Ullr

A God on the Edge of Memory

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Abstract

The author sets out to provide a comprehensive overview of all source material, previous research and overarching theories with regard to the Nordic god Ullr, known primarily from the *Snorra Edda* as a god of bows and skiing, and from Swedish and Norwegian place names as an archaic god whose cult was abandoned before the Viking Age. It is demonstrated that there is significant reason to doubt various aspects of the claims made by Snorri Sturluson in regard to the god, and especially those of the relation between Ullr and Sif. Among other things, the evidence given for the theories of Ullr's relation to Freyr, his status as a sun god, and his association with law and justice is explored. The author investigates furthermore the possibility of Old West Norse **Ullinn* existing in a contracted genitive form *Ulls* in a 10th century skaldic kenning, something also implied by the Scandinavian variations of the Icelandic anatomical term *ullinseyru*, and other factors. It is also postulated that a variety of factors suggest, that the extant evidence from various sources in regard to Ullr reflects two stages of the god's role in religious worship, and that future research must focus on settling the problematic relation between Snorri's account of the god, and the indications presented in place names.

Útdráttur

Höfundur leitast við að gefa heildstætt yfirlit yfir allar tiltækar heimildir, fyrri rannsóknir og helstu kenningar um norræna guðinn Ull. Samkvæmt *Snorra-Eddu* er hann einkum bogaás og skíðagoð og sænsk og norsk örnefni benda eindregið til þess að um sé að ræða ævafornan guð sem hætt hefur verið að dýrka fyrir víkingaöld. Sýnt er fram á að veruleg ástæða er til að efast um ýmislegt af því sem Snorri Sturluson staðhæfir í sambandi við goðið og þá sérstaklega það sem snertir tengsl Ullar og Sifjar. Rannsóknin beinist meðal annars að vitnisburði sem leitt hefur til kenninga um að samband sé milli Ullar og Freys, að hinn fyrrnefndi hafi verið sólargoð og hafi tengst lögum og réttlæti. Höfundur athugar jafnframt hvort fornt vesturnorrænt **Ullinn* hafi mögulega fyrirfundist í formi samdregins eignarfalls *Ulls* í 10. aldar skáldskaparkenningu en til þess gætu skandínavísk tilbrigði við líffærafræðilega hugtakið *ullinseyru* og fleiri atriði líka bent. Einnig er gert ráð fyrir að ýmislegt sé því til staðfestu að vitnisburður mismunandi heimilda um Ull endurspegli tvö stig varðandi hlutverk goðsins í trúarlegri dýrkun og að í framtíðinni verði rannsóknir því að beinast að því að gera upp hið torráðna samband milli lýsingar Snorra á goðinu og vísbendinga örnefna.

Preface

My interest on Ullr was raised during my first semester as a Master's student in Old Nordic Religion at the University of Iceland, during which I was tasked with writing a term essay on theophoric place names in Scandinavia. The extraordinary prominence of Ullr names in Sweden and Norway, which had been noted by place name researchers for over a century, caught my attention, and it was with great surprise that I realized how scattered and scarce the scholarship on the god ultimately was, a circumstance which undoubtedly has its roots in the equally scattered and scarce evidence for Ullr himself. It was partly for this reason, and under some encouragement and initial support from Stefan Brink, that I decided to conduct my Master's thesis on the subject of Ullr, an undertaking which has been extraordinarily exciting, and which has yielded results far beyond what I had originally expected. That being said, the systematic nature of this essay leaves the material drawn from the various scientific fields upon which it touches open to potential errors and inaccuracies, which naturally have their roots in my own incompetence and lack of experience within said disciplines. In spite of having studied Old Icelandic, I make no claim, for example, to have the necessary knowledge required to carry out original studies in the fields of linguistics and place name research, and have thus relied very heavily upon previous scholarly works on these fields in order to be able to produce the sort of systematic overview of evidence in regard to Ullr that I had originally intended.

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Abbreviations

AS. = Anglo-Saxon

GEM = Gothic Etymological Dictionary

Got. = Gothic

Icel. = Icelandic

Ir. = Irish

Lat. = Latin

LP = Lexicon Poeticum

NG = Norske Gaardnavne

Norw. = Norwegian

OHG. = Old High German

ON. = Old Norse

PG. = Proto-Germanic

PIE. = Proto-Indo-European

PN. = Proto-Norse

str. = Strophe

Sw. = Swedish

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of those whom I've contacted for the purpose of writing this essay, among them Stefan Brink, for convincing me that Ullr was a suitable subject for a Master's thesis, and for giving me a head start by informing me on some of the most useful material to go through; Arne Kruse, for informing me on the nature of theophoric Nordic place names on the British Isles; Andreas Nordberg for offering his help; and Per Vikstrand, for kindly answering any inquiries I might have had on the subject of the relationship between **Ullinn* and *Ullr*. Most importantly, however, I would like to thank my supervisor, Terry Gunnell, for his immense support during the last two years, as well as the enthusiasm with which he has approached the supervising of my subject. Thanks are also due to Johanna Nowotnick for helping me out with some of the German material.

1. Introduction

In the Old Icelandic and Norwegian literary sources, Ullr is one of the least frequently occurring gods. Snorri Sturluson knew only little of this elusive deity, and describes the god only briefly in his *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál* (see Chapter 5.3). Snorri recounts no myth in support of his claims about the god, and one might consequently assume that large parts of Snorri's information were deduced from the numerous skaldic kennings involving the name of the god (see Chapter 5.2), rather than any additional source. Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus says less about the characteristics of the god, but recounts a myth involving the figure *Ollerus*, who is undoubtedly based on the Old West Norse and Old Icelandic *Ullr*. Saxo's story remains the only surviving account of a myth involving Ullr, however, and its implications for our understanding of the god are unique (see Chapter 5.4). Eddic poetry (see Chapter 5.1) gives little more help: the god surfaces only briefly in two poems, and it has thus long been assumed that the Ullr cult of old had faded into obscurity long before the beginning of the literary tradition in the Nordic countries. Nonetheless, Swedish and Norwegian place names (see Chapter 4) bear great witness to the god's former prominence in pre-historic religious life, and recent archaeological finds in some of these sites have helped underline this fact (see Chapter 6). Indeed, on the basis of our limited evidence, Ullr appears to have been a uniquely Swedish and Norwegian deity, no certain sign of his influence surfacing outside of the two aforementioned countries.

Even though many mentions and theories of Ullr's persona and role in religious worship have been made by a variety of academics throughout Eddic and Nordic philological, linguistic and religious scholarship (see Chapter 2), very few scholarly works focusing exclusively on Ullr have ever been published, and even fewer systematic overviews of the evidence and theories in regard to the god have been made. With a handful of exceptions, primarily during the beginning-half of the 20th century, by scholars such as Just Bing, Ivar Lindquist and Eric Elgqvist, it is my opinion that the pastures for studies regarding the god have been left partly unexplored. The purpose of this essay is to fill some of the gaps currently present in the research on Ullr, and at the same time, to provide a systematic overview of source material and previous research. This essay aims at providing original contributions, particularly, within the literary analysis of source material related to Ullr (Chapter 5), but also in regard to Ullr's potential side form, **Ullinn* (Chapters 5.2 & 11), as well as to the overarching theories in regard to Ullr that have been presented throughout the years (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10).

The essay begins by outlining, in a systematic manner, the evidence in regard to the god which has been considered in previous research, finishing by discussing a number of over-arching

theories as to the specific role of Ullr in religious worship, which draw on the aforementioned source material. The History of Research chapter seeks to briefly outline the development of ideas concerning Ullr that has taken place throughout the history of scholarship, and to give an idea of the uncertainty and conjecture with which scholars have attempted to approach the god. The following Etymology chapter gives a detailed analysis of the etymology of the name(s) of the god, as well as discusses other possibilities for Ullr's various name forms, such as the ideas of the theophoric *Ullr* name surfacing in personal names, and the feasibility of *Ullr* being a noa name. The Place Names chapter gives an exhaustive overview of Nordic place names thought to contain the name of the god, including research history on particular names, etymological disputes and general consensus, as well as an investigation of place names in the British Isles that are open to consideration for a theophoric background related to *Ullr*. The following chapter on Literary Sources seeks to give a detailed overview of all old Nordic literary sources in which Ullr is mentioned by name, the history of ideas as to the implications of these mentions for our knowledge on Ullr, as well as make some original contributions in terms of interpretations of the literary material. The last chapter dealing with source material in regard to Ullr is the Archaeology chapter, discussing a number of instances in which Ullr has been related to archaeological material or excavations, and the implications of these examples for our understanding of the god. The following chapters, Ullr as a Sun God, Ullr as a God of Law and Justice, Ullr and Freyr and Two Variations of Ullr, are discussion chapters aimed at exploring what the previously-outlined source material implies for our understanding of Ullr as a subject of religious worship. The essay will finish with a Summary chapter, aimed at summarizing some of the most important points and implications of the previous chapters. Because of the nature of this essay, large-scale conclusions of the source material is dealt with in the aforementioned discussion chapters, rather than in the Summary chapter itself.

2.0. A History of Research into Ullr

The history of research on the god Ullr might be said to have experienced a number of more or less clearly distinguishable periods in terms of scholarly ideas. Whereas the earliest mentions of Ullr in academic circles largely revolved around discussion of the characteristics attributed to the god in the *Prose* and *Poetic Edda*, later scholarship has made greater use of comparative elements of research, attempting to establish a connection between Ullr and other mythological figures, from both Nordic and other religions.

As will be shown below, throughout the history of research, various attempts have been made to equate Ullr with virtually every other major deity in Nordic mythology: most prominently Óðinn, Freyr and Týr, but also figures such as Loki and Skaði. By the end of the 19th century, numerous theories concerning the nature of the god had also been presented on philological, mythological, religious and linguistic grounds – few of which ever garnered significant support in later research. Most importantly, however, was the success at establishing a new etymology for the *Ullr* name, as stemming from the Gothic *wulþus* 'splendour, glory'. This was different from the previous theory, which postulated that the god was identical to a word meaning 'wool'.

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, place-name studies came to increasingly dominate original research on the god. Of particular importance was a period between 1900 and 1930, during which numerous new theories based on place names were presented for Ullr. Among other things, scholars were able to establish that Ullr belonged to one of the oldest strata of theophoric place names in Scandinavia, and that the god might potentially have been worshipped in conjunction with a female deity. It was also postulated that Freyr might have historically taken over after the Ullr cult was abandoned.

Even though place name research came to set the tone for the continuation of research on Ullr all throughout the 20th century, a handful of studies related to other fields have also been presented (see below), few of which have had as significant an impact as place names. In recent years, archaeological excavations of places dedicated to the god have helped shed even further light on the practical nature of Ullr's worship. It cannot be denied, however, that the scarce and unreliable evidence we have in regard to the god has contributed to a comparative scarcity of scholarship on the god throughout history. With this essay, it is my intention to cover some of the holes I believe are present in the study of Ullr, especially with regard to not only the mythological and philological aspects of the god, but also others, relating to linguistics and archaeology.

2.1. Timeline

Arguably, one of the first scholarly mentions of Ullr in literary sources was made by the German scholar Johann Georg Keyßler (1693-1743) in his *Antiquitates selectae septentrionales et Celticae* in 1720 (p. 182). Keyßler argued that the Frisian *inferni dominus* ('god of the lower world'), Holler, is clearly different from the one *Hollerus* mentioned by Saxo. Keyßler's argument, although certainly accurate, is clearly based on a misunderstanding of Saxo's text, in which *Ollerus* has been read by Keyßler as *Hollerus*. Nonetheless, the idea of a relation between the Frisian *Holler* and the Nordic *Ullr* was espoused by numerous subsequent scholars, and survived in later research.[1] Nonetheless, in 1772, German poet Michael Denis (1729-1800) gave a brief summary of Snorri's account of the god in his *Die Lieder Sineds des Barden*, and, referring to Keyßler, suggested that "Vielleicht ist er der friesische Gott Holler, von dem Keysler spricht" (Denis, 1772, p. 16).

More serious scholarship on the god came to light in the beginning of the 19th century, with scholars like Icelander Finnur Magnússon (1781-1847) and German Jacob Grimm (1785-1863). Both Finnur Mágnusson and Grimm were proponents of the idea of *Ullr* stemming from an older cognate of a word meaning 'wool'. The two scholars also favoured the idea of the god being related to Baldr, based upon the use of the Baldr kenning *Ullar sefi* 'relative of Ullr', found in the extended version of *Baldrs draumar*, often known as *Vegtamskviða*. Due to the nature of *Vegtamskviða*, this kenning is not normally considered a genuine part of the original *Baldrs draumar*, and the connection between the two gods has been completely abandoned in later research. Finnur, who published his volumes of *Den Ældre Edda: En samling af de nordiske folks ældste sagn og sange* between 1821 and 1823, was nonetheless the first to present a more scholarly approach to an interpretation of the god. He argued that the *Grímnismál* catalogue of the gods answered to an astrological interpretation of the months, and that, indeed, the entire Nordic mythology was a reflection of a belief in "Lysets og Mörkrets, Himmelvarmens og Dybets Kuldes vedvarende Kamp" (Finnur Magnússon, 1821-1823, v. 1, p. 151). According to this interpretation, Ullr's *Ýdalir* (see Chapter 5.1.1) represented the zodiac sign *Sagittarius*, the archer, and Ullr snow and the winter itself, while his brother apparent, Baldr, was the personification of summer. Their shared father was Óðinn, who was seen as representing both summer and winter. In addition, Finnur was also one of the first to recognize that Saxo's claim that Ollerus traveled on a "bone" probably meant "skates", since the oldest skates were made from bones (1821-1823, v. 1, pp. 151-159, pp. 194-196; 1821-1823, v. 2, p. 260, and so on). In 1825 he additionally argued that Ullr's role as a god of winter and cold, made him perfect to "dæmpe den Hede der maatte være ved de gloende Kjedler," in *Grímnismál* str. 42 (Finnur Magnússon, 1824-1826, v. 3, p. 34).

1. This theory, despite its flimsy support, has continued to be mentioned throughout modern scholarship.

Jacob Grimm spoke only briefly on the role of Ullr in Nordic mythology, most prominently in his *Deutsche Mythologie*, where he argued (Grimm, 1854, p. 209) that the Merseburg inscription bore witness to the now well-established notion of the identical nature of the two named beings *Phol* and *Balder*. Grimm suggested that if the two *Phol* and *Balder* are not identical, however, the *ph* in the inscription is to be interpreted as *v* or *w*, in which case *Wol* could be a cognate to Old Norse *Ullr*, which, according to Grimm, was probably related to Old High German *wolla* 'wool', which would create the alliterative wording "Wol endi Wodan" (Ullr and Óðinn) in the charm. To Grimm's mind, this alliteration was unproblematic from a mythological perspective, since, as he stressed, *Vegtamskviða* referred to Baldr as a relative of the god Ullr (see above).

