

# UBAS



University of Bergen Archaeological Series

## Placing Place Names in Norwegian Archaeology

Current Discussions and future Perspectives

Sofie Laurine Albris (ed.)



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

**14**  
2023

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# Preface

In 2019, I started the research project ArcNames at the University of Bergen. One of the defined goals of the project was to revive interdisciplinary discussions between archaeology and onomastics in Norway.

The discipline of onomastics is being cut down at most Norwegian universities and only few specialised onomastic researchers remain. Meanwhile, archaeological discoveries are forwarding new understandings of the settlement history in Norway, encouraging us to re-evaluate traditional views on the place name material. The need for an informed dialogue between onomastics and archaeology is growing with the constantly expanding knowledge about landscape and settlement. The application of place name material in archaeology, however, is a debated issue in Norway.

Onomastics has a lot to offer archaeology, and vice versa, and collaboration between the two disciplines could be better facilitated. All the Norwegian archival material related to place names has recently been gathered in the Language Collections at the University of Bergen, creating a new basis for revitalizing place name research in Norway. In this context, I arranged an interdisciplinary seminar at the University of Bergen on October 20, 2020. The aim was to bring together researchers from both onomastic and archaeology working with toponymy in the Norwegian Iron and Viking Age landscape to discuss the status and perspectives of place names in Norwegian archaeology and to bring attention to current problematics, particularly the reduced capacities in the onomastic discipline. The workshop had presenters from various Norwegian institutions addressing the relevance and use of place names in archaeology today and discussing problems and limitations, in addition to exploring future possibilities in this line of research.

Several of the speakers agreed to contribute with written articles. With some additional papers, the result is this collection of articles presenting various perspectives on the use of place names in relation to archaeology in Norway. I am very grateful to all the authors for taking time to contribute to this volume.

This collection of papers serves to illustrate how place names have a continued relevance to archaeology both in and beyond Norway. Views on the material differ and the evidence may seem incoherent, but this should rather encourage interdisciplinary studies than discourage them. Using place names and archaeology in combination has a long range of methodological implications, and it also calls for qualified theoretical discussions, something that has been lacking in traditional research.

*Sofie Laurine Albris and Krister SK Vasshus* introduce the topic of interdisciplinary work between archaeology and onomastics, giving an overview of the key themes covered in the book and in research history. The paper further discusses the theoretical perspectives in combining two such different source materials as archaeology and place names.

*Peder Gammeltoft* uses new digitized mappings of the main types of Norwegian settlement names to address settlement patterns in Norway from a macro perspective.

*Geir Grønnesby* discusses the observed differences in settlement structure between the Early and Late Iron Age in Norway and their implications for our understanding of place names, particularly from a theoretical perspective. The article proposes that the fundamental relationship between people and landscape changed significantly at the end of the 6th century, with significant impact on landscape experience and naming practises.

*Per Vikstrand* evaluates the linguistic and archaeological evidence of plural tuna-names in Norway. In the Iron Age, plural tuna-names have clear connections with centrality in Central Sweden and are part of a prestigious vocabulary connected with centrality during the Iron Age. Vikstrand concludes that only Tune in Østfold is a clear representative of this type of place name in Norway.

*Kjetil Loftsgarden* uses a quantitative approach to the place name element *skeid* throughout Norway. The name localities are evaluated in combination with archaeological and historical sources and likely sites of skeid-assemblies are identified and discussed.

*Birgit Maixner* uses place names in combination with archaeological and topographical evidence to identify and evaluate components of centres of power in the coastal landscape of northern Trøndelag in Central Norway.

*Håkon Reiersen and Christopher Fredrik Kvæstad* present a detailed analysis of the Iron Age and Medieval portage at Haraldseid in southwest Norway. The article combines place names, early maps, historical and archaeological evidence, to demonstrate the strategic importance of the site and suggests that there is a core of truth in local legends, associating it with the Viking king Haraldr Fairhair.

*Dikka Storm* studies the Sámi settlement Stuorgieddi on the island of Innasuoilu in Southern Troms. The local Sámi place names have gone through a process of Norwegianization and translation into Norwegian until work has been in recent decades done to recreate and restore Sámi place names according to the Place Names Act of 1990. The article demonstrates how the local Sámi place names reflect the economy and use of cultural and social space as well as the close connections between people, their activities and place names at Stuorgieddi.

I want to thank the UBAS editorial group and the anonymous peer reviewers for their assistance in editing and reviewing the chapters. Thanks especially to Randi Barndon, who served as the supervisor of the ArcNames project for encouraging me to put the book together. I also thank AHKR (department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion) at the University of Bergen and the University Museum of Bergen for their administrative assistance with the publication.

Both the seminar and this publication were put together as a part of the research project *ArcNames. Individuals, social identities and archetypes – the oldest Scandinavian personal names in an archaeological light*, funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. The project research focused on personal names and individual identities in the Scandinavian Iron Age from an archaeological point of view. The project was a Marie Skłodowska-Curie individual fellowship under grant agreement No. 797386, running from March 2019 to June 2021 and hosted at the University of Bergen at the Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion.

Sofie Laurine Albris

*National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen, January 2023*





Per Vikstrand

## Plural *tuna*-names in Norway

*This paper investigates the settlements with plural tuna-names in Norway, with the objective to investigate if they, as their East Scandinavian counterparts, show indications of centrality during the Scandinavian Iron Age. Of seven studied names, only Tune in Østfold with certainty displays such properties. It is argued that this name is an expression of a Scandinavian 'central place nomenclature', common but with regional variations, reflecting a prestigious vocabulary connected with central places.*

### Introduction

The plural names in *tuna* are well known for their connection with central places during the Iron Age. The etymological meaning of the word *tun* is 'fence, fenced area, enclosure', but its occurrence in the central-place nomenclature is due to a specialisation of meaning, about which we are still in the dark. The names are mainly confined to central Sweden, but scattered examples also occur in Denmark and Norway. One Norwegian name, *Tune* in Østfold, appears in a well-known aristocratic setting from the Iron Age, reminiscence of many Swedish *tuna*-sites. This motivates us to take a closer look at other plural *tuna*-names in Norway. Do they resemble *Tune* in Østfold and the Swedish names, with regard to landscape setting, name-environments and archaeological monuments and findings?

Studying the Norwegian names in *tun* is complicated, as there are obviously several layers of names, differing in both age and meaning. Although the etymology of *tun* as 'fence, fenced area, enclosure' is clear enough, the meaning of the place names is not. The word *tun* (Germanic \**tūna*-) seems to be common Germanic (although not testified in Gothic), and it must thus be studied in a European context. An important characteristic in such a wider perspective is the profound divergence of meaning. While a *tun* in Western Scandinavia might be a 'farmyard, part of a farm, farm', the directly corresponding English *town* and German *Zaun* 'fence' have quite different meanings. The English names in *ton* do not seem to be a coherent group but are comprised of different chronological strata with different historical backgrounds and meaning (Blair 2018, p. 193–201). As for the Swedish names, it has been suggested that *tuna* developed into a technical term for the central place (Hellberg 2011, p. 39). Confronting the Norwegian material, we must try to sort out different layers of names. The easiest group to distinguish is the partition-names in singular *tun*, such as *Midtun*, *Nesttun* and *Øvre Tun*. These names are the result of partitions of older farms, and *tun* seems to have the above-mentioned meaning 'farmyard, farm'. The names are rather young and mainly confined to the western parts of the country (Sandnes 1997, p. 226–227, Sandnes and Stemshaug 1997, p. 323–324). Another group consists of compositions of *tun* in singular with *heim*, *land* and *vin*, such as *Tūneimr*,

*Tanum*, *Tønjum* and *Tuntland*. These are of considerable age, and it seems probable that *tun*, in such names, retains its older meaning ‘fence, fenced area, enclosure’. There are other singular names that might be more interesting in this context, names such as *Hovtun*, *Tunsberg*, *Logtu* (\**Lagatún*) and several *Elgjartún* (Sandnes 1992, 1997). In this study, however, I will confine myself to the plural names in *tuna*, i.e. the names that formally correspond with the Swedish *tuna*-names.

