boulder or rocky ground can be found near virtually any settlement in the area where the naming element is found. Therefore, the presence of such formations near a *horg* farm does not demonstrate anything. What we have to ask is whether more striking examples of such formations are connected to *horg* farms than to neighbouring farms. The opposite is often the case, Vikstrand observes. He argues (like Hellberg 1986: 48 and Brink 1990: 483) that in some cases in his area of study, Uppland, central Sweden, there is good reason to believe that a *horg* place name has a pre-Christian sacral meaning. He sees the *horg* meaning ‘heap of stones’ as a variant of the meaning ‘rocky ground’ and believes that these meanings are the most original ones (Vikstrand 2001: 207-8, 215) and points out a few archaeologically known cult sites with formations similar to this that can plausibly be linked to *horg* names. He does, however, admit the difficulty of establishing this link and criticizes the uncritical identification of heaps of stones as *horgs* in archaeology. Our knowledge of what *horgs* were is still too limited to be sure about such identifications, Vikstrand points out (ibid: 210-24).

2. DISCUSSION OF ETYMOLOGY

It seems that etymology has played too great a role in our understanding of *horg*, and that it has formed part of a circular argument: The etymological derivation from an original meaning ‘heap of stones’ accounts for about half of our basis for understanding *horg* in that way (see the de Vries quotation at the beginning of § 1.2). But this etymology has been preferred only because *horg* has been taken to refer to a ‘heap of stones’ – an understanding which is in turn founded on the said etymological derivation. No formal objections have been raised to the *carcer* etymology.

The other half of the basis for interpreting *horg* this way consists of information from sources, but that information has been procured through selective reading that specifically targets the heap-of-stones etymology (not because of dishonest

scholarship, but because the established understanding has formed a filter through which the material has been viewed – as in many other cases, see. e.g. the research on the Eddic poem *Fjölsvinnsmál*, Heide 1997: 11-51). The sources do contain some basis for the heap-of-stones understanding: *hørg* refers to some kind of piled up stone construction in *Hyndluljóð* 10, while ‘rocky ground’ or ‘heap of stones (or ore) / cairn (functioning as a navigation mark)’ are common meanings of *harg* / *horg* in Swedish dialects; the meanings ‘rocks fallen from a cliff’ and ‘man-made heap of stones on hill forts’ are found in some Norwegian dialects, and the meaning ‘pagan altar’ of *horg* is known from Old High German and Old English (§ 1.1). Such altars possibly were constructed from rocks. I may add that a *grjóthørg* ‘*hørg* of rocks’ refers to a pile of stones in an Old Testament translation (*Stjórn*, see § 8) and that a cluster of large heaps of stones in Hardanger, Western Norway, bore the name *Horg(j)ane* (m. pl. def.) until the 20th century (Meidell 1921: 38, Heide manuscript 2013).

What is needed, however, is that all the available material be taken into consideration, not only that which fits one theory. The probable Old Germanic meanings are (cf. § 8): ‘cultic stone construction of some kind (a heap or altar?)’, ‘(at least partly) wooden cultic building’, ‘mountain’, ‘height’, ‘Capitolium’, ‘temple’, ‘(sacred) grove, forest’, ‘altar’, ‘idol’, and ‘enclosure of hazel branches at the assembly’. When the material is considered independently of any preconceived ideas, it is far from obvious that the meaning ‘heap of stones’ or similar has prominence over the others. It is true that attempts have been made to deduce many of the other meanings from the heap-of-stones meaning (e.g. Olsen 1915: 293-94, Olsen 1966: 110, Rostvik 1967: 93-96), but such attempts form part of the theory, not independent data. In the Old Germanic textual corpus, there is no example of *horg* indisputably meaning ‘a heap of stones’ (cf. § 8).

A related problem is this theory’s virtual equation of the meanings ‘heap of stones’ and ‘mountain, cliff’ (e.g. Olsen 1915: 293-94, Vikstrand 2001: 208). These are two very different things, although it is possible to imagine many ways in which one of these meanings may have evolved from the other (e.g. Olsen 1966: 110).

In the modern Scandinavian material, much has been ignored in the research on *horg*. I agree that there is a close relation between the meanings ‘heap of stones (and the like)’ and ‘rocky ground’, and the latter meaning certainly is very common in Swedish dialects. On closer examination, however, this meaning seems to be only one aspect of a larger complex of ‘concentrations of rocks, undergrowth and standing or fallen trees’ (extending into ‘cluster of flowers’, ‘cluster of fruit trees’, and the like), in which the impeded traversability or accessibility (*olände*) caused by these obstacles seems to be the essence. This is clearly why *horg* in Swedish dialects can also have the general, abstract meaning ‘trouble, difficulty’ (Rostvik 1967: 78, 80). In the explanatory examples in the material collected by Rostvik,

there are many sentences akin to ‘The forest was so dense that I just barely got out of the *harg*’ and ‘There was such a *horge* [= dense, young forest] that I could not get through’ (ibid: 77, 80, cf. 74-81 and 30, 39). To be sure, the poor passability of a *horg* is often caused by rocks, but equally often by thicket, undergrowth and fallen tree trunks (ibid: 74-81). The Icelandic *hörgull* meaning ‘bumps on a snow-free but frozen road’ also appears essentially to be about poor passability; the dictionary’s example phrase is ‘Riding conditions were terrible, *hörgull* and hard-frozen ground’ (Sigfús Blöndal 1920: 386).

As we can see, when the many ignored aspects of the complex are taken into account, a bigger picture emerges in which the ‘rocky ground’ and ‘heap-of-stones’ meanings are only parts. Therefore, the relevant material as a whole constitutes an uncertain basis for the theory that the original meaning of *horg* was ‘heap of stones’. As far as I can see, this leaves us with Sanskrit *śárkarā* ‘gravel, pebbles’ as the only unproblematic basis for this understanding. But this is also problematic if it is isolated. I conclude that when all of the material is taken into consideration, the theory that the original meaning of *horg* was ‘heap of stones’ has a weak foundation.

The connection to Latin *carcer* ‘an enclosed place, prison, barrier or starting-place in the race-course’ may fit the material better. The Old High German meaning ‘enclosure of hazel branches on the assembly site inside of which oaths were sworn’ fits very well into this (as Meier 1950: 41-53 and Schmidt-Wiegand 1967: 35 point out). So does the probable meaning ‘paddock’ in the chronicle of Øm Abbey. In south-eastern Norway, a stone ring seems to be the background of a *horg* name from the early Iron Age: The name of the farm *Horgen* < **Hörgvin* ‘*horg* meadow’ by the river Vormå south of lake Mjøsa reflects a *horg* (Olsen 1915: 290), but no rocky ground, boulder or cliff is found in the area; the surroundings all consist of marine clay. However, a stone ring is known to have existed (unearthed and removed in the 1920s) between the farmhouses and the river (pers. comm. from the farm’s owner, Jan Erik Horgen, Aug. 2013). Given the lack of alternatives, there is reason to believe that this stone ring was the *horg* behind the farm name and it may be seen as equivalent to the enclosure of hazel branches on the assembly. In Uppland, Sweden, one of Vikstrand’s most plausible candidates for a *horg* – the cultic complex at Odensala Vicarage (Vikstrand 2001: 217-22, cf. Brink 2001: 104-05) – is another stone enclosure: two more or less concentric walls (some 50 m in diameter) with many gaps in them, so low that they would have no defence value, encircling a grave mound and with sacrificial remains found throughout the area (Olausson 1995: 58-61, 191, 220). The ‘barrier’ (poor passability) element of the Modern Swedish *horg* complex may connect to these examples through the barrier element of *carcer* and enclosures in general. This will be discussed in more detail in § 5 and 8.

These examples are not sufficient reason for replacing the heap-of-stones etymo-

logy with the *carcer* one. But I hope to have demonstrated that the basis for the latter etymology is no weaker than that of the former. In what follows, I attempt to find new and independent data that can tip the balance. I will search for such data in the relation of Norwegian *horg* place names to the landscapes in which they are found.

3. DISCUSSION OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON *HORG* PLACE NAMES

Sandnes and Rostvik demonstrate a somewhat narrow understanding of religion when they assume that if a place takes its name from a cliff or hill, this implies that that name has no relation to cult or religion. Sacrality or cult does not require man-made constructions. As is well known, mountains and other landscape features often play a religious role as objects of cult or as places associated with the deceased or other supernatural beings (see e.g. Vikstrand 2001: 20 ff.). The ‘neighbour’ of Old Scandinavian religion, Sami religion, shows countless examples of this (Manker 1957). From Old Scandinavian religion itself, a famous example is the Icelandic Helgafell, ‘holy or inviolable mountain’ near present-day Stykkishólmur in western Iceland (other Helgafells are mentioned below), which, according to *Eyrbyggja saga* 1935 (: 9-10, 19) and *Landnámabók* 1968 (: 125), was believed in pre-Christian times to be sacred and a place where people from the area would go after death. Prominent landscape features have often given names to nearby farms, but that same prominence has in many cases also made people understand them as holy or connected with supernatural beings. Actually, several of Sandnes’ own examples can illustrate this. According to him, the farm Horgheim in Romsdalen (from **Horgheimr*, sometimes spelled *Horgjem* takes its name from the mountain Romsdalshornet. There is probably something to this, although it seems to be a bit more complicated (§ 6.1. and 8.). But that does not count against sacrality, because Romsdalshornet does play a role in popular beliefs (many of which have roots in pre-Christian beliefs) and pre-Christian religion. It is one of the most prominent (Figure 3) and fabled mountains in the country, it features in local legends of trolls (Faye 1833: 124, Bø and Hodne 1974: 57) and the south Sami counted it among their *saajve* mountains (Randulf 1903 [1723]: 43), which were residences of a fairy-like people and places where one hoped to go after death (Skanke 1945 [1728-31]: 193), just as the aforementioned Helgafell in Iceland. The cliff Roaldsteinen in Snåsa, North Trøndelag, is analogous on a more modest scale: it is probably the origin of the name *Horgjem* of the farm next to it, it is a landmark and it is associated with a troll in local lore (the *jøtul* Roald; Skar 1906: 83-84).

It seems that attempts to determine whether *horg* in pre-Christian place names had a religious meaning have also been impeded by two unfortunate and interconnected characteristics of the source material:

- i. Farm names are normally chronologically closer to pre-Christian times in terms of their attestation. Because of this, research on (pre-Christian) sacral place

names has focused on farm names, whereas natural names (nature-names) have largely been left out.

- ii. It is difficult to know whether *horg* in a farm name refers to a man-made cult site on the farm or to a natural *horg* – cliff or other – close to it. We cannot exclude the latter possibility even when we know about man-made cult sites at a given farm and only inconspicuous candidates for a natural *horg*. Likewise, the former possibility cannot be excluded even if a farm is located next to a very prominent natural formation that could be a *horg*.

4. THE APPROACH OF THE PRESENT STUDY

My starting point is that if we want to ascertain what people in pre-Christian times understood by the word *horg*, we need to examine something that has come down to us with the term *horg* attached to it. I will analyse Norwegian *horg* place names in relation to the landscapes in which they are found. The fact that most of these names are natural names will reduce the problems described above. I will ask the following questions:

- a) Is it possible to determine from the landscape in which *horg* names are found whether they have a sacral meaning or not?
- b) Does the location within the landscape give us any information about an essential or early meaning of *horg*? ‘Cliff / mountain’? ‘Heap of stones’ / ‘rocky ground’? ‘Enclosure’ / ‘barrier’?

Attempting to obtain information from the landscape about possibly sacral place names is by no means a new approach (see e.g. Olsen 1915: 54-55, Calissendorff 1964). Still, it is somewhat unusual, the classical approach to such studies being the toponymic rather than the topographic environment (e.g. Olsen 1915). For example, in order to determine whether a farm name *Lund* ‘grove’ has a sacral or profane meaning, it is considered in relation to the names of the surrounding farms. If many of them have a sacral meaning, it is considered probable that the *Lund* name does, too (e.g. Vasshus 2011). I approve of this approach, but I believe there is a large and untapped potential in the landscape approach, not least in Norway, where the landscape is easier to read than in most places, because the formations of the landscape are so large. For this reason I will, however, exclude from the initial discussion the names from the agricultural areas of south-eastern Norway, which are flat (in comparison to the rest of the country), until the concluding discussion. In the remaining material, it seems that the original bearers of virtually all the *horg* names are natural formations.