In 1843, Danish priest and scholar Karsten Friis Viborg (sometimes Wiborg, 1813-1885) published his *Fremstillning af Nordens Mythologi for dannede Læsere*, in which he (Viborg, 1843, pp. 104-107) took up a different approach, arguing extensively for the proposition that Ullr was identical to Týr. Viborg imagined that *Týr* was an honorary title applied to Ullr (cf. PG. **Tiwaz* 'god'), and that *Ullr* was the god's original personal name. As to Ullr's family relations, Viborg put forth the quite imaginative theory that: "Hymer havde en Sön, Ullr, med sin Kone, Algyllin; Thor dræbte Hymer, ægtede Algyllin, og antog hendes og Hymers Sön som sin egen Stifsön; hun fik, i saa nær Beröring med Aserne, Tilnavnet Sif, og Ullr Tilnavnet Tir" (Viborg, 1843, p. 107). Viborg, like all scholars at the time, considered *Ullr* to mean 'wool'. In addition, he argued that Ollerus, in Saxo's story, represented honour, and a shift to a new historical period characterized by honesty and glory – his predecessor Óðinn having been an adulterer and breaker of oaths (1843, p. 171).

Niels Matthias Petersen (1791-1862), who published his *Nordisk Mythologi* in 1849, echoed Finnur Magnússon's idea that Ullr and Baldr were closely related, as personifications of winter and summer respectively (Petersen, 1849, pp. 288-289). Petersen also recognized that Ullr must have been of some importance in ancient history, on the basis of the mentions of the gods in *Grímnismál* and *Atlakviða* (see Chapters 5.1.1 and 5.1.2). Petersen nonetheless considered Viborg's argument of Ullr being identical to Týr to be unsubstantiated, writing: "Viborgs mening, at Uller er den samme som Tyr, og kunde afbildes enhåndet, forekommer mig uforenlig med alt hvad Edda véd om dem" (Petersen, 1849, pp. 288-289).

During the middle of the 19th century, numerous other more or less substantiated theories on Ullr were made in passing by a number of German scholars. Karl Weinhold, for example, commented briefly in 1848 (p. 5), in his *Die Sagen von Loki*, that "Ullr und Hænir sind uralte dunkle gottheiten, welche durch die jüngeren Baldur und Höðr später aus dem Ásenkreise verdrängt werden." Weinhold (1848, p. 26) held that the triad Óðinn–Hænir–Loki was similar to that of Óðinn–Vili–Vé, and saw similarities to the three instances where Mithotyn, Ollerus and Vili and Vé

all take Óðinn's place in different myths. To Weinhold's mind, Ullr would be one of the two brothers, and perceived as a "luft- und sonnengott". Karl Müllenhoff (1818-1884), in his *Sagen, Märchen und Lieder der Herzogthümer Schleswig, Holstein und Lauenburg*, meanwhile argued that the god mentioned by Saxo, *Ollerus*, who clearly answers to Old Norse *Ullr* (see Chapter 5.4), should not be confused with *Holler*: "Mit Saxos Ollerus, dem nordischen Ullr, was deutsch Wol (Gen. Wolles) wäre, hat er natürlich nichts zu thun [...]" (Müllenhoff, 1845, p. 46).

The arguments continued. Karl Joseph Simrock (1802-1876) presented an exhaustive theory on the close relation between Óðinn and Ullr in his *Handbuch der deutschen Mythologie* (1855). On the basis of Saxo's myth of the two gods, Simrock (1855, p. 333 & pp. 336-339) argued that Ullr and Óðinn were, if not one and the same god, at least closely related. To Simrock's mind, Ullr is the "wintery side of Óðinn," while Óðinn himself represents summer. According to Simrock, during the winter months of the North, Óðinn's normal role of leading armies against each other, is obstructed by the climate, meaning that he then instead takes on the role of hunter, armed with bow and arrows in the shape of Ullr. Simrock imagined that whenever Óðinn rules, Ullr is in the underworld, and vice versa, something that would explain Ullr's earlier assumed "friendship" with Baldr. To Simrock's mind, it was in the underworld, where Baldr went whenever the light waned, that Ullr first met Baldr, a god of light and summer. It is as a god of the underworld, Simrock explains, that Ullr joins with the earlier-noted Frisian god of the underworld, Holler, the two words standing in relation to each other as *Woden* does to *Hoden*, a linguistic development which would have taken place through fricative alternation (*Spirantenwechsel*). According to Simrock, *Holler* is also reminiscent of the Germanic folklore figure of *Frau Holla*, who, supposedly, appears as *Wolla* on the Merseburg Incantation. Ullr's name, to Simrock's mind, as to Grimm's and indeed most other scholars at the time, is based on an original word meaning 'wool', connected to the "wooly" snowflakes of winter. Simrock also suggests, that the goddess Skaði, presented by Snorri as being related to the winter, and who is said to marry Óðinn after her marriage with Njörðr ends, further indicates a relation between Óðinn and Ullr, through the "winter connection" between Ullr and Skaði.

In 1868, German philologist Hugo Meyer (1831-1908), in his article "Abhandlung über Roland", introduced yet another approach, when he argued for the god being equated with both Höðr and Holler in the context of Frankish history. As with previous scholars, *Vegtamskviða*'s apparent association of Baldr and Ullr was taken as being an indicator of an intricate relationship between the two gods, Höðr, as a brother to Baldr, being seen by Meyer as having displaced Ullr at a later point. Meyer attempted to tie Ullr–Ollerus–Holler to the Frankish legendary hero Roland's close advisor, Olivier, partly through similarities between the different names (Meyer, 1868, pp. 12-

13).

It was not until 1851 that scholarship on the god at last somewhat changed direction, when the German linguist Joseph Bachlechner (1851, p. 203) presented his now widely accepted etymology of the name, as being related to Gothic *wulþus* 'splendour, glory' (see Chapter 3.1). It took time, however, for Bachlechner's theory to be entirely absorbed by the scientific community. It was not until 1859, when Swedish linguist Carl Säve presented a lecture in which Bachlechner's theory was heavily espoused, that the etymology received more widespread recognition (Säve, 1860, p. 83).

In the meantime, other arguments continued to be made. In 1854, Norwegian historian Peter Andreas Munch (1810-1863) published *Nordmændenes ældste Gude- og Helte-sagn*. An early pioneer in the usage of place names to study religion, Munch identified many locations in his native Norway, which he thought were originally dedicated to the old gods. He was aware of Bachlechner's 1851 etymology for *Ullr*, but found it difficult to combine with the account of the god in the *Poetic* and *Prose Edda* (see Chapters 5.1 and 5.3). He subsequently expressed some uncertainty about the identity of Ullr, initially arguing that he might even be identical with Óðinn or Þórr. Munch (1854, p. 22) additionally argued that the form **Ullinn* found in places names (see Chapters 3.2 and 4.1.2) "synes nærmest at være et Tilnavn for Odin," but, later, in the same publication, nuanced this position, pointing out that "tvivelsomt [er], om man ej bør antage Ullin for eenstydigt med Ull" (Munch, 1854, p. 171).

Another development came about with the discovery of the Thorsberg chape (see Chapter 3.3.1). Sophus Bugge (1868-1869, pp. 180-182) and Ludvig Wimmer (1887, p. 105) argued for the first time that the first stem in the runic inscription *owlþuþewaz* on the chape represented a theophoric name, a cognate to Gothic *wulþus* (noted by Bachlechner) and Old Norse *Ullr*. The inscription was thus believed to read 'servant of [the god] Ullr' (alternatively 'servant of glory').

Arguments on Ullr's family background continued, when in 1886 and 1889, the Swede Viktor Rydberg (1828-1895) published his *Undersökningar i germanisk mythologi*, in which he theorized that Ullr's father was Egill-Örvandill (from an earlier marriage with Sif), a legendary hero and archer of Germanic mythology, from whom Ullr inherited his skills with the bow (see Chapters 5.1.1 and 5.3). As such, Ullr was seen as being both a cousin to Skaði and half-brother to Svipdagr-Óðr, according to Rydberg's interpretation. Rydberg also theorized that Saxo's *Rollerus* (Saxo, book five, chapter two, and so on), was the same as Ollerus, and consequently the same as Ullr, and thus part of various other myths recorded by Saxo. According to Rydberg, the two names *Ollerus* and *Rollerus* stand in relation to each other as *Ólfr* does to *Hrólfr*, *Hrólfr* being a contraction of *Hróð-úlfr*, something that, according to Rydberg, indicates yet another (unrecorded) contraction, **Hróð-*

Ullr. In this connection, Rydberg himself notes that the form *Hríðullr hrotta* occurs as a kenning for *battle* in *Grettis saga*.

With the gradual development of Scandinavian place name research as a tool in the study of pre-historic Nordic religion (after Munch), an increasing number of publications touching upon Ullr's presence in place names came to be presented in the end of the 19th century. As early as 1878, Magnus Fredrik Lundgren (1852-1903) published his *Språkliga intyg om hednisk gudatro i Sverige*, in which he began his chapter on *Ullr* names by commenting: "Jag har redan här närmast efter de tre främsta gudarne upptagit namnet på denne gud, därför att det utom dessa ej finnes någon, hvars namn är ens tillnärmelsevis lika vanligt i sv. ortn." (Lundgren, 1878, p. 69). Lundgren went on to investigate numerous Swedish place names which to his mind were drawn from the name of the god, as well as, with some well-founded uncertainty, a number of personal names potentially stemming from the name of the god.[2] By this point, the acceptance of Bachlechner's 1851 etymology had become widespread, and, bearing this in mind, a few years later, in 1880, the Norwegian linguist Oluf Rygh (1833-1899) published his *Minder om Guderne og deres Dyrkelse i norske Stedsnavne*, where Rygh, like Lundgren, recognized the prominence of the *Ullr* names.

Rygh's most important contribution to place-name studies began in 1897 with the publication of the state-endorsed *Norske Gaardnavne*,[3] which was intended to survey all Norwegian farm and place names. Work on the project (which reached a total of 19 volumes) had begun in 1878, but with the beginning of its publication in 1897, researchers found new grounds on which to base investigations into previously unexplored territory, on the basis of the project's enormous scope and systematic recording of pronunciations of place names. It was during this period that the Norwegian **Ullinn* was first extensively talked about (see Chapter 3.2.1). Rygh had already equated the word with *Ullr* in his aforementioned 1880 publication (Rygh, 1880, pp. 10-12, and so on), as had Munch in 1854, but the problem nonetheless garnered significant discussion in the various volumes of *Norske Gaardnavne*, especially NG 2 (p. 310), where Rygh commented that:

> Paa Grund af den paa 3 Steder forekommende Sammensætning med hof maa det ansees for utvivlsomt, at dette Ullinn, der efter de Forbindelser, hvori det forekommer, maa gaa meget langt tilbage i Tiden, er et gammelt Gudenavn. Dette styrkes derved, at Flertallet af de Steder, som have Navne sms. dermed, ere gamle Kirkesteder; Kirker lagdes jo i den første kristelige Tid gjerne paa Steder, hvor Hedendommens Guder før havde været dyrkede. Guden Ullinn kjendes ikke ellers; det bliver ganske usikkert, om han er Ullr under en anden Form eller en ganske forskjellig Guddom.

2. A deeper investigation into personal names was made in Lundgren's publication *Spår af hednisk kult och tro i fornsvenska personnamn* (1880), which discussed *Ullr* only briefly, and with considerable uncertainty.
3. Henceforth NG.

Also of some interest in this regard is a work by Elof Hellquist (1864-1933), *Studier öfver de svenska sjönamnen* (1903-1906, pp. 673-676), in which Hellquist took the opportunity to theorize on a number of lake names starting with *Ull*-, and whether or not they were theophoric. Hellquist favoured theophoric explanations for several of the names in question. Also of interest for place names was the article by Magnus Olsen (1878-1963), "Hærnevi: En gammel svensk og norsk gudinde" (1908), in which Olsen saw a variation of Freyja's alternative name *Hǫrn* in a number of Swedish place names. These names, Olsen argued, could be found in the immediate vicinity of *Ullr* names, and bore witness to an old fertility cult. Olsen's ideas were furthermore substantiated by Oskar Lundberg (1882-1956) and Hans Sperber (1885-1963), who, in a co-publication in 1912 (p. 20), also found reasons to consider **Hærn–Ullr* a pair in Swedish place names.

Philological discussions on Ullr's persona also continued during this period. In 1895, Rudolf Much (1862-1936) attempted to make sense of the various shield kennings involving Ullr's name (see Chapter 5.2). Much suggested that various words for "skiing" (a practice with which Snorri associates Ullr: see Chapter 5.3), such as Old Norse *skíð*, German *scheit*, Celtic *sketo*, Irish *scíath*, and so on, literally meant "abgespaltenes stück holz", and generally and historically denoted various kinds of wooden boards, rather than skis in specific. Thus, Much imagined that the original meaning of the word *skíð* had given rise to the meaning 'shield' (a wooden board), for which Old Norse *skjöldr* was another word (Much, 1895, pp. 35-36). This, to his mind, meant that Ullr's relation to skis needed reconsidering.

Another significant contribution to the philological discussion appeared in 1904, when Henrik Schück (1855-1947) published his large work *Studier i nordisk litteratur- och religionshistoria*, which touched upon various new aspects of Ullr's role and persona. Schück (1904, pp. 226-227) argued amongst other things that the goddess Skaði actually denoted an older variation of Ullr. Schück (1904, pp. 195-196, and so on), like some of his predecessors, also considered Ullr a chthonic alternation god, who stood in close relation to Óðinn. Similarly to Weinhold in 1848, Schück considered the various myths in which Óðinn was replaced temporarily by "place-holders" (Mithotyn, Ollerus, Vili and Vé), to be representations of an old alternation myth, pertaining to the alternating nature of the seasons – summer replacing winter and vice versa. To Schück's mind, Óðinn and Ullr were brothers, and Óðinn's departure in the beginning of Saxo's Ollerus myth represented his killing by Ullr. In this version, Schück imagines, Ullr took Rind as wife, and together they brought about the rebirth of Óðinn, which is represented by his eventual return. The myth is thus seen as a vegetation myth, which showcases the death and renewal of the vegetation god (Óðinn). As such, Ullr is the (twin) brother of the vegetation god, who ensures his eventual downfall (and return) – everything symbolizing the cycle of the seasons, winter giving

birth to summer, and vice versa. It is through this methodology that Schück sees Sif's relation to Ullr, imagining that Snorri had misunderstood his sources, and that Ullr was in fact not himself "sonr Sifiar" (literally 'son of in-law-relationship'), but rather the "father of *sonr Sifiar*". "Sonr Sifiar" (see also Chapters 5.2 and 5.3) thus denotes Óðinn, and Ullr is the father of this in-law relationship, being the brother of Óðinn himself. According to Schück, the triad Óðinn–Hænir–Loki (similar to that of Óðinn–Vili–Vé in the story of Óðinn's replacement) bore witness to the fact that Hænir and Ullr were, indeed, one and the same. To Schück's mind, the various kennings for Hænir mentioned by Snorri, "[...] hinn skjóta Ás ok hinn langa fót ok aurkonung" (*Skáldskaparmál* 63 [Faulkes, 1998, p. 19]) bore witness to Hænir's role as a skier and archer (Schück, 1904, p. 228).