However, it is not all that easy to delimit this group. The names are often sparsely documented in written sources. Sometimes the assessment of their grammatical number depends on one single case. Bearing this in mind, the corpus of names used may be neither complete, nor fully correct. It is mainly compiled from Tom Schmidt’s excellent but synoptic presentation in *Bustadnavn i Østfold 7* (Schmidt 2007, p. 20–21). The names are as follows:

- Tune, Eina sn, Oppland county
- Tune, Tune sn, Østfold county
- Tune, Vang sn, Oppland county
- Tune, Ål sn, Buskerud county
- Toner, Strøm sn, Hedmark county
- Setton, Fluberg sn, Oppland county
- Sigtun, Kråkstad sn, Akershus county

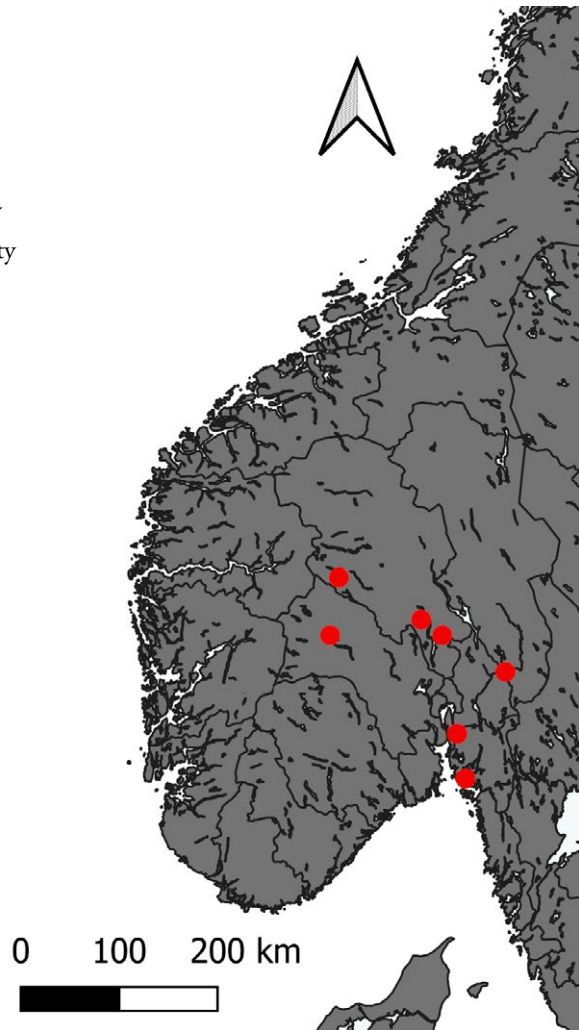


Figure 1. Distribution of plural *tuna*-names in Norway discussed in this paper.

I have excluded *Tune* in Kvikne parish in Gudbrandsdalen. It is mentioned by Schmidt but does not present any plural forms (and he never claims it does). The co-location with the church is of later date. *Toen* in Haug parish, Buskerud county has also been excluded. Although the oldest form of this name is *Thune* (1528), it is later documented as *Tunenn* (16<sup>th</sup> century), *Tunim* (1578) and *Thunnenn* (1592). Considering these forms and the pronunciation, it is probably correctly perceived as a compound of *tun* and *vin* (NG 5 p. 47–48). Tom Schmidt (2007, p. 21) points out, however, that this interpretation, due to the oldest attested writing of the name, cannot be regarded as certain. It should be added that *Toen* is situated in a remarkable environment, with names like *Hov*, *Løken* (\**Leikvin*), *Ullerål* and *Norderhov* in the vicinity. It may be wise not to dismiss *Toen* as a potential *tun(a)*-name of importance. It is perhaps worth considering that this suggests \**Tunvin* could be a secondary name formation to a now lost, plural \**Tuna*.

From the list above it is clear that the plural names in *tuna* are confined to Østlandet, that is the eastern part of southern Norway (Fig. 1). I will start by discussing *Tune* in Østfold, as this place clearly provides guidance on what to expect of a central place *Tuna*.

## **Tune, Tune sn, Østfold county**

*Tune* is well testified in plural forms (*Tuna*, *Tunom*) from the Middle Ages. The earliest source seems to be a law codex from around 1325 (Schmidt 2007, p. 18). *Tune* is situated close to the estuary of Glomma, Norway's largest river, on a vast island flooded by two tributaries of the river (fig 2.). The river was navigable up to the cascades at Sarpsborg, just a few kilometres from the *Tune* settlement. To continue further up the river, *Eidet*, located some kilometres northwest of *Tune*, was the best portage route (Stylegar 2003a, p. 292, Stylegar 2015, p. 165–167). *Tune* sits on the *Ra* moraine, an important prehistoric communication link, connecting the rapids with the *eid* 'passage between waterways'. This landscape setting, on a river and at rapids, controlling important communication links, has a marked resemblance to many Swedish *tuna* sites. Their strategic positions in the landscape, commanding waterways and entrances to major settlement areas, is very characteristic but has perhaps not been fully appreciated.

When considering the rich archaeological landscape around this place, I believe it is important to remember that *Tune* is primarily a settlement name, designating a settlement at *Tune* church. As the name of a parish, it has a wider denotation, but this is a later development. In the literature, the *Tune*-name has been associated with the ship-burial at Haugen ("the *Tune* ship grave") some 5 km off and on the other side of the river Glomma, or even with the Late Roman period settlement at Missingen, situated about 15 km from the church. We cannot make such associations. It is certainly true that *Tune* is at the centre of an imposing archaeological and onomastic complex around the Glomma estuary, but *Tune* is not, in itself, a territorial name.

At *Tune* there has been an extensive cemetery, likely consisting of several hundreds of grave monuments, but now mainly destroyed. This cemetery has been used from the Bronze Age to the Viking Age but seems to have an emphasis in the Roman period, with exclusive findings such as drinking paraphernalia of bronze or glass. A now lost silver cup belonging to the Roman period, allegedly similar to the one from Hoby in Lolland, Denmark, was also found. Perhaps there was also a goldsmith workshop in the *Tune* area. Exceptional findings of gold,



however, have not been discovered (Andersson 1995, p. 172, Stylegar 1998, p. 199, 2003b, p. 321–322). The emphasis on the Roman era at Tune is interesting, as this seems to be the formative period for many Swedish *tuna*-places.