Regarding the natural *horg* names in Norway, I will try to determine whether the probable namebearers stand out in the landscape and whether there are man-made indicators that they had a special status. If Sandnes and Rostvik are right in thinking that these places had no religious significance, we should expect them to be anonymous, insignificant. If the opposite is the case, however, it is hard not

to attribute to these names the religious significance that we should expect from the medieval information about *hørgr* / *hargher* / *harug* / **harag* / *hearh*. The same applies if some of the places turn out to be hill forts (cf. § 6.4.) or to have other unusual, non-prosaic constructions, especially if the way in which they stand out fits into a pattern. Oral traditions connected to a place with a *horg* name are also indicative of that place having had a special status, even if the tradition is not recorded until modern times or is Christian in content, because the landscape and communication routes have basically been the same until modern road construction. The chances are high that a landscape feature that attracted attention in recent times also did so in ancient times. In some cases, this is confirmed by archaeological monuments.

I use the term ‘religious’ in a wide sense, including beliefs in fairies (*underjordiske*, *huldrefolk*), trolls, etc., because such beliefs were an integral part of pre-Christian religion, although in Christian times they became separated from what was understood as religion proper (more about this in Heide 2014b).

To get information about the characteristics of the Norwegian places in question, I have used maps available at norgeskart.no and the navigable virtual landscape Virtual Globe at <http://www.norgei3d.no/>. Information about Icelandic place names and their topography comes from the *aðalkort* map series 1:250 000 edited by the National Land Survey of Iceland and <http://ja.is/kort/>, and for Swedish names <http://kso.lantmateriet.se/kartsok/kos/index.html> and Google maps (<https://maps.google.no/maps?hl=no&tab=wl>). Information about archaeological monuments in Norway comes from the online database <https://askeladden.ra.no/> unless otherwise stated. I have also used online photographs found through Google searches to obtain information about places.

As mentioned, problem i. above constitutes an argument in favour of the present approach. But it is also an argument against it: natural *horg* names, like other natural names, are usually not attested until post-medieval or even modern times. Accordingly, it is somewhat bold to understand such names as pre-Christian. However, although virtually no assumed pre-Christian sacral place name is attested prior to the conversion, there is nevertheless general agreement that many of them are, in fact, pre-Christian, potentially reaching far back into prehistoric times, because various factors associated with the names indicate or demonstrate this. In the case of *horg*, ancientness is probable when a *horg* name appears in an area where the appellative *horg* is unknown in the post-medieval dialect (most recordings of dialects are 19th and 20th century). This is the case with many of the names discussed below. And if a place that stands out in the landscape or features pre-Christian non-prosaic constructions has been given a *horg* name, this is easier to explain from a pre-Christian world-view than from a Christian one – or from a pre-Christian naming tradition that continued into Christian times, which will also be informa-

tive. However, this reasoning can never be completely certain and this means that conclusions may only be based upon broad patterns within the source material, patterns that will be clear even if a few names should prove to be post-medieval after all. As the examination of the names will show, such broad patterns definitely are present in the Norwegian *horg* name material. In the case of *Hor(g)berget*, probably from **Hǫrgr*, in Tjeldsundet (name a. below), written sources indirectly show that the name existed around the year 1300 or earlier (note 5). Some of the datable farm names can also give indications of the dating of naming patterns (§ 7). The name *Horgane* in Hardanger, Western Norway (name d. below) seems to be at least high medieval for two reasons: Firstly, it is preserved with the Old Norwegian masculine form (definite plural *-ane*), whereas *horg* has become a feminine in all other names that I know of where grammatical gender is visible (*-ene* when in definite plural), as well as in the appellative *horg*. (This development started already in high medieval times; the feminine form *hǫrg* seems to be attested once in Old Norse; *Landnámabók* 1968: 140). Secondly, the name *Horgane* refers to a heap of stones (*røys*, cairn), and this meaning of *horg* is unknown in Hordaland other than in this name.

Nordland's study of *horg* mountains suggests that Sandnes and Rostvik are wrong about the non-religious nature of *horg* names. But his conclusions do not necessarily say much about pre-Christian times as such because they are based upon a deviant area. In Hordaland (according to the overview in Rostvik 1967: 52–66), there are more than 70 *horg* names, virtually all of them mountain names, whereas in the rest of Norway there are only about 30 *horg* names, of which less than one third are mountain names. Apparently, a special, secondary development has occurred in Hordaland, in which *horg* has become applicable to all sorts of mountains and hills (similar to how for example the naming element *horn* for mountains has become especially popular in Sunnmøre, further up the west coast). We cannot know when this development took place, but it may have been completed as late as in modern times. Accordingly, we should exclude the Hordaland names to begin with when attempting to identify medieval or pre-Christian *horg* names and the landscape features to which they were applied. It seems, though, that the Hordaland names can shed further light on patterns detected in the extra-Hordaland material, as we will see in the discussion below.

In the discussion subsequent to the examination of the *horg* names (§ 8), I will try to take into account as many as possible (ideally all) of the known meanings of *horg*, in combination with the place names, to increase the chance of finding the right answer and to rule out as many conceivable solutions as possible (cf. the insistence on this principle in Heide 2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2014a). This does not imply a claim that all *horgs* were conceived of in the same way throughout the entire pagan period and across the whole Germanic area. Obviously, this was

not the case; Germanic religion is known to have varied much in time and space. But when the meaning/s of a word or word root develop/s in different directions, creating new semantic branches, the new meanings do not come about by mutation, they develop successively from earlier meanings. (See for example the discussion of Icelandic *hörg-* ‘lack’ and ‘poor’ in § 7.) This potentially makes it possible to link the different derivations of the meanings of a word or word root.

5. THE MATERIAL FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The list of names discussed below have been made by searching for ‘horg-’, ‘horgj-’, and ‘horj-’ in the Norwegian Mapping Authority’s online database (<http://norges-kart.no/>, during the spring and summer of 2013).⁴ From the resulting list, I have excluded the seven *Horgen* farm names from the flat farming areas of south-Eastern Norway (and derivations from them) and all names from Hordaland except *Horgane* (d.), for which arguments can be given that it is ancient, as stated above. I have also excluded the mountain *Horgaknuten* in Vindafjord, Rogaland, because it is located just south of the Hordaland border and seems to be a branch of a cluster of *horg* names in Etna just north of the border. A few derived names have also been excluded when a primary name is known; see name p. and r. below. The purpose of the exclusions is to establish a name corpus with the highest chances of giving us access to a very early meaning of *horg*. In the later stages of the discussion, many of these excluded names will, however, be drawn in.

I have included the name *Hårberget* (from Myrvang 1986) on the Tjeldsundet strait, Northern Norway, because its location is strikingly analogous to that of *Horga* in Bygland and because it is located next to the farm *Sandtorg*. This implies that *Hårberget* can with high probability be reconstructed as **Horgberget*, originally probably **Høgr* (with *berget* ‘the mountain’ added when the meaning of *horg* was forgotten, for which there would be countless parallels), and *Sandtorg* as **Sand-Høgr* ‘the sandy farm next to **Høgr*’.⁵ – I have also included the grave cairn (cluster) *Horgane*, mentioned by Meidell 1921 (presented and discussed in Heide manuscript 2013). This name is unique in referring to a cult site itself.

Here is the resulting list of 18 names, starting from the north.

Non-farm simplex names:

- a. *Hor(g)berget (Hårberget) / *Høgr*, a mountain in Tjeldsundet, Nordland / Troms, Northern Norway. Figure 2.
- b. *Horga*⁶ ‘the *horg*’, a low mountain in Romsdalen, north-western Norway. Figure 3.
- c. *Horga*, a mountain in Seimsdalen, Årdal, Sogn, Western Norway.
- d. *Horgane*, a grave cairn or cluster of grave cairns between Ljones and Tørvikbygd in Hardanger, Hordaland, Western Norway.
- e. *Horge*, an island northeast of Stavanger, south-western Norway. Figure 7.

- f. *Horga*, a mountain in Bygland, Setesdal, Southern Norway. Figure 1.
- g. *Horga* = *Horgeknipen* = *Horveraks-Horga*, a hill on the border between Bygland, and Evje and Hornnes, Setesdal, Southern Norway.⁷ Figure 1.
- h. *Horga*, a hill in Iveland, interior Eastern Agder, southernmost Norway.
- i. *Horga* (*Hørja*), a river in Sigdal, Buskerud, Eastern Norway.⁸
- j. *Horga* (*Hørja*), a slope in the hilly woodlands of Hurdal, Akershus, Eastern Norway.

Non-farm compound names:

- k. *Horgtinden*, a mountain on Vestvågøya island, Lofoten, Northern Norway. Figure 8.
- l. *Horgevika*, a bay in Lake Nisser, Nissedal, Telemark, Eastern Norway. (Summer) Farm names:⁹
- m. *Horg*, a farm in Melhus, South Trøndelag (< *Hørgr*).
- n. *Horgjem* (*Horjem*), a farm in Snåsa, North Trøndelag (< **Horgheimr*), mentioned in § 3.
- o. *Horgheim* (*Horgjem*), a farm in Romsdalen, north-western Norway (< **Horgheimr*), mentioned in § 3. Figure 3.
- p. *Horge*, a farm in Lærdal, Western Norway (probably < **Hørgr*, dative *Hørgi*). The name *Horgehornet* of the mountain next to the farm probably is derived from this name. Figure 4.
- q. *Horgen*, a farm in Heidal, Eastern Norway (< **Hørgvin*). Figure 5.
- r. *Horga* (*Horgen*), a summer farm in Sel, Oppland, Eastern Norway. Figure 6. The names of the nearby mountain *Horgenøsa*, shieling *Horgesætrin* and the slope *Horgelia* are derived from this name.

In addition, I draw in a couple of the Swedish names mentioned by Rostvik when these are relevant, although I have not studied the Swedish names systematically.

6. DISCUSSION OF THE NORWEGIAN *HORG* NAMES

Most of the names are discussed under more than one heading below.

6.1. *Horg* names and mountains / hills hindering passage

The bearer of the name f., *Horga* in Bygland, Setesdal (Figure 1), is a mountain of a shape similar to Helgafell in Snæfellsness, Iceland, and it has an extremely dominating location. Rising steeply 275 m above the major waterway, Byglandsfjorden, it fills up a headland in the lake, in pre-modern times forcing virtually all traffic up and down the valley to take a detour around it. The farm next to the mountain on the southern side bears the name *Frøyraak* (*Froyrak* 1434, a *Frøyraake* 1453, Larsen 1905: 206), in which the first element is understood as the stem of the god name *Freyr* or shortened from the genitive *Freyju* of the goddess name *Freyja* (ibid: 206-07). This farm features in legends about supernatural beings (Skar 1961-63

[1903-16] I: 338-39, 415, II: 17) and there are graves and other archaeological monuments near the farm.

Mount Hor(g)berget (name a.) on Tjeldsundet (Figure 2, footnote 5) provides a very similar case. Rising steeply 399 m above the sea, Hor(g)berget forces a detour onto one of the two inshore passages available at this section of the Norwegian coast. (The passage leading up to Hor[g]berget from the south-east is not much sailed; it is narrow and shallow and the prevailing south-westerly and westerly winds are gusty there.) Its prominence is enhanced by its location approximately halfway between the Vestfjorden – Ofoten basin to the south and the Vågsfjorden basin to the north, which has given it the status of border marker between administrative communes (Norw. *kommune*, sg.) and counties. Similar to Horga in Bygland, but more pronouncedly, Hor(g)berget is special in the sense that it stands by itself, not connected to nearby mountains, thus earning it its Sami name *Hoalbmavárri* ‘the islet mountain’. There are many archaeological monuments around the mountain.

An analogous case in Bolstadfjorden in Hordaland hints that landscape formations of this kind did have some religious significance. Bolstadfjorden, which was one of very few passageways to the district of Voss prior to the introduction of dynamite that could blast through rocks and mountains, takes a detour round a 264 m high mountain with a vertical face on one side, and this mountain is called *Trollkona* ‘the troll woman’ (Figure 9). In addition, a river flowing into a bay facing this mountain is called *Tysso*, derived from Old Norwegian *þu(r)s* ‘a troll’ (in later tradition also ‘elf, fairy’).