In 1907 (pp. 117-120), German Eugen Mogk (1854-1939) took yet another approach to Ullr in his *Germanische Mythologie*, when he argued that Ullr was to be equated with Loki, on the grounds that the two gods are both related to fire (Ullr through his association with the fires in *Grímnismál* str. 42: see Chapter 4.2.1), and are both referred to as beautiful by Snorri (see Chapter 4.4.1). Mogk, similarly to other scholars, looked at the "triad" of gods, Óðinn–Loki–Hænir, and attempted to establish that the triad Loki–Ullr–Hænir all represented the same gods, seeing Mithotyn as identical to Loki, Ollerus as identical to Ullr, and Hænir as the third part of the triad.

In 1914, another contribution to the place name material was presented, when Hjalmar Lindroth (1878-1947) published *En nordisk gudagestalt i ny belysning genom ortnamnen*, a quite extensive study on Swedish place names associated with the deity Skaði. Lindroth saw a female variation, *Skeðja*, of the masculine name form *Skaði*, in numerous Swedish place names, and thought them to be named in conjunction with several *Ullr* names in the country, as well as with *Finn-* names (Lindroth, 1914, pp. 1-47). Lindroth imagined that the pair *Skaði*–(*Skeðja*)–*Ullr* had been pushed out by stronger Germanic gods, and eventually partially taken up by "Finns" (Lindroth, 1914, p. 48), which would account for their shared association with skis, bows and hunting. In his study, Lindroth raised the possibility of Ullr having been a former sun god (see Chapter 6), but theorized that the god was originally related to the moon (while pointing out the difficulty in clearly distinguishing the two concepts of the sun and the moon on linguistic and philological grounds), representing the strong, shining full moon, and Skaði representing the darker, lower moon. Lindroth furthermore imagined that Ullr's ring, and therewith associated kennings for shields, represented the full-moon's journey across the night sky, a concept earlier presented by Ernst Siecke (1909, p. 251). Similar concepts had been demonstrated among the Sami people, which Lindroth postulated might strengthen his previously asserted theory of a connection existing between Ullr, Skaði and a people referred to in place names as *Finns* (Lindroth, 1914, pp. 51-58).

The same year, Erik Brate (1857-1924) published his *Vanerna*, a mythological investigation

into the *vanir*. Here, Brate argued for the idea that Freyr and Ullr were identical, and that *Grímnismál* 5 and 6 bore witness to this fact (see Chapter 4.1.1), suggesting that Ullr's *Ýdalir* and Freyr's *Álfheimr* are both seen by the composer as one and the same (Brate, 1914, pp. 13-15).

The following year, in 1915, Magnus Olsen published the monumental *Hedenske kultminder i norske stedsnavne*, an exhaustive study of pre-Christian religious remnants in Norwegian place names, and their implications on religious history. Olsen's study was groundbreaking at the time, and gave rise to numerous similar studies, reviews and debates in the upcoming decades. Naturally, Olsen's study took up the question of the prominent *Ullr* and **Ullinn* names in the country, the author presenting a number of theories in relation to these names, most importantly that **Ullinn* was a younger variation of the *Ullr* name, primarily based on its association with *hof* (see Chapter 3.2). Olsen saw reason to support the idea raised by Rygh and Munch, that **Ullinn* was identical to *Ullr* (Olsen, 1915, pp. 104-105). Olsen also saw reason to believe that *Ullr* and *Freyr* constituted a male pair of gods in Norwegian place names, and that, together, they made up an old fertility cult – Freyr representing the dark, cloudy sky, and Ullr the clear, bright sky (Olsen, 1915, pp. 233-257). Other relations deduced through place names were a connection between the *dísir*, Ullr and Þórr, a relationship Olsen also tried to establish for Sweden, through use of historical-mythological literature pertaining to the *dísablót* and the *dísaþing* (Olsen, 1915, pp. 186-193). Olsen also made the argument that the individual speaking the lines in strophe 42 of *Grímnismál* (see Chapter 5.1.1) was not Óðinn (Grímnir), but Ullr (Olsen, 1915, p. 236). In addition, Olsen also saw remnants of the Ullr cult in other Norwegian place names such as *Skjaldarakr* and *Ringisakr*, based on Ullr's mythological association with "rings" (*Atlakviða* str. 30), and shields (Olsen, 1915, pp. 219-232, see also Chapters 5.1.2 and 9).

Like previous scholars such as Axel Olrik (see below) and Karsten Friis Viborg, Olsen felt Ullr was identical to the sky god Týr, and that, in certain cases, Ullr had the role of a sky god in a fertility cult, who had inherited characteristics from a certain "kornvætte eller korngud" ('god or spirit of grain'), and acted in conjunction with a female deity – in Sweden, the earth goddess **Hærn*, just as Týr was a sky god in marriage with the earth goddess *Nerthus* (*Njörðr*) – something Olsen found evidence for in Norway (Olsen, 1915, p. 197 & p. 201). Olsen (1915, p. 187 & p. 221) also pioneered the possibility of the Ullr having been intrinsically related to law and justice, as "tingfredens og retssikkerhedens haandhæver" (Olsen, 1915, p. 221), an idea for which both literary and place name evidence arguably bear witness. Olsen (1915, pp. 303-304) also took the opportunity to respond to Brate's previous argument that Freyr and Ullr were identical, by arguing that *Grímnismál* str. 5 simply indicated that the two gods were closely related, and perhaps lived in

the same space,[4] an idea that was perfectly in line with Olsen's postulated "male pair of gods".

It was not until 1916 (pp. 107-124) that a study solely dedicated to the god first surfaced, in an article entitled "Ull – en mytologisk undersøkelse", by Norwegian Just Bing (1866-1954). Here, Bing made an ambitious attempt at demonstrating that Ullr, as a more ancient god, had been pushed out and taken over by Óðinn. According to Bing, Saxo's account of Óðinn eventually driving Ollerus to Sweden, where he was killed by Danes (see Chapter 5.4), was one of the clearest depictions of this historical religious change. Bing also argued that Adam of Bremen's (book four) account of the statues of Þórr, Óðinn and Freyr, in which Þórr took the middle position as the most important god (see Adam of Bremen, 1959, p. 207), and where Óðinn was revered on the same level as Freyr, bore witness to a historical state in which Óðinn had not yet reached such a position in religious worship whereby he could push out the old god Þórr. At this point, he had only managed to replace the ancient Ullr (Bing, 1916, pp. 110-111). The original triad had thus been Þórr–Freyr–Ullr. Bing additionally argued, on quite flimsy grounds, that Skaði was originally a male winter demon, married to the female variation of Njörðr (Nerthus, known in Sweden as *Njörð*, *Njärd*, and so on: see Chapter 4.3.3). Skaði had subsequently changed gender, and had her characteristics taken up by Ullr (Bing, 1916, p. 114). Bing also made use of the old *owlƀuƀewaz* runic inscription from the Thorsberg chape, to demonstrate, on exceedingly uncertain grounds, that Ullr's original name form had been *Wolƀ*, which reflected nicknames used for Óðinn in German folk tradition, *Wold*, *Wodl*, *Waudl*, and so on. Originally, Bing argued, Ullr had been a fertility god (which his association with shields apparently bore witness to). To his mind, Ullr's absorption of Skaði's wintery attributes marked a decline in both cults, whereby their personas and characteristics were no longer well-rooted in the religious perception of their worshippers (Bing, 1916, p. 122). Bing also touched upon the possibility of Ullr and Freyr having been a pair of gods, worshipped together in a single cult (Bing, 1916, p. 107 & p. 123).

In the beginning of the 1920s, place-name research once again took a prominent position in the study of Nordic religion. In 1918, place name veteran Jöran Sahlgren (1884-1971) published the article "Förbjudna ord", in his journal *Namn och bygd*, where he argued, perhaps hastily, that *Ullr* was actually a noa name: "Genom tabu har troligen ock gudanamnet *Ullr* uppkommit. *Ullr* är tydligen identiskt med got. *wulƀus* 'härlighet' och är sålunda ett berömmande noanamn" (Sahlgren, 1918, p. 23).

During the following years, place-name studies in which scholars attempted to establish "pairs" of gods in theophoric place names were particularly prevalent. Publications by Elias Wessén (1889-1981) among others further reaffirmed the well-established (at this point) notion of Ullr's

4. Brate later defended his position further in a response to Olsen and his study in 1918 (Brate, 1918b).

prominence as a major god in pre-historic Sweden. Of particular importance were a number of publications by Wessén, among them “Forntida gudsdyrkan i Östergötland. 1” (1921a), “Hästskede och Lekslätt” (1921b), “Forntida gudsdyrkan i Östergötland. 2” (1922a), “Till de nordiska äringsgudarnas historia” (1922b), “Minnen av forntida gudsdyrkan i Mellan-Sveriges ortnamn” (1923), and *Studier till Sveriges hedna mytologi och fornhistoria* (1924) in which Ullr’s former role as a fertility god, in conjunction with a female (earth) goddess, was established. It was also assumed that by the time of the introduction of Christianity, the Ullr cult and its places of worship had already been abandoned. In these works, Wessén also made numerous claims about the probability of the god Freyr being younger than Ullr, and the possibility of this god (rather than Óðinn, as scholars had assumed from Saxo’s account) having subsequently taken over after the dying-out of the Ullr cult. In 1929-1930 (pp. 114-115) Wessén went as far as to suppose that “Frö is eigentlich ein *Ullr freyr*, ein 'Ullr der Herr'.”

Between 1926-1951, the large work *Nordens Gudeverden* was published in two volumes, written by Axel Olrik and Hans Ellekilde, in which new attention was given to the idea of Ullr as a sun god. Olrik and Ellekilde argued that the sun god that can be discerned on Bronze Age rock images (see Chapter 7) reflects a god which later came to be known as Ullr, a god of the sun or the heavens (Olrik & Ellekilde, v. 1, 1926-1951, pp. 558-559). The two authors also argued strongly for the probability of Týr being a Danish variation of the Swedish and Norwegian sky god Ullr, based on literary and place name evidence (Olrik & Ellekilde, v. 1, 1926-1951, pp. 559-562).

Meanwhile, in the same period, in 1926, Ivar Lindquist published the second study solely dedicated to the god, in an article titled “Eddornas bild av Ull – och guldhornens”, in the journal *Namn och bygd*. A large part of Lindquist’s study attempted to verify the various claims made by Snorri (see Chapter 5.3). Here, for example, Lindquist argued that Ullr was to be found on both of the two golden horns from Gallehus, Denmark, depicted as a figure wielding a bow. The author, additionally, presented a new alternative etymology, in which the name of the god was said to stem from the Indo-European root ***u̯el-*** 'to see', and related to Gothic *wlits* 'appearance', rather than *wulþus*. Building on Snorri’s account of Ullr being “fagr álitum” (see Chapter 5.3), Lindquist makes the assumption that *Ullr* literally meant “den utomordentligt sköne” (Lindquist, 1926, pp. 95-96). Since Lindquist also believed he could identify Týr on the Gallehus horns, he felt able to show, contrary to Viborg, Olrik and Olsen, that Týr and Ullr were considered clearly distinct gods (Lindquist, 1926, p. 102). A few years later, in 1929, Lindquist published another article titled “Gudar på skidor”, in which he expressed the idea that Ullr was not originally associated with skis, but rather with bows and with hunting, arguing that it was only in Norway that Ullr received his association with skis. Lindquist (1929a, p. 13) supported his claims by arguing that the depiction of

Ullr on the Danish Gallehus horns without the skis bore witness to the lateness of this association (see also Chapters 5.3 and 10). Here, Lindquist also cites a response to his 1926 study by Edgar Reuterskiöld, in which Reuterskiöld sees Ullr as depicted on a Sami drum from the 17th or 18th century (Lindquist, 1929a, p. 13).

In 1930-1931, Johan Palmér (1930-1931, pp. 290-291) presented a much-needed examination of the semantic development of Ullr's Gothic cognate *wulþus*. Palmér imagined that the Indo-European root **u̯el-* 'to see', which forms the basis for the Gothic word, might alternatively have had the meaning 'shine', similar to the way in which closely-related concepts such as 'dark' and 'blind' might be contained within a single word. Palmér argued that Gothic *wulþus* might have originally meant 'radiance, glance, sheen', later to develop a more religiously appropriate meaning, 'splendour, glory, brilliance', and so on, as is evident from the use of the term in Wulfila's Gothic bible.

Discussions of Ullr's role in place names continued also in the 1930s; Jöran Sahlgren published his *Vad våra ortnamn berätta* in 1932, a summary of a number of lectures and studies carried out by himself and others throughout the beginning of the 20th century. Here, Sahlgren brought new attention a number of interesting claims about Ullr and the god's place names in Sweden. As Brate (1914) had done previously, Sahlgren argued that Freyr and Ullr were identical (Sahlgren, 1932, p. 62), and that the two names were simply variations of one and the same god. Sahlgren argued furthermore, as had been done before, that *Ullr* and *Njörðr* belonged to the oldest stratum of named Nordic gods, partly based on their association with older second stems, but also because of their apparent absence in parish names (Sahlgren, 1932, pp. 60-61). This was an idea that had been presented earlier, in 1922, in Elof Hellquist's etymological dictionary of the Swedish language, where Hellquist had noted that *Ullr* is "icke i ett enda säkert fall uppvisat i sockennamn […]" (Hellquist, 1948, p. 1274).

Arguments continued. The same year, in 1933, Norwegian Nils Lid (1890-1958) published *Jolesveinar og grøderikedomsgudar*, in which he presented a number of more or less controversial propositions in regard to the god, arguing, among other things, that *Ullr*'s original name form was actually the alternative Norwegian variation **Ullinn*. He also revived the idea of the god's etymology being related to 'wool', and that the god was intrinsically related to wool in cult worship.

This is followed in 1935 and 1937 by Jan de Vries' (1890-1964) monumental standard work on Germanic mythology and religion, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, in which de Vries summarized previous research, with particular focus on the place names among other things. He emphasized, correctly, that no Danish place names could firmly be associated with the god, and recognized the probability of Ullr having originally been a sky god. Because of the god's

association with winter, de Vries saw, rather than a sun god, a god which constituted a personification of the "sternenbesäte Nachthimmel im Winter" (de Vries, 1957, p. 162). de Vries also considered the Ullr cult to have arisen in Uppland, Sweden, and Oppland, Norway (de Vries, 1957, pp. 156-158), and that the relationship deduced by Olsen between *Freyr* and *Ullr*, was younger than the one found between *Njörðr* and *Ullr*. de Vries had touched upon the relationship between *Ullr* and *Ullinn* previously: For example, in 1934 (de Vries, 1934a, pp. 193-206), de Vries had criticized Nils Lid's etymology, and reinforced the probability of *Ullr* being older than **Ullinn*. de Vries also, on linguistic grounds, demonstrated the likelihood of the idea that gods such as *Njörðr* and *Ullr* belong to the oldest strata of gods in Scandinavian religion.