The continued importance of Tune in the Migration period is testified by the Tune rune-stone, an impressive two-metre-high runic monument. Its oldest known and perhaps original position was by the Tune church (Grimm and Stylegar 2017, p. 123). The inscription is traditionally dated to c. 400 A.D., but a time span from A.D. c. 375/400 to 520/530 can be assumed (Imer 2011, p. 205). The text itself is much debated but seems to allude at the inheritance of a man called *Wöduridaz* (Grønvik 1981, Þórhallur Eyporsson 2012). Although this inscription is highly relevant for the understanding of Iron Age Tune, it also abounds with intriguing problems. I shall be content to acknowledge the importance of the monument and will not venture into the debate over the inscription.

During later periods of the Iron Age, there seems to be a westward dislocation of power in the area, to Rolvsøy west of Visterflo (an arm of the river Glomma). At the farm Haugen, a great mound was excavated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, containing a Viking Age ship-burial. A century earlier, another ship-burial had been discovered at the neighbouring farm of Rostad. Together with a chamber grave at Haugen and testimonies of several large grave mounds in the vicinity, this indicates an impressive necropolis (Stylegar 2003c p. 346–351). However, the church was built at Tune. Furthermore, it had a status superior to other churches in the province, as it was a *fylkeskirke* ‘church of the *fylke* (county/province)’ (Stylegar 1998, p. 198). Tune thus seems to retain its importance, and the Viking Age burials at Rolvsøy do not necessarily indicate a shift of power. Instead, they could be regarded as expressions of the same central place, perhaps indicating a Viking Age harbour at Visterflo (Stylegar 1998, p. 200, 2003a, p. 289, 292).



Figure 2. Some important place names in the Tune area. Background map from Kartverket, Hønefoss. Map from geonorge.no.

## The place name setting

The Swedish names in *tuna* often occur in conjunction with other specific names, making up varying constellations of names and name elements. Frequent examples are *Karlaby*, *Rinkaby*, *Husaby*, *vilvé*, *heilagr*, *salr*, *skeið* etc. These name environments are immensely important for understanding the names. Linked to Iron Age central places, they seem to reflect a prestigious nomenclature present at these sites. There is a name environment around *Tune* in Østfold, but it is a bit blurred and many of its components uncertain. In the following, I will rely heavily on Tom Schmidt's (2007) analysis of the place names in Tune parish. Although based on an earlier text by Kåre Hoel, it is mainly an independent work by Schmidt, and I will refer to it as Schmidt 2007.

Close to the Tune church was a farm called *Lekevoll*, from Norw. *leik(e)voll* 'gathering place for games and plays'. My impression is that names like *Leikvøllr* or *Leikvin* are rather common at Norwegian central places. *Leikvin* often refers to large farms with a central position, while *Leikvøllr* and *Leikvang* sometimes have a more peripheral position (Helleland 1994). It seems possible that such names may also refer to horse racing and perhaps horse fighting. At the great horse games in Valle in Setesdal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Leikvollen* was the name of the place for horse races (Wessén 1922, p. 22–23, Solheim 1956, p. 32, Stylegar 2006). Unfortunately, *Lekevoll* is documented rather late, as the farm is from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Tom Schmidt seems willing to ascribe advanced age to *Lekevoll*, but hedges by stating that it could depend on late traditions triggered by the presence of ancient monuments (2007, p. 165–166). I fully agree with his assessment. Bordering *Lekevoll* is *Tingvoll*. *Pingvøllr* is an Old Norse denomination for an assembly place, but the name in Tune is a late construction, perhaps inspired by *Lekevoll* (Schmidt 2007, p. 166). It is known, however, that there was an assembly place at Tune (Stylegar 1998, p. 199–200, Ødegaard 2015).

The name environment of the central place often includes religious names. This religious dimension is a bit vague in Tune, because there are a number of names that might have a religious background but only one certain case. I think we can discard a few names, certainly *Helgeby* and perhaps also *Torsbekk*, both probably having personal names as their initial elements (Schmidt 2007, p. 164, 264–265). However, *Torsbekk*, which last element is *bekk* 'brook', denotes a watercourse with a central and prominent position in the Tune area. It is furthermore very distinctive because it runs in a rather deep gully (see picture in Stylegar 2003d, p. 421). The absence of old forms of the name, however, renders a sacral interpretation highly uncertain.

The only certain sacral place name in the vicinity is *Vesten* on the south shore of river Glomma, just opposite *Alvim* (see below). The first part of the name is Old Norse *vé* n. 'sanctuary, holy place' and the second part *steinn* m. 'stone' (NG 1, p. 271), here probably in the well-attested meaning 'hillfort'. In that case, the name originally designated the hillfort on *Holberget*, surrounded by the three farms *Vestre Vesten*, *Mellom-Vesten* and *Nordre Vesten*. Interesting but more uncertain are *Horgen* and *Ælin*, situated side by side on *Rolvøy* but at a considerable distance from Tune. *Horgen* is an old *Hørgvin*, a compound with *vin* 'meadow' where *høgr* may carry its religious meaning, 'sanctuary'. But, *høgr* is also a well-known topographical term. Jørn Sandnes (1964) has demonstrated that the meaning 'mountaintop' seems to be present in a number of *høgr*-names from Western Norway and Trøndelag. However, according to Tom Schmidt (2007, p. 274), this not an option for the several *Hørgvin* names of Eastern Norway.

A more interesting meaning is ‘cairn, stony ground’, well known from Swedish dialects. Were it not for its colocation with *Ælin*, I might say that the easiest way to understand *Horgvin* would be as ‘the stony meadow or ‘the meadow with clearance cairns’ (Vikstrand 2001, p. 224 note 175).

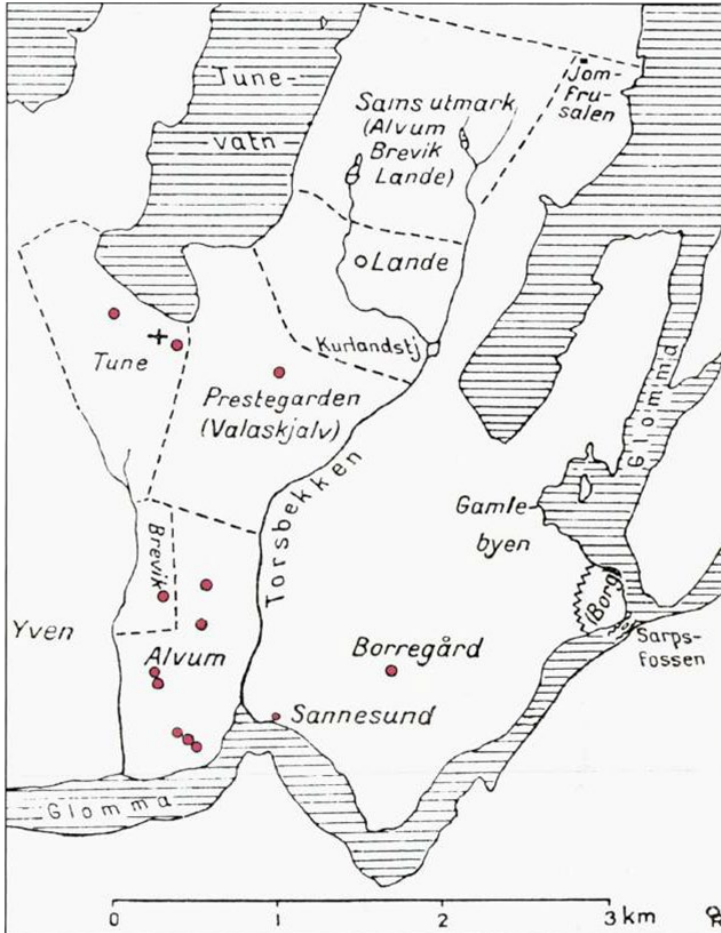


Figure 3. Alfheimr with underlying farms according to Asgaut Steinnes (1950).