Several of the (summer) farm names and compound mountain names have a similar location in the landscape. The bearer of name o., *Horgheim* (*Horgym* 16th century, *Horgem* 17th century, Rygh 1908: 234), is situated next to the narrowest point of the lower Romsdalen, where the valley turns around the peak Romsdals-



Figure 1. Lake Byglandsfjorden (half of it) with Horga (mountain filling promontory) and Horga / Horgeknipen (hill, near outlet). Contour interval 100 m.

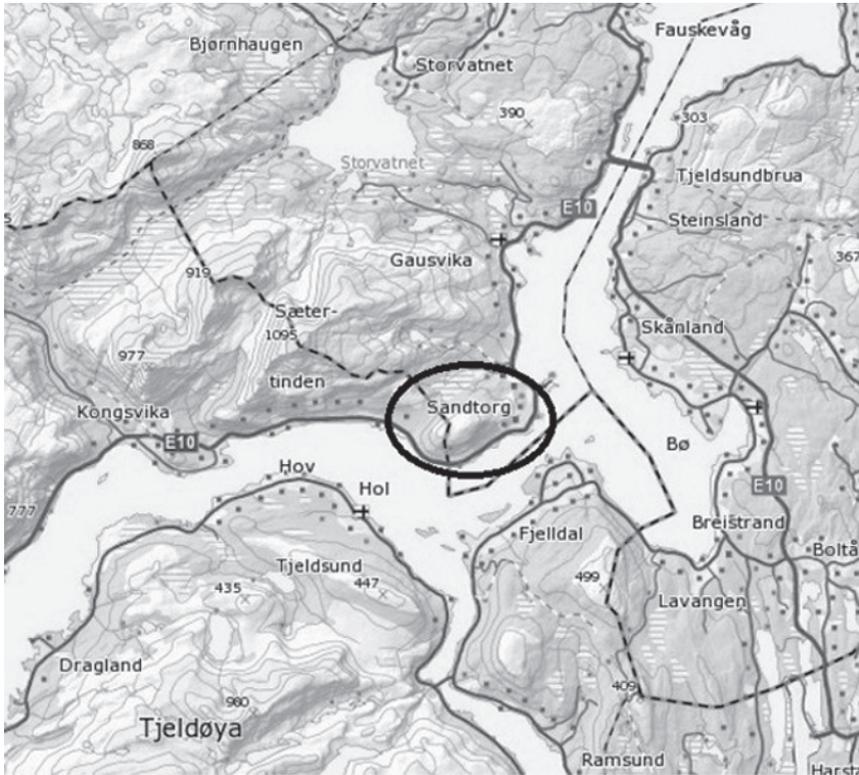


Figure 2. Hor(g)berget near *Sand-Horg, Northern Norway. Contour interval 100 m.

hornet, facing the row of the vertical Trolltindane ‘the troll peaks’ (Figure 3). A large Iron Age grave field lies midway on the ‘detour’ around the mountain (Nord-eide 2012a, Nordeide 2012b, cf. Farbregd 1971 and Øverås 1928: 79-81).

The bearer of name *p.*, the farm Horge in the valley of Lærdal (*i Horwi*, *i Horgwi*, *i Horghi*, *af Horfwe*, mid-14th century, Kjær 1919: 76), has a very similar location. In this valley, too, there is a narrow passage, turning around a steep, massive mountain – known as *Horgehornet* ‘the *horg* peak’. This passage is so difficult that in olden times, travellers would often take an alternative route over the mountains (pers. comm. Sept. 2013 from archaeologist Morten Ramstad, who has information from local historian Oddkjell Bosheim). The farm Horge lies at one end of this route, as is shown in Figure 4. At the other end of the difficult passage, at Bjørkum (far left in Figure 4), a Viking Age trading centre has been identified and excavated (Ramstad et al. 2011). Next to the road on the western side of the mountain crossing, Lærdal’s largest petroglyph field is found (*Kattefarsvøi*), as well as a mound that is the focus of the richest popular tradition in all of Lærdal (*Grimehaugen*, Røberg

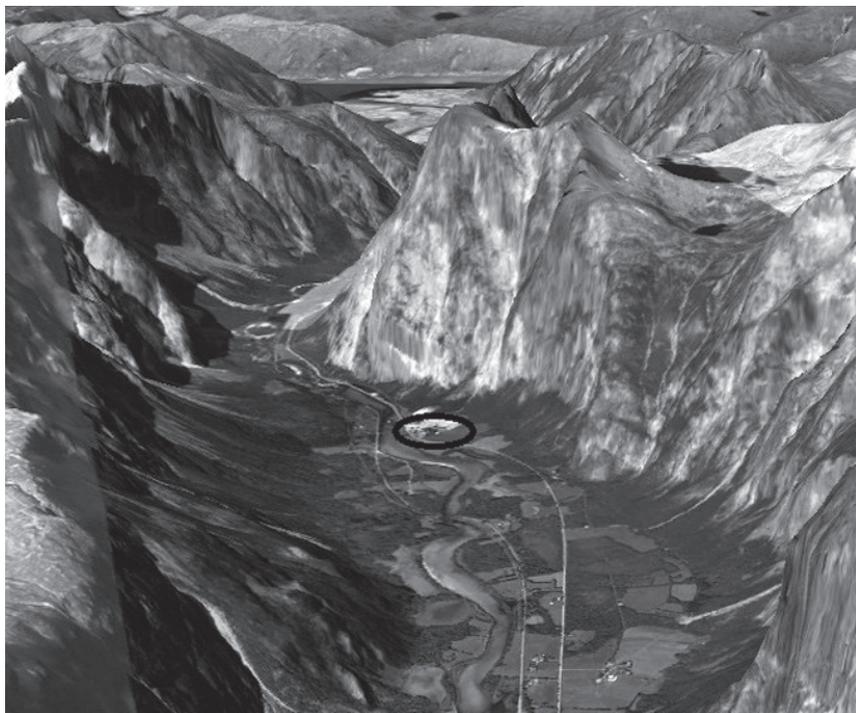


Figure 3. Romsdalen near the farm Horgheim (encircled), beneath the mountain Romsdalshorn (facing Trolltindane ‘the troll peaks’); Åndalsnes and the fjord in the background. Image generated from Virtual Globe at www.norgei3d.no/.

manuscript 2014). – Judging by the pronunciation, the farm name *Horge* is primary to the mountain name *Horgehornet*. The mountain name is pronounced ²horje-hodne/, with the *g* palatalized (Kjær 1919: 76). This is unproblematic if the name is a late derivation from the farm name, pronounced ²horje/, probably reflecting the old dative **Hørgi* from **Høgr* (ibid.), but is otherwise hard to explain, cf. footnote 7.¹⁰

The bearer of name *q.*, the farm Horgen in Heidal, Eastern Norway (*Herienn* 1594, *Hørgenn* 1604, *Horgen* 1668, Kjær and Rygh 1902: 87), has a location analogous to the examples already discussed. It lies next to a steep hill that forces the valley to change direction around it, creating a narrow passage that complicates travel up and down the valley (Figure 5. Horgen may seem to lie quite some distance from the hill, but name typology indicates that this was the farm closest to it when the farm was founded. The farms between Horgen and the hill have *stad(i)r* and *-setr* names [*Faukstad* and *Høgset*], which are younger than the *-vin* group [Sandnes 1997: 34-35] to which *Horgen* < **Hørgvin* belongs.)

A similar landscape situation is found around the bearer of name *r.* *Horga*

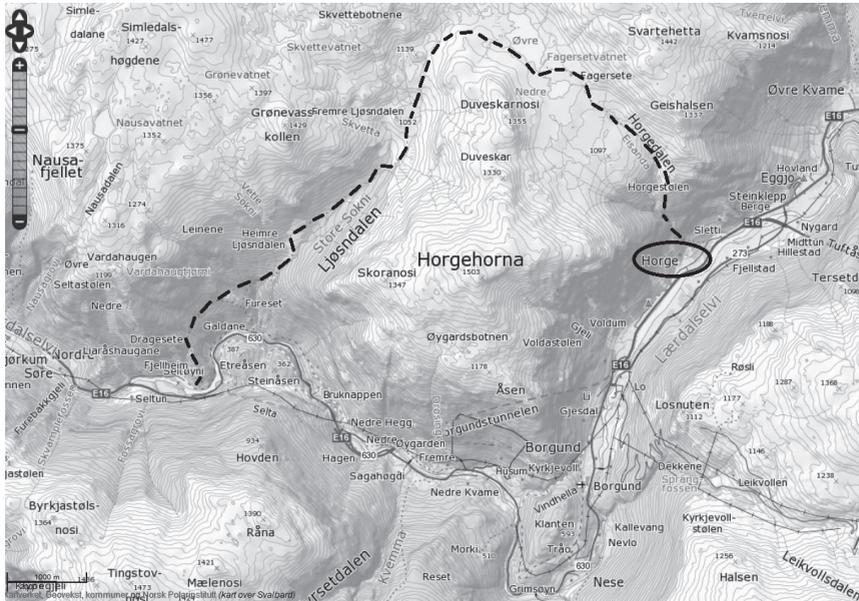


Figure 4. The narrow part of Lærdal past the mountain Horgehornet, with the road (dotted line) to avoid the passage, starting / ending at the farm Horge. Countour interval 20 m.

(*Horgen*), a shieling in Sel, Gudbrandsdalen: It is located close to Gudbrandsdalen's narrowest passage, where the valley turns around a mountain (called *Vetahaugen*). But in this case, the *horg* name is found above the blocking mountain rather than beneath one side of it. Most of the traffic would pass below the mountain, as attested by the name *Rosten* 'the road' of this section of the valley (from Old Norse *rostr* f. 'a road', originally 'the distance between two rests'). But in the old days, some traffic would go past the shieling Horga, namely traffic between Dovre and Vågå (pers. comm. local historian Alf Eriksen, Dovreskoen, Sept. 2013).

In these six cases, a hill or mountain blocks or visually appears to block passage on one of Norway's major ancient routes of communication. On land, travellers are forced to make detours around or over the obstructing mountain, often taking them through difficult terrain. On water, difficult sailing conditions complicate such detours. Because of the surrounding mountains, winds will tend to follow the waterways in question, but will be gusty and shifty and thus dangerous on the lee side of the *horg* mountain when sailing in a strong tail wind. In a light breeze, it will be hard to pass the *horg* mountain because there will be a calm on the lee side.

Clearly, the landscape formations to which these *horg* names are connected are very prominent. They also fit the 'barrier' element of *carcer* and seem to point to 'barrier' being an early and essential meaning of *horg*, because there is a strong



Figure 5. Heidal with the blocking hill Båsdalsberget. The farm Horgen (<Hørgvin) encircled. View from the south-east. Image generated from Virtual Globe at www.norgei3d.no/.

connection between *horg* names and this type of landscape feature, which is, in fact, quite rare. I have spent hours and hours examining the maps and found very few additional examples. The clearest parallel is the mentioned Trollkona on the Bolstadfjorden (Figure 9). Sundsåsen / Sundsberget by the lake Krøderen and Smikollen in the valley Numedal, both Eastern Norway, may be other examples, but they are not particularly prominent. The mountain Hornelen on the west coast, on the other hand, is extremely prominent by its elevation and steepness, but does not appear to eat into a landscape corridor, which the above examples do. I may have overlooked examples, but it nonetheless seems that the majority of the examples of the landscape formation in question are connected to *horg* names. It is hard to conceive of this as accidental, especially as there are so few *horg* names altogether outside of Hordaland – only 18 names in the list in § 5 and six of them connected to such landscape formations. Accordingly, *horg* names are hugely overrepresented in connection with this type of landscape formation: mountains and hills forming (or appearing to form) barriers on ancient, major routes of communication by eating into a landscape corridor.

6.2. *Horg* names on borders

Many of the already discussed *horg* names and most of the remaining ones are found in connection with another type of barrier, namely borders of various kinds. I have not been able to check borders no longer in use for all names, but here are the examples that I have found.