In 1939, a new structural, comparative approach was added to the discussion, when Georges Dumézil (1898-1986) published his highly regarded *Mythes et dieux des Germains*. Here, Dumézil, similar to Viborg (1843, p. 171), argued that Ullr essentially represented a more "glorious" aspect of the god Óðinn. For Dumézil, evidence of this was present in the Saxo myth, as well as in *Atlakviða*'s mention of an oath sworn on "Ullr's ring". While Óðinn was known as a breaker of oaths, Ullr, instead, represented the gravest honesty in oath swearing (Dumézil, 1939, pp. 144-147).

In 1941, Franz Rolf Schröder (1893-1979) published *Skadi und die Götter Skandinaviens*, in which he, once again, like Lid, returned to the idea of an etymology related to 'wool' (pp. 81-82), which was perfectly in line with Schröder's proposition of Skaði as a symbol of the goat. To Schröder's mind, Skaði and Ullr could potentially have originally been a more northern variation of the "sibling pair" Freyr and Freyja, their father being Skaði's father, Þjazi (Schröder, 1941, pp. 74-116, esp. p. 109).

A year later, in 1942, new evidence was added to the question of dating based on place names, when Ólafur Lárusson published an article suggesting that one might potentially find *Ullr* in at least two Icelandic place names, *Ullarklettur* and *Ullarfoss*, on the basis that they both lie adjacently to two other apparently theophoric place names, *Goðaklettur* and *Goðafoss* (Ólafur Lárusson, 1942, p. 79).

In the following years, Åke Ohlmarks (1911-1984), who had specialized in the sun cult of the Bronze Age, and whose failed doctoral thesis *Heimdals Horn und Odins Auge* had attempted to establish that Heimdallr was an original sun god, published a largely ignored collection of studies written by himself during the late 30s and early 40s, entitled *Studien zur altgermanischen Religionsgeschichte*, one of which was called *Ullr und das Königtum* (1943). Here, Ohlmarks, like Olrik before him, attempted to demonstrate that Ullr had been the original Swedish sun god of the Bronze Age, continuing to argue for similar standpoints in later publications (Ohlmarks, 1947, pp. 200-211; 1948, p. 263; 1954, p. 266; 1963a, pp. 232-236; 1963b, pp. 47-49; 1983, p. 316 & pp.

368-369, etc). According to Ohlmarks, Ullr and the Swedish sun cult's primary place of influence was Uppsala, with Ulleråker and the majestic Bronze Age grave mound of *Hågahögen*. Ohlmarks even went as far as to argue that the historical king of Håga might have been perceived as the sun god Ullr embodied on earth.

In 1947 and 1955, the first systematic study of Ullr was at last published, by Eric Elgqvist, in his *Ullvi och Götevi* and *Ullvi och Ullinshov*. While Elgqvist's studies never garnered widespread acceptance, he presented a number of original ideas in relation to Ullr's characteristics as a subject of cult worship. The two studies focused particularly on the place names of Norway and Sweden, Elgqvist systematically listing each theophoric *Ullr* name in the two countries (1947, pp. 2-30; 1955, pp. 18-38). Elgqvist (1955, pp. 72-73) also presented yet another alternative (if questionable) etymology to the god's name, arguing that *Ullr* stemmed from an original Old West Norse **ullı*, Old Swedish **ulder* 'well spring' (Sw. *källsprång*: see Chapter 3.1 and 4.2). Based on this etymology, Elgqvist argued that Ullr had historically been associated with springs, and thought himself able to show that several of the theophoric *Ullr* place names in Sweden were found in association with such springs (Elgqvist, 1955, pp. 39-51). Most important, however, was Elgqvist's investigation into the origin and permanence of the Ullr cult. According to Elgqvist, it might be assumed that Ullr was once the major god of the *Sveaı*, his influence being found primarily in those areas under the control of the Swedes. Elgqvist argued that the Ullr cult would ultimately have originated in Mellansverige. Elgqvist (1955, p. 91) writes:

> Ett ingående studium av de ortnamn, i vilka gudanamnet Ull ingår, ger en kraftig antydan om sannolikheten av att Ullkulten uppkommit i Mellansverige. Det ger dessutom vid handen, att Ull tidigt, sannolikt flera århundraden före folkvandringstiden, varit en svensk huvudgud. Såsom sådan torde han ha efterträtts av Frö, vilken vikingatidens nordbor funnit så starkt sveabetonad, att de kallat honom både *Svía guð* och *blótguð Svía*.

Elgqvist further argued that the place-name evidence bore witness to the fact that the Ullr cult had been forced upon the neighboring *götaı*, based upon, among other things, the centrality of Ullr place names found in historically *Svea* dominated areas, whereas the regions traditionally inhabited by the *götar* saw lower degrees of centrality and gave a more irregular impression (Elgqvist, 1947, pp. 145-152).

Since Elgqvist's time, few original contributions to the study of the god have been made in the latter part of the 20th century. Nonetheless, a few studies are worth noting briefly:

In 1955, Hermann Pálsson (1921-2002) postulated for the first time that the unknown third

deity in the well-known legal formula, *Hjálpi mér svá Freyr ok Njörðr ok inn almáttki Áss* (see Chapter 9), denoted Ullr, dismissing various previous explanations, which had sought to explain the god as Þórr or Óðinn (Hermann Pálsson, 1955, pp. 187-192), and thereby suggesting some continuation of the Ullr cult at the time of the Icelandic settlement.

In 1969, on undeniably shaky grounds, Niels Åge Nielsen (1913-1986) argued in his "Ullr, Freyr and the Sparlösa Stone," that the famous Swedish Sparlösa runestone (see Chapter 6.1), revolved entirely around Ullr. Nielsen's belief, based on an original reading of the stone's runic inscription, was that the stone bore witness to a king's offering of his father's sword to the vegetation god Ullr (Nielsen, 1969, p. 105). Of particular interest was Nielsen's claim that the stone's inscription explicitly equated Freyr with Ullr, and that to whoever carved the runes, Freyr and Ullr were perceived as one and the same. Nielsen argued additionally, on the basis of a mythological survey, that Ullr's father might have been Njörðr, through an earlier marriage with Sif (Nielsen, 1969, pp. 114-122).

In 1997, Richard North, in his *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, made a number of minor claims as to the usage of *Ullr*'s Old English cognate, *Wuldor*, in Old English literature, thereby brining Ullr into a British context (North, 1997, pp. 241-246). North held, among other things, that Snorri's use of the terminology "fagr álitum" was based on historical tradition. According to North, *Atlakviða* str. 30's mention of *hringr Ullar* might even have a parallel in the Old English *wuldorbeag* 'ring of glory'. Another similarity is the Old English use of *wuldorgeflogene* 'glory flown things' in the poem *The Nine Herbs Charm*, which North feels is related to Ullr's role as an archer (see further Chapters 5.1.1 and 5.3).

In 2001, an important addition to the place-name discussion was added when Per Vikstrand published his Ph.D. thesis *Gudarnas platser*, an exhaustive investigation into the place names of Mälarlandskapen in Sweden. Here, Vikstrand concluded that the various Swedish *Ullevi* (see Chapter 4.1.1) should be interpreted as defining features of the Ullr cult in the region, and the country of Sweden as a whole. As he notes, even though most *Ullevi* locations are found in exceedingly old settlements, they are not necessarily found in areas of particular social importance or centrality. Vikstrand also discusses further to what extent one might assume that Ullr was "svearnas främste gud", as Elgqvist (1947 & 1955) had argued (Vikstrand, 2001, pp. 188-189).

A completely new addition to the field was presented in 2007, when Ann-Mari Hållans Stenholm revealed the results of an archaeological investigation into Lilla Ullevi, in Bro parish, Uppland, Sweden, in which 65 ring amulets had been found (see Chapter 6.3). The immediate assumption was that these rings should be related to the Ullr cult in the region, and more specifically to those used in oath swearing and legal matters historically, as suggested in *Atlakviða*

str. 30. Already a decade earlier, an *Ullevi* in Östergötland had been excavated (see Nielsen, 2005), revealing what is possibly a *vé* dedicated to the god Ullr (see Chapter 6.4).

Most recently, in the third volume of her translation of the *Poetic Edda* (2011), Ursula Dronke (1920-2012) has returned to the idea of Ullr being an original sun god, in her discussion of *Grímnismál*. On strophe five (2011, p. 127), Dronke comments that: "A sense of peaceful finality hangs over these stanzas: the glorious old Germanic sun god Wuldor-Ullr is there among ageless old yew-trees, and he is remember again in 42 as the Sun itself." Strangely enough, in the first volume of Dronke's *Edda* translation (1969, p. 65), Dronke has seen herself dumbfounded as to why Ullr would appear in strophe 30 of *Atlakviða* (writing: "[...] no reason for this association has so far been established."), citing only an explanation given in 1939 by Georges Dumézil (see above).

As demonstrated above, numerous theories and postulations about the nature of Ullr and his cult have been made throughout the years. It is important to highlight that the furtive nature of Ullr in the source material leave limited room for interpretation of the god. Nonetheless, a handful of overarching theories as to the specific role and nature of Ullr in religious worship have garnered significant support from scholars in recent years. The following chapters (Chapters 3-6) will provide a comprehensive overview of all extant (etymological, toponymical, literary and archaeological) source material in regard to the god, alongside theories and postulations made in regard to the material in question, whereas the finishing chapters of the essay (Chapter 7-11) will discuss the aforementioned overarching theories, particularly in regard to Ullr's potential relation to a sun cult, his relation to Freyr, and his postulated connection to law and justice. We shall begin by discussing the unique source of information, which is *Ullr*'s etymology.

3.0. *Ullr*: Name, Variations and Etymology

Ullr's name is arguably equally as elusive as his persona. A number of theories and etymologies have been presented throughout the years by a variety of different scholars to explain his name. The most important and notable of these explanations will be presented and discussed in this chapter. It should be borne in mind that the etymologies of the potential alternative meanings of the *place name elements* will be discussed in the chapter regarding place names (see Chapter 4). This chapter will deal exclusively with the etymologies and variations of the names denoting the *Ullr* deity.

3.1. The Etymology of *Ullr*

As noted in the previous chapter, one of the oldest and most widely accepted interpretations of the name *Ullr* (genitive *Ullar*)[5] was presented by Joseph Bachlechner (1851, p. 203), who argued that the word stems from the Gothic word *wulþus* 'splendour' (Lehmann, 1986, p. 413)[6], a word commonly found in Christian Gothic literature (Palmér, 1930-31, p. 290; Vikstrand, 2001, p. 166), and, among other places, in the Gothic Lord's Prayer, where it is used as a translation of the Greek *doxa* (Lat. *gloria*), in an apparent reference to the gleam surrounding God in the Christian vision of heaven. This word, in turn, is derived from Proto-Germanic **wulþuz* (Schröder, 1941, p. 80), and as such, is a masculine *u*-stem. Jan de Vries (1934a, pp. 193-206, esp. p. 203) argued that masculine *u*-stems such as *Ullr*, *Óðr* and *Njörðr* used in names of ancient Germanic deities, indicate that these gods belong to one of the oldest layers of Scandinavian religion. In Old Norse, *wulþus* is found with the typical loss of word-initial **w*- before a round vowel (as in similar words such as *orð*, *úlfr* and *Óðinn*), and with *lþ* assimilated into *ll*, thus rendering it *Ull-r*. Pokorny (1959, pp. 1136-1137) sees the Proto-Germanic word **wulþuz* as stemming from the Indo-European root **u̯el-* 'to see', and considers **u̯l-tu-* (which becomes **wulþuz*) 'appearance', to be a *tu*-derivative of the same stem (GEM, p. 413).[7] Cognates of this word and its root are found in a variety of related languages, including the Old English *wuldor* 'fame'; the Latin *voltus*, *vultus* 'facial expression, appearance, form'; the Old Irish *fil* 'behold!' (GEM, ibid.), as well as the Irish *filis* 'sees', and Old Celtic *veleda* 'seeress' (Lindquist, 1926, p. 96). On the basis of the above arguments, both Vikstrand (2001, p. 166) and Ström (1961, p. 105) suggest that the name *Ullr* must have originally meant 'splendour' or 'radiance' (Sw. *härlighet* or *glans*), Ström claiming the god to have been a "manifestation av det

5. Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson (1931, p. 578) note that Eysteinn Valdason also uses the genitive *Ulls* (see also Chapter 5.2 and 11). Lundgren (1878, p. 69) notes that the name's nominative form never appears in Old Swedish, although claiming it undoubtedly must have been **Uller* or **Ulder*.
6. A reference to the *Gothic Etymological Dictionary*, henceforth GEM.
7. M. L. West (2007, pp. 146-147) investigated the possibility of a shared Indo-European origin for other deities whose names are derived from this particular Indo-European **u̯el-* root, such as the Lithuanian *Vẽlinas*, Latvian *Vę̃lns*, Vedic *Varuna*, Gaulish *Vellaunos* and Hittite *Walis* (as well as Nordic *Ullr*/**Ullinn*), without success.

glänsande himlavalvet," while de Vries (1957, p. 162) suggests that the god might have been a personification of the "sternenbesäte Nachthimmel im Winter." Ohlmarks (1963a, p. 47), believing the god to be intrinsically related to the sun, suggests the meaning of the word as having been "solens strålglans".

As noted earlier, another etymology derived from the same root was presented by Ivar Lindquist (1926, p. 96), where he argued for an explanation with "less preconceptions". In his view, rather than being derived from Gothic *wulþus*, the name is derived from the Gothic verb *wleitan*, found in Icelandic as *lita*, always with the meaning 'to see'. Lindquist believes its semantic development into meaning 'splendour' can be illustrated by the semantic development of similar words with shifting meanings, such as Gothic *wlits* 'appearance, face, figure', Old Saxon *wliti* 'appearance, face, sheen, splendour', Old English *wlite* and *wlitu* 'beauty', and 'shape, kind' respectively, as well as Icelandic *litr* 'appearance, colour'. According to Lindquist, a similar semantic development can also be found in modern Swedish *syn* 'vision', which can be found with both the meaning 'face' (dialectically *i syna*) as well as with the meaning 'a wonderful or exceptional sight', ultimately rendering the god's name with the meaning 'the wonderfully beautiful one'.[8] This view is similarly echoed by Palmér (1930-1931, pp. 290-291), who, although arguing for the name to be equated with *wulþus*, still considers its semantic development to have started off at an originally profane 'radiation', to later mean 'splendour' ("en kosmisk glans, som samtidigt kunde fattas som gudomlig"), the god's name ultimately meaning 'the radiating one, the splendid one', denoting "he who emits radiation" (Palmér, 1930-1931, pp. 291). All of the meanings derived from the Indo-European **u̯el-* root find a tempting mythological reflection in Snorri Sturluson's own description of the god in *Gylfaginning* 31, where he is referred to as "fagr álitum" (Faulkes, 2005, p. 26), "beautiful in appearance" (Faulkes, 1995, p. 26). Whether or not this is a legitimate remnant of an older understanding of the god is a matter of discussion, but the playfully minded might unashamedly subscribe to that idea. Later in this essay, I will further discuss Snorri's use of this terminology (see Chapter 5.3).

