This chapter presents analyses of place names in western Norway, especially ancient place names linked in some way to an early sailing route along the Norwegian coast. Although the region is home to some of the oldest place names (for islands and fjords and related settlements and features) known in Scandinavia, medieval sources for the names are lacking; the oldest recorded forms are from the 16th and 17th centuries. On the island of Kormt (Kǫrm) and the adjacent mainland, we find ancient settlement names primarily in -heim (however, no names in -vin), and prehistoric settlement names in -stæð (< -stæða) and -land. Regarding the island names it is notable that the etymons of many of these names are descriptive, signalling hints for orientation or warnings for the people sailing along the coast. Also notable are the absence of place names in the analysed corpus that would indicate cult or sacrality and the lack of obvious central-place elements common elsewhere in Scandinavia where there was prehistoric settlement. The reason for this, we conclude, is that this was a society not based in agriculture, but facing westwards, towards the sea.

South-western Norway and its place names is to toponymists what Polynesia was for early anthropologists. The western coast of Norway is home to some very ancient place names, with the potential for opening up an onomastic gateway to prehistoric Scandinavia. The origins of some names, particularly those of islands along the coast, are so ancient that they are nearly impossible to etymologise; some scholars classify some of them as relics from a period of the language that precedes the Proto-Germanic. Furthermore, many of the settlement names represent some of the oldest in Scandinavia, probably an effect of the special topography, which ‘locks’ the settlements (Skre, Ch. 29:782–4). However, there is a striking irony to this: although the names here are some of the oldest known in Scandinavia, the recorded forms for these names are some of the youngest in Scandinavia. Thus, while the names might date as far back as the Bronze Age (more than 2,500 years old), the earliest records of most of these names are to be found in documents and cartularies from c. 1600 (only 400 years old). Yet another complicating factor is the fact that the majority of names have forms from 1520 and later, during which period the Norwegian language underwent major changes phonetically and under pressure from the Danish (administrative) language. Seldom do we find a medieval form of the name; unfortunately, this part of Norway lacks a Røde Bok (Biskop Eysteins Jordebok), an Aslak Bolts Jordebok, or a Björgynjar Kálfskinn. Toponymic analyses are therefore nothing if not problematic.

Most names of settlements known with some degree of certainty to be of medieval origin are found in Norske Regnskaber og Jordebøger fra det 16de Aarhundrede (NR), which are registers of farms and farmers. The name forms here would have deviated considerably from their medieval forms. To give some examples: Fikstveit in Skjold has the form Vfxbtueit in a document from 1449, but Fixtwet, Fycketvett in NR;
**24.1 The name of the land**

To begin with, let us take the name Norway. All discussion of this name is centred on the idea that it refers to an inshore sailing route along the country’s western coast (Fig. 24.1; NSL 335–6; Skre 2014:37; Ch. 29). The oldest attestation of the name is in Liber Vitae (Durham) from c. 840, which enumerates a “Reginaldus sacerdos de Nor-tuagia” (Liber Vitae, 56). In the famous account by Óthhere (Ottar) of how he sailed from his home in Hålogaland in northern Norway to Haithabu in the south, found as an appendix to King Alfred’s Orosius translation Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII from c. 890, (Othere’s voyages, passim), the form is Norðweg. In Frankish annals we find forms such as Northwegia and Norwégia (Myrvoll 2011:114). The first occurrence of the name on Scandinavian ground is on the famous runestone in Jelling from c. 963 (Gelting 2010), where it takes the form nuruiak (to be understood as Norvég). These forms allow us to posit two early forms of the name: Nordvægr (> Norvægr) and Norvegr. In the first case the qualifier is the adverb norðr, giving the

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1 In this chapter, only the year for the name forms is given. References for each of the citations are to be found in NG 10.
name the meaning ‘the route to the north’, ‘the northern route’, whereas in the latter case it is the noun nór, ‘narrow sound’. There is no obvious explanation for a word nór or a name *Nór as the first element in Norway; one possibility discussed below (with Norheim), is that the sound between Kormt and the mainland could have been named *Nór, ‘the narrow sound’, and which could occur as the first element in the name Norheim. If there is any validity to this hypothesis, we have to consider the possibility of a *pars pro toto name, whereby this particular stretch of the inshore sailing route, the sound between Kormt and the mainland, has given its name to the entirety of the sailing route.

24.2 The name of the province and district

Kormt is situated in the province of Rogaland and the old district of Rygjafylki. Presumably these two units comprise the same territory, although it is not entirely certain. One problem is that the fylki was a rather obscure and not uniform institution in medieval Norway; for example, the fylki in Trøndelag differs from the fylki in western Norway (Bull 1930; Indrebø 1937). Probably, the older of the two names is Rogaland, reflecting a prehistoric province (land), whereas Rygjafylki probably is a later administrative and legal district linked to the leiðangr institution. Rogaland seems to have been the name for the region around the large Boknafjorden, and the island of Kormt would have occupied a focal position in this land and fylke. From this it follows that these two names are linked.

The background to the names is an ancient ethnonym: rygir, first mentioned by classical authors in the beginning of the first millennium. This tribal name is a derivation with a common -ja/-ia-suffix to a stem *rug- (where we have to reckon with a secondary development of the name inflected as an i-stem). In the name Rogaland, the first element, the genitive plural Roga-, is most certainly analogically introduced from the a-stems. The normal genitive plural we instead find in the district name Rygja-fylki. The stem *rug- has been identified with ON rugr ‘rye’ (< PGmc *ruȝj-) and the name rygir translated as ‘rye farmers’ or ‘rye eaters’ (Andersson 2003:452–3). This etymology creates a number of problems. First, there is the question of an occurrence of rye in western Norway at this early time. Second, there is the problem of explaining the homonyms occurring across northern Europe, such as the Norwegian rygir, the German island name Rügen, and the classical authors placing a tribe Rugi in northern Europe, and so on. Is it one and the same tribe/people, or several tribes/people with the same name occurring in different regions in Europe? The onomastician Thorsten Andersson is of the opinion that we are dealing with a single people (“Es ist unwahrscheinlich, daß es zwei gleichbenannte Stämme, urgerm. *Ruzjaz Pl., gegeben hat. Es handelt sich vielmehr offensichtlich um ein und denselben Stamm, der sowohl an der s. Ostseeküste als auch im sw. Norwegen bezeugt ist.” Andersson
2003:453; see also Steinhauser 1939; Pohl 2003 pp. 456–8; Sitzmann and Grünzweig 2008:232–3; Udolph 2003). Generally, the classic question of how to understand, identify, and geographically locate Latin gens ‘people/tribes’ in Europe in the first millennium, however interesting, is too complicated for satisfactory discussion here.²