Horveraks-Horga (name g., Figure 1) marks the border between the adminis-



Figure 6. Gudbrandsdalen between Sel and Dovre, with the shieling Horga (Horgen) encircled and the mountain Horgenøsa in the extreme upper left. View from the south-east. Image generated from Virtual Globe at www.norgei3d.no/.

trative communes Bygland to the north and Evje and Hornnes to the south as well as a *skipreiða* (fleet levy district) border from medieval times (Imsen and Winge 1999: 384). Hor(g)berget (name a.) marks the border between the communes Tjeldsund and Harstad and also between their respective counties Nordland and Troms (Figure 2). In Romsdalen, the mountain Romsdalshorn next to the farm Horgheim (name o., Figure 3) marks the border between the former parishes (*sokn*) Grytten and Kors (Nordeide 2013), and the mountain Horga (name b.) lies on the border between the former parishes (*prestegjeld*) Bolsøy and Veøy (<http://www.digitalarkivet.no/norkart/>). In Lærdal, a *skipreiða*, parish, and former commune border runs across the mountain Horgehornet next to the farm Horge (name r., Figure 4, Imsen and Winge 1999: 388). The shieling Horga in Gudbrandsdalen (Horgen, name r., Figure 6) lies on the border between the communes Sel and Dovre. In Trøndelag, the border between the *skipreiður* Foss and Haltbrekka seems to have run by the farm Horg (name m., map in Imsen and Winge 1999: 390). In Hordaland, Western Norway, the grave cairns Horgane (name d.) are located on the headland of the early modern border between Jondal and Strandebarm parishes (Imsen and Winge 1999: 387) and on the medieval border between the regions Harðangr and Sunnhjørøland (Brekke et al. 1993: 368); moreover, it is only a few hundred m from a bay bearing the name Hardingahola ‘the bay of the Hardanger people’, which probably reflects this border. In Sigdal, Eastern Norway, the river Horga (name i.) with

its rugged ravine in an otherwise gently sloping terrain, formed the border between the medieval properties Sundsveldet (first attested 1370) and Flåganveldet, which covered large parts of, respectively, the lower and upper Sigdal valley (Mørch 2007: 1131, 1275).

The tiny island of Horge north of Stavanger, south-western Norway (name e., Figure 7), lies only a few hundred m off the present-day commune borders between Strand and Stavanger as well as on previous *skipreiða* and parish borders (Imsen and Winge 1999: 386). There is reason to believe that the island itself marked borders between communities in the days prior to maps and GPSs since it lies quite precisely at a middle point between the communities within the area. Its location makes it a hub at the junction of many fjords and sea routes. Because of this, it may have been the point most frequently encountered by people travelling around this region, so it should be regarded as a prominent landscape formation in spite of its somewhat modest appearance. In this respect, Horge corresponds to Helgøya ‘the holy island’ or ‘the inviolable island’ in the lake Mjøsa, Eastern Norway. Helgøya is

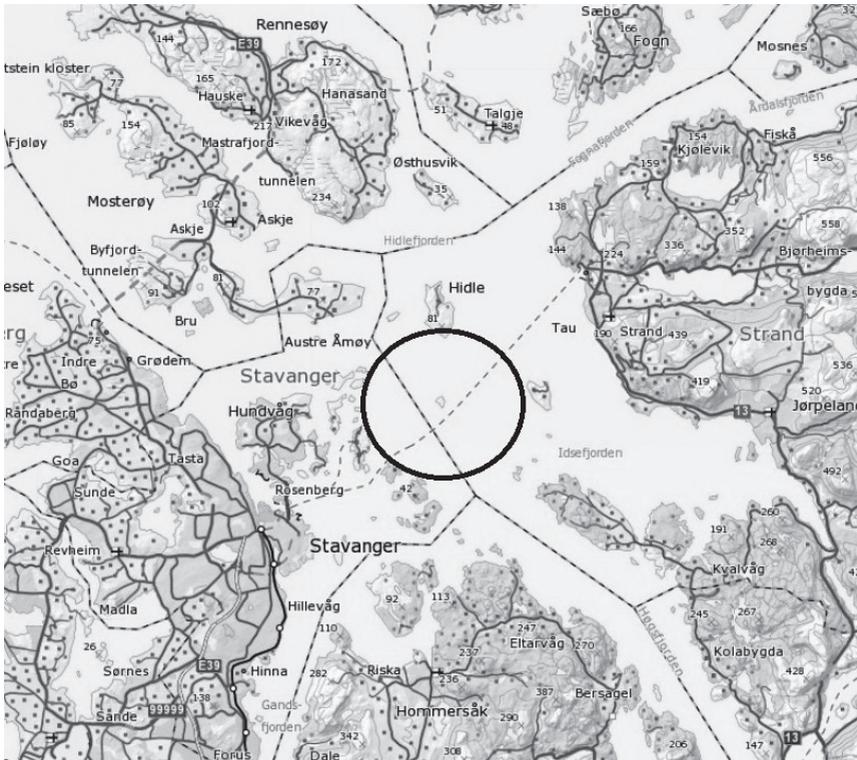


Figure 7. The island Horge in south-western Norway. Countour interval 100 m.

located between several prehistoric kingdoms at the junction of the three branches of the lake. Calissendorff (1964: 123, 128-29, 136-38) has pointed out that several of the Swedish Helgös ‘holy islands’ or ‘inviolable islands’ have a similar in-between location at the border between several counties, or where rivers or other waterways reach the Baltic Sea. The islet Hargen ‘the *horg*’ in lake Mälaren, Sweden, has a location very similar to that of Horge island – in the middle of the lake, on the borders of four parishes (*socknar*) and two counties (Rostvik 1967: 27).

In Telemark, Eastern Norway, the background for name I. is probably a border mountain. *Horgevika* ‘the *horg* bay’ must be derived from some nearby *horg*. As there were no farms in the vicinity until the 19th century (Åsen 1976: 671-73) and there are no (registered) archaeological monuments, we should expect this *horg* to be a natural feature. The obvious candidate is the mountain Hægefjell (as pointed out by Øyen 1947: 25), located 2.5 km away and dominating the broad, open valley, which leads from the bay up to the mountain, by virtue of its 400-m-high, km-wide barren gneiss and granite precipice facing the valley. With its 1021 m, its rocky faces and free-standing appearance, Hægefjell dominates the whole area (Øyen 1947: 21-22). Because of this, it has functioned as the border between the communities Fjone in Nissedal and Vrådal in Kviteseid since ancient times (pers. comm. from local historian Kjell Åsen, Treungen in Nissedal, 25.09.2013). The mountain even features in legends about this border (ibid; Øyen 1947: 22) and its special status is accentuated by its name. *Hægefjell* in all probability comes from **Helgafjall* (or *-fell*). In this part of Norway, Old Norwegian *-elg* regularly goes to /æ:g/, e.g. in the women’s name *Helga* > *Hæge*. The name, location and function of Hægefjell also fits well with the Icelandic Helgafell mountains that function as dividers in the landscape, as mentioned in § 6.3. Thus, there is good reason to believe that the landscape divide formed by the border mountain Hægefjell is the *horg* that has given name to Horgevika – although we cannot exclude the possibility that the cliff Skaggen to the northeast of the bay is the background for the name.

In none of these cases do we know for certain where the border/s lay in pre-Christian times, or whether there was a border at all in pre-Christian times, but the concurrence between known borders and *horg* names is nevertheless striking. The borders associated with the *horg* places in question naturally offer themselves in the landscape, so there should be no reason to assume that the majority of them are late inventions.

If we include other names from Hordaland than *Horgane* (name d.), there are more examples (the list is probably not complete): One mountain Horga lies on the border between the communes Lindås and Masfjorden, Gravdalsborga on the border between the communes Kvam and Fusa, Sandvassborga and Horga near Åkra in Kvinnherad lie on the border between the communes Etne and Kvinn-

herad, Skamdalsborga on the border between the communes Voss and Granvin, Kvanngrøborga on the border between the communes Jondal and Kvinnherad, and Kringdalsborga on the border between the communes Voss and Vaksdal.

6.3. *Horg* names and other landscape divides

The Horgtinden in Lofoten (name k., Figure 8) is associated with a natural divide that is not known to have had the status of an administrative border. The peak stands like a guardian on the mountain pass leading from the community Unstad to the larger communities on the island of Vestvågøya.

The mountain Horga in Sogn (name c.) has a similar location, and so do many mountains in Hordaland. Blomdalsborga, although less prominent, guards the pass through which runs the path between the communities Matresdalen and Åkra. In Iceland, one *Helgafell* mountain has a location analogous to this: on the highest point of the road between Þistilfjörður and Öxarfjörður in the north(-east) of the country.¹¹ Translated into maritime travel, Helgafell in north-western Iceland is another analogous case: located on the tip of the promontory between Dýrafjörður and Arnarfjörður, it is the coastal equivalent of ‘tipping over’ from one valley into the next. The Norwegian island Horge is located on another kind of sea-travel ‘tipping point’, exactly in-between the different communities (cf. the discussion of this name in § 6.2.).



Figure 8. Horgtinden at the pass to Unstad, Vestvågøya, Lofoten, Northern Norway. View from south-east. Image generated from Virtual Globe at www.norgei3d.no/.

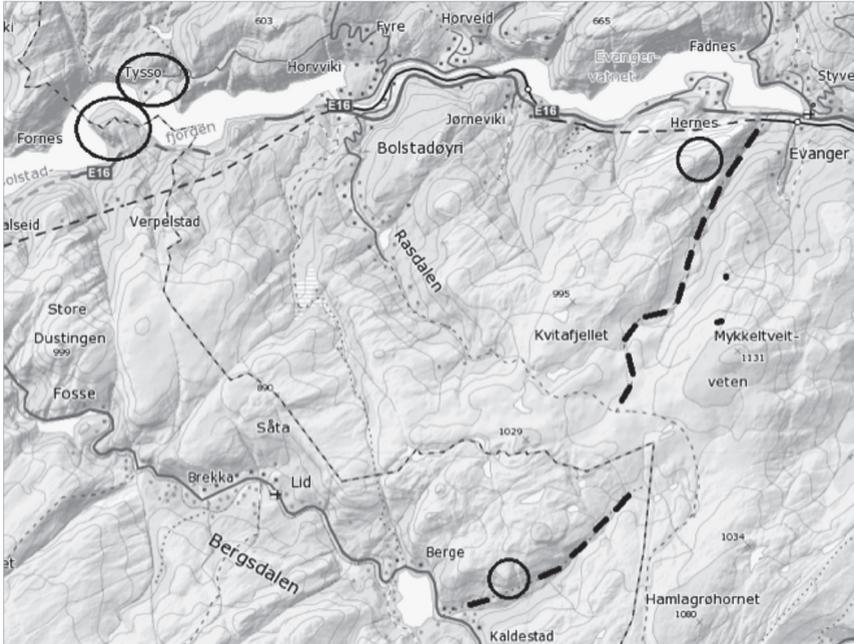


Figure 9. The mountains Horga (lower centre) and Hørneshorga (upper right), discussed in § 6.3, and the mountain headland Trollkona and the river and settlement Tyssø (upper left), Hordaland, discussed in § 6.1. Contour interval 100 m.

If we include more of the Hordaland material, there are several cases where it is not the highest point on a mountain road that bears a *horg* name, but rather the entrances to the mountain road. One example is shown in Figure 9, the passage between Berge in Bergsdalen and Evanger.

In most such cases, only one of the ‘entrances’ is marked by a *horg* name. For example, the mountain Horga in Eidfjord, Hardanger, is located at the eastern ‘entrance’ to the last leg of the ancient road from Eastern Norway across the Hardangervidda plateau to Kinsarvik in Hardanger. On the island of Tynesøya, the mountain Horga lies at one end of a pass leading from the south-western part of the island to the northern part. In outer Hardanger, one end of the pass leading from the farm Gangdalen ‘the walk-valley’ to Årvika and Årsand is guarded by a mountain called *Horgene* ‘the horgs’ (plural probably because its prominent side consists of a row of precipices). Near Bergen, the monumental mountain Hausdalsborga guards the southern ‘entrance’ to an important pass leading through a mountain range from Os on the southern side to Osterfjorden on the northern side. On the northern side, the road comes into (or leads out of) the settled area at a farm called *Herland*, from *Helgaland* (Olsen 1910: 306), and the mountain range is known as *Gullfjellet* ‘the gold

mountain'. Thus, this area is part of the basis for Nordland's observation that *horg* mountains are often associated with *Helg*- names or laudatory names (Nordland 1969: 82-91, 96-97; § 1.2 here). In north-western Iceland, one Helgafell appears in the same way to 'guard' the 'entrance' to a valley leading from Húnafjörður westwards to the communities around Hvammsfjörður and Gilsfjörður. Another Helgafell south of Hafnarfjörður near Reykjavík has a similar location in relation to an old road leading over the mountains to the communities south of the Reykjanesskagi promontory. In Rogaland, south-western Norway, one Helgafjell combines this location with the former one: It is located at the northern 'entrance' to an ancient road from Dirdal and Høgsfjorden / Frafjorden to Egersund (the name Sundvor, which reflects ferrying across the lake Byrkjelandsvatnet on this road, attests to this), but the road also reaches its highest elevation at the point of passing by Helgafjell.