For many modern readers, the god's personal name might seem to have an identical parallel in the cross-Scandinavian *ull* 'wool'. As has been noted, explanations based on this word were presented as early as 1821, by Finnur Magnússon (1821-1823, v. 1, pp. 195-196), who drew heavily on Snorri's account of Ullr as a god of winter: "Gudens Navn er vel draget af det gamle Ord *Ull* (Uld) da Sneeflokkerne tit ere blevne sammenlignede dervid." Jacob Grimm (1854, p. 209) also espoused this early view, commenting that: "[…] altn. Ullr, bei Saxo p. 45 Ollerus dar, der (wie ull lana ahd. wolla) ahd. *Wol* lauten würde […]." Nils Lid, who based his etymology on the alternative

8. Swedish "den utomordentligt sköne" (Lindquist, 1926, p. 96).

form, **Ullinn* (which will be discussed in the following chapter), also argued strongly for Ullr's relation to wool, theorizing that the god's name and characteristics both bore witness to this fact. This explanation of the word was criticized by Schröder (1941, p. 82), who presented his own, related, etymology. He believed the name might stem from Proto-Germanic *wullō-* 'wool', Latin *(v)lāna* 'wool', related to the Greek adjective *λάσιος* 'densely haired, shaggy, wooly'. This would render the god's name as something akin to 'the wooly one'.[9] All of these explanations of the god's name, relating to *wool*, nonetheless seem highly unlikely, and not only from an etymological perspective. Lid (1933, p. 123) uses his *wool* etymology to argue that wool production was an important practice in the Nordic countries at the time of the appearance of the Ullr deity. Lid's explanation of the importance of wool, and the god's association with it, is lacking in several regards. Much of the understanding of the god is based on the accounts found in Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*, in which he is described as a bow god, a hunting god, a skiing god, as having "a warrior's accomplishments", and as being good to pray to in single combat (Snorri Sturluson, 1995, p. 26). Should this description be accurate, the association with Ullr to wool would seem highly unlikely. Wool production is an agricultural pursuit, and if not considered a more feminine practice, then at the very least highly distinguishable from hunting, bow shooting and single combat. Based on these points, any explanation relating the god to wool (a relation found nowhere outside of the god's hypothesized etymological background) is highly unsatisfactory. Certainly, Finnur Magnússon's (1821, v. 1, pp. 195-196) comment that "Sneeflokkerne tit ere blevne sammenlignede dervid [Uld]" seems more probable for any theory attempting to associate the god with wool. Whether this connection between Ullr and "heating" is right or wrong, there are no references anywhere to the god having been explicitly associated with sheep or goats.

Yet another etymology to the god's personal name was presented by Eric Elgqvist (1955, p. 73). Rather than being based on the Gothic common noun *wulþus*, the word is identical to a supposed Old West Norse **ullr*, a word denoting a source (of water, a spring), meaning 'well-spring' (Sw. *källsprång*). Towards the end of Runic Swedish, Elgqvist argues, a *d* would have been inserted between *ll* and *r* in **ullr*, and the form would have appeared in Old Swedish as **ulder* – similar to other Old Swedish words such as *alder* 'all', or *fulder* 'full'. This word would be related to Old West Norse *vella* (preterite *vall*, *ullum*), with the same meaning as Old Swedish *vælder* 'dehiscent beam (of water), squirt' (Sw. *uppspringande stråle*), and created from the stem *ull-*. Elgqvist, thus, considers it very likely that the theophoric name *Ullr* was created from an originally common noun simply meaning 'well-spring'. The meaning of the god's name would therefore have been 'he

9. In addition to his wool-related explanation, Schröder (1941, p. 82) was open to another meaning related to the Proto-Germanic **walþuz*, Old English *weald*, New High German *Wald*, all meaning 'forest' (related to ON. *vǫllr*, from PN. **walþuʀ*). The meaning of the name would thus be "der Gott des Waldes und der Wildnis."

associated with the well-spring' (Sw. *den med källsprånget [källan] förbundne*). Disregarding the fact that an Old Swedish **ulder* has never been recorded, this explanation hardly finds any support in the few literary accounts of the god found in Snorri's *Edda*, the Poetic *Edda* and skaldic poetry, nor, as Vikstrand (2001, p. 181) has been able to demonstrate, in the place name material in Sweden and Norway.[10]

One final etymology deserves to be mentioned, that of Uhlenbeck (1905, p. 327), who suggests an alternative etymology relating *Ullr* and *wulþus* to Gothic *waldan*, which means 'rule', 'exercise authority over', or 'power, authority' (GEM, p. 392). This renders the god's name with the meaning 'the ruler'. This etymology finds a parallel in the idea that the *–na-* (PIE. *–no-*) suffixes, such as those found in **Ullinn* (a side form of *Ullr*) and *Óðinn* (see below), were commonly used to denote rulership or control (cf. ON. *dróttinn*, Got. *þiudans*, Lat. *dominus*, *tribunus*, and so on),[11] as well as in the etymology of Ullr's closely related Freyr (see Chapter 8), whose name according to common knowledge would seem to mean 'lord'. This would perhaps render the god's name as having the meaning 'ruler of splendor', 'ruler of glory'; perhaps a notion that was spawned with the influx of the Óðinn cult in Norway, but has received limited support.

All in all, Bachlechner's 1851 etymology is almost universally accepted by modern scholars. Eric Elgqvist (1955, p. 71) recounts a quotation by German Hermann Schneider (in 1938, p. 217), as to the question of why the *wulþus* etymology has been so heavily espoused:

> Wohin wir sehen, nur Verlegenheit und ungelöste Fragen. Überall hängt dichter Nebel über dieser Göttergestalt, aber er darf uns den Glauben an seine einstige lichte Herrlichkeit nicht stören.

Certainly, it would seem that *wulþus* is one of few suitable etymologies for a deity such as Ullr, whose furtive and elusive nature reveals little of certainty beyond his former prominence in Sweden and Norway. Both Bachlechner (1851, p. 203) and Säve (1860, p. 83) warned of an etymology related to the meaning 'wool' for linguistic purposes, and, as we have seen, other circumstances probably make such an explanation even less favourable. Elgqvist's own etymology, of *Ullr* being related to an Old West Norse **ullr* and Old Swedish **ulder* seem highly unlikely (as Vikstrand, 2001, p. 181, has demonstrated). As far as Gothic *waldan* is concerned, it might probably be dismissed on linguistic grounds. As Säve (1860, p. 83) comments, the common development of *v*/*w* dropping before *u*, and Gothic *-lþ-* commonly assimilating to *-ll-* in Nordic languages, an etymology related to Gothic *wulþus* is too appealing to abandon.

10. The problematic nature of a hydronomic etymology for *Ull-* in place names will be further discussed in chapter 4.1.1.
11. For more information regarding Proto-Indo-European *–no-* suffixes as indicating rulership, see GEM, pp. 361-362.

3.2. **Ullinn* Variation

As has been briefly mentioned in Chapter 3.1., a potential side form of the *Ullr* name is **Ullinn*, which occasionally appears in Norwegian place names. This word is found as the first compound in Norwegian place names such as *Ullinshof* or *Ullinsakr*, and a number of arguments have been presented to explain its coexistence with *Ullr*. Most viably, Magnus Olsen (1915, pp. 178-183) argued that **Ullinn* (gen. *Ullins-*) is a younger side form of *Ullr*, and that they both denote the same deity. Similar arguments had been previously made by P. A. Munch (1854, p. 171) and Oluf Rygh (1880, pp. 10-12), as well as in the various volumes of *Norske Gaardnavne* (i.e. NG 2, p. 310). Olsen argued that Norwegian *Ullr* place names are significantly older than their **Ullinn* counterparts, not only because they demonstrate a greater diversity in their combination with second stems (*Ullarin*, *Ullareng*, *Ullarváll*, *Ullarøy*, *Ullarland* and so on: see Chapters 4.2.1 and 4.2.2), but also because *Ullr* is never found in Norwegian church towns, nor in combination with the second stem *-hof* (as opposed to the relatively common *Ullinshof*), thus implying that the **Ullinn* name came into usage only when religious practice in Norway had started taking place inside buildings. In addition to this, Olsen argues that the *Ullr* names are also found in places of significantly lower social status than the *Ullin-* names ("Ull's kultsteder paa Oplandene er tydelig af lavere rang end Ullin's," 1915, p. 183). In Olsen's own words:

> Ullin bliver saaledes att opfatte som et paa Oplandene (heri iberegnet Gudbrandsdalen og Hallingsdalen) og i Hardanger ved særegne forhold foranlediget navn paa Ull. […] Er dette rigtigt, kan stedsnavne, sammensatte med Ullin, ikke være ældre end de ældste oplandske sammensætninger med Ull; men vel kan Ull-navnene tildels være yngre end flere af Ullin-navnene (Olsen, 1915, p. 182).

This view reflects Olsen's previous remark (Olsen, 1915, p. 105), that the *Ullin-* names are found in a relatively narrow region, while the *Ullr* names follow a broader geographical region stretching in to Sweden (Olsen, pp. 182-183; see also Chapter 4.1.1). If this is correct, one might suggest that **Ullinn* is a dialectal side form of *Ullr*, found in a specific region of Norway. Lending support to Olsen's equating of the two words was his proposition that *Freyr* and *Ullr* constituted a male pair of gods, which could be deduced through place names. As a result of this supposed connection, the adjacent place names *Ullarin–Frøysin*, *Ullinsaker–Frøysakr* and *Ullinsin–Fillinsin* showed that **Ullinn* must be equated with *Ullr*, and that **Fillinn* must be equated with *Freyr* (for a discussion on **Fillinn*, see the end of this chapter).

Contrary to what Olsen had argued, Albert Kjær (NG 12, pp. 338-339) suggested in 1919 that *Ulleland* in Sogn og Fjordane county, Norway, might contain evidence of the originality of

**Ullinn* rather than *Ullr*. Here, *Ulleland* appears to be derived from an older *Ullarland*, which in turn has replaced an original *Ullinsland*. As presented by Kjær, the explanation is as follows:

> For den Mening, at *Ullinn* har været et ældre Navn, som er gaaet af Brug og er afløst af *Ullr*, synes det her omhandlede Gaardnavn at kunne tale. Det nuv. Form kan ikke være opstaaet af *Ullinsland*, som BK. har; Udtalen forudsætter en middel-alderlig Form **Ullarland*, af *Ullr*, og det er unægtelig nærmest ud, som om detta har afløst et ældre *Ullinsland*, fordi navnet *Ullinn* var gaaet af Brug. Men har dette været Tilfælde, maa Navneskiftet have fundet Sted længe for den Tid, da BK. blev skrevet; eller maatte *Ullinn* være kjendt fra den gamle mythologiske Literatur. Det bliver dog da paafaldende, at BK. ikke har Navnet i den Form, som maa ha været den brugelige paa Jordebogens egen Tid; men det kan jo tænkes, at de to Navne paa Gaarden have været brugte Side om Side i 1ste Halvdel av det 14de Aarh., eller at Formen *Ullins-* er indkommen i Jordebogen fra Dokumenter fra en endnu ældre Tid. Magnus Olsen er imidlertid i en senere Tid kommen til det Resultat, at *Ullinn* har været det paa Oplandene brugte Navn paa *Ull* […], som har udbredt sig derfra, sikkert til Hardanger, (*Ullinsvangr*) og mulig til Naustdal (*Ullinsland*), men at det ikke er udelukket, at O. R. har Ret, naar han antager […], at *Ullins-* i BK. er en Feil; denne kan have indsneget sig ved, at Skriveren er kommen til at tænke paa det bekjendte *Ullensvang* […]. Til nogen bestemt Mening om det her omhandlede Navns rette gamle form synes man saaledes ikke at kunne komme. Det bør dog bemærkes, at *Ullarland* har været et ikke sjelden forekommende Navn, som særlig har været brugt paa Vestlandet, medens *Ullinsland* ikke forekommer noget andet Sted (NG 12, pp. 338-339).

Kjær's argument was followed up by Nils Lid (1933, p. 105), who argued that the word **Ullinn* is an older primary form of the word *Ullr*, derived as a substantivization of a dialectal Norwegian adjective *ullen* 'wooly'. From the account by Snorri and Saxo (see Chapters 5.3 and 5.4), Lid (1942, pp. 115-123) thus attempts to derive a history of the god in conjunction with folk traditions, as an inherently winter-oriented figure, imagined as being made from, or pictured with, wool. This argument has nonetheless received little support.

Neither Lid's nor Kjær's explanation is appealing. The idea that **Ullinn* might be an older form than *Ullr*, based on the notion that **Ullinn*'s name never appears in the literary sources, and that it therefore could have gone out of style earlier than *Ullr*, seems unsatisfactory. A simpler explanation might be that **Ullinn* was such an obscure and localized variation of the name that the literary sources never took note of it. Indeed, a similar relationship might be seen in the similar word **Fillinn*. As has been noted, these etymologies have been heavily questioned, and it is ultimately doubtful whether **Ullinn* can be considered an older form than *Ullr*. Magnus Olsen's explanation still has to be considered the most certain.

One explanation for the variation comes from Hjalmar Lindroth (1914, p. 7), who argued that the *-in* suffix in *Ullin-* might have been an influence from the growing presence and importance

of the *Óðinn* name in the same region. Indeed, the forms *Óðinn* and the shadowy *Óðr* are curiously similar to **Ullinn* and *Ullr*. Olsen (1915, p. 104), however, staunchly opposed this notion, arguing that the *-in* suffix in *Ullins-* was not to be equated with the suffix of *Óðinn* (OHG. *wuotan*, AS. *wōden*, derived from PG. **Wōdana-*, and **wōda* 'rage, furious') (Olsen, p. 104), based on the notion that one should expect a form **Ollinn* to come from the primary derivative **Wulþana*, not *Ullin-*. Thus, **Ullinn* has to be considered as probably being a dialectical word belonging to the same strand as a group of words originated as secondary derivatives of adjectives on *-īna* 'belonging to, consisting of, inclined towards', with its root deriving from Gothic *wulþus*. Despite this, the similarity between *Ullr*/**Ullinn* and the names *Óðr*/*Óðinn* are too striking to put aside completely. Brink (2007, p. 116), for example, points out that a less complicated explanation than Olsen's would be to simply interpret **Ullinn* as a "derivative parallel to the variant form of the god Óðinn that we find in […] Pr.-Germ **Wōðinaz*, hence a Pr.-Germ **Wulðinaz*; in this way a parallel between *Ullr*/*Ullinn* and *Óðr*/*Óðinn* may be maintained."[12]

Fig. 12. "Ullaberstein" (pronounced *u`dlabærstein'n*), in Ullensvang, Norway. The stone bears witness to the identical nature of **Ullinn* and *Ullr*, according to Magnus Olsen. Photo: Terry Gunnell.