*Ælin* is also a compound with *vin* ‘meadow’. The first element might, as Magnus Olsen has suggested (1915, p. 271–276), correspond to Gothic *alhs* ‘temple’. On the other hand, it could also be Old Norse *ál* f. ‘strap’ or *áll* m ‘stripe, trench, furrow’. Schmidt (2007, p. 267–271) points to an old water channel between *Ælin* and Reklingsholm (earlier *Skinmarey*), which might be the source motivating the use of Old Norse *áll*, meaning ‘stripe, trench, furrow’. However, he also argues that the pronunciation of the name suggests a short first vowel, thus not supporting such an interpretation. Furthermore, he recognises that an identical name, not far away in Onsøy, is neighbour to *Hov*. This is probably a religious name. I believe both the

*Hørgvin*- and *Ælvin* names call for further investigation. As things stand now, it is possible neither to dismiss nor confirm them as sacral place names.

In addition, the military aspect of the central place might be reflected in place names. This is mostly in the form of military titles, such as *karl*, *rink*, *tegn* (*Karleby*, *Rinkeby*, *Tegneby*) etc., or in allusions on naval warfare as in *Snekkenes* to Old Norse *snekkja* ‘warship’. The first type of names, which might be called *comitatus*-names, are rare in Norway. There are a few *Tegneby* and *Svenneby* in eastern Norway, but none in the vicinity of Tune. Frans-Arne Stylegar (2003c, p. 374) argues that this might be because the ‘king’ to whom these men had sworn allegiance resided in the Tune-area. It should be mentioned that *Holleby* in Tune has been discussed in connection with these names, assuming that the first element can be associated with Old Norse *holtr* ‘reliable, friendly’ (Stylegar 2003c, p. 374). Although the name is obscure, such a background seems unlikely (Schmidt 2007, p. 143–145).

*Lande* (j *Landum* 1397) just north of Tune, containing a plural form of *land* ‘land, ground, landed property’ is perhaps more interesting. Asgaut Steinnes (1950, p. 378–392, 1955, p. 218–220) has made the interesting observation that nearly all 13 farms with this name appear in the close vicinity of royal manors or chieftain’s farms. He argues that they originally were outlying lands to the manors, later subordinate farms. Elaborating on this hypothesis, he believes these farms had a specialised function as lodgings for men in arms, the host or army. This assumption is based on a passage in *Ynglingasaga*, where king Gandalf in *Alvheim* waits with his army at a place called *Londum*, before setting out to attack *Vestfold* across the fjord. Steinnes argues that *Londum* refers to *Lande* in Tune. Traditionally, however, *Londum* has been identified with *Vesterøya* in *Hvaler*, which seems more plausible (Schmidt 2007, p. 154, 2014, p. 229–233). It is nevertheless fully conceivable that the *Landir*-names in connection with central farms had a special function.

### ***Alvim, Yven and Valaskjol***

The most intriguing part of the onomastic landscape around Tune is doubtlessly the three names *Alvim*, *Yven* and *Valaskjol*. In a famous paper from 1950, Asgaut Steinnes compares these names with three mythological place names mentioned in *Grímnismál*, *Valaskjölf*, *Alfheimr* and *Ydalir*, all designating different abodes of gods. He argues that the landscape around *Alfheimr*, which he comprehends as a Viking Age royal manor, has acted as a matrix for the mythological universe of *Grímnismál* (Fig. 3.). The similarities between these names—real and mythological—has later been discussed by Frans-Arne Stylegar (1998, p. 201–208), who is more apt to regard them as an ambition to recreate the territory of the central place with a mythological landscape as model. In view of such copious theories, there is sufficient cause to scrutinise these names from an onomastic point of view.

According to *Grímnismál*, *Alfheimr* is the abode of Freyr. *Alfheimr* is identical with *Alvim* (*Aluæimom* 1397), which seems to designate the most important hamlet in the area. Bordering Tune in the north, it stretches south down to river *Glomma*. It is the largest settlement in all *Østfold* county, comprising seven farms already in 1604 (Schmidt 2007, p. 227). According to Asgaut Steinnes (1950, p. 353–355, 396–401), *Alfheimr* is an old royal manor for the king of *Vingulmørk*. He further believes that it included the surrounding farms of *Brevik*, *Tune*, *Valaskjol*, *Land* and *Borg*. *Snorri* speaks of an old realm called *Alfheimar* situated between the two big rivers *Glomma* and *Göta älv*, and he attributes the name to a king *Alf*. Such eponymic

interpretations are typical of Snorri and the saga authors. It might very well be that the notion of *Alfheimr* as a realm is an apocryphal construction, based on an understanding of the name as \**Elveheim* ‘the land between the rivers’ (Steinnes 1950, p. 368–369, Stylegar 2003d, p. 411–412 with references). Frans-Arne Stylegar (2003d, p. 403, 420) suggests that *Alfheimr* might have been a name for the entire Tune-area, from Visterflo to Sarpsfossen, or an even larger territory at the estuary of the river Glomma. Although I will not take a position on the details in this reasoning, I nevertheless find it plausible that *Alfheimr* originally was a territorial name designating an Iron Age domain of several settlements. This is actually characteristic of names in *heimr*, at least in eastern Scandinavia (Vikstrand 2013, p. 38).

It might seem surprising that *Alfheimr*, and not Tune, is “the centre of attraction” in this respect, but actually, it is not. The *tuna* places in Sweden often appear on the outskirts of old, central settlements, sometimes adjacent to a village, which seems to be of older and greater importance. This is especially true of *tuna* places outside the central distribution area around Lake Mälaren. A couple of examples are *Sätuna* bordering Gudhem in Västergötland and *Tuna* in Kumla parish, Östergötland, bordering Åsby. In these cases, the *tuna* settlements seem to have a controlling position.

Tom Schmidt (2007, p. 228) interprets *Alfheimr* as ‘the settlement by the river’, the first element being Old Norse *elfr* f. ‘river’. Due to the shore displacement, he argues, *Alfheimr* was situated at the estuary of the river Glomma when the name was coined some 2000 years ago. Further, it reached up to Sarpefossen, the cascades at Sarpsborg, a natural hindrance and suitable control station for navigation further up the river. This interpretation gains support in comparison with the identical name *Alvhem* in Västergötland, Sweden, situated by the great river Göta älv. There are, however, two other *Alfheimr* place names in Østfold, and this complicates things. Perhaps *Alvum* in Kråkstad might be associated with the river Kråkstadelva, and *Alvum* in Heli with Glomma (cf. Harsson 2001, p. 180 f.), but this needs further investigation.

Nevertheless, the topographical alternative must have precedence. It thus appears that we should refrain from the tempting alternative to understand the first element as the mythological *alf*, which designates a kind of supernatural beings of semi-divine character. Following this line of interpretation, *Alfheimr* would be a parallel to the much-debated *Gudhem* names and fit well in this central place environment.