24.3 Ancient island names

Along this route we encounter ancient names such as Kormt (< Kǫrmt), which has been understood to be a derivation of the word ON karmr ‘battlework, safeguard, defence, shield, guard, protection’ (Fritzner 1972–3, art. karmr), alluding to the fact that this elongated island functioned as a protection, a shield for the inshore sea route (the ‘Norway’) from the open sea to the west (Hovda 1961:296; 1966:15; Strid 2004:78). Bokn is the characteristic island along this inshore route to the south (Figs. 24.1–2). The name probably goes back to a PGmc *baukna- ‘sign, signal’, its name likely a reflection of the island’s function from ancient times as a navigational mark, especially if approached from the south, while crossing the large bay Boknafjorden from the Stavanger area (Brink 2017; cf. Elmevik 2012:89–92). The intention would have been to traverse the narrow sound between the islands Vestre and Austre Bokn, where the striking, 293 m high Boknafjellet (cf. the farm Boknaberg, ON Bóknarberg, at the foot of this mountain), the highest mountain in outer Ryfylke (Hovda 1961:248), rises on the easternmost part of Vestre Bokn; a man-made navigational beacon (ON varði m./ varða f.) erected on the 188 m high Vardefjellet on Austre Bokn must also be taken into account.

North of Bokn, along this inshore route, we find the island of Fosen (ON Fölvnsn; Fig. 24.1). The name has several identical counterparts on islands in Norway (NSL 156). Fölvnsn is a derivation of the word ON fela f. ‘hideout’ and the verb fela (< *felhan) ‘to hide’, which had the Ablaut-series fel – fal – fálu – folginn in Old Norse (Fritzner 1972–3, art. fela; de Vries 1962:116). The background to the name is probably that this island lies ‘protected and hidden’ along the inshore route, behind and inside of Bokn and inside of Kormt (Kǫrmt), or denoting a protected harbour (Særheim 2007:69). Between

² For a general discussion on tribes and gentes, many of them toponymically potentially linked to Scandinavia – at least according to an older generation of scholars – such as the Vandals to Vendysel, Denmark, the Burgunds to Bornholm (< Burgundarholm), the Kimbrer to Himmerland, Denmark, etc., or claiming Scandinavia to be their ancestral homeland, such as the Goths according to Jordanes in his Getica, see Kossinna 1895; Bremer 1900; Birt 1917; Neckel 1929; Günther 1934; Norden 1934; Trier 1947; Schwarz 1956; Wenskus 1961; Bachmann 1970; Hofmann 1982; Ribbekel 1992, 1996; Beck 1999; Gillett 2002; Goetz et al. 2003; Geary 2003; Goffart 2006; Sitzmann and Grünzweig 2008; Garipzanov et al. 2008.
Fig. 24.1: The sailing route Norðrvegr/Norvegr and place names mentioned in the text. Illustration: I. T. Bøckman, MCG.
the island of Fosen and the small island of Ogn lies the island of Høvring. This name is a derivation of the word *hovr- 'hillock, elevation, hump' with an -ing-suffix, and is cognate to ON hyfri 'the upper part, the arc, of a horse harness' with an older, general meaning of 'elevation, hump'. There are several Norwegian place names derived from this latter word (NSL 233), whereas in Sweden the word *hovre occurs in a few North-Swedish place names, such as Hovra i Hålsingland (Brink 1984b:103, 106). Another possible explanation finds a connection with the local dialect word havring for the brown crab Cancer pagurus.³ Although this word is not known in Old Norse, an ancient origin for it cannot be ruled out. The above-mentioned island Ognøya (Fig. 24.1), ON Ógn, is a name we again find in several Norwegian island and river names (NSL 342). The name has the etymon ON ógn 'horror, fright, scare'. This name probably alludes to some danger of sailing too close to the island posed by underwater hazards, such as an undercurrent or a reef or cay.

Not situated along the inshore sailing route, but rather outside and to the west of Kormt, is the island Utsira (Fig. 24.1). The old name is Sira. The modifier Ut- 'outer' must be understood in light of the occurrence of several homonymous river and island names in western Norway. The meaning of the name Sira remains uncertain; several suggestions have been proposed (NSL 393).

North of Kormt, we continue to find ancient island names. After leaving Kormt, travellers faced a hazardous stretch exposed to the open sea in the west, before rejoining an inshore route in Bømlafjorden, protected to the west by the island Bømlo and then Moster. The name Bømlo (ON Bymbil) has been proposed to contain a word meaning ‘turgescent, swollen’, whereas Moster (ON Mostr) has a completely obscure

³ I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this idea, which I find both interesting (the word ought to be old, albeit not found in Old Norse lexica) and contextually possible.
The problem of identifying the etymology for these names is in itself indicative of their very ancient provenance. The same goes for the next island to the north, Stord (ON Storð; Fig. 24.1), an island name with an obscure and much discussed etymology (NSL 429). Ancient island names – Huglo (ON Hugl), Sotra (ON Sotr/Sótr) (Fig. 24.1), and the like – continue to occur travelling northward along the western coast of Norway.

One explanation for the preponderance of ancient island and fjord names is the fact that these names belong to what the eminent Norwegian onomastician Magnus Olsen (1926) once referred to as ‘names of the route’ (Veiens navn), in contrast to ‘names of the local district’ (Bygdens navn) and ‘names of the farm’ (Gardens navn). Names in these three groups show notable differences regarding chronology: names of the route tend to be ancient, names of the district can be as old as the settlements, and names of the farm (applied to arable land, meadows etc.) tend to be relatively young. On display here is the phenomenon of name chronology, which is dependent upon the number of name users; the more people acquainted with and using a name, the higher the probability that the name will survive and be resistant to change. And for one of the most well-known and frequently used sailing routes in Scandinavia, we therefore must reckon with the possibility of a high degree of name continuity, which in turn explains the ancient names along this sea route.