In Rygh's enormous project aimed at mapping Norwegian farm names, *Norske Gaardnavne*, Olsen (NG 11, p. 454) found further evidence in support of the two words *Ullr* and **Ullinn* indeed denoting the same deity. In Ullensvang in Søndre Bergenhus Amt, Hordaland, Norway, he found a reference to the god in two separate mediums, first in the shape of a large stone (Fig. 12) originally on the rectory lands, which has connections with local tradition. The stone is known as *u`dlabærstein'n*,[13] "Ullaberstein". The name of this rock, according to Olsen, was clearly drawn from the word **Ullarberg*, meaning 'Ullr's rock'. The *r* in the genitive has probably disappeared

12. In this context, it is worth noting that **Ullinn* was suggested as a secondary name for the god Óðinn by Peter Andreas Munch (1854, p. 22: see Chapter 2.1), *Ullr* being seen as a secondary name for either Óðinn or Þórr. Munch notes, however, that the appearance of both *Óðinshof* and *Ullinshof* in the same region seems curious, asking himself why a place would be named with a god's secondary name (especially considering the frequency of *Ullin-* place names in Norway), instead of its most premier name (*Óðinn*), going on to propose the probability of *Ullin* simply being equal to *Ullr* (Munch, 1854, p. 171).

13. This is the pronunciation of the name of the stone, which bears no runic or other inscription.

through dissimilation. The name of the town, *Ullensvang*, Olsen argues, is itself a compound of **Ullinn* and *vangr*. This evidence suggests that, in this region, the god would appear to have been worshiped with the two closely related names, *Ullr* and **Ullinn* – although, to Olsen's mind, the two names most likely were not in use at the same time.[14]

Before finishing this discussion of **Ullinn*, some brief discussion should be given of another place-name element with potential implications for the origins of the **Ullinn* name. The word in question is **Fillinn*, first noted by Oluf Rygh (1897, p. 75) and later taken up by Olsen (1915, pp. 103-106), and found most notably in the name *Fillinsin*, from Vaage in northern Gudbrandsdalen, Norway. When Rygh first noted the name, he commented that "Jeg kan ikke give nogen sikker Oplysning om Navnet," but went on to argue that it might derive from an otherwise unknown masculine **fillingr*, derivative of the neutral *fjall* 'fjeld, mountain, hill'. Olsen took the discussion further, noting that *Fillinsin* is found in the immediate vicinity of two similarly named places, *Ullinsin* and *Lýgin*, the former "sikkert sammensatt med gudenavnet *Ullin*" (Olsen, 1915, pp. 103-106). Olsen thus criticized Rygh's explanation of the word, arguing that the formal similarity between the two *Fillinsin* and *Ullinsin* (both with the second stem *-vin*) is lost if one chooses to accept the *fjall* explanation. To his mind, the word refers to the name of another Old Norse god, **Fillinn*, analogical to **Ullinn*, the name probably being derived from a Proto-Germanic **felþa-* 'ground', as in the German *Feld*, possibly via an umlaut form as Old Norse *fold* 'earth'. Olsen compares the initial vowel correspondence of **Fillinn* and **Ullinn* (*i* and *u*) to Old Norse *birkinn* and *gullinn* (also, *i* and *u*). Similarly to **Ullinn*, **Fillinn* would thus mean 'he who belongs to the ground (the earth, the mountain)', and the word's alliteration with another earth-related god, Freyr, prompts Olsen to comment the following:

> Det fortjener opmerksomhed, at Fillin danner allitteration med Frøi. Mulig er derfor Fillin egentlig et i det sakrale (digter)sprog dannet tilnavn til Frøi, som kan have fæstet sig som virkeligt navn paa grund af overensstemmelsen i afledning med navnet paa den nøie forbundne gud Ullin. […] **Det omvendte er ogsaa muligt, at *Ullinn (istedenfor det almindeligere *Ullr*?) har sat sig fast paa grund af den formelle lighed med *Fillinn***. Hvordan det nu end forholder sig med dette sidste spørgsmaal, synes vi ialdfald nu at have fundet et sikkert holdepunkt i identificeringen af Fillin med Frøi (Olsen, 1915, pp. 105-106; my bolding).

Olsen concludes his discussion by saying: "**Ullinn* betyder da vistnok: den med herlighed (anseelse) forbundne, han som pleier at vise sig i herlighed" (Olsen, 1915, p. 105).[15] The

14. It should be noted that the connection between the two "Ullaberstein" and *Ullensvang* has been criticized by Botolv Helleland (2002, pp. 81-83).
15. The Norwegian **Ullinn* place names will be further discussed in Chapter 4.1.2.

relationship between Ullr and Freyr will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

3.2.1. Critical Remarks on the Identity of **Ullinn*

Despite the formal similarity between the two names *Ullr* and **Ullinn*, the only sources for our knowledge of the latter show a striking difference in comparison to those concerning the former. **Ullinn* appears in a total of seven Norwegian place names, and is apparently completely absent in literary sources. Three of these place names occur with the second stem *hof*, and three of the four remaining names (Elgqvist, 1955, pp. 124-125) are set in locations of surprising centrality and social significance, including influential church villages and thing places, especially the two *Ullinsyn* and *Ullensvang*.[16] As both Vikstrand (2001, pp. 174-175) and Olsen (1915, p. 183) have remarked, the *Ullr* names are generally found in less central locations, and show no particular high-status indicators. An **Ullarhof* is completely unknown, and so is an **Ullarsvang*, the second stem *vangr* supposedly occasionally denoting a meeting place or temple-like structure. **Ullinn* occurs significantly less frequently than *Ullr* (seven times, compared to between 27-34), and in a more limited geographical region. With these facts in mind, one needs to consider seriously the possibility of **Ullinn* and *Ullr* denoting two independent deities. Our only remaining source for the equating of the two words is their formal linguistic similarity.[17] I do personally not feel, that it is out of the question that **Ullinn* might denote a deity identical to Óðinn. Óðinn, famously, did not have an especially prominent position in Norway, as is evident from the relative lack of *Óðinn* place names in the country, Brink (2007, p. 111) counting them at 11. Should one include the seven **Ullinn* names in Norway in the *Óðinn* count, this god would land at 18 names, compared to the 49 in Sweden (Brink, 2007, p. 111). As has already been mentioned, the suffix of **Ullinn* appears to be identical to the *Óðinn* suffix, and no real linguistic conditions exist to conclusively justify the separation of their suffixes. The most certain *Óðinn* name in Norway (Brink, 2007, p. 112) is *Onsåker*, in the traditional region of Vingulmǫrk, which is today Østfold, immediately adjacent to the most important **Ullinn* regions of Raumaríki (Romerike) and Heiðamörk (Hedemark). Here, the **Ullinn* name appears in the parish of Onsø, in the hundred of Onsø ('Óðinn's island'). Interestingly, the one *Óðinshof* in Norway (admittedly, in a region otherwise riddled with *hof* names, especially in combination with *Þórr*) occurs in what is today the municipality *Ullensaker*. Should any of the asserted connections between the Norwegian **Ullinn* and *Óðinn* be accurate, I would explain its occurrence as a noa name. Perhaps, with the knowledge of the underlying meaning of the *Ullr* name

16. For a discussion of *Ullensvang*, see chapter 4.1.2.
17. Should one dispute Olsen's idea of the *Ullaberstein* referring to *Ullr* (as Helleland, 2002, pp. 81-83, has done), no other conclusive evidence of the two names referring to an identical deity exists, apart from the aforementioned linguistic similarities.

('splendour, glory'), an attempt was made to apply the same form of praise unto Óðinn, who consequently was given a noa name with the same stem, but with *Óðinn*'s traditional suffix. Potentially, the *-hoƒ* endings commonly found with **Ullinn* were applied in an attempt to analogically connect him to Þórr, who was considerably popular in Norway, and who appears in as many as nine *Þórshoƒ*, in regions in and adjacent to the three *Ullinshof* (Olsen, 1915, pp. 73-78). The later perception of **Ullinn* representing *Óðinn* and his active cult might also have played a role in the establishment of important churches on *Ullinshoƒ* places, as opposed to *Ullr* places, which might no longer have been active by the introduction of Christianity. Further investigation would naturally require a comparison between the dating of the different **Ullinn* and *Óðinn* places in Norway, but the currently accepted assertion of **Ullinn* being younger than *Ullr* certainly does not hinder such an interpretation. The lack of a mention of **Ullinn* as a noa name for *Óðinn* in literary sources might, once again, be attributed to its obscure and localized usage.[18]

3.3.0. Potential Personal Names Involving *Ullr*

Personal names derived from the names of pagan gods and other deities appear frequently within the Nordic countries. The idea of *Ullr* as an element in personal names has been suggested a number of times, without any real certainty as to whether or not the names in question can actually be established as having derived from the name of the god. This chapter will discuss a number of instances in which scholars have suggested that the theophoric name *Ullr* can be discerned in earlier names, and the degree to which such suppositions make sense.

3.3.1. The Thorsberg Chape

The most important of few potential examples which seem to contain the name *Ullr* outside of Sweden and Norway, is the so-called Thorsberg chape, dated to around 200 AD, which contains one of the oldest preserved runic inscriptions in Elder Futhark. It was retrieved between 1858 and 1861 during Danish archaeologist Conrad Engelhardt's excavations in the Thorsberg moor, a peat bog in Anglia, Schleswig-Holstein, modern Germany. The runic inscription on the A side of the chape (the B side of the item is of less importance for the following discussion) reads ᛟᚹᛚᚦᚢᚦᛖᚹᚨᛉ, transliterated as *owlþuþewaz*. The now unanimous interpretation of this inscription seems to have been first presented by Sophus Bugge (1868-1869, pp. 180-182), later echoed by Ludvig Wimmer (1887, p. 105) and H. M. Chadwick (1907, pp. 142-143 & p. 286), all of whom argue for the transposition of *o* and *w*, to render the line *Wolþuþewaz*, which they understood as referring to a

18. It is postulated in Chapter 5.2 and Chapter 11 that remnants of **Ullinn* survive in literary accounts beyond the Icelandic word *ullinseyra*.

proper name derived from Proto-Germanic **wulþuz*, potentially referring to the god Ullr; the second part then, *-þewaz*, meaning 'servant' (Fig. 3).

There are, however, a number of uncertainties regarding the interpretation of the first part of the word, including the appearance of *o* as the stem vowel instead of the expected *u*. Andersen (1960, p. 406) and Marstrander (1953, p. 12) both argue that the *o* represents a development in Germanic from *–u-* to *–o-*, whereas Antonsen (1975a, p. 29) argues that the *o* can only be explained by deriving the word from the word's singular genitive form **wolþōz*. Other explanations of the appearance of *o* include Krause's interpretation of *o* representing **ō(þala)*, a form of inheritance. As Williams (2001, p. 156) points out, it has been questioned whether **ōþala* would refer to personal property rather than real estate. The word for personal property would be expected to be **fehu*.[19] Finally, Grønvik (1985, pp. 188-189) has argued that the *o* rune represents a vocative particle, *oh*. These latter two explanations of the *o* rune, which assume that *wlþu-* alone represents **Wulþu-*, have been previously noted but heavily criticized by Marstrander (1953, pp. 11-12), who considered the argument "less reasonable". The interpretation is further complicated by the discussion of whether or not the inscription's language is of Nordic or West Germanic origin, a question with implications for the interpretation of the inscription as theophoric in nature. It should also be noted that the geographical origin of the finds in the Thorsberg moor, and of the chape in particular, has also been debated. Marstrander (1953, p. 15) earlier argued that the chape is of "provinsromersk type some ikke ellers er funnet i Norden," although chapes of similar design admittedly have been found in both Vimose and Loddenhøj, Denmark. Marstrander concludes the discussion by claiming that "Vi vet helt enkelt ikke hvilken nasjonalitet mosefunnenes runemestrer var." Nonetheless, later research (Ilkjær & Lønstrup, 1981, pp. 56-57) has indicated a West Germanic origin for the objects, the item probably having belonged to an army from a region between Elben and the Rhine, modern Germany.

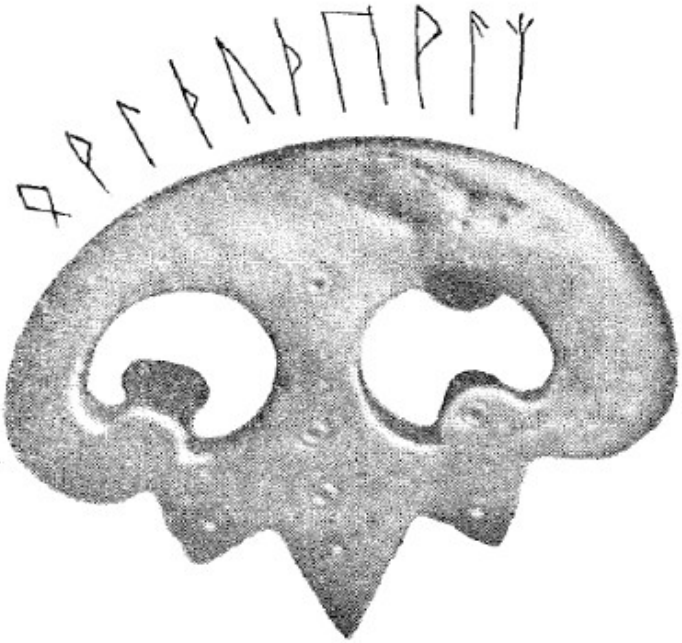

Fig 3. Thorsberg chape. Side A. Elder fubark inscription reading *owlþuþewaz* (from Marstrander, 1953, p. 13).

19. Cf. Old Icelandic *óðal* and *fé*.

In recent years, Williams (2001, p. 156) has summarized previous research on the Thorsberg chape, ending by claiming that the inscription definitely refers to the Proto-Germanic **wulþuz* (noted in Chapter 3.1). The question then arises as to what kind of a word it is: is it a proper name with profane or sacral meaning, or simply an appellative referring to the original meaning of the word **wulþuz* 'splendour'? According to Williams, most scholars today accept it as being a proper name, the question now being whether or not it is sacral, and whether or not it refers to the name of the sword itself, the name of a person, or the name of a god. Marstrander (1953, pp. 12-13) considers it to be the name of the sword itself, rather than the god. Should one accept the sacral meaning, however, the word would read "the servant of [the god] Ullr". However, in Thorsten Andersson's (1993, pp. 42-54) important lecture on the subject, he points out that there are no extant examples of Germanic names on the continent which contain the name of an individual god. The Thorsberg chape would thus be the first and only example of such a personal name. As Andersson notes, theophoric personal names only become relatively common in North Germanic regions, especially in compound with the elements *Þórr* and *Freyr*. However, even if the name was of North Germanic origin, one should expect its theophoric element here to be in the genitive case, which it is not in this case. It might be added, as is pointed out below, that it is also highly uncertain whether or not a personal name derived from the god Ullr's name would have been found even in North Germanic regions. Admittedly, as we shall see, the Gothic word w*ulþus* does appear in one form or another as profane first and second stems in Germanic personal names on the continent, but without referring to the god, and rather to its underlying appellative. Based on the previously examined information, the most satisfying explanation would thus appear to be that the inscription on the chape refers to the name of either the wielder of the sword, or the sword itself, rather than to an individual god.