Steinnes draws an analogy between *Yven* (j *Yuini* 1397) and *Ýdalir* of *Grímnismál*, the abode of the god Ullr. As the names are not identical, this is a weak point in his theory. In an attempt to explain the divergence, he argues that *Ývin* was the original name, but that the scald behind *Grímnismál* deemed it prosaic and changed it to *Ýdalir*, inspired by a dell between *Ývin* and *Alfheimr* (Steinnes 1950, p. 396). He assumes that the first element in both names is *ýr* m. ‘yew’. Yew trees are rare in Scandinavia but not unknown, and the word Old Norse *ýr*, Old Swedish *í*, does occur in place names. A sample of such names—in different forms—has been provided by Jöran Sahlgren (1912), among these *Idala* in Halland, Sweden, a direct parallel to *Ýdalir*. Tom Schmidt, however, with regard to *Yven*, is not at all convinced in this interpretation. Although he finds an explanation from *ýr* possible, he prefers to regard the first element as the name of a creek, formed to the bird-designation *úfr* ‘eagle-owl’ (2007, p. 220–221). However, this does not exclude the possibility of a link between *Yven* and *Ýdalir*, as the creator of *Grímnismál* might have understood *Ývin* as a compound with *ýr* ‘yew’ and

thus associated it with the god Ullr. Mythologies are usually full of such misunderstandings of place names.

*Valaskjol* (*Valaskioll* 1397) is a resurrected name of the parsonage in Tune. It was early on identified with the mythological *Valaskjölf*, the name of one of Odin's halls. Magnus Olsen (1926, p. 277–281) argues in favour of identity of the names. According to him, the first element is *Váli*, the son of Odin and the revenger of Baldr. He compares *Valaskjol* with *Viskjøl* on the other side of the Oslo fjord, which seems to be a \**Viðarskjölf*, containing the name of another of Odin's sons, *Viðarr*, the avenger of Odin at Ragnarök. These two avengers are paired together in *Vafþrúðnismál* (*Viðarr ok Váli*) and seem thus to appear—as the only gods—in place names compounded with *skjölf*. This is all very enigmatic and demands an explanation, given the interpretations are correct. Olsen (1926, p. 280) regards *Valaskjol* and *Viskjøl* as transfers from the mythological to the real world, while Asgaut Steinnes—as mentioned above—understands *Valaskjol* the other way round as a real-world paragon for the mythological name. Frans-Arne Stylegar (1998, p. 204–208) is more in line with Olsen. The restructuring of the landscape around Tune and Alfheimr in accordance with a mythological universe, Stylegar argues, is a means for the ruler of this place to consolidate his power by claiming divine right to his position. This, then, must also include the use of mythological names in a real-world setting, thus blurring the distinction between the worlds of man and god and bestowing the ruler's manor with a divine nimbus. Such cosmogonic strategies for retaining power have also been discussed in conjunction with other central places in Scandinavia, e.g. Gudme and Uppsala (Hedeager 2001, Sundqvist 2004).

However, Old Norse *skjölfskjölf*, Old Swedish *skialfiskiölf*, is a well-known word in place names, and it seems to designate tablelands, plateau-shaped hills or hills with a characteristic bedrock shelf (Vikstrand 1996; see also Olsen 1926, p. 274). Admitting this, it should not be denied that such names might also present ritual or mythological properties. This is clear from the Swedish *Vissgårde*, originally \**Viskialf* 'the holy rock' (Vikstrand 2001, p. 333). Tom Schmidt (2007, p. 160) appealingly suggests that *skjölf* in *Valaskjol* might refer to a height called *Trompeten* nearby the parsonage. As for the first element, he falls back on Oluf Rygh's suggestion that it could be the genitive plural of Old Norse *váll* m. 'debris from the clearing of forests; tree trunks, roots etc.'. But as he himself ventures to demur (p. 158), this is not a meaning one might anticipate for a name with such a central position in an old landscape. An earlier suggestion (Brøgger 1932, p. 216, Sandnes and Stemshaug 1997, p. 476) is that the first element is Old Norse *válr* (Fritzner 1883–96, p. 847) 'fallen warrior (on the battlefield)'. Now, the *Trompeten* knoll actually forms part of the great cemetery at Tune, making this interpretation quite interesting. Schmidt dismisses this possibility, partly because of the lack of parallels. But parallels have been suggested, primarily *Valsgårde* close to Uppsala in Uppland, well known for its boat graves from the Late Iron Age. Lars Hellberg (1983) understands the name as 'the enclosure of the fallen warriors', thus directly denoting the cemetery. A stronger reservation is that no other compound with *válr* has the form *vala-* (Ståhl 1986, p. 74, Schmidt 2007, p. 160).

As regards *Valsgårde*, it is worth mentioning that Harry Ståhl (1986) has suggested it might be a name ending in *skjölf* and thus identical with *Valaskjol* and the mythological *Válaskjölf*. Unfortunately, the name is only testified from the 16<sup>th</sup> century and cannot be appraised with any certainty. If Ståhl's assumption were correct, however, it would supply us with another

connection between Tune and Swedish central place nomenclature. Probably, however, *Valsgårde* has a much more profane origin as a contraction of an original \**Vallskos gårde*, depending on the nearby village of *Vallsko* (Vikstrand in SOL, p. 354).

Regarding ancient monuments (including the Tune rune-stone) and its strategic position, Tune is well in line with the Swedish *tuna* places. There is also a cluster of interesting place names around Tune, although theophoric and “military” names are missing. It should be mentioned that further downstream on the river Glomma, and not far from Tune, are several religious place names such as *Onsøy*, *Ullerøy* and *Hov*. Especially the setting around *Onsøy* is richly diversified and interesting, in some ways more so than that of Tune (see Hoel 1985, p. 126–129). Finally, the analogy between the mythological place names of *Grímnismál* and those of the Tune area cannot be ignored. In my opinion, it is an excellent example of place names acting as inspiration for myths; demonstrating how narratives can be woven around place names and thus inspire a “mythologising” of the landscape.

### **Tune, Eina parish, Oppland county**

The name is testified as *Tuner a Ynestrandh paa Totensmarken* 1490 (NG 4, p. 106); the form *Tuner* is interpreted as plural nominative *Túnir* or *Túnar* (Schmidt 2007, p. 21). This *Tune* is located in the settlement area around the lake Einavatnet in Vestre Toten. The surroundings are dominated by names of younger types, especially *rud* but also *-li(en)* and *set*. There is archaeological evidence of a prehistoric settlement on the northwest shore of the lake, at the farm *Sætre*, but the area around Tune is devoid of ancient monuments and archaeological findings (RA Kulturminner). Tune has a dominating position by the lake, but overall, this seems to be a rather remote and young settlement area, remote from Toten’s prehistoric settlement districts to the east, with the parish of Hoff as a possible centre.

There are no indications of high status or centrality for this Tune, or even of prehistoric origins. In the cadastre of 1838, Tune already consists of five parts. Perhaps an early division of the farm might explain the plural form, cf. *Tune* in Vang parish.