In Hordaland, there is also a more general connection between *horg* names and dividing landscape formations: many of the *horg* names not yet mentioned tend to occur in high, not easily passable mountain ranges separating communities. This applies to the mountain ranges between Maurangsfjorden in Kvinnherad and Jondal, between the community of Voss and those along Hardangerfjorden to the south, and the valley Eksingedalen to the north-west, and between Åkrafjorden and Orradalen in southern Hordaland. Especially interesting is the mountain range between Voss and Granvin – Ålvik by Hardangerfjorden. Despite being a mountain range, it was one of the easiest ways out of Voss prior to modern infrastructure, and several of the most popular routes to the Hardanger fjord led through it (Nordland 1969: 86-87, based on interviews with people who remembered pre-railway Voss). This mountain range has the highest concentration of *horg* names anywhere, with seven *horg* mountains within a few square km and, as Nordland points out (*ibid.*), this concentration concurs with an equally remarkable concentration of *helg*- place names. On both sides, three of the tracks leading into the area pass by (summer) farms with *helg*- names, and in the middle of the mountains, travellers would rest or spend the night at Helgaset (*ibid.*) 'the holy or inviolable summer farm'. The concentration of both name types around this important mountain crossing fits with the connection between *horg* names and landscape divides that we have seen.

The second largest concentration of *horg* names is found around an ancient road leading from Jondal and Torsnes in outer Hardanger across the 930-m-high mountain pass Glomdalsskaret to Maurangsfjorden (where travellers would travel part of the way by boat and then continue by foot across the mountains to Tökheim in inner Hardanger. Pers. comm. from Jarle Øvrehus, Austrepollen, Kvinnherad).

6.4. The remaining names

Of the 18 names in § 5, only three – h. the hill *Horga* in Iveland, j. the slope *Horga* in Hurdal, and n. the farm *Horgjem* in Snåsa – are not associated with barriers,

divides or borders of the mentioned types. All of them are, however, associated with other types of barriers.

The slope name *Horga* in Hurdal, Eastern Norway (name j.), seems to reflect the *horg* meaning ‘terrain traversable with difficulty’ known from Swedish dialects (§ 1.2.). When I phoned a local (Per Olav Rønningen, Skrukkelia, Sept. 2013) and asked whether there is anything special about that slope, he answered ‘I have been wondering whether the name could have something to do with messy terrain’. The *Horga*, he says, is all kame, kettle and boulders, a challenge to cross.

The cliff Roaldsteinen next to the farm Horgjem and the hill *Horga* in Iveland are both hill forts. (There are traditions of trolls connected to both; Skar 1906: 83-84, Fjermedal 1962: 114, 465-66; Aannestad 2003: 37.) This could be accidental if these two cases had been isolated, but there is a whole range of connections between *horg* places and hill forts. Horveraks-*Horga* (name g.) is also a hill fort, and *Horg* in South Trøndelag (name m.) lies next to a cliff called *Littstenen*, which is a hill fort. This may be part of the background for the farm name *Horg*. In England, several *horg* sites feature prehistoric fortifications (Semple 2007). In Old High German, *harug* is used among other things to refer to Rome’s Capitol Hill (§ 1.1.), which served as a hill fort in Rome’s early history. The meaning of *horg* in the Norwegian dialects that have retained the word until modern times – ‘a mountain or cliff with steep sides and a flat top’ (§ 1.1.) – is the ideal shape for a hill fort. The cairns *Horgane* in Hardanger (name d.) are located on inaccessible shelves in a cliff side, with precipices underneath, resembling hill forts. In a dialect dictionary from south-western Norway, a *horg* is explained as a ‘man-made heap of stones (hill fort)’ (Sandvik 1991: 129). In this area, no hill forts with *horg* names are known, so it is unlikely that this meaning derives from some random hill fort with heaps of stone on it; this is, rather, an old, inherited meaning.

The connection between *horg* and hill forts also points to ‘barrier’ being an early and essential meaning of *horg*, because hill forts are obstacles to passage. The hill forts next to *Horg* and *Horgjem* in Trøndelag obstruct passage on two of Norway’s most important ancient traffic routes (Gauldalen valley leading from Eastern Norway to Trondheimsfjorden, and the isthmus between lake Snåsavatnet / Trondheimsfjorden and Namdalen) – thus resembling the function of the natural barriers discussed in § 6.1. Accordingly, all 18 names listed in § 5 are associated with landscape barriers.

The mountain *Horga* in Romsdalen (name b.) was mentioned as a border mountain in § 6.2. It also features a very special stone formation referred to as ‘the altar’ – *Alteret* – by people in the area. It is located on its south-eastern slopes (c. 215 m above sea level) and is made up of seven stone blocks, the top one weighing 2.6 tons (Olafsen-Holm 1948). There is disagreement about the origin of this ‘altar’. It may seem impossible that it is natural, but geologists argue that the melting icecap

could have left rocks originating from a rockslide like this (Olafsen-Holm 1948, Parelius 1955). The fact that several of the rocks are of the same kind of gneiss, some of them seemingly even stemming from the same block (Parelius 1955), may support this understanding. It is also hard to see why people would invest the enormous amount of work needed to erect such a monument in the middle of a forest, several km away from (summer) farms and major communication lanes, with no exceptional natural formations in the immediate vicinity. All things considered, the less implausible alternative seems that the ‘altar’ was made in the course of nature. This, however, does not mean that it did not function as a cult site. Whether it did or not can only be determined by means of an archaeological excavation, but there is already reason to believe that some kind of religious notion or activity was connected to the site, because of the uniqueness of the stone construction and what we find in the vicinity. The ‘altar’ is located on a mountain with the name *Horga*, and 1.5 – 2 km away, on the north-western slope of the mountain, a standing stone is located, known under the name of *Finnen* (‘the Sami’ or ‘the jut’. Holsbøvåg 2010: 197-98. It seems not to be registered at <https://askeladden.ra.no/askeladden/>). On the same mountain, somewhere between these stone monuments, but closest to the latter, we find the boulder *Bikkalteret* ‘the tipping alter’, which a person can tip back and forth when standing on it (Holsbøvåg 2010: 229). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, *Alteret* is located on the mountain closest to an island bearing the pre-Christian name *Veøya*, Old Norwegian *Véey* ‘the consecrated island’. This island probably got its special status from a location at the junction of many communication routes, similar to the island *Horge* and the *Helgøya* / *Helgö* islands mentioned in § 6.3. The mountain *Horga* would be important to the residents of *Veøya* because it is a fabulous lookout point that gives an overview of the whole fjord system surrounding the island (in spite of its modest elevation). In short, a (probably) natural wonder like *Alteret*, with its location close to *Veøya* and on *Veøya*’s lookout mountain, should be expected to acquire some kind of religious role. The background for this mountain name *Horga* remains a riddle, though. It could be the mountain’s border function, or the stone monument *Alteret*, or a combination.

6.5. Conclusions to § 6

During the above examination, all of the 18 names listed in § 5 have been discussed. On this background, I will return to the questions asked in § 4. Regarding question a), there is a clear tendency that the name bearers (or formations from which the names seem to be derived, i.e. the original name bearers) are not anonymous, easily overlooked features in the landscape, but are prominent or distinguished in one or more ways, usually by the hand of nature (in relation to human settlement and activity), sometimes by the hand of man, sometimes by both. Because of this it is problematic not to ascribe to most of these names and their bearers (but not

necessarily all and not necessarily other *horg* names / places) some kind of religious significance, which we should expect from the medieval information that we possess about *hōrgr* / *hargher* / *harug* / **harag* / *hearh* throughout the Germanic area. This impression is supported by the fact that formations with similar locations in the landscape (or even the same formation, in one case, Romsdalshorn) are in quite a number of cases designated with *helg*- names (§ 6.3) or have been understood as realms of the dead for the local population (Romsdalshorn. This is just one category of [bearers of] *helg*- names, however; the whole group seems far more heterogeneous than the *horg* names in Norway. I will focus on *helg*- names in a subsequent article.).

This understanding is supported by a parallel in Sami religion, where points passable only with difficulty, similar to those in § 6.1., form a category of sacrificial sites (not labelled with any common term. At least seven cases are known, Manker 1957: 23). They are typically found in the middle of a difficult block field that has to be traversed because it is the only passage between a lake and a vertical mountain face (ibid., with references).

Regarding question b), the location of the *horg* places in the landscape and, in some cases pre-historic fortifications on them, seem to support the connection between *horg* and Latin *carcer* ‘an enclosed place, prison, barrier or starting-place in the race-course’. The investigated material connects closely to the ‘barrier’ part of this meaning; Norwegian *horg* names are strikingly associated with barriers in the landscape. The hill fort strain of the *horg* name complex – which seems to be supported in English and German material – connects to the ‘enclosure’ part of the *carcer* meaning as well.¹² Other support for this etymology or essential meaning of *horg* was given towards the end of § 2: the probable *horg* paddock at Øm Abbey, the probable stone ring background of the name of the farm *Horgen* by the river Vormå, the concentric stone walls at Odensala Vicarage, and the poor passability that is the essence of the Modern Swedish *horg* complex.

7. CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE *HORG* COMPLEX

The strong connection between *horg* names and barriers in the landscape indicates that ‘barrier’ is an ancient meaning of the word *horg*. The ancientness of this pattern can be supported by the typological dating of some of the names that have the clearest connection with landscape barriers. The farm name *Horgen* in Heidal (name q, Figure 5), is a compound with *-vin* ‘meadow’¹³, and this group of farm names is dated to ‘the first 5 - 6 centuries AD’ (Sandnes 1997: 34). The name *Horgheim* (from *Horgheimr*) in Romsdalen (name o., Figure 3), is an equally clear example landscape-wise, and the *-heimr* group of names is in Norway dated to the same period (ibid). The simplex *horg* farm names – *Horg* in Melhus, South Trøndelag

(name m.), and *Horge* in Lærdal, Western Norway (name p.) – can probably push the pattern to an even earlier date. They belong to the simplex names that refer to landscape features, which are considered the oldest farm names we have (ibid: 34) and thus belonging to the earliest Iron Age or even earlier times. There is some uncertainty about these two names, however. Regarding *Horg* in Melhus, it is not certain that the name refers to the hill fort Litlstenen that blocks travel up and down the Gauldalen valley, because Litlstenen (and the larger cliff Høgstenen) is located approximately two km away. The name could derive from a man-made cult construction on the farm. Regarding *Horge* in Lærdal, the background in a ‘blocking’ mountain seems clear. But in this case, it is not certain that the name is a simplex (namely *Hqrgr* ‘solidified’ in the dative form *Hqrgi*); 14th century spellings like *i Horwi* and *i Horgwi* (alongside with *i Horghi*) suggest that the normalized Old Norwegian form would be **Hqrgvé*, a compound with *vé* n. ‘a consecrated place’. However, such a compound is improbable because it would be unparalleled; moreover, the pronunciation /^horje/ fits with *Hqrgi* but not **Hqrgvé* (Kjær 1919: 76, cf. note 7). Moreover, the spellings with a <w> or <gw> do not really show that an additional word is involved, because an arbitrary variation *g : f* (pronounced /v/) is not unusual in Old Norwegian (cf. e.g. the farm name *Horverak* below the hill *Horga* mentioned early in § 6.3). Thus, *Horge* in Lærdal probably is a simplex name. At any rate, the outlined naming pattern seems to predate the conversion by at least half a millennium, probably much more. Thus, the landscape pattern connected to *horg* names, independently and supported by the *carcer* etymology, can give us information about the essential meaning of the word *horg* (**hargur*) centuries before our earliest textual sources for Old Scandinavian religion, even well before the earliest West Germanic textual information.