Notably, many of the etymons of these island names are descriptive, serving as hints or warnings for people sailing along the coast: this island offers protection from the open sea (Kǫrmt); that island, resembling in shape a buoy beacon, can be used as a navigation mark (Bókn); that island looks like a hump (Høvring); don’t sail too close to that island, for there are dangerous underwater obstacles nearby (Ógn), and so on.

### 24.4 Settlement names in and around Kormt

This section presents a survey of the place names and the landscape on Kormt. To determine whether Kormt is unique in any respect, comparisons are drawn between the toponymic milieus Kormt and the island of Bokn and the adjacent mainland parishes/settlement districts of Førre, Skåre (large parts of which today are incorporated into the city of Haugesund), Skjold, Tysvær, and Vats (Fig. 24.1). To that end, toponymic material for Kormt will be presented first, followed more briefly with the corresponding material for the mainland (names mentioned in the following may be found in the map Fig. 24.3).

For a spatial-geographical landscape approach, the survey grouped together names with the same head or denominator (second element), such as -stad, -heim, -land, -tveit, and -aker. This typology was chosen based on the premise that it is possible to date these elements roughly, within broad timeframes: early Iron Age (c. AD
Fig. 24.3: Place names referred to in the text.
Illustration: I. T. Bøckman, MCH.
1–600), late Iron Age (c. AD 600–1100), early medieval (c. AD 1100–1300), and similar (Brink 1983; 1984a). The modifier or qualifier (the first element in the compound) can identify who owned a tract of land or a farm or had established a farm (Ǫgvaldsnes ‘Agvald’s peninsula’), describe the type of topography, geology, or biology at the site (Brattland ‘the steep land’, Birketveit ‘the tveit with birches’), or describe the form or shape of the denominator (Langåker ‘the long arable land’). This method provides a general overview of a district’s settlement history.

The -heim names are normally dated to the Iron Age (often early Iron Age). In the material discussed here, there are 4 Austrheim among the 16 -heim names, and 8 Håland among the 62 -land names. These cases likely represent a well-known phenomenon in toponymy: the proliferation of a certain place name within a region or district. Similar examples are seen in western Sweden, where there are several Askim (< Ask-hem) within a fairly small area (Brink 1991).

The stadh- (< står) names are normally dated to the Iron Age, many with some certainty more precisely to the late Iron Age. The first element, the qualifier, in the stadh-names is frequently a man’s name, none of them Christian – an indication of their prehistoric origin. There are several place names in the area normally ending in -sta, in other parts of Norway and Sweden in -stad, which can be traced back to -staðʊ (hence not -stadar but derived from the same stem, stadar, to the verb stá, ON stánda ‘to stand’). This word ON stóð f. denoted a landing place for boats.

The land-names are quite complicated for dating and regarding their denotations. As settlement names they tend to denote a type of arable, cultivated, or otherwise utilised land. Of the approximately 2000 total Norwegian -land names, a large majority are found in western Norway; this is reflected in our material, which includes 16 heim-names, 16 stadh-names, and 62 land-names. Norwegian toponymists assign these names a broadly Iron Age date (NSL 279–82; Særheim 1999).

Avaldsnes must have been a central place already in the Iron Age (Zachrisson, Ch. 25). It is the largest settlement on Kormt, according to Halvard Bjørkvik’s (1999:28–9) assessment of (later) documentary evidence. The name occurs frequently in the Old Norse saga literature, normally in the form Ægvaldsnes á Kormt (Mundal, Ch. 3). In 1299 it has the spelling de Agwallznes and in 1308 de Avaldsnes (NG). The name evidently denotes the headland (ON nes) where the church is standing, and the first element has usually been understood as the man’s name Ægvaldr (gen. Ægvalds-) (Olsen 1926:210; NSL 81). This man’s name is not unknown in medieval Scandinavia, with the second element -valdr denoting a ‘powerful, mighty leader’, but it is uncertain whether the first element here is Á- (< *ana-), a strengthening prefix, in Ávaldr (hence, ‘very mighty, powerful’), or Ág- (< *aga-) beside Æg- (meaning ‘frightful, horrifying’) (e.g., Janzén 1947:62, 113 and 160 n. 252). It is impossible to determine with any precision the age of a place name such as Avaldsnes. It could be as young as the earliest known recording, or as old as the Iron Age. It is possible that the name is so old that the first element is not actually a man’s name, but rather a title *ávaldr ‘the mighty, powerful leader, king’, which would be the background to the man’s name.
In this scenario, the title and name could be understood in light of the name Eirikr, a Proto-Nordic *Aina-rikr ‘the one in sole control of the power, the high king’. This is an intriguing hypothesis for the old royal seat of Avaldsnes, but unfortunately impossible to prove.

In the large medieval Avaldsnes parish we have few typologically identifiable prehistoric names, and only three land-names: Londo, Matland, and Meland. The first element in Matland is probably the word mat ‘food’ (ON matr), which in place names often alludes to fertile land that can ‘bring food to the table’. The qualifier in Meland is ON medal ‘between’. Most names in the parish denote some topographical feature, such as Kvalavåg (Hualauge 1322) ‘whale bay’, Vikene ‘the bays’, Stoggdal (< Stokkdalr) ‘log valley’, Visnes (uncertain qualifier), Våge ‘bay’, Uvik, Fiskå (< Fisk(i) á) ‘fish river’, Rygge ‘ridge’, Hāvik ‘shark bay’, Austevik ‘the eastern bay’, and Bygnes (< Bjúgnes) a nes in some way described with the adj. bjúgr ‘bended, curved’. Kalstå denotes a landing, but the first element is uncertain and the earliest form (from 1661) provides no further information. There is another name of the same kind, Kolstå. Since this name has as the earliest forms Kolstad (NRJ) and Kolstadt (1563), it could be argued that this name is not an old stað úr, but rather staðr; if so, the second element probably could be understood as linguistically influenced by the similar Kalstå. If this hypothesis is correct, the first name could be the man’s name Kolr. However, the recentness of the known forms of the name means that this suggestion must remain speculative. The name Hinderåker is interesting, because the qualifier in the name for an arable land could contain an old river name *Hindr, an alternative interpretation is *Hindr(i)akr ‘the farthest field’. Velde or Vedle is also related to agriculture, as the dative sg. Velli of the word völ ‘field’.