3.3.2. Attested Examples of Other Potential Accounts of *Ullr* in Personal Names

The appearance of personal names derived from the theophoric name *Ullr* is a controversial topic. Magnus Fredrik Lundgren (1878, pp. 69-71) was the first to attempt a survey of the appearances of such names in the Nordic countries. He considered all the suggested candidates, being found in both runic inscriptions, sagas and other documents, to be exceedingly uncertain, among them *Olla dysa*, *Ulviþer*, *Ulvidus*, **Ulle* (as *vlle*), the common Old High German *Vuld-*/*Wuld-*, as well as the three runic *ulfastr*, *ulfriþer*, *ulkautr*.

As far as the feminine name *Olla dysa* is concerned, the name is only found in a letter from Pope Benedictus XII, from 1340 AD,[20] in which the Pope imposes a fine on a group of individuals

20. For the full letter, see *Diplomatarium Suecanum* IV, p. 722 (Hildebrand, 1853-1856), SDHK (= Svenskt Diplomatariums huvudkartotek) entry #4598.

in Finland for defying the Catholic faith. The name appears as *olla dÿsa de Voypala* ("Olla dÿsa of Voipala"), referring to a region in Finland adjacent to modern Helsinki. Other individuals from Voipala mentioned in the letter include *Vargh de Voypala* and *Anundi de Voypala*. *Anundi* potentially derives from the common Old Norse *Önundur*. *Vargh* might perhaps relate to Old Norse *vargr*, a noa name for a wolf. If so, this might distinguish the latter name from *Olla*, thereby disqualifying the possibility of that name stemming from *úlfr*. Also mentioned in the letter is an *Olli de salu*, "Olli of Salu". One might thus think that *Olla* could be a feminine form of *Olli*, but the second word *dÿsa* remains unexplained. Imagination could quickly associate it with the Old Norse *dís*, referring to a female mythological being. In a later work (1880, p. 12), Lundgren suggests that the name might be a broken form of a previous **Ullardisa* (similar to *Oþindisa*, *Frödisa*, *Þordisa*, and so on). To my mind, it is nonetheless highly unlikely that the name of this individual, even if potentially of Nordic descent, is named after *Ullr*. Indeed, it would seem extraordinary to the point of disbelief, that the name of a deity exclusive to a relatively specific south-central region of Norway and Sweden should surface in the heartland of Finland and nowhere else.

Regarding **Ulle*, Lundgren (1878, p. 70) notes that all individuals supposedly bearing this name are from Uppland, Sweden, but also comments that these names might very well relate to the relatively common *Olle*, *Olli* (Lat. *Ollo*) 'descendant'. Vikstrand (2001, p. 167) sufficiently proves this theory, by demonstrating that the so called "Vendel scribe" of the manuscripts in which this name form ("*vlle*") appears, was notorious for replacing *o* with *u*, thus rendering the name's form in the manuscript as *vlle*. Vikstrand (2001, p. 167) does, however, also argue that any supposed form **Ulle* is realistically more likely to be a hypocoristic development from two-stem compounds on *Ulv-*, suggesting that the common Danish place name *Ullerup* is potentially also derived from such a name, rather than one drawn from *Ullr*.

It is certainly reasonable to assume, that *Ulviþer* must be related to Old Swedish *ulver* 'wolf', an etymology which is probably also suitable for the runic names *ulfastr* and *ulfriþer* (transliterated from rune stones). As far as *ulkautr* is concerned, Lundgren (1880, p. 12) considers the name highly unsuitable for proper interpretation, and questions whether or not the runes can be trusted to accurately relay the actual sound conditions of the word. In the case of the Latin *Ulvidus*, the name is probably a variation of the Old Swedish *Ulvidin* (cf. Icel. *Úlfheðinn*) (Lundgren, 1878, pp. 69-71; 1880, p. 12).[21]

The name element Old High German *Vuld-*/*Wuld-* (*Vuldar-*), is relatively common in first stems on the continent, appearing in names such as *Vuldebert*, *Vuldulf*, and so on. Lundgren (1878, p. 70) also mentions in a note the forms *Sigisvulthus* and *Cuniuld*, where the word (Got. *wulþus*)

21. Lundgren does not specify where some of these name forms occur.

might appear as the second stem rather than the first. The *Sigisvulthus* name has been discussed briefly by Bachlechner (1851b, p. 203), who points out that the name indeed refers to the underlying appellative *vuld-*. The name appears in Latin as *Sigisvultus* and is the name of a Roman general, *Flavius Sigisvultus*. In Old High German the name appears simply as *Wuldar* (Bachlechner, 1851b, p. 203) In all of these cases, however, the names most certainly refer to the appellative in question, rather than any theophoric name. *Cuniuld* meanwhile, according to Balg (1891, p. 218), apparently stems from a *kunjawalds* (Got. *waldan* 'rule'). These conclusions would be in line with later research (Andersson, 1993, pp. 42-54), establishing that no Germanic personal names on the continent contain the names of individual gods.[22]

Finally, I would like to mention one further name that might be relevant, this time an example from Old Icelandic literature. It is a name from *Heimskringla*, more specifically from *Saga Ólafs Tryggvasonar*, chapter 53, where the name *Ulli* is mentioned a single time. In the context of the story, a slave named Kark is having a dream, in which a "maðr svartr ok illiligr" told him that "Ulli var dauðr". The slave's jarl interprets this as meaning that "Erlendr mundi drepinn" (Snorri Sturluson, 2002, vol. 1, p. 295). The name *Ulli* is otherwise unexplained in the literature, but Lundgren (1878, p. 70) suggests in a note that this name potentially refers to the god, a suggestion backed up by Hugo Meyer (1891, pp. 258-259), who considered the name a by-form of *Ullr*. Most scholars (Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, 1874, p. 648; Finnur Jónsson, 1908, p. 301; Lind, 1905-1915, p. 1056), however, from the context of the story, naturally consider the name to be a diminutive of *Erlendr*, Finnur Jónsson noting that: "der er næppe tvivel om, att *ulli* har været et kælnavn, dannet af navnet." According to Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon (1995, p. 1084), the name occurs alternatively as *Urli*, and is probably "stuttnefni eða gælunafn af *Erlend(u)r*, sbr. að Erlendur sonar Hákonar jarls var nefndur svo." We should thus consider *Ulli*, in the context of Heimskringla, to be a type nickname, rather than anything related to the god.

3.4. Noa Name Or Not?

Before leaving the question of Ullr as a personal name, one final question deserves discussion. It has been debated in the past whether or not *Ullr* is a noa[23] name for a god, rather than being a proper personal name. In his comprehensive overview of the nature and history of noa names and religious taboos, Jöran Sahlgren (1918) demonstrated that noa names have been in common use for a significant amount of time, within a large range of cultures and geographical regions. Not only

22. It can, thus, probably be established beyond a doubt, that the previously discussed inscription on the Thorsberg chape, is not theophoric in nature.
23. The word *noa* itself is of Polynesian origin, denoting the opposite of taboo, something which can be used without risk (SAOB, entry on *noa*; also cf. Sahlgren [1918]).

were noa names used to denote religious deities, but also animals, natural phenomena, vegetation, and other objects deemed too sacred or dangerous to openly mention by their original names.

Sahlgren (1918, p. 23) certainly considered the *Ullr* name to be a praising type of noa name (having originated as a result of a form of taboo against using the god's original name), meaning 'splendidness, the splendid one, the shining one', primarily based upon its etymological origin (Got. *wulþus*). As noted earlier, Sahlgren (1932, p. 62) and Brate (1914, p. 13; 1919, p. 295) were of the belief that both *Freyr* and *Ullr* were noa names for the same deity, a fertility god (an idea that will be further discussed in Chapter 8). Here, I would like to interject a few comments of my own.

A number of combining factors give good reason to believe that *Ullr* is indeed *not* a noa name for the deity in question. Indeed, to base the notion of *Ullr* as being a descriptive noa name based simply upon its etymological origin and meaning seems irresponsible. I should note that Brate bases his conclusion in part on his belief that *Freyr* and *Ullr* were one and the same. Sahlgren, however, is uncharacteristically hasty in his remarks on *Ullr* as a noa name, stating simply: "Genom tabu har troligen ock gudannamnet *Ullr* uppkommit. *Ullr* är tydligen identiskt med got. *wulþus* 'härlighet' och är sålunda ett berömmande noanamn […]" (Sahlgren, 1918, p. 23). We should remember that every known deity within the corpus of Nordic mythology and religion has a personal name based upon an original appellative. That goes for deities such as Óðinn (PG. **wōda* 'rage, furious), Þórr (PG. **þunraz* 'thunder'), Freyr (PN. **fraujaz* 'lord'), Freyja (PN. **frawjō* 'lady'), Njörðr (Ir. *nert* 'strength, power'), Týr (PG. **tīwaz* 'god'), Baldr (supposedly PG. **balþaz* 'good, white'), Sif (same as ON. *Sifjar* 'relation [by marriage]', etc.) and so on.[24] I do concede that there is significant reason to believe that the name of the Freyr deity was (originally) a noa name – an idea that has been established through careful examination of historical sources (often times) unrelated to etymology – but this fact alone does not immediately qualify Freyr's fellow gods Óðinn, Þórr, Freyja, Njörðr, Týr, Baldr, Sif nor, indeed, Ullr, as being noa named gods. The use of etymology alone can always justify the perception of any name as a noa name – something which must be considered a fallible methodology. In the case of *Freyr*, historical circumstances such as his mythological association with *Njörðr*, and *Njörðr*'s subsequent connection to *Nerthus*, significantly helps in establishing the quality of his name. In actuality, it is only after interdisciplinary assessment of various source that one can determine can the quality of the name (as being, for example, a noa name). Indeed, as noted above, the nature of Germanic names dictates that they are based upon original appellatives. Clearly, the use of the names *Óðinn* and *Þórr* goes back a significant amount of time, during which the stems of the names by which the gods are referred have not changed. It thus remains impossible to decide whether or not *Þórr* and *Óðinn* are noa names for the deities in

24. Cf. entries in Hellquist's *Svensk etymologisk ordbok* (ed. 1948).

question (the use of etymology alone could certainly justify such a conclusion) or “original” personal names.

Sahlgren (1918, p. 23) properly identifies the Icelandic words *ráð* and *regin* as flattering noa names used for the *æsir* and *vanir*. However, could one not, on the same grounds, argue that the names *æsir* and *vanir* are themselves noa names for “original” groups of deities? *Æsir* (sg. masc. *áss*) has been sufficiently proven (Mallory & Adams, 1997, p. 330) to stem from a Proto-Germanic **ansis*, *ansuz*, in turn stemming from a Proto-Indo-European **h₂énsus* 'god, spirit, vital force' (<'king'?), and further back to **h₂ens-* 'engender' (cf. Hittite *hass-* 'procreate, give birth; engender, bear). Is *áss* thus a “praising type of noa name”, denoting the role of the gods as “vital forces” or related to “procreation”? Sahlgren does in fact take this continued etymological step backwards in his assessment of Freyr’s and Freyja’s progenitor, *Nerthus*, considering this name in turn to have originally been a noa name related to Irish *nert* 'strength, power', meaning 'the power, the (godly) power, the powerful one'. This methodology once again begs the question: how can one reasonably establish the nature of the name, if its underlying appellative without question or connection to other independent source material can be taken as a noa name?

It is, of course, possible that *Ullr* is a noa name for the god, but other relevant factors might point to the contrary, factors such as its limited geographical distribution, the age of the place names within this region, the limits of the appellative’s theophoric connotations, and the nature of the cult with which he was associated. The idea of Freyr’s name as an original noa name was established through its close association with the *Nerthus* deity, mentioned in Tacitus’ *Germania*, and with his association to the alternative name *Ingvi* (found in both Latin and Nordic sources). In the case of *Ullr*, any such association with another name is lacking – the name being found exclusively in Swedish and Norwegian place names, and in Norwegian-Icelandic literature – without overt associations to any potential nicknames or side forms. As noted above, Sahlgren (1918, p. 23) argues that *Ullr* is essentially a praising type of noa name – but if one accepts the etymological nature presented by Lindquist (1926, p. 96) and Palmér (1930-1931, pp. 191-192) the underlying word might not originally have had a sacred or “praising” meaning, but rather a purely profane one, with the suitably descriptive meaning 'radiance'. It is impossible to more firmly establish the idea of *Ullr* being a noa name without alternative, independent source material.

We will now move on to the more secure field of place names, from which much of our knowledge of Ullr as a once important deity derives.

4.0. Place Names Involving *Ullr*

As indicated in the review of previous research, the nature and volume of *Ullr* place names in Norway and Sweden is one of the primary sources in support of our notion of Ullr having been an important deity in this region. From studying the literary sources alone, one would never suspect that Ullr at one point must have been one of the primary gods of Sweden and Norway. In contrast to this, apart from well known deities such as Þórr, Óðinn and Freyr, we have to face the fact that no other deity appears even remotely as frequently in place names as Ullr.

For this chapter, I have made considerable use of a number of important and influential studies on place names in Scandinavia, some of which I will briefly outline here. As indicated earlier, the study of theophoric place names in Scandinavia largely took off in 1878, with Magnus Fredrik Lundgren's work on the traces of pre-Christian cult and belief in the Swedish language, where Lundgren discusses, in particular, Swedish place names containing the names of gods or groups of religious beings. Shortly thereafter, Oluf Rygh published his *Minder om guderne og deres dyrkelse i norske stedsnavne* (1880), on the remnants of pagan cult and worship in Norwegian place names. In 1897, Rygh followed this up with the publication of the survey of Norwegian farm names, *Norske Gaardnavne*, which eventually ended up at 19 volumes, the majority of which were published after his death. Many of the discussions in Rygh's work inevitably ended up as source material for later works on theophoric place names, especially in Norway, where, in 1915, Magnus Olsen published his groundbreaking and endlessly discussed work on theophoric place names in Norway, *Hedenske kultminder i norske stedsnavne*, in which the idea of "pairs" of theophoric place names largely took off. In 1926, Olsen published an additional contribution to the field, *Ættegård og helligdom*. Comparable works in Sweden were carried out in the next few decades by the Swedish linguist Elias Wessén and others, with numerous publications on the remnants of ancient religious practice in, particularly, Östergötland and central Sweden.[25]

In the years that followed, and especially after the Second World War, sharp debate took place about the use of place names in discussions of religious practice. It is impossible to discuss theophoric place names in Scandinavia (or Scandinavian place names in general, for that matter) without mentioning Jöran Sahlgren, whose endless list of publications in, especially, the self-started journal *Namn och bygd*, constituted an invaluable contribution to the study of Scandinavian place names. Sahlgren belonged to a more critical school of place name studies, and published several critical responses to studies carried out by his predecessors and contemporary colleagues, and has

25. Among these works, one can mention in particular Wessén's "Forntida gudsdyrkan i Östergötland. 1" (1921a), "Hästskede och Lekslätt" (1921b), "Forntida gudsdyrkan i Östergötland. 2" (1922a), "Till de nordiska äringsgudarnas historia" (1922b), "Minnen av forntida gudsdyrkan i Mellan-Sveriges ortnamn" (1923) and *Studier till Sveriges hedna mytologi och fornhistoria* (1924).

since received his own dose of criticism.[26] General contributions of which I have made great use, have been made by, among others, Hjalmar Lindroth, Harry Ståhl, Lars Hellberg, Lennart Elmevik, Stefan Brink and, especially, Per Vikstrand, through his 2001 PhD project on theophoric place names in Mälarlandskapen, *Gudarnas platser*. In terms of studies focused exclusively on *Ullr* names, Eric Elgqvist contributed greatly in his 1947 examination of all Swedish *Ullr* place names, *Ullvi och Götevi*, and his 1955 study on Norwegian *Ullr* place names, *Ullvi och Ullinshov*.