### **Tune, Vang parish, Oppland county**

This name is testified as *a Tunom* 1395, *Thune* 1520, *Tunum* 1578 (NG 4:2, p. 314) and must be regarded as a plural *tuna*, although the evidence is meagre. The farms (*Tune* and *Sore Tune*) are situated about one kilometre to the south-east of the church. Place names and ancient monuments testify that this is an old settlement area. Especially the combination of *Bø* and *Vang* is significant. At the adjacent farm of *Øvre Kvåle*, there are iron-rich grave findings from the Merovingian period. There is also a possible large mound, *Ellingshaugen*, situated just a few hundred metres from the Tune-farms. It is, however, built on a natural hillock, and for that reason uncertain and impossible to measure (RA Kulturminner). This mound or hillock is very likely the background for the name *Kvåle*, a local adaptation of *hóll*, Old Norse *hväll*, ‘small hill’ (NG 4:2, p. 314).

The parsonage carries the name of *Vang*, and this is the most significant onomastic feature in the surroundings. The lexical meaning of *vangr* is ‘grassland, pasture, greensward’, but already Magnus Olsen (1926, p. 216–220) noticed that farms with this name nearly always occur in very central positions and have often become the site of a parish church. He argued that *vangr* in these cases probably was a heathen equivalent of *kirkevangen*, the grassland

outside the church which acted as a communal meeting place, a bit like the English village green. The likelihood that such places could be involved in the cult is testified by *Ullensvang* in Hardanger, where the first element is a name of a god, \**Ullin* (Helleland 2002). Another example is *Torsång* in Dalarna in Sweden, which reflects an Old Swedish \**Thorsvanger* ‘the *vang* of the god Þórr’.

Tune in Vang has a rather central location in an old settlement area, probably with a cultic site at its core, but otherwise there is not much to suggest any special status. If we follow Magnus Olsen, the oldest and most prestigious farm would be represented by the name *Bø*. I would like to draw attention to the fact that Tune consists of two separate farm-sites. Furthermore, bordering Tune to the west is the farm *Baggetun* (*Baggethunn* 1520 NG 4, p. 314), obviously of at least medieval origin. Observing the singular form of this name and taking into account the fact that Tune already in the Middle Ages consisted of several farms, I think it should be considered that these circumstances might motivate the plural form. *Tune* in Vang is then a plural *tuna* name, but not of the same sort as the Swedish names and not in itself indicating centrality.

## Tune, Ål parish, Buskerud county

This *Tune* is testified in 1424 in a plural form, *paa Tunene*, albeit in a transcript from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A document from 1526 mentions *nordregaarden paa Tune* ‘the north farm at Tune’. NG speculates in this being a compound with *vin* ‘meadow’ (NG 5, p. 157), but this is dismissed by Tom Schmidt (2007, p. 21).

The centre of Ål parish has an interesting place name constellation with a *Hove* (Old Norse *Hof*) and an intriguing *Gjeldaker*. The latter is perhaps to be compared with the obscure Swedish *Gillberga*-names that frequently appear near *Tuna*-sites, although NG (5, p. 150–151) suggests the first element is *gald* m. ‘hard ground’. If *Leksvol* (a *Leiksuale* 1310), with an outmost central location by the church, can be interpreted in line with the rather common *Leikvin* and *Leikvollr* is uncertain but tempting, cf. *Lekevoll* above. NG (5, p. 153, also Helleland 1994, p. 31) explains it as a compound of the man’s name *Leikr* and Old Norse *váll* m. ‘debris from the clearing of forests; tree trunks, roots etc.’

Tune, however, is not situated in the vicinity of the church, but some four kilometres further up the river. Here, the farms have very ordinary names, such as *Breie* (a name in *vin*) and *Strond* ‘shore, waterfront’. A possible grave mound is situated more or less on Tune’s farmyard, some 13 metres in diameter, believed to be an ordinary size in this part of Scandinavia. At the farm Bakke, situated only a couple hundred meters from Tune, several findings were made, probably from destroyed Iron Age graves (RA Kulturminner). The artefacts include a spearhead, a weaver’s reed and a whetstone pendant, all fine objects but in no way extraordinary. This Tune, then, has a reclusive position in what seems to be an ordinary Iron Age setting.

## Toner, Strøm parish, Hedmark county

The name is written *Tunar* 1306 (transcript 1397), *i Tunum* the 1390s and *i Tuna* 1422 (NG 3, p. 197). It thus clearly has a plural form. The farm Toner stands on the east side of Dølisjøen, a lake situated a couple kilometres north of river Glomma. The lake is connected with the river by a small stream named *Sloa*, but this is hardly navigable as it falls more than 20 meters on its first leg down to a smaller lake called *Nordsettjennet*.



Across the water from Toner is the farm Slåstad with archaeological evidence of prehistoric settlement from the Early Iron Age (RA Kulturminner). The name *Slåstad* (*i Slastadhum* the 1390s) is also of a prehistoric type, the first element being the river name *Sloa* (NG 3, p. 180). Otherwise, there are no archaeological indications of prehistoric settlement around the lake. Considering the place names, only *Slåstad* and *Døli* (from *\*Dalvin*, NG 3, p. 179) are of prehistoric types. It is probable that Øfstgarden and Melgarden originally were parts of Slåstad, which seems to have dominated the northern shores of the lake.

The location of Toner by a lake is consistent with the Swedish *tuna* places, which often have a connection to sounds, rivers, inlets or lakes. But whereas these nearly always have a protruding and strategic position, controlling waterways and important places, Toner in Strøm has a withdrawn and remote position. There is no archaeological evidence for high status or even prehistoric settlement at Toner, and no place names in the surroundings indicate centrality.

## Setton, Fluberg parish, Oppland county

This name is not documented earlier than in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it appears as *Sethum* 1578, *Setum* 1592, and *Settum* 1595 (NG 4, p. 181). Both NG and Magnus Olsen (1917, p. 90) believe it could be an old *\*Sigtunir*, but the late documentation makes this assumption very precarious. Setton does not seem to be associated with any central place and does not have a name environment pointing in such direction (Fig. 4.). In a plan for the preservation of cultural environments, issued by the local council, it is assumed that *Nordråk*, a farm to the south of Setton, is a 'Njorðs aker', 'the field of the god Njorðr' (Kulturminner og kulturmiljøer for Søndre Land commune, p. 4). This is not true, however, as the first element certainly is *nordr* 'north' (NG 4, p. 181). The name probably derives from the older and more dense area of settlement around Hov church, some 8 kilometres to the south-east.



Figure 4. Setton with Husodden and Nordråk. Map from Kartverket through geonorge.no.

A single grave mound is situated c. 200 metres to the west of Setton farm. To the south is a peninsula named *Husodden*. This is a remarkable archaeological place with several Stone Age settlements, vast areas with fire-cracked stones, grave mounds and pits for production of charcoal (RA Kulturminner). The emphasis is clearly on the Stone Age, but some of the sites with fire-cracked stones may date from the Iron Age and perhaps indicate some kind of communal activities. A 200-metre long stretch of beach full of fire-cracked stones is especially intriguing. It is easy to associate to the fields with pits containing fire-cracked stones recently observed in connection with *thing* sites in Norway (Ødegaard 2018, p. 96–97; see Sigtun in Kråkstad parish below). However, before it is feasible to appraise any tangible link with Setton, more knowledge is needed in forms of dates, investigations and analysis of the Husodden-complex.