On the island of Fosen (the name discussed above), part of Avaldsnes parish, there are two land-names: Tjoland (Thiønslandt 1563, Tjugtønnland 1567, Kiølland 1602) and Bratthelgaland ( Helgelandt 1563). While the young forms of Tjoland provide no certain indication for interpreting the qualifier in this name, Bratthelgaland is Helgaland with the modifying bratt ‘steep’ added to distinguish it from the Helgaland in the vicinity.
The perhaps most intriguing settlement name in the parish is Skeie, located in the central part of the island, to the west of Avaldsnes. It is written i Skæidi in 1285, Skeidh in 1427, and af Skeidh in 1463. The name doubtless contains the word ON skeið n. This word occurs with many meanings. One possibility is ‘racecourse for horses’, hence a gathering place for communal activities, such as games, horse racing, the settling of affairs, and the like. Very often names containing skeið occupy central locations in their districts and are often found at levelled fields (NSL 399). Hence, regarding potential sites on Kormt for Iron Age communal gatherings, perhaps even cultic activities, Skeie would be a prime contender; it is centrally located on a wide expanse of open land near to Avaldsnes, in an area host to numerous ancient, monumental burial mounds (Fig. 24.5).

The parish of Torvastad straddles the northern part of Kormt and a section of the adjacent mainland to the east. On the Kormt side occur three stad-names in close proximity in the west: Torvastad (Torfostadum 1301, a Tofuastadum 1346), with either the man’s name Torfi in the first element or the word ON torf ‘peat’, alluding to peatery in the area (NSL 458), although the latter suggestion is undermined by the absence of bogs at Torvastad from whence to extract peat; Vikingstad (Vickingstadt 1563), probably containing the man’s name Vikingr; and Skjølingstad (Skiøllingstadt 1563), in
which the qualifier is difficult to etymologise due to the recentness of the forms. There are also three land-names: Håland to the north; Viks-Håland to the south, with the modifier Vik added to distinguish it from Håland (both assumed to contain the adj. ON há ‘high (up)’, although this is not an obvious interpretation of the names, considering the topography); and Hoftland or Haugland (Hoffland NRJ, Houland NG 10:407), evidently an older name for the vicarage (the late and diverging name offer no help in interpreting the name; instead, the local pronunciation of the name alludes to the possibility of the first element actually being Hov; cf. Sæheim 2007:108–9).⁴

Other place names in Torvastad are: Stongo ‘pole, rod, staff’, with uncertain reference, perhaps alluding to Stonganeset (Sæheim 2007:220); Sæbo ‘the farm by the sea’; Dale ‘valley’; Storesund and Litlasund on the east coast of the island, referring of course to the narrow sound; and the trio of Ba, Øvraba, and Nordha, which would have initially comprised a single Ba unit. Frequently Ba in Norway are found in central locations in their districts, often near the parish church, and in many cases are thought to represent a primary settlement in that district (e.g., Olsen 1926:55–7; NSL 113–14). As mentioned, there are numerous important burial mounds in this parish, especially on the eastern side of Kormt, as reflected in the names Haugo, Øvre, and Nedre, as well as Gunnarshaug (Gundershough NRJ, Gunershough 1563), obviously containing the man’s name ON Gunnar or Gunndjarfr. The farm name Storhaug is obviously a secondary name referring to Gunnarshaug. Osnes on the northern tip of Kormt is probably an older Ósnes, containing the word ON össm. ‘opening, gap’, in place names often referring to an outfall, that is, the mouth of a river. The name hence denotes an interruption to the inshore sailing route, where it gives way to the open sea. Finally, we have the intriguing name Hauske (Hyskade NRJ, Høuskenn 1563). The older forms are of

⁴ This possibility is emphasised by one of the anonymous reviewers, for which I am grateful.
no help. NSL (p. 200) records several occurrences of the name Hauskje, all of them in Røyfylke, and interprets the names as *Haug(α)sked, containing the above mentioned sked and (probably) plural of haugr ‘burial mound’. Whether this interpretation is likewise relevant for the Hauske in Torvastad remains uncertain.

In the eastern, mainland part of Torvastad parish, there is the name Spanne, of uncertain background, along with two heim-names, Moksheim (Møgsenn 1567, Mogsimbs 1602) and Norheim (Noremb 1602). Although the latter two have very late forms, they most probably should be understood as old heim-names. According to NG (10:410) the first element is a river name *Moksá. There is, or at least has been, a small rivulet issuing from the small lake Moksheimsvatnet and running through this settlement. The name of this rivulet could be linked to ON mykr ‘muck, dirt’ (cf. NSL 315).

The settlement name Norheim is of special interest. Although only young forms of the name survive, there is reason to investigate the possibility of an ON form Nórheimr. The first element here is definitely the word ON nór n. ‘narrow sound’, although there are doubts regarding the frequency and antiquity of this word in Norway (Strid 1981:62). Evidently the word nor does occur – now and then – in Norwegian place names (e.g., NSL passim); what is notable is that the word is absent from the Icelandic language and is not mentioned in Fritzner’s lexicon of the Old Norse language (1972–3). At issue with this name is of course its relation to the name Norway, given its location along the inshore sailing route, identified with the name ‘Norway’, and its proximity to Avaldsnes royal estate. The most obvious explanation is that Norheim is situated at the narrowest point of the sound between Kormt and the mainland – a natural interpretation of the first element Nór-. A more speculative approach would be to posit a direct link from Norheim to the name Norway, or even to ask whether the Nór- in Norheim is a reflection of an old name for the sound between Kormt and the mainland, *Nór, which in turn is the background for the name Norway, denoting the entirety of the western sailing route (hence a pars pro toto name). There is no way to test any of these theories, however, and whether the other 3 (or 4) Norheim in Rogaland (Særheim 2007:170) can be explained in the same way remains uncertain.