The Horgen farms of south-eastern Norway seem not to fit into the outlined pattern.¹⁴ Whereas the *horg* names from the hilly or mountainous parts of Norway (listed in § 5) tend rather strongly to connect to landscape formations separating communities, the seven Horgen farms in the relatively flat south-eastern Norway are located centrally in large farming communities, some of them in a toponymic environment with theophoric names (Olsen 1915: 290), which the *horg* names discussed above are not.

This does not necessarily contradict the pattern, however, as these farms may have featured man-made *horgs* that were in some way characterized by barriers. *Horgen* on the bank of the river Vormå is in all likelihood an example of this, since the aforementioned stone ring is probably the background for the name (§ 2). A stone ring is a circular, symbolic barrier comparable to the symbolic stone walls with numerous gaps in them at Odensala Vicarage and the Old High German **harag* and Old Norwegian *véþond* enclosures at assembly sites (§ 1.1.). At Odensala Vicarage, the sacrifices had ‘a very strong connection to the walls’ entrances’

(Olausson 1995: 220, cf. 206), which correspond to the passages between the stones in a stone ring. One might argue that an enclosure is very different from the landscape barriers discussed above, but that depends upon what we understand to be the essence of a cultic enclosure. Obviously, its enclosing function is important. But, when barriers like fences, walls and hedges very often and throughout the world¹⁵ are found enclosing cult sites, their main function seems to be to mark the *border* between the profane world outside of it and the special status of the area inside. That is, they have a separating function, one of separating areas of different status. From this perspective, it is not decisive whether the border encloses an area or not. Both cultic enclosures and landscape barriers between communities separate spheres of different social status.

No stone rings are known at the other lowland *Horgen* farms, so we may not assume the same to be the background for those names, although there may have been now lost stone rings at some of the farms, or other kinds of now lost cultic enclosures or constructions developed from enclosures, see below.

8. THE REST OF THE MATERIAL

Since the textual Old Germanic evidence is so confusing, the conclusions of the present study are based upon place names and their location in the landscape, supported by etymology and ancient monuments connected to *horg* place names (the stone ring next to Horgen by Vormå, Odensåla Vicarage, hill forts), and only to some degree upon textual evidence (*Lex Ripuaria*, *Øm Abbey Chronicle*). However, in order to be acceptable, these conclusions also have to be compatible with the rest of the material, not least the extensive Old Norse textual information. I will now go through this material and discuss whether it can be seen as fitting with or deriving from either the meaning ‘a barrier’ or ‘an enclosure’. Because a probable, original meaning of *horg* has already been established by other means, I will here not put too much emphasis on the dating of sources but rather focus on the semantic aspects.

In the Old Norse textual corpus, *hǫrgr* is mentioned some 25 times,¹⁶ but these occurrences, as we have seen, only give mixed and limited information about what it was. The following seems to be the information we get, cf. § 1.:

- A. A *hǫrgr* can be a cliff with a cave in it: a troll living in a cave in a mountain designates himself as residing inside *hǫrgar* (*Bergbúa þáttur* 1991: 444-46, stanzas 4 and 6, cf. Finnur Jónsson 1913-16: 312, , § 1.1 and 6.3. here).
- B. *Hǫrgr* and *hof* ‘(large) cultic building’ together can translate a Latin expression meaning ‘high places’ (*sacerdotes excelsorum*).¹⁷
- C. A *hǫrgr* can be listed among natural formations with a cultic function: the missionary king Óláfr Haraldsson destroyed *bæði hamra ok hǫrga, skóga, vǫtn ok tré ok ǫll ǫnnur blót* (*Saga Óláfs konungs hins helga* 1941: 694) ‘both cliffs and *hǫrgar*, lakes and trees, and all other objects of pagan worship’.

- D. A *høgr* can be a sacrificial construction made of piled up stones (*Hyndluljóð*, § 1.1.).
- E. A *grjóthøgr* ‘rock-*høgr*’ can be a pile of stones on a dishonourable grave mentioned in the Old Testament.¹⁸ Compare *Sturlunga saga* (1906-11: 529): a group of warriors stops on a *grjóthøgr* below a slope.
- F. A *høgr* typically juts upwards: a woman may testify in a killing case if the killing has been committed on the farm (within the *akragarðr*) and neither *høgr* nor mound (*haugr*) prevented her from seeing the scene (*Gulatingslova* 1994: 109, footnote).
- G. A *høgr* located on the infields of a farm was not something unusual (same passage).
- H. A *høgr* can be a cultic, tall timber construction: *hátimbraðr høgr* (*Grimnismál* 16 and *Völuspá* 7).
- I. A *høgr* can be a cultic building: *Snorri’s Edda* mentions a *høgr* that is a *salr* ‘hall’, belonging to the goddesses (*Codex Regius*). One manuscript, however (*Codex Upsaliensis*), says that this *høgr* was *inside* the hall (*Gylfaginning* 7, *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931: 20). But we also find *høgr* as a house in the relatively reliable and early *Gulaping Law*: a man will have to pay a certain fine if he *gerir hús ok kallar høgr* ‘builds a house and calls it a *høgr*’.¹⁹
- J. A *høgr* can be burnt down, typically by missionary kings (Fritzner 1883-96 II: 191).
- K. A *høgr* can be torn down, also by missionary kings (*brjóta niðr horga*, e.g. *Flateyjarbok* 1860-68. III: 246).
- L. A *høgr* can belong to a *hof*; in the translated *Karlamagnúss saga* the pagans in Spain *leyfir at niðr brjótist kirkjur en hof með hörgum upp reisist* (*Karlamagnús saga* 1860: 137) ‘allow the tearing down of churches and the construction of *hofs* with *horgs*’. Compare the common collocation *hof ok høgr* ‘*hof* and *høgr*’ (10 examples in prose, 2 in poetry).

In the listed material, there is no clear connection to barriers or enclosures. This may count against the theory put forward in the present article. But not necessarily, because the basis for this theory points to barrier / enclosure being an essential, *early* meaning of *horg* – early Iron Age or even earlier (if the connection with Latin *carcer* holds). Such an early meaning will not be contradicted by later developments, and the Old Norse texts mostly reflect the latest phase of Nordic heathendom – or even post-conversion understandings.

There are, however, more pieces of information in the list that may fit with barriers / enclosures than one might think at first glance, and in the rest of the material (§ 1.), many pieces fit very well. The mountain with the disappearing cave in *Bergbúa þáttr* (A.) is located on a mountain pass (Ódrjúgsháls) between Djúpafljörður and Gufudalur (§ 1.1., *Bergbúa þáttr* 1991: 441), so this *horg* may be analogous to

those discussed in § 6.3. So may the meanings B. and C. in the list. Meaning B., however, rather represents a link between *horg* and heights in general, which we can also see in the places with *horg* names in England and on the Continent; they, too are usually located on heights (Rostvik 1967: 89, Semple 2007: 367-68, 371 ff.). This corresponds with Lloyd and Lühr's view that Old Saxon **hara* / Middle Low German *hāre* 'hill, hillock' is *horg*'s closest relative within Germanic (§ 1.2; Lloyd and Lühr 2009 IV: 856). For the 'barrier' understanding of *horg*, the connection with heights fits in at least two ways. Firstly, a height, even if its surface has no obstacles, is a divide, a barrier, from which it is easier than elsewhere to stop an intruder, which is why fortifications have usually been placed on heights. Secondly, there are often more obstacles, such as rocks and forest, on hills than between them, especially in a cultivated landscape. Moraine hills, frequently strewn with rocks and boulders, are a common hill type in Scandinavia, especially its eastern parts, and quite a few of the Swedish dialect *horg* explanations explicitly link the term to moraines (Rostvik 1967: 14-52). At the same time, the link between *horg* 'a cult site' and *horg* 'a height' is understandable if 'a barrier' is the essential meaning, because, throughout the world, cult sites (man-made and natural ones) are very often located on heights (which are landscape barriers), that is in prominent places. When considered from this angle, it also makes good sense that places with *horg* names in England are in several cases heights with remains of both ancient fortifications and Romano-British temples (Semple 2007). The Old High German use of *horg* referring to Rome's Capitol Hill can be seen as another example. Coincidentally or not, it is both a barrier height (fortification) and site with cultic buildings. Mountains of the *horg* type – 'steep sides and a flat top' (§ 1.1.) – are surrounded by a barrier (the precipices) and are therefore suitable as hill forts (which *horg* names in several cases are linked to, as pointed out in § 6.4.). This may have contributed to the 'cliff' or 'mountain' meaning of *horg*.

The Old West Germanic *horg* meaning '(sacred) grove, forest' can also be understood as a variation of the 'barrier' idea, because forests were the most common form of barrier between settlements in the West Germanic, mostly flat, area (as opposed to the mountainous western Scandinavia) in medieval times and because (dividing) heights often are wooded. Compare the double meaning 'forest' and 'border' of the Germanic noun **markō* f. (Old Norse *mark*. Bjorvand 1994: 79-80, 158-59). In addition, groves come close to such thickets and clusters of trees that we have seen in Swedish *horg* meanings (§ 1.1., 2) and which are barriers even when located in depressions. Similarly, a grove can be hard both to get into and to pass through. The probable Old High German meaning 'enclosure of hazel branches on the assembly site' may be seen as a stylization of the sacred grove, accentuating the barrier and enclosure it represents. Compare birch or spruce branches (and reindeer horn) put into the ground as enclosures around Sami sacrificial sites (Manker 1957: 27).

Hörgur (f. pl.) ‘infertile stretches’ will in Iceland normally also be located on heights between communities, because this landscape feature in Iceland is normally created by the wind eroding everything that juts up (when the turf that covers Iceland’s vulnerable volcanic ash soils has been damaged by grazing livestock). The *hörg-* meanings ‘lack’ and ‘poor in something’ can easily be derived from this ‘infertile stretches’ meaning (as Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon 1989: 413 points out). The essence of the *hörgur* meaning ‘little mound’ also seems to be ‘something jutting up’, cf. the explaining sentence: ‘the snow is covering everything except the highest *hörgar*’ (from which the wind will erode snow and soil alike). Meaning F. above may connect to this.

The *horg* meaning ‘terrain traversable or accessible with difficulty (*olände*) (because of rocks, thicket and fallen tree trunks)’ known from Swedish dialects and name *j.* fits into a more general ‘barrier’ meaning of *horg* (as mentioned in § 1.1. and 2). So may Icelandic *hörgull* in the example ‘Riding conditions were terrible, *hörgull* and hard-frozen ground’ (mentioned in § 2). The same may be said of the Norwegian *horg* meaning ‘rocks fallen from a cliff’ and the like, as this landscape feature is obviously passable only with difficulty and constitutes the kernel of the mentioned Sami cult sites (§ 6.5.), as well as being prominent at several of the *horg* places discussed in § 6.1 (below the precipices of the ‘blocking’ mountains). Finland Swedish *hargla* ‘outstretched bank (shoal)’ (§1.1.) is an obstruction to sea travel.

Modern Icelandic *hörgull* ‘outermost border’ may fit into the pattern of *horgs* on borders and entrances to the wilderness pointed out in § 6.3.

The cultic complex at Odensala Vicarage (§ 2., 6.5., 7.) seems to feature a combination of ‘barrier’ characteristics. It is located on a smooth rock top of a prominent divide, a low moraine hill (the surrounding landscape is flat), which separates two communities and two landscape types (Olausson 1995: 58-61, 191). On both sides of the hill, a *horg* farm is found – (Old Swedish) *Hargher*, about a km to the north, and *Odhinshargher* (now *Odensala*), about the same distance to the south. The complex is dominated by two more or less concentric walls (some 50 m in diameter), so low that they would have no defence value, and by a grave mound in the middle. One could argue that the dating of this complex is too early; the (activity around the) walls being dated to 900-200 BC (ibid: 220). But judging by the name *Horge* in Lærdal, Western Norway (and maybe *Horg* in Melhus, South Trøndelag) and the probable connection with Latin *carcer*, the ‘barrier’ idea behind the term *horg* did exist at that time.