### Sigtun, Kråkstad parish, Akershus county

This name is rather well testified from the Middle Ages, thus written *i Sigtunum* 1358, *i Syftunum* the 1390s, *i Sihgtunum* 1406 and *i Sigthunæ* 1500 (NG 2, p. 28). Despite the corrupt form from the 1390s, there can be little doubt about this being an Old Norse *Sigtúnir*, corresponding to the well-known Swedish *Sigtuna*, the name of one of Sweden's first towns. The first element *Sig-* is much debated and no certainty has been reached as to its meaning. The name *Sigtuna* is, together with *Forn-Sigtuna* 'old Sigtuna', mentioned in *Heimskringla* and thus seems to have been well-known in western Scandinavia as well. This is supported by a number of younger *Sigtuna* names all over Scandinavia (including Iceland), obviously deriving from the well-known Sigtuna by Lake Mälaren.

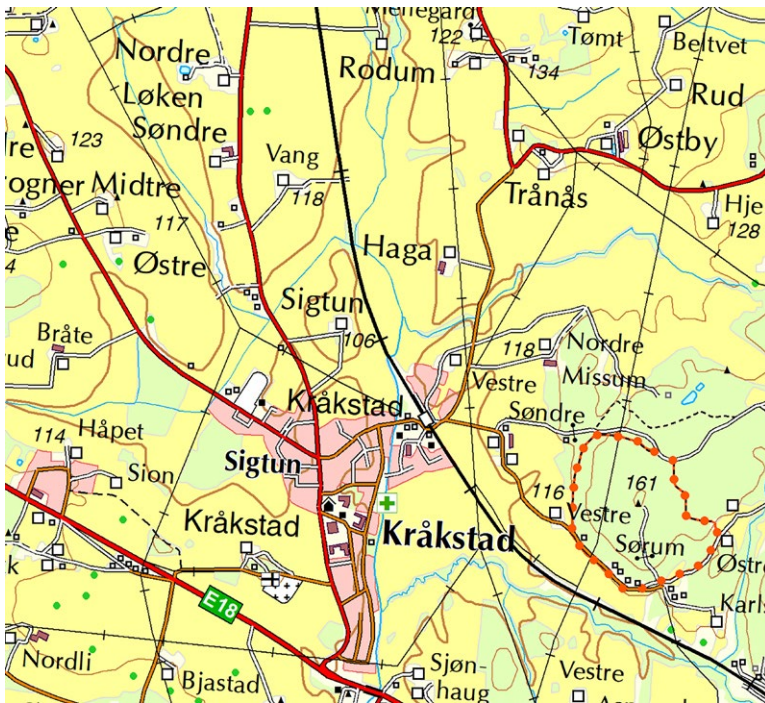


Figure 5. Sigtun with surroundings. Map from Kartverket through geonorge.no.

There are, however, a couple of old villages in Sweden that carry the name, and in these cases, they might be names formed independently. The same goes for *Sigtun* in Kråkstad, which seems to be an old settlement. The farm has a central location in the parish, situated just north of the church (Fig. 5.). Adjacent to the north and north-west are the farms of *Løken* (\**Leikvin*) and *Vang* (see Tune in Vang above). This, then, is the most elaborated name environment, besides Tune in Østfold. It should be mentioned that there also is an *Oppsal* in the parish, situated about one kilometre south of the church. However, it seems as though this originally was a part of Harastad (*Herastadha* 1341 NG 2, p. 29–30). The name could depend on a factor involving elevation; Oppsal is situated a little higher than the other two farms in Harastad (Fig. 6.). Perhaps we should understand *Oppsal* as a sort of pun, referring to the Swedish *Uppsala* and inspired by the older *Sigtun*. There are examples of the two names occurring together in other parts of Scandinavia, e.g. *Uppsalir* and *Sigtúnir* in Þverá in Iceland (Holtmark 1933, p. 121, see also Brink 1996, p. 63, 2016, p. 141).

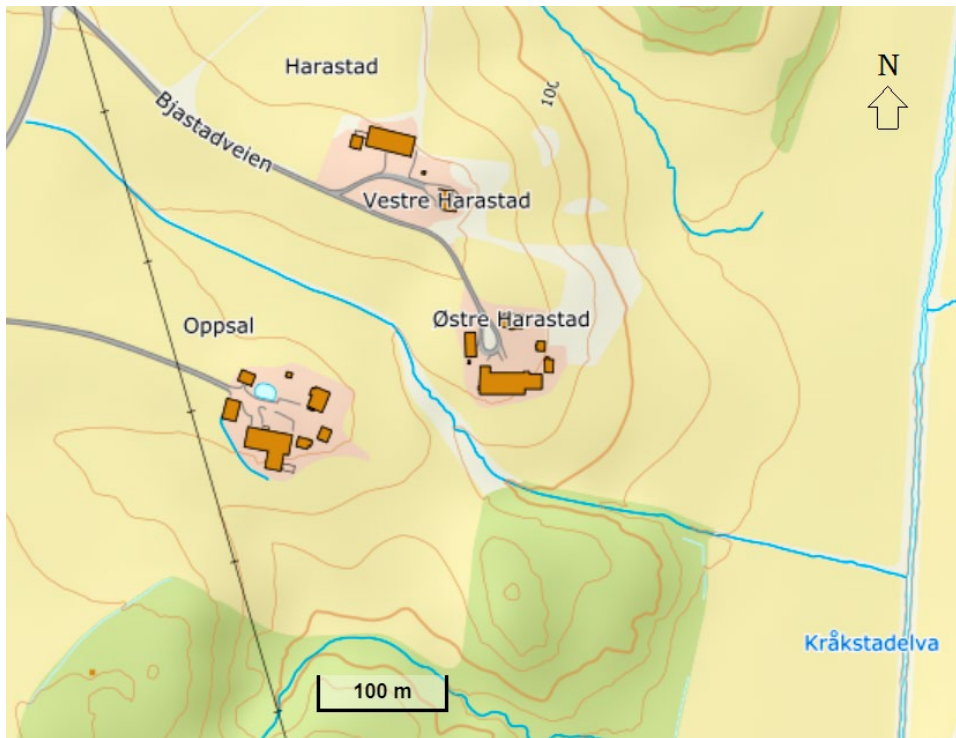
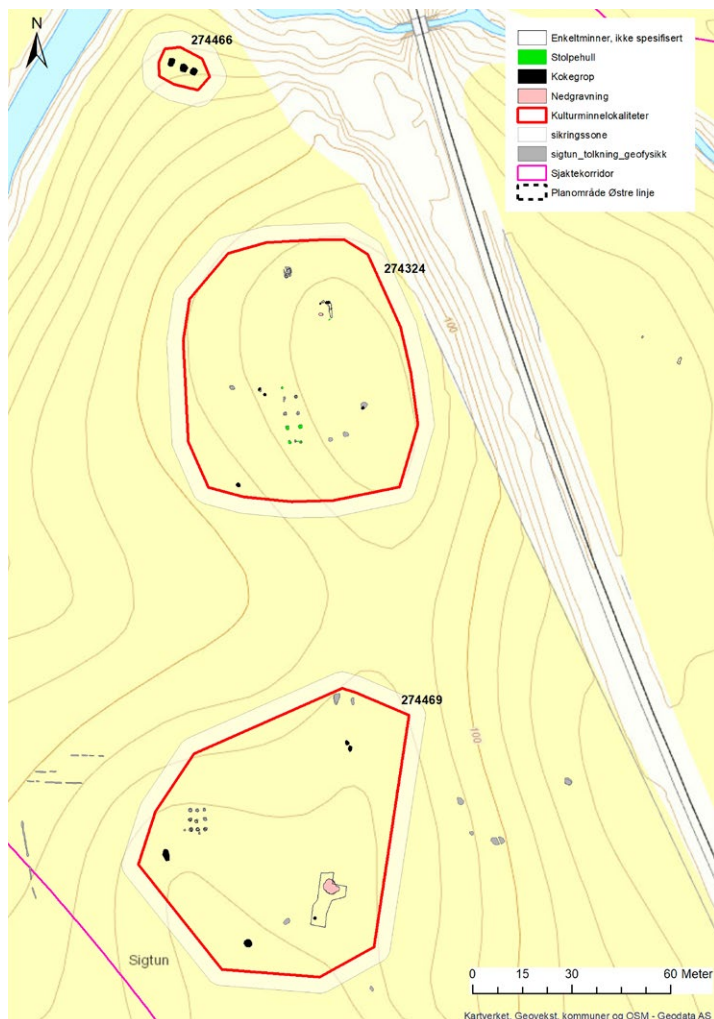