Kopervik parish, which in the Middle Ages belonged to Avaldsnes parish, has one heim-name and two land-names: Austrheim (Østrem NRJ) ‘the eastern heimr’, Stangaland (Stangeland NRJ), and Ytreland (Ythrelandt 1563). What stong f. in Stangaland refers to is uncertain (NSL 423), as the word has many meanings. Because Stangaland gave its name to one of the skipreide (naval leiðangr district), the stong here could be the same as in the compound merkisstong, meaning a staff bearing an official or even provocative (insulting) connotation, in this case perhaps to identify the place where the leiðangr men assembled. The fact that there are several Stangaland in Rogaland, however, weakens this explanation. Ytra- ‘outer’ in Ytraland refers to the location of the farm. Nordstokko, Múdistokko, and Sønnstokko evidently refer to an older farm Stokko (< Stokkar) that was subsequently divided. The same holds for Indre Eide, Ytra Eide, and Midt-Eide; Eide referring to the eid, the narrow isthmus between the inlets Kopervik and Veavågen. Finally we have Brekke, Skår, and Sund, three names with
a topographical background: brekk ‘slope, hillside’, skár ‘nock, score, incision’, and sund ‘sound’.

To the west of Kopervik is Åkra parish. The parish name goes back to a farm name Åkra (a Akrom 1301, Akra s. 1392) ‘the (or most certainly the) arable land’. In this parish we find one stad-name, Haringstad (Harringstad 1567), and three land-names, Sevland (Seweland NRJ), Ádlând (Alland, Oland NRJ), and Fagerland (Fflagreland NRJ). One would expect Haringstad to contain a man’s name, but there is no obvious candidate. A name *Haringr, which would linguistically fit, is, to my knowledge, unknown. Oluf Rygh (NG 10:379) has proposed, somewhat unconvincingly, a man’s name Haring ‘a man from Hardanger’. Alternatively, it could be the older name, *Haringr, on the small lake Heiavatnet, or a name on the terrain north of Haringstad; in both cases, derivations to the word har ‘stone, stony terrain’ are to be found in Swedish dialects, but it is uncertain whether they are also to be found in Norwegian dialects (for example, the word is lacking in Torp 1963, but proposed for a name Haram in NSL 196). Sevland is probably an older Sævarland to ON sær ‘sea’; Ádland, NG (10:382) believes, is an older Årland to á ‘river’; and the adj. fager ‘beautiful, useful’ occurs in Fagerland. The island name Vedeya in the north is perhaps an older Veidôy to ON veiðr ‘catch, capture’, often found in coastal place names denoting sites used for fishing or seal hunting (Fig. 24.6). Relatively self-explanatory names include: Sævik ‘the bay by the sea’; Østhus (Ystahuus 1392) ‘the outermost house’; Munkajord ‘land (farm) owned by a monastery’; Vea (< Viðar) to viðr ‘forest, wood’; and Varne (Vardøenn 1563, Warnne 1569) to varðr(a) f. ‘beacon’. Medhaug (< Míðhaugr) in the south obviously refers to some burial mound with an ‘in the middle’ position. Leiknes presumably has as the first element the word leikr m. ‘play, game’; for what reason is unknown.

The neighbours Tjøsvoll (Tywsewal NRJ, Thiøssuoldt 1563) and Árvoll (Arulld 1567) certainly refer to a common *Vôllr. Árvoll refers to its location near a river (á), whereas Tjøs- is unclear. In one interpretation, given the central location of these two settlements near the Tjøsvollvatnet just north of the parish church, is that it represents an old assembly place on this vôllr ‘levelled field’ (cf. the many Tingvoll, Tingvalla, Tingvellir, etc. to vîlr). If such were the case, the name Åkra also becomes interesting – parish names and names of the district’s most central settlements containing the element åker, at least for Sweden, have been interpreted as cultic fields, perhaps associated with fertility (Vikstrand 2013). A combination of Åkrar and Vôllr is certainly an indication, at least in eastern Sweden, of the centrality of communal activities and a potential cult. Whether this interpretation can be transferred to Kormt is uncertain.

The names of another pair of neighbouring settlements in Åkra – Trælhau (Threlthueld 1602, Threlhough NG) and Mannes (Manness NRJ, Mandenes 1563) – appear to refer to forced bondage or slavery; an interpretation to which NG (10:380) already is hinting. Trælhau (probably < Trælahau) apparently includes as the first element the word thrall ‘slave (cognate with English thrall), and as the second element the word haugr ‘a burial mound (if not a natural mound or hillock)’. Thus, it is a mound or
hill in some way is linked to not one *thræll* but a collective *thrælar* in plural. We actually have a couple of names in *Thræl* - here in Ryfylke (cf. Iversen 1997). In *Mannes*, the second element denotes a peninsula (a *nes*), while the first element could be the word *man* n., which occurs as a synonym for a *thræll*, sometimes for an individual in a household, sometimes for the collective (Fritzner 1972–3). This interpretation of *Mannes* (< *Mananes*) is of course reinforced by its neighbour, *Thrælhaug*. Beyond the likelihood that the two names are related to slavery, however, semantic explanations remain a matter of speculation.

South of Åkra in Ferkingstad parish occur one *stad*-name (the parish name *Ferk*ingstad), and two *land*-names, *Dyrland* (Dyrlannd 1567) and *Sand-Håland* (Haland NRJ). *Ferkingstad* is assumed to contain the man’s name *Farþegn* (NG 10:384; NSL 143); *Dyrland* (< Dyraland?) could contain the word *dír* n., in place names often referring to big game, such as deer, whereas *Sand-Håland* is again one of the Håland names, here with a qualifying *Sand* to distinguish it from the other homonyms. The farm name *Stava* (Staffue 1563) might refer to some staff of unknown usage or a mountainous feature. *Nes* and *Hebnes* both refer to peninsulas. The etymon for *Stol* (Staall 1567) is uncertain. *Langåker* ‘the elongated arable land’ is straightforwardly descriptive; *Kvilhaug* (Quilgaa 1567) could be a variation of *Hvilhaug* ‘a mound suitable for taking a rest’ (*Hvilhaug*, *Hvilstein*, etc. are not uncommon names); and *Haga* ‘fenced-in field’ is straightforward. Two more obscure names, *Vikra* and *Sandve*, occur in the south.

Fig. 24.6: Vedøya (facing north). Photo: S. Brink.
of the parish. Vikra (pa Vikra NRJ) NG (10:386) is derived from vihr m. ‘bay, inlet’, in this name probably an -r extension of vik ‘bay’; the settlement is situated at an inlet, today a protected harbour, but further context for the name is not evident. Sandve (Sandwen NRJ) is according to NG (10:386) an older *Sand-vin, hence an old vin-name. This interpretation is reinforced by the occurrence of other Sandve in Rogaland, with medieval forms of the names intimating their provenance as vin-names.