In this chapter, we shall focus primarily on those place names identified by previously mentioned scholars, and others, to potentially refer to the god Ullr. The chapter will begin (Chapter 4.1) by discussing place name elements in Sweden and Norway about which there is a more or less established consensus as to the probability of these elements occurring in combination with a theophoric *Ullr* name. The following chapter (Chapter 4.2) will then discuss individual instances in which the etymology for the first stem *Ull-* has been disputed, or is otherwise unclear. It must be borne in mind, however, that individual exceptions apply to both cases. On the one hand, some of the least problematic *Ullr* names include individual examples in which the first stem is disputed regardless of its unproblematic outlook.[27] On the other hand, there are particular instances of "unique" *Ullr* place names which are more or less unanimously accepted as theophoric by scholars.[28] The time-scope of this essay has not allowed for a systematic overview of every single certain *Ullr* name in Norway and Sweden. Readers are referred to Elgqvist (1947 & 1955) for such an overview.

4.1.0. Volume, Geographical Distribution and Association with Second Stems

All-in-all, Scandinavia boasts some 70 place names with a first stem potentially containing the theophoric name *Ullr*, with a relatively even spread between Sweden and Norway,[29] and a complete lack of such names in Denmark and Germany. The place names in Sweden and Norway containing the first element *Ullr* (or **Ullinn*) stretch out over a relatively distinct south-central region of the

26. Famously, Sahlgren sharply criticized the conclusions drawn in Elias Wessén's study "Hästskede och Lekslätt" (1921), in his 1950 article "Hednisk gudalära och nordiska ortnamn".
27. For example, *Lilla Ullevi* (*Ullevi* in general being the most common and least problematic of the theophoric Swedish *Ullr* names) in Upplands-Bro, Uppland, Sweden, is considerably problematic. As has been pointed out by Vikstrand (2009-2010, p. 57-66), the name's earliest written form, and the presence of a nearby *Stora Ullevi*, raises questions as to the originality of the name (see also Chapter 6.3). Another example is the westernmost of the *Ullevi* names in Östergötland, Sweden, which occurs in its earliest written form as *Ullervi* (1313). Lindroth (1914, pp. 23-24) pointed out that the presence of the *-r-* might indicate that the second stem, rather than *vi*, could have been Old Swedish *ærvi* 'inheritance', and that the first stem might have been a personal name, **Ulle* (see Chapter 3.3). Wessén (1921b, p. 124), on the other hand, preferred a theophoric explanation alluding to the meaning 'Ullr's shrine'.
28. For example, the Norwegian *Ullensvang* is the only example of a **Ullinn* + *vangr* name, but is almost unanimously accepted as a theophoric place name. The same goes for the Norwegian *Ulleraal* (see Chapter 4.1.2).
29. According to Olsen (1915, p. 64) there are 29 (potentially 32) *Ullr* place names in Norway, and seven **Ullinn* names, totaling 36 (39). According to Brink (2007, p. 116), however, Norway contains only 27 *Ullr* names, several of which are uncertain. Elgqvist (1955, p. 19) comments that there are at least 35 certain *Ullr* names in Sweden alone.

two countries. In Norway, no such names appear north of Trøndelag, and in Sweden the name is restricted to a region between Öland and Gotland in the south east, and Dalarna in the central-west.[30] It has been suggested (Elgqvist, 1955, pp. 91-92; Vikstrand, 2001, pp. 188-189), on good grounds, that *Ullr* was the primary god amongst the Swedish tribe (*Svear*), and that his influence stretched over regions inhabited or controlled by the Swedish dominion. The nature of this distribution has clear influence on our understanding of Ullr as a uniquely Swedish-Norwegian god. No other deity show such a distinct and consistent limitation in the toponymical material in Scandinavia, sparking questions of the god's origins and nature. All the same, as we shall see, for many of the names apparently containing the first stem *Ullr*, a theophoric interpretation is not always satisfactory, and give reason to be wary.[31]

4.1.1. Sweden

Elgqvist (1955, p. 19) records 35 certain *Ullr* names in Sweden, along with a number of uncertain instances. These names are present in the provinces of Uppland, Västmanland, Södermanland, Närke, Gästrikland, Dalarna, Jämtland, Östergötland, Småland, Öland and Gotland. Most of these places have been discussed at length by, among others, Elgqvist (1947, pp. 17-30; 1955, p. 18-21), and I will thus only bring up a number of noteworthy points in regard to some of these names.

The identification of a place name as theophoric is often times largely based on its second stem element, as well as the location of the place in the surrounding landscape (see Rydving, 1990, pp. 167-175; Vikstrand, 2001, pp. 27-34 & pp. 38-45). In Sweden, the most commonly accepted theophoric *Ullr* names are found in combination with the following Old Swedish second stems: *lunder* 'grove', *aker* 'field', *vi* 'shrine' and *tuna* 'enclosed farmyard'. The ambiguity of these and other elements will be discussed in the following text, but particularly in chapter 4.2. However, for now, let us discuss a few elements of extra importance that are thought to be combined definitely with the name of the god (Fig. 8).

-*lund(a)* is an extremely common second stem element in theophoric place names in Sweden, as well as a common first or stand-alone element. The word itself denotes a natural place in the cultural landscape, a type of deciduous, leaved forest area, normally translated into English as

30. The northernmost *Ullr* name, *Ullvi*, found close to Storsjön in Hackås parish, Jämtland, Sweden, while appearing in an almost ideal form for a theophoric interpretation to be satisfactory, is somewhat uncertain. Elgqvist (1947, p. 20), considering the name to be highly uncertain, notes that the first mention of it is in the *skifteshandlingar* (farm reorganization documents) from the Surveying Office in Östersund, from 1769; as *Ullvi (ullvi) Lägd*, the name of some lands in the village of Sande. Brink (1987, p. 475) lists the name as theophoric. Vikstrand (1993, p. 57), who has found an older mention of the name, in a publication of *Rannsakningar efter antivkiteter* from 1685, where it appears as *Wluij Högh*, *wluij* and *Wluj*, similarly sees no problems in a theophoric interpretation.
31. The dates given for earlier written mentions of the place names in the following text are all taken from the referred literature in question.

'grove'. The commonness of the *-lund(a)* word in theophoric place names rather upstages the importance of the deities with which the word is combined, and puts the *lund* itself in the spotlight.[32] As Vikstrand demonstrates, the importance of the *lund* has been almost universal in human culture, and is an extremely common religious element in European cultures ranging from Greece, to Rome, to Germany, to the Nordic countries (Vikstrand, 2001, p. 280). For a thorough discussion of this word and its religious connotations I shall refer to Vikstrand (2001, p. 280). As other scholars have noted, the word can be found with every major deity in Swedish place names. Elgqvist (1947, pp. 17-18) mentions five such names in combination with *Ullr* in Sweden, where they appear as *Ullunda* and *Ulunda*, the latter example probably having lost its second *l* due to a confusion in the interpretation of the stem border when the older form **Ulle-* lost its final vowel, and *Ull-* met a second stem with the initial letter *l*, resulting in a displaced first stem, **U|lunda* (Vikstrand, 2001, p. 167).

Of the Swedish place names containing *Ullr*, *-vi* (Old Norse *vé*) is uncontested as the most common second stem, appearing in as many as 23 names, constituting around 65% of the total mass of *Ullr* place names in the country. This fact carries with it a number of interesting implications. Although *-vi* is also found in combination with most other deities,[33] no other deity demonstrates such a significant skew in second stems. In comparison, the "overwhelmingly most frequent" second stem with *Þórr* is *-lund(a)*, occurring in a total of twelve *Þórr* names in Sweden (Brink, 2007, p. 115). There is thus significant reason to discuss whether Ullr was specifically associated with the *vi*, and in this context consider the nature of the *vi* in pre-Christian Sweden (for an extensive discussion on the Old Norse *vé*, see Vikstrand, 2001, pp. 289-365). Elqvist (1947, p. 24) has also demonstrated a regional dialectal difference in the nature of the *Ull(e)vi* names in Sweden. As he notes, the original Old Swedish form of these names have been *Ullarvi*, in which *r* of the genitive disappeared at an early stage, after which the *a* often as not was weakened to *e*, and, in some cases, syncopated altogether. The syncopation of the final vowel seems to have taken place most prominently in Uppland, Västmanland, Dalarna (and Jämtland), where these names appear as *Ullvi*. In Närke, the name form appears with its final vowel retained, *Ullavi*, and in Södermanland, Östergötland and Småland the form appears with a retained, weakened final vowel, *Ullevi*.

Vikstrand (2001, pp. 188-189) mentions that the extraordinary prominence of the *Ull(e)vi* names in Sweden can not simply be considered merely a sign of a shared language in the region, but must be interpreted as a sign of a region in which the god Ullr at one point held a premier position

32. As Vikstrand (2001, p. 49) also points out, due to the many stand-alone *lund* names, such as *Lund* or *Lunda*, it is also reasonable to suggest that in individual cases, an apparently theophoric *-lund(a)* name might not necessarily refer to the natural *lund*, but to a place named *Lunda*, such as to render the meaning of the place name, e.g. *Fröslunda*, as 'the Lunda associated with the god Frö.'

33. *Skædvi*, *Frøsvi*, *Hærnavi/Ærnavi*, *Frøvi*, *Nidhervi*, *Odhinsvi*, *Thorsvi*, and so on (Vikstrand, 2001, p. 299).

in religious life, and was specifically worshipped in association with a *vi*. Jöran Sahlgren (1924, pp. 63-88) nonetheless tried to problematize the discussion of the Swedish *-vi* names, arguing that in individual cases, *-vi* names in Sweden might be contractions of Old Swedish *viþi*, from *viþer* 'forest'. The argument is based on the suggestion that this word would have gone through a similar development as Old Swedish *staþum*, which was contracted to *stam* at an early stage. *viþi-* is apparently present in a number of Swedish place names, such as *Virserum* in Småland, *Bankevid* in Östergötland, and *Ekevi* in Västmanland. In spite of this, as Vikstrand (2001, p. 41) notes, in those cases where *-vi* occurs in combination with the name of a god, the most satisfying explanation should be to regard it as Old Swedish *vi* 'shrine'.[34]

As suggested above, the many *Ullr* place names in Sweden give a sense of the god as having been highly important. They also reveal facts about the age of the deity. In this regard, the *-tuna* place names are of extra interest. Indeed, *-tuna* (Old West Norse *tún*) is another word found relatively frequently in combination with theophoric first stems, where the meaning of the word most likely was 'enclosed area, farmyard (dedicated to a god)'. Erik Brate (1918a, p. 210) considered *-tuna* names to "generally" be of religious nature, meaning 'enclosement around a shrine'. More than 120 *-tuna* names are present in Sweden (Ståhl, 1970, p. 78). Many of them might not have been of religious nature, in which case the meaning of the word has been suggested as referring to a particular type of 'market place' (Lindqvist, 1918, p. 6), or 'fortified place', 'fortified farmyard', 'castle' or 'central farmyard', often referring to a dominant farm within a specific region, an idea which is supported by the central position in administrative districts of many *-tuna* names (Ståhl, 1970, pp. 78-80).

As Sahlgren (1932, p. 42) has pointed out, the *-tuna* names might be exceedingly old, possibly from the Celtic Iron Age. He also notes that Óðinn's name is not found with the *-tuna* names, suggesting the period for the establishment of the first *-tuna* names to have been before the influx of the Óðinn cult in the Nordic countries. At the same time, Sahlgren (1932, p. 60) has claimed that the names *Ullr* and *Njörðr* are never attached to *socknar* (a type of parish), thus indicating an older age than those gods commonly found in parish names (see Chapter 4.2.3). A popular view has thus been that when the church organized the first parish names, the cults of *Ullr* and *Njörðr* most likely were no longer active, and the establishment of church parishes in places originally named after these gods was therefore not as urgent, as in those places where the names of the active cults of *Þórr* and *Óðinn* were present.

34. Similar difficulty arises in the interpretation of *-vi* names that occur in combination with Swedish *Frö-*. The tempting answer is to equate *Frö-* with the god, Freyr, but, as Sahlgren has demonstrated, the Old Swedish *frödh* 'lushness, exuberant' is a more satisfying explanation in a number of cases. The meaning of the place name would thus be 'exuberant forest', rather than 'Freyr's shrine' (Sahlgren, 1924, pp. 37-40).

Fig. 8. Map of place names in Sweden, in which the theophoric name *Ullr* is thought to surface. Sweden's northernmost *Ullr* name, *Ullvi* in Jämtland, has been left out (from Elgqvist, 1947, p. 29).

In Sweden, the *-tuna* names appear with *Ullr* as *Ultuna* and *Ullentuna*, both more or less unambiguously considered theophoric. The first stem of *Ullentuna* in Uppland, *Ullen-*, has been suggested as being a Swedish reflection of the supposedly uniquely Norwegian **Ullinn*. Indeed, Elof Hellquist (1948, p. 1275) assumed that *Ullentuna* contained a Swedish by-form, *Ullen*, of the Norwegian word. Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 71), however, remarks that the Swedish *Ullentuna* can not be considered to contain the Norwegian **Ullinn*, not only because this name otherwise only appears in such a distinct region of Norway (see Chapter 4.1.2), but also because a Swedish form would have been expected to appear as **Ullenstuna*. The idea of the genitive *s* dropping between the *n* and *t* in *Ullentuna* is not appealing to Olsen. Indeed, should one equate the *-in* ending in Norwegian *Ullin-* place names with the same ending in *Óðinn* place names, it is evident that the *s* tends to be retained in such names in Sweden, judging from examples such as