The *horgr* reddened with blood by Óttarr in *Hyndluljóð* 10 (D. in the list) could be a stone fence / wall reminiscent of the one that received so many sacrifices at Odensala Vicarage. The *grjóthorgr* in *Sturlunga saga* (E.) could be an early attestation of the Modern Icelandic *hörgur* meaning ‘a little mound (jutting up)’

probably related to the notion of *horgs* being heights separating settlements. This may be the case in the Bible translation, too (E.), because it is not *horggr* alone that has the meaning ‘pile of rocks’ in this text. The addition of *grjót-* seems necessary to produce this meaning, and the best manuscript (AM 226 fol) reads *grjóthaugr* ‘mound of rocks’ (*Sturlunga saga* 1906-11: 529), which suggests that *horggr* and *haugr* could be synonyms. – The *horggr* blocking lines of sight in the *Gulaping Law* (F.) could be a fence of stones or wood, profane like the probable contemporary Danish *horg* paddock (§ 1.1.) – or cultic. The flammable cultic *horggar*, even ‘high-timbered’ ones, could be wooden or partly wooden fences, as pointed out by Frizner (1883-96 II: 191). Enclosing fences are often essential parts of cult sites and such fences can be wooden, piled of stones or even a combination: stone walls with timber on top. In Norway, timber and stone / timber fences are found especially around medieval churches (e.g. Hustad, North Trøndelag; Olberg, Buskerud; Heidal, Oppland; Hovin, Akershus). Quite a number of Sami sacrificial sites are enclosed by this combined type of fence with an idol, heap of stones or other in the middle (Manker 1957: 25-26, Vorren 1985). The stone parts are typically 100-125 cm high, with the timber part on top of that (Vorren 1985: 71). Saxo Grammaticus describes a Slavic cultic building with a tall, elaborate wooden fence around it (Stuopecki 2013).

However, there is no doubt that *horg* in Old Germanic could also refer to a cultic building (West Germanic in § 1.1. and meaning I. above), that is clearly something else than an enclosure or barrier. But the step from ‘barrier / enclosure’ to ‘cultic building’ does not have to be very far. Even if a *horg* cult site was originally characterized by a barrier or enclosure (§ 2-7), we should expect a cultic object inside the enclosure, like at the mentioned Sami sites. At Odensala Vicarage, the enclosing stone ‘walls’ were the main receivers of sacrifices, but there was still a heap of stones with graves in it in the middle (Olausson 1995: 220, cf. 206).²⁰ From archaeology, we know that there was a development during the course of the Iron Age from outdoor cult connected to natural features like swamps, springs, trees, boulders, etc. to cult inside of buildings wholly or partly dedicated to this purpose (Fabeck 1991, Jørgensen 2009, 2014, cf. Turville-Petre’s point that *hof* in the Old Norse texts seems to reflect the latest centuries of heathendom only; 1964: 240). This may have shifted the emphasis of the cultic *horg* from an enclosure to a building developed from the object inside the enclosure (cf. the theories about the *horg* building having developed from heaps of stones, § 1.2.) – but still with an enclosure around it. In that case, it would not be irregular if the term followed the shift and developed the meaning ‘cultic building’. The development from ‘enclosure’ to ‘the thing being enclosed’ is common, e.g. Germanic **gardaz* m. > *gard* / *gård* / *yard* etc. and **tūna* n. > *tun*, *town* etc., or Norwegian / Danish *hage* m. / *have* ‘a fence’ / ‘a garden’. Both in Gothic, Old English, and Scandinavian, **gardaz* has develo-

ped the meaning ‘a house, home’ (Falk and Torp 1903-06: 210), independently, it seems. The *horgs* known to Bede in early 8th century England may have contained both the enclosure and the building meanings: missionaries should destroy pagan *heargas* and the fences surrounding them alike (*cum septis quibus erant circumdata / Mid heora hegum ðe hí ymbsette wæron*, Bosworth and Toller 1898: 525, Fritzner 1883-96 II: 191, Turville-Petre 1964: 237). This implies that the *horgs* Bede knew were surrounded by fences, which he regarded as religiously essential parts of these cult sites.

Bede’s description of *horgs* may fit a group of Scandinavian Viking Age finds at southern Scandinavian magnates’ residences. During the most recent decades, archaeologists have found at such sites several complexes consisting of small buildings rich in cultic finds next to central hall buildings, and many of these small buildings, which are probably cult-related, are surrounded by fences (e.g. Järrestad, Skåne; Toftegård, Själland; Lisbjerg, Jylland; Erritsø, Jylland; Jørgensen 2009, especially p. 331, with references; 2014: 244, 249-50, 254; Sundqvist 2009: 67-68). As has been pointed out by many scholars (e.g. Sundqvist 2009, Jørgensen 2009), these small buildings next to halls correspond to the cultic outbuilding (*afhús*) at Þórofr Mostrarskegg’s longhouse *hof* in Western Iceland (*Eyrbyggja saga* 1935: 8). If the archaeologically known fenced-in small buildings containing many cultic finds and located next to hall buildings could indeed be *horgs* of Bede’s type, this would fit both with *Karlamagnúss saga*’s implication that a *hōrgr* was something that belonged to a *hof*, and with the common connection *hof ok hōrgr* (L. in the list above).

De Vries had something similar in mind when he argued that a *horg* was an altar with an enclosure around it (de Vries 1956 I: 379). This may well be the easiest understanding of the Old Norse meanings F, J, K., and L, and the information that *horg* in the West Germanic area could refer to an altar – there would normally be an enclosure around such an altar (cf. footnote 15), although it is not necessarily mentioned. If *hōrgr* could be an altar (with an enclosure around it), this can also make sense of *Codex Upsaliensis*’ otherwise confusing information of a *hōrgr* inside a hall (I. if this is not a corruption). A *horg* meaning ‘altar’ could also have developed from ‘enclosure’ to ‘the thing being enclosed’. – A related theory is that a *hof* was a fence, whereas the cultic building that it surrounded was a *hōrgr* (see references in Sundqvist 2009: 67-68, who does not, however, concur with this theory). The origin of this theory may be Fritzner’s claim that *hof* in Old Norse essentially meant an enclosed space (Fritzner 1883-96 II: 30-32, 191). But he seems to have no example of this and etymology counts against it, *hof* seems originally to have been a word for a height (Bjorvand and Lindeman 2000: 400, Andersson 1986).

Several scholars (e.g. Turville-Petre 1964: 238-39) argue that Old Norse *vé* was also a type of cult site characterized by an enclosure, referring to the term *véþond*

(§ 1.1). To me, however, it seems that *vé* did not refer to a specific type of cult site but had a general meaning ‘a consecrated place’ or ‘place of truce’. Snorri uses *vé* synonymously with *gríðastaðr* ‘asylum’ (*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar* 1931: 38), and the remaining 10 prose occurrences are all found in the fixed expressions *vargr í véum* and *vega víg í véum*, which refer to the violation of asylum (*A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, http://dataonp.ad.sc.ku.dk/wordlist_e.html). The root **weik-* from which *vé* is derived refers to something set aside (e.g. Falk and Torp 1903-06: 982), not necessarily enclosed.

It should be stressed that many of the solutions suggested in this § are necessarily uncertain because of the nature of the material and knowledge at the present stage of research. It should also be stressed, however, that the material discussed here is not the basis for the theory put forward in the present study. The theory has a fairly robust basis in other types of evidence, and it seems compatible with the material discussed here. If ‘barrier / enclosure’ were the original meaning of *horg*, this may bind together more or less all the seemingly incongruous and confusing forms of *horg* listed in § 1.1 and in this § into one model of understanding.

9. WHAT KIND OF CULT?

The total corpus of information about *horg* gives the impression that *horg* sites were very diverse and that cultic *horgs* existed over a vast area at least from the early centuries AD (cf. the datable farm names) until the conversion nearly a millennium later. This may imply that the religious notions and practices associated with *horg* sites were also very diverse, more diverse than has been realized (cf. Nordberg 2011). Names like *Odhinshargher* and *Porshargher* indicate worship of gods, whereas the landscape similarity between the ‘blocking’ *horg* mountains (§ 6.1) and the *Trollkona* ‘troll woman’ in Bolstadfjorden, Western Norway (Figure 9), suggests a belief in very different supernatural beings living in mountains. So does the connection between *horgs* and mountain crossings and the passing of prominent cliffs and the like near old roads. The unfavourable winds that would complicate sailors’ passage of *horg* mountains ‘blocking’ sea routes (§ 6.1) may have been understood as souls / spirits sent forth from supernatural beings or sorcerers in the mountain (cf. Heide 2006a, 2006b: 196-221, 240-50, Mathisen 2003: 145-53). The border aspect of many *horg* sites may imply notions similar to those attached to Finnish *pyhä* sites (cf. Anttonen 1992 and 2013).

Regarding cult, Olsen noticed that the *horg* farm names in Norway’s mountainous regions are not found in theophoric farm name environments. Therefore, he suggested that these names reflect private cult and the central *horg* names public cult (Olsen 1915: 293). There may be something to this, although the private cult connected to landscape barriers may have been much simpler than what Olsen had in mind (cf. Nordberg 2011). The cult at such places that we know from later times

is kissing or greeting (*helse på*) the cliff one passes, or throwing a twig, pebble, berry, or some other similar object onto a heap of such things, the heap being referred to as a *kast* or *varp* ‘throw’, in order to stay on friendly terms with the powers inhabiting that place (Olrik and Ellekilde 1926: 482, Solheim 1952: 52 ff., Christensen 2000: 19-21). On the coast, sailors would take off their hats or pay their respects in other ways when passing a mountain that was known to generate dangerous winds or other critical points (Solheim 1940: 141-68). I have not been able to check such traditions in relation to *horg* places, but I do know that twigs were thrown by passers-by onto a heap on *Hårgaberget*, Northern Sweden (Olrik and Ellekilde 1926: 482).

The cult at Odensala vicarage was very different from this, with extensive burning on the cliff and extensive sacrifices of food and animals (Olausson 1995: 206-08). Similar rituals could have taken place at the stone ring next to Horgen by the Vormå (see § 2). Near Horgheim in the valley of Romsdalen (name o., Figure 3), there may have been a similar cult at the grave field / cult site at Horgheimseidet (Nordeide 2012a, 2012b), located at the centre of the landscape barrier formed by Romsdalshornet and the river below. It is conceivable that the cave in the mountain *Hor(g)berget* in Northern Norway (name a.) or the grave field below formed a similar focal point at that *horg*. In other cases, such focal points may not have existed. Our information about what kind of cult was connected to *horg* sites is still very limited, which means that the suggestions put forward here are equally limited.

10. CONCLUSION

It seems that the landscape location of *horg* names in the mountainous and hilly parts of Norway contains an ancient naming pattern that can shed light on the *horg* complex. There is a clear tendency for the natural features bearing such names to be prominent. This, combined with the Old Germanic textual evidence, indicates that most of these names and their bearers had some kind of religious significance, a conclusion that contrasts with the hypercritical rejection of this religious aspect during the 1960s. The location of the *horg* places in the landscape, and in some cases also pre-historic fortifications on them, appear to support the alternative etymological connection between *horg* and Latin *carcer* ‘an enclosed place, prison, barrier or starting-place in the race-course’ first suggested by Noreen in 1894 – an etymology also supported by Old High German **harag* ‘hazel enclosure on the assembly site’ and probably by a stone ring next to a Norwegian farm *Horgen* as well as the sacrificial, concentric stone walls between the farms *Hargher* and *Odhinshargher* in Eastern Sweden. The investigated place name material connects closely to the meaning ‘barrier’, which is an aspect of the Latin *carcer*; Norwegian *horg* names are strikingly associated with barriers and borders within the lands-

cape. The hill fort strain of the *horg* name complex – which seems to be supported in English and German material – connects both to the meaning ‘barrier’ and ‘enclosure’ and thus to *carcer*. The essential or original meaning of *horg* seems to be ‘a barrier, enclosure’, which are two sides of the same coin if a cultic enclosure is seen as first and foremost *separating* areas of different symbolic status.