Falnes is the southernmost parish on Kormt, formerly part of Skudenes herred (hundred). Falnes (Fallnes 1602) and Skudenes (a Skutonesi 1418) denote the two peninsulas extending to the south. The etymology of Fal- is obscure; perhaps it refers to the peninsula’s resembling in shape a falr m. ‘the tubular part of a spear’. The name Skudenes (< Skútunes) probably contains the word skúta f. ‘a protruding wall of a mountain/hill’ (NSL 408; cf. the mountain Åreskutan in northern Sweden). Maybe this ‘skuta’ is the hill Varden, alluding to a beacon on this peninsula, or identifies the peninsula’s pointy shape at the southernmost tip of Kormt.

Two areas of fertile land in this parish appear to have a long history of agricultural use. One area contains the settlements Grødheim (Grethem 1567), Syre (Syrith 1417), and Håland (Haaland 1661). The first name is a heim-name containing grjót ‘gravel, stony land’. Syre is one of the largest farms on Kormt regarding the landskyld, and certainly an ancient settlement; as Torun Zachrisson writes (Ch. 25:706, Fig. 25.14), a remarkable find of a late Migration Period goldsmith’s hoard underlines Syre’s prehistoric background. The name, however, remains obscure; extensive discussion of the name in NG (10:386–7) proposes several possible etymologies, but none are convincing. Lastly, Håland here is another of the many homonyms on Kormt.

The second agricultural area in Falnes parish is situated around Lake Hilleslandsvatnet. Here occur two heim-names: Heggheim (Heggimb 1602), derived from heggr ‘bird-cherry tree’, and Tjøstheim (Thiøstimb 1602), with an obscure first element. There is also a land-name here, Hillesland (Hellisland NRJ), which could contain hellir ‘cave, overhanging cliff etc.’, probably referring to the nearby Nauthelleren (NG 10:388).

Several names in Falnes have a topographic background: Austnaberg ‘the hill in the east’; Li ‘slope’, Risdal (< *Hrísdalr) ‘scrub’; Nalei (obscure); Haynes ‘the peninsula where hay is found’; Selvág ‘seal, sea-calf bay’; Kuviken ‘cow bay’; Neset ‘the peninsula’; Vik ‘bay’; Skitnedal ‘shit(!)valley’; and Dale ‘valley’.

Finally, in the east lies Hovdastad (Hoffdestadt 1563), a stad-name containing the word howde ‘hill, hillock’ (NSL 225), and in the north-east Snørteland (Snørthelannd 1567). NG (10:389–90) discusses the first element of this name extensively and offers parallels, but a definitive etymology remains elusive.

Regarding the settlement names on the mainland and islands adjacent to Kormt, a more summative assessment of the overall picture is possible. First, the island of Bokn: several settlements here, not surprisingly, have old island names, such as Ogn, Nautøya ‘island where cattle (naut) are kept’, and the obscure Are (Aardt 1563), which could denote an island resembling an ardr ‘arder’. Many have a topographic back-
ground: Aksdal ‘valley’, in which the qualifier is obscure, perhaps a metathesis of askr ‘ash tree’, thus Askdal > Aksdal; Våge ‘bay’; and Trosnevåg with obscure qualifier. Jøsen (Jossenn 1567) has been discussed by many scholars (Særheim 1996:40; 2007:118–19). Oluf Rygh (1893:201) suggests the name could be derived from an older Mjósund, denoting a narrow sound. Magnus Olsen (NG 10:433) postulates an older island name Jǫsund f.; this idea has been picked up by Eva Nyman (2000:363), who interprets the name as ‘ferment and foam’, presumably in reference to the sea pounding the island. Although the settlement Jøsen is not directly adjacent to the bay leading up to the settlement from the south, it is fully possible that Jøsen could be the older name for this bay, an old und-derivation.

Kro (a Krom 1392) < *Króar is perhaps a plural of the word ON kró f. ‘cattle corral’. Øvrebo, Nedrebo, and Sæbo all contain the head bo ‘farm, hamlet’, the latter in conjunction with sax ‘sea’. There are three stad-names on Bokn: Alvestad (Alwesta NRJ), probably < Olvissstaðir to the man’s name Ovhir; Granestad (Grønesta NRJ, Grønnestedt 1563) with an obscure qualifier; and Gunnarstad (Gunderstedt 1563) to the man’s name Gunnar. Finally, there are as many as eight land-names on Bokn: yet another Håland; Vatnaland (Vatnelandt 1563) to vatn, ‘water, lake’, alluding to Lake Vatnalandsvatnet; Laupland (Lopland NRJ) with an obscure qualifier; Hognaland (Hagnaland NRJ), perhaps with the man’s name Hogni, or alluding to the hill Hognåsen (Særheim 2007:104); Sunnaland (Swundeland NRJ) to sund ‘sound’ referring to the long Sullanlandstraumen; Torland (Torrelund 1567) containing perhaps a West-Norwegian dialect word for f. referring to a stony shore (NSL 458) or the man’s name Pórdr, rather than Norw tørr, ON þurr ‘dry’; Dagsland (Daxslandt 1563) possibly containing the man’s name Dagr; and Aukland (Haukland 1427), as with the many Aukland found in Norway (and also in the British Isles), to the verb auka ‘expand’ (NSL 77). Finally, we have a name of a farm situated on the land belonging to Vatnaland, Trælhaug (Trelhoug 1723), hence a homonym to Trælhaug in Åkra on Kormt.

In Skåre parish, where nearly all medieval farms have been incorporated into the modern city of Haugesund, there is one heim-name, another Austreheim (Óstreemb 1602); three stad-names, Skastad (Stadested NRJ, Skيستadt 1563), Hemmingstad (Hemingsstadt 1563) < mn. Hemingr, and Sakkastad (Skakastada NRJ, Sochestedt 1567); and perhaps a fourth stad-name in the obscure Veste (Vesta 1563). Of other settlement names deserving mention, the name Vikse (< Viksa or Viksir probably an s-derivation to vik ‘inlet’) in the north is an older name of a fjord, Viksefjorden, with a very narrow sound-like inlet (NSL 692). The preponderance of haugr names in this area calls for special explanation, which will be addressed in the discussion below.