Figure 6. Oppsal and Harastad in Kråkstad parish. Map from geonorge.no.

A large part of Sigtun has been included in an archaeological survey, disclosing a settlement area on the ridge a few hundred metres north of the farm (Fig. 7). Traces of one or perhaps two houses were found, dating from the Roman Iron Age. A bit further to the north, on the slope above the river, were three large pits with fire-cracked stones, probably used for preparing food (information on this yet not published survey has kindly been provided by Anne Herstad, Seksjon for feltarkeologi, Viken fylkeskommune).

The farm next to Sigtun is Kråkstad, a settlement showing clear indications of high status. Beside the Romanesque church from Early Medieval times, there are at least four larger grave mounds with a diameter of 18–21 metres in the vicinity. Adjacent to the churchyard, a field of pits with fire-cracked stones has been investigated, dating from the period AD 245–540 (Russ and Figenschou Simonsen 2011). Such fields do sometime appear at places with old churches, hinting at a long continuity in the utilisation of these sites. The name *Kråkstad* (*Krakustadir*, *Krakastadir* the 1390s) probably has a river-name \**Krāka* as its first element (NG 2, p. 29). A ‘neighbouring position’ to a high-status settlement is not uncommon for *tuna* places in Sweden. All in all, *Sigtun* in Kråkstad is the most interesting *tuna* name, besides *Tune* in Østfold.



**Figure 7.** The area north of Sigtun in Kråkstad with red marking heritage localities. In the middle, postholes of a Roman period house are visible (grey). Further north are the three pits containing fire-cracked stones (black) (no. 274466). The quadratic construction in the southernmost area is from a storage house from historic times. Map supplied by Anne Herstad.

## How to understand the *tuna*-names of Eastern Norway

The result of this investigation is rather clear. *Tune* in Østfold shows signs of centrality regarding the archaeology, the landscape setting and the onomastic surroundings. With its highly aristocratic context, it stands out among the Norwegian *tuna* names. Some indications of high status or at least centrality are also found at *Sigtun* in Kråkstad parish, not so much in the settlement itself as it is connection to the high-status settlement at Kråkstad and the surrounding place names. Both *Tune* and *Sigtun* shows a likeness to Swedish names regarding location and environment, although the content of their name environments is very 'Norwegian', with names like *Vang* and *Leikvin*. For the rest of the *tuna* names, I have not been able to present any evidence for centrality or high status. It should be pointed out that this investigation is rather narrow in scope, as I have concentrated on the farms carrying the names and their nearest surroundings. A wider archaeological perspective might disclose other properties or relationships. The fact remains, however, that the *tuna* names of Eastern Norway do not occur in strategic positions such as are characteristic for the Swedish names. How these non-central but plural names should be understood is uncertain. For a couple of them, I have suggested that the plural form might depend on an early division into several parts. However, it is a well-known fact that place names often display a seemingly unmotivated plural form, a much-debated phenomenon with – certainly – many possible explanations.

As for *Tune* in Tune parish and perhaps *Sigtun* in Kråkstad parish, they might very well be inspired by the nomenclature of the Swedish central places. They could be compared with a couple of South Scandinavian names, *Tune* in Zealand and *Tuna* on the island of Ven between Sweden and Denmark, also regarded as influenced by Swedish names. Bent Jørgensen (2007: 114–118) has, however, pointed out that one must be cautious when linking a high frequency of name occurrence with the distribution of a word or phenomena, and he uses these southern *tuna*-names as an example, hinting at them being independent, South Scandinavian formations. This is certainly a sound, critical approach, but on the other hand, as place name scholars, we should not distrust our source material – including distribution maps – without good reasons. I would suggest that the easiest way to understand these southern and western *tuna*-names are as parts of a pan-Scandinavian central place nomenclature.

It has been noticed that the second generation of central places, emerging from *c.* 550 AD, show similarities in their layout, with a banqueting hall supplemented by a smaller and often enclosed building for ritual purposes (Jørgensen 2009, p. 349). There are also similarities in terms of the functions associated with them and how they are organised (Skre 2007, p. 48–50). Thus, a kind of a Scandinavian standard must have existed for how a central place should be constructed (Jessen 2012, Albris 2017, p. 31). This presupposes extensive connections between central places. We should probably regard them as a network through which ideas of societal organisation, rituals, warfare, agriculture etc., and also of poetry, songs and narratives of different kinds could be transferred. This transfer of ideas was most certainly also accompanied by a transfer of linguistic changes and innovations, including place names. Sofie Laurine Albris (2017, p. 63, 255–257) argues that certain place names – especially religious ones – provide insight into the collective representations of the ancient Scandinavian society. The place names actually hint at a Scandinavian central place nomenclature, common but with regional variations, reflecting a prestigious vocabulary connected with these sites (Brink 1999). The *tuna* names are certainly part of such a nomenclature, spread over a vast Scandinavian area from Ångermanland in the north of Sweden to Zealand in the south of Denmark.

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## Placing Place Names in Norwegian Archaeology

This collection of papers serves to illustrate how place names have a continued relevance to archaeology both in Norway and beyond.

The interdisciplinary use of place name studies and archeology have long traditions in Norway and Scandinavia. However, the prerequisites for this type of research have changed in recent decades with decreased resources in onomastic departments while archaeology develops rapidly through new methods in surveying, natural sciences, metal detection and excavations. Where do we stand today and how can we improve and renew our views on toponymy and of the methodological challenges we face when combining linguistic and material remains?

The various papers in the book emphasise how place names can provide unique insights into past people's perceptions of land and sense of place, providing access to emic categories otherwise unavailable to archaeologists. Names work as active elements in ongoing discourses about the landscape, and there can be intimate connections between places, names, populations and identities. Toponymy may reflect or evoke emotions on both individual and collective levels.

Through a range of perspectives, this collection of papers explores the status and perspectives of interdisciplinary research in a Norwegian context, focusing on the methodologies of interdisciplinary studies, research environments and prehistoric as well as historical periods.



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