This understanding is compatible with more or less all of the seemingly incongruous and confusing forms of *horg*, although the Old Germanic meanings of *horg* are so diverse that many of them had clearly developed quite far from the original meaning at the time of recording. The traditionally dominant view, that the essential or original meaning of *horg* was ‘rocky ground’ or ‘a heap of stones’, is in all likelihood less helpful for an understanding of the relationship between the different forms of *horg*. The basis for this view seems, on closer inspection, to be weak and largely built upon circular reasoning.

Not much can yet be said for sure about pre-Christian cult and beliefs connected to *horg* sites, except that they were probably very diverse, far more diverse than has been realized. In all probability, they span from natural ‘blocking’ formations on borders and in the wilderness to man-made constructions in the middle of central communities.

The results of this study suggest that more attention should be paid to non-farm names as a source for Old Scandinavian religion than has hitherto been done. Although the non-farm names in Norway are usually recorded very late, a pattern in a large corpus of such names can be relatively robust and may be anchored in ancient times through individual, typologically datable names as well as supported by etymology, archaeological monuments, medieval texts and other independent material. The results of this study also suggest that more attention should be paid to possible naming patterns revealed in a wider landscape context than is normally done.

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Notes

- 1) ‘*cum 12 ad stafflo regis in circulo et in corelo* (read *corelo* < *corulo* ‘hazel’) [*in hasla hoc est in ramo*] *cum verborum contemplatione coniurare studeat*’, Schmidt-Wiegand 1967: 35.
- 2) ‘*Fr(ater) Byorn, monachus et sacerdos de claustro Æm, adiuratus depositus, quod Benedictus sacerdos de Byærkæ duos equos eorum, unum nigrum et alterum griseum, propria manu de ipsorum harughe accepit, iuxta eorum grangiam, que Sueghestorp appellatur, in Dofræ mark, tertia feria in ebdomada pasce*’ (emphasis added). The form *harughe* (dative, corresponding to the Latin ablative), with an anaptyctic *u*, is what we should expect in this part of Denmark at this time (north-eastern Jylland c. 1200 AD, cf. Skautrup 1944: 251).
- 3) Some words are considered to belong to a different root (Torp 1919: 200), e.g. *hargla* vb. ‘scrape’ and *horga* f. ‘vulgar and unreliable woman (and the like)’ (Vendell 1904-06: 328, *Norsk Ordbok* 1966- V: 597).
- 4) Searches through local place name databases might have yielded more names, but that has been beyond the scope of this study.
- 5) The area is very sandy. 14th century spellings like (dative) *Sandtorghæ* (Rygh and Rygh 1911: 16) secure the -g, although it is not pronounced in the modern dialect. In the compound **Horgberget*, where the -g- is the middle of three consonants, it would be irregular if it did not disappear. The development -dh- > -t-, as in **Sandhøgr* > /²santor/ (which is the traditional pronunciation), can be compared to *andhøfa* ‘to manoeuvre a rowing boat’ > /²andøve/ in the same dialect. Normally, *nd* is assimilated to a palatal *nn*, but in this word the *d* is retained because of assimilation with the following *h*, which was consumed in the process. The same happens to an *ð* before an *h*, e.g. *hofuðherna* ‘scalp’ > *hovvetenna* (Myrvang 1986, Torp 1919: 224), *Staðhella* > *Statle* (a place in Telemark, Southern Norway) and **varðhygli* > *vardøgle* / *vartdyvle* / *vardøgle* / *vardøgre* / *vardøger*, always with the *ð* retained (as a *d*), although it is normally lost in the consonant cluster *rð* (Heide 2006a: 152-53). The step to /²santor(g)/ from the expected **²sandrðor(g)*/ (cf. /²andøve/) is easily explained as association with the word *torg* ‘a market place’, which Sandtorg was in early modern times. – The initial *h* is supported by the nearby *Hårvika* (*vika* means ‘the bay’) on the other side of the mountain from Sandtorg. – The landscape similarity with Horga in Bygland strongly indicates that the mountain name is primary to the farm name, the latter being attested around 1320 (Rygh and Rygh 1911: 16). Clearly, the mountain name existed well prior to that.
- 6) A standardized spelling -a of the feminine definite (*Horga*) is used here, in accordance with the principle in the legislation (*Lov om stadnamn*). The local pronunciation may be -i, -ja, -jo, -ji, etc. The Eastern Norwegian pronunciation /høɾj/ is normalized *horg* (like e.g. *korg* for /køɾj/ ‘a basket’).
- 7) On the map, this hill is called *Horgeknipen* ‘the horg cliff’, but among local people it is commonly called just *Horga*, /¹Horjæ/, just like name f. *Horga* (see Figure 1). To distinguish between the two *Horga* mountains only 10 km apart, people can refer to the one near the outlet as /²Horverakshorjæ/ or /²Horjeknipen/ (pers. comm. Magnhild Rygg, *Setesdal sogelag*, 6 Sept. 2013). The name *Horga* could be a shortening of *Horgeknipen*, but to judge from phonology, *Horgeknipen* is rather an expansion of *Horga* (like **Horgberget* probably from **Horgr*, above in a.). In /²Horjeknipen/, the *g* is palatalized, and this is not what we should expect if the word were an old compound; neither **Horgar-* (Middle Norwegian?, with *horg* as a feminine) nor **Horgs-* (Old Norwegian) should give a palatalized *g* in this dialect. But in the singular definite, a final stem *g* is always palatalized because it was frequently followed by the /i/ of the definite article in Old Norse. Thus, /¹Horjæ/ should have a palatalized *g*, and the same pronunciation of /²Horjeknipen/ is not problematic if that name is derived from /¹Horjæ/, but is otherwise hard to explain. The expanded form *Horverakshorga* refers to the nearby farm *Horverak* (first attested in the 17th century), in which the first part, *Horv-*, probably is a variant of *Horg-*; there are examples of *rg* / *rv* variation in appellatives in Old Norwegian, possibly

also in the name *Hørg-* (Rostvik 1967: 56-57, partly referencing Eivind Vågslid). The need for the designation *Horgeknipen* probably arose from the name *Horga* being used not only for the upper parts of the hill but also its foot, which forms a small headland in the lake. The name *Horgeknipen* meaning ‘the *horg* cliff’ would distinguish the hill from this headland, which bears the name *Horja* on the map.

- 8) The name of the creek *Hørjua* in Sør-Odal, Eastern Norway, seems not to be the same word. An unstressed *-u* in inherited words in Eastern Norwegian dialects (in principle) only appears in words that had a short stem (short vowel + short consonantism) in Old Norwegian (the level stress rule). Thus, *Hørjua* seems to reflect an Old Norwegian **Hyrja* (oblique cases **Hyrju*, parallel to *mølju*, *silju* < *mylju*, *selju*), not related to *høgr*.
- 9) For the present purpose, I see no need to distinguish between different types of such names (simplex names and different sorts of compounds).
- 10) To be sure, name *d.* (in Hardanger) is also pronounced /²horjane/, whereas **²horgane/* is what we should expect, because in this word, the masculine form is preserved (*-ane* is the standard masculine definite plural in the dialect), with no front vowel following the *g*. But in that area, the word *horg* is very frequent in place names with the pronunciation /horj/-, which is regular in the definite singular, so that an analogical shift **Horgane* > **Horjane* does not seem problematic. In Lærdal, such a basis for analogy is lacking because the word seems to be known only in these two place names and only in one place name elsewhere in Sogn, name *c.*
- 11) A similar landscape situation could be the background for the river name *Hörgá* ‘the *horg* river’ in Northern Iceland, because it flows from a mountain pass on the previously important road between Eyjafjörður and the bishopric at Hólar in Skagafjörður. The prominent mountain *Prestsfall* ‘priest’s mountain’, guarding the pass like *Horgtinden* in Lofoten and *Helgafell* in Northern Iceland, could be the *horg* from which the name derives; in which case *Prestsfall* would be a ‘Christianization’ of an older name. But this is speculation. It has also been suggested (Rostvik 1967: 66-69) that the name refers to a mountain ridge that ‘splits’ the main valley into Hörgárdalur and Öxnadalur. This is possible, but it does not explain why it was Hörgárdalur that got the *horg* label, rather than Öxnadalur.
- 12) This naming pattern could support Karsten’s suggestion (1906: 191) that Finnish *harju* is borrowed from the Proto-Scandinavian form of *horg*, **hargur*, because the meaning of *harju* – ‘a hill, an esker (a type of moraine)’ – has much in common with the essential meaning of *horg* as deduced from the place names. *Harjus* have even been common as cult sites and have remained the preferred sites for churchyards into modern times. The word *harju* is considered a derivation from the semantically partly overlapping Finnish *harja*, which is believed to be a borrowing from Baltic languages (Karsten 1906: 193, Itonen and Kulonen 1992-2000, Lloyd and Lühr 2009: 856), but it is conceivable that new information about *horg* could change this view.
- 13) It is not attested until the 16th century (*Herienn* 1594, *Hørgenn* 1604, *Horgen* 1668, Kjør and Rygh 1902: 87), but early attestations of several other *Horgen* farm names show that they derive from *Hørgvin* (e.g. *ibid*: 155 and Falk and Rygh 1907: 302).
- 14) *Horgen* south-east of lake Skinnerflo in Fredrikstad, Østfold (Hoel and Schmidt 2007: 273-76 argue that there is no sacral background to this name); *Horgen* in Frogn, Akershus; *Horgen* in Slagendalen, Tønsberg, Vestfold; *Horgen* on the border of Upper and Lower Eiker, Buskerud; *Horgen* in Gran, Oppland, and two farms *Horgen* in Nes, Akershus – one on the banks of the river Glomma and one upstream on the banks of the river Vormå – cf. Olsen 1915: 290. I do not know whether it is significant that six of these farms are located near major rivers or long and narrow lakes, possibly even the seventh, *Horgen* in Slagendalen, Vestfold (a narrow fjord, in that case), when the name was coined during the first centuries AD, depending upon the progress of the post-glacial rebound.

- 15) Examples: Slavic religion: Stupecki 1994, Kuczkowski and Kajkowski 2009: 115; Finno-Ugric religion: Holmberg [Harva] 1926: 161, Honko 1968: 169; Baltic religion: Nordberg 2011, Gallic religion; Brunaux 1988, Ancient Egypt: Tomlinson and Marconi 2005: 9061, Bronze Age Greece: Tomlinson and Marconi 2005: 9062, Hinduism: Meister 2005a: 9038, Buddhism: Meister 2005b. Compare Christian churchyard walls.
- 16) *A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, http://dataonp.ad.sc.ku.dk/wordlist_e.html, Finnur Jónsson 1913-16: 312; Fritzner 1883-96, II: 191, cf. Vikstrand 2001: 207-25, Olsen 1915: 285-300, Olsen 1966: 103-115, 225-28, Rostvik 1967: 82-86, Turville-Petre 1964: 239ff.
- 17) The Old Testament king Jeroboam appointed priests for ‘high places’ = *hof ok horga*, 1 Book of Kings 13, 33, *Stjórn* 1862: 582, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=I%20Regum+13:32-34&version=VULGATE>.
- 18) 2 Samuel 18, 17, *Stjórn* 1862: 535, Latin original *acervum lapidum*, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=II%20Samuelis+18:16-18&version=VULGATE>.
- 19) *gerir hús ok kallar horg* NRA 1 B / *hleðr haug eða gerir hús ok kallar horg* AM 146 4° / *hleðr hauga ok gerir hús ok kallar horg* AM 78 4°; *Gulatingslova* 1994: 52, footnote 208.
- 20) Compare how a profane object can be turned into an object of cult by enclosing it with a fence. A good example is the Old English *Law of the Northumbrian Priests* (54): A fine will have to be paid *Gif friþgeard si on hwæse lande, abúton stán, oððe treow, oððe wille, oððe swilces ænige feard* ‘if there be an inclosed (sic) space on any one’s land, about a stone, or a tree, or a well, or any trifles of such kind’ (Bosworth and Toller 1898: 338. Written in the first half of the 11th century [Wormald 1999: 396-97], but this regulation was probably made with Scandinavian immigrants in mind, because the Anglo-Saxons had converted to Christianity centuries earlier [Olsen 1966: 84]). As Olsen points out (ibid), the term *friþgeard*, literally: ‘fence of peace’, in all likelihood refers to the asylum rights that in pre-Christian times were connected to cultic places. This makes it comparable to *Lex Ripuaria*’s **harag* (de Vries 1956 I: 374).