In Tysvær parish, the parish name Tysvær (Teizfyrdi 1322, Tiezfiardar sokn 1338) is an older name for a minor inlet, Vågen ‘the bay’, to the larger Forlandsfjorden. The first element in this bay name is obviously the man’s name ON Teitr, a common name (NSL 469). There is one heim-name, Vatnheim (Vatnimb 1606) to vatn n. ‘water, lake’, and ten land-names, of which all but one denote the land or local topography; the exception is Kvinnesland (i Huinislande 1322), having as the first element an old fjord
name *Hvinir or *Hvínir, which is probably the older name for the certainly secondary Farlaksfjorden. The name Lundarvoll (Lwnderwal NRJ), located centrally in the parish beside the church in Tysvær, could be compared with central Tjølling, where we find the names Tjølling (< Fjóðalbyng), Vollen (< vollr), and Lunde (a Lunde 1451) (Brink 2007a:63); Lundarvoll should probably be understood as the voll by Lund or a lund ‘grove’. Situated at the western shore of the large Hervikfjorden, with an exceptionally good and protected harbour, is the settlement Hervik (i Heruikum 1322). The first element is probably the word herr ‘cohort, troop, army’ (NSL 211). Because Tysvær was a skipreide (a leiðangr district), it is tempting to link the name Hervik to the leiðangr; perhaps it was the assembly place for this leiðangr district. In the north of the parish is Narreviken (Knareuig 1602), probably containing knör ‘(cargo) ship’.

In Førre parish, the parish name Førre (Førde NRJ) is an old *Firði, dative sg. of fjórðr ‘sound’, alluding to its position at the bottom of Førresfjorden. Here there are two heim-names, Nesheim (Nessim 1563) and Veim (Veimb 1606); three land-names, two Helgaland and one Nodland (Notuland 1449); and two stad-names, Stakkastad (Stocke stad 1563) and Tuastad (Twuestad NRJ, Thicествad 1561). All of the land- and stad-names, except for Helgeland, have rather obscure qualifiers.

Other names of interest include Myklabust (Myklebostad NRJ) < ON Miklibólstaðr (Gammeltoft 2000; 2001); and Vormedal (no older name forms), situated along a short river issuing from Lake Vormedalsvatnet – the first element is an old name for this river, *Varma, oblique form *Varmu-, to the adj. varmr ‘warm’, with the second element -dalr ‘valley’. The most intriguing case is the name Veim. This settlement is centrally located, just north of the parish church. A possible interpretation could be *Vé-heimr, with the first element identified with the word vé n. ‘pagan cult site’ or perhaps the adj. vé ‘holy’. The present church could have been erected on a pagan cult site, †Vé, hence the heim settlement, Véheimr, would be understood as the heimr-settlement near the †Vé. On the other hand, the homonym Veim in Aurland, Sogn, has been written Viðheimr, i Viðheimi c. 1360 (NG 12:111), demonstrating that the first element is probably the word víðr m. ‘wood, forest’; NG (12:111) is of the opinion that this latter explanation holds for both Veim names.

Skjold parish is situated to the east of Førre. In the Middle Ages the vicarage was known as a Skildi (1393). Semantically, it is fairly obvious that the name contains the word skíoldr ‘shield’ (NSL 403). The name is likely the old name for Skjoldafjorden, which opens up in a broad inner bay at Skjold. The background to the fjord- and the parish-name is to be found in the shield-like shape of either this fjord’s bay, or of the small, rounded island Nesøya, situated in the middle of the fjord.

This large parish has three heim-names: Nesheim (Nebemb 1602), situated on the top of a peninsula (nes); Fiellheim (Fiellimb 1606) to the word fjell, ON fjall n. ‘mountain’; and yet another Austerheim (Østrem NRJ). There are two stad-names: Hatlastad (Hatlestad 1610), probably to the mn. Atlí or perhaps hassel ‘hazel’; and Østeinstad (Ystenstad NRJ) to the mn. Øysteinn. This parish has as many as 17 land-names, in which the qualifiers normally denote the topography for the site.
Finally, in Vats parish to the east, there are two heim-names: Nesheim (Nessim NRJ) and Skjerheim (a Skerheimi 1313). The former name contains nes ‘peninsula’ as the qualifier, the latter probably Norw. dial. skjerv ‘rock’, Sw dial. skärv ‘cairn, heap of stones’ (Torp 1963:603), likely alluding to stony land. There are four land-names, of which Freiland (Frølannd 1567) is of special interest. In a Swedish context, a homonymous Fröland would merit investigation as to whether the first element could be the name of the goddess Freyja, if the older forms support such an etymology. In the present case, the older forms do not provide a hint in any direction. The absence of theophoric place names in the region works against interpretation as an older †Freyjuland; rather, it appears more likely to be a qualifier frey (< *fraiw--) ‘exuberant’ (Torp 1963:138; cf. Elmevik 2003), alluding to fertile ground. This Freeland is to be seen in conjunction with several homonyms elsewhere in western Norway.

### 24.4.1 Names with -haug

One observation, admittedly somewhat unsystematic and en passant, is the occurrence of an astonishing number of place names with the element -haug at the place where the sound between northern Kormt and the mainland (in principle within the boundaries of the city of Haugesund) is at its narrowest. Apparently, the word haugr in this area often denotes a man-made (burial) mound, as in many other areas in Scandinavia, fostering the impression that burial mounds were built along the shores of this narrow sound, perhaps as a display of power. Evidence from the excavated burial mounds suggests that all of them date to the Iron Age. The names I have found (some of which may be young and of no relevance) are: Grønhaug, Storhaug, Haugo (plur.), and Gunnarshaug in Torvastad; Kjuklinghaug, Øygardenhaug, Rehaugane, and Flaghaugen in Avaldsnes; and Haugo (plur.), Grønhaug, Sørhaug, Niphaug, Svehaug, Orshaugane, Høgahaug, and Steinmeshaug in Skåre, today entirely incorporated into Haugesund, which takes its name from the first Haugo (NSL 199) – perhaps the first element in the name of the town alludes not only to Haugo, but to the many ‘hauger’ to be found here. As is well attested, burial mounds have been subjected to considerable destruction over the centuries, and those mounds (and their names) preserved today represent only a small share of what was once a monumental arrangement of large burial mounds along this sound. This observation, although warranting further substantiation, would reinforce the importance of the location here at Avaldsnes and northern Kormt generally, and should be considered in light of Torun Zachrisson’s enumeration and discussion (Ch. 25, passim) of several important archaeological finds in this area with a concentration of haug-names.
24.4.2 Place names and pagan cults

One notable aspect to the discussion of prehistoric place names in Rogaland is the question of whether they contain evidence of pre-Christian cultic activities, a phenomenon that occurs throughout Scandinavia to varying degrees. In Sweden there are plentiful examples of districts with theophoric names and place names indicating pagan cult and rituals. There is similar evidence, though to a lesser extent, in Denmark and in the Viken area in Norway. A recent development in this field of research is the understanding that different parts of Scandinavia were home to distinct regional cults. While there was a general, pan-Scandinavian mythology and religion, regional differences are revealed in place names as well as archaeological burial customs; for example, regional preferences for cults of certain gods or goddesses (Brink 2007b).

In this respect, south-western Norway markedly differs from other parts of Scandinavia with Iron Age settlement: by comparison, theophoric place names here are few. The few cases that do occur here are highly debatable, often due to lack of medieval forms of the names. This lack of sacrality in the place-name material is notable even for elements denoting pagan cult sites, such as vé or hof.

In the toponymic corpus assembled for this chapter, the following names are relevant to discussion of evidence for pagan cults:

- **Bratt-Helgaland** (Helgelandt 1563) on Fosen in Avaldsnes parish
- **Helgaberg** (Helgeberg 1723) and **Helga-Huland** (Helghalande 1301?) in Avaldsnes, both at the foot of the striking hill, **Helgabergsnuten**
- **Spann-Helgaland** (Helgaland NRJ) in Førre, between Spanne and Moksheim
- **Helgaland** (Helgelannd 1567) in Førre
- ?**Veim** (Veimb 1606) in Førre
- ?**Hofland** (Prestegdn) (Hoffland NRJ) in Torvastad
- ?**Froland** (Frolannd 1567) in Vats parish

This is the complete list; the only ‘obvious’ candidates are a few variations on Helgaland. However, the word heilagr as an element in place names in some cases can have a purely profane meaning (Calissendorff 1964, 1991); therefore, not even the Helgaland names can be taken as ‘proof’ of pagan cults.

Strikingly, among the approximately 300 analysed settlement names, there are no theophoric place names to be found. The only contender is Froland in Vats; as noted above, the lack of other theophoric place names in the region advises against identifying the name of the goddess Freyja, especially as the older name form is entirely obscure, and that other interpretations (i.e. related to agriculture) are plausible.

As for names indicative of cult sites, Veim in Førre could be a contender. It is certainly possible that central Førre would offer a site for a *vé* (acknowledging the reservation noted above). Likewise, the old name for the vicarage in Torvastad appears to have been Hofland or Hog-/Haug-land (the young forms offer no help), possibly referring to a hof, but this cannot be claimed with any certainty.
Thus, the only clear example of pagan sacrality in the landscape is the Helgabergsnuten, which had the old name Helgaberg ‘the holy mountain’. With fair certainty, this name represents a homonym or cognate of the many Helgaberg/Helgafell to be found throughout Scandinavia and Iceland, frequently with some myth attached to the mountain or hill (Brink 2007a).

Why, then, does south-western Norway differ from the rest of Scandinavia regarding pagan sacrality in the toponymic material? It might be assumed that such names have been lost, due to a restructuring or death of old place names, but as has been shown to the contrary, the region possesses a toponymic corpus of very old place names and a notable stability in the landscape, owing to topographical factors. Thus, other arguments must be considered.

As one hypothesis, I would suggest that the naming practices of a particular region reflect its socio-economic foundations, which in sea-oriented south-western Norway are essentially different from those of agriculturally centred regions, such as Trøndelag or the Mjøsa region, or the area around Viken, or even Jæren in south-western Norway. Religion, cult practices, and rituals were probably expressed differently in agriculture-based societies than in sea-based ones such as in Ryfylke and Sogn; precisely how pagan religion in a sea-orientated society can be identified in a place-name corpus has yet to be fully understood. Such a hypothesis could explain why Ryfylke differs from for example the eastern parts of Norway, let alone from Denmark and Sweden.

24.4.3 Place names and central places

In interdisciplinary research of recent decades, place names have been used to identify central places in the prehistoric Scandinavian landscape (e.g., Fabech and Ringtved 1999). For Sweden, elements used in these analyses have been tuna, husaby, vi, hov and some others. For Denmark and the area around Viken in Norway, the same elements have been analysed, though found with less frequency. Distinction must be drawn between names for true central places within a district, and names, such as Bø or *Vin, that denote old, centrally located settlements assumed to have been divided into new farms, which in antiquated terms might be called an Urgård or Ættegård (e.g., Olsen 1926; pace Pilø 1999; 2005). These centrally located settlements were not political or administrative central places, but in many cases could have functioned as communal gathering places for a settlement district. To the same category can be assigned place names denoting a cult site, such as vé or hof, which probably were the communal cult sites for a district. To this category the following names can be enumerated:

- Bø (Bø, Øvrabø, Nordbø) in Torvastad
- Åakra and *Vølir (Tjøsvoll and Árvoll) in Åkra parish
- Bø (Øvrebø, Nedrebo) in Austre Bokn
*Landir (Londo and Landanes) in Avaldsnes
Veim (Veimb 1606) in Færre

Skeie (< Skeið) near Avaldsnes, which, owing to its location on the island and situation on open ground and proximity to Avaldsnes, could have had some function as a communal gathering place for the district

Lundarvoll (Lwnderwal NR) in Tysvær, which as mentioned above could be compared with central Tjølling, where we find the names Tjølling (< Tjóðalyngr), Vollen (< vóllr), and Lunde (a Lunde 1451) (Brink 2007a:63); the name Lundarvoll is probably to be understood as the vóll by Lund or a lund 'grove'

In the place-name material discussed here, the picture regarding administrative central places is even more unclear and scant than in eastern Norway. No obvious central place name is to be found, and the obvious central place in the area, Avaldsnes, has an atypical name for a central place. Apart from Avaldsnes, which must be understood as a ‘political’ central place, it is possible that Hervik i Tysvær could have functioned as a ‘central place’ for Tysvær skipreide, as the site where the leiðanger ship anchored and its crew assembled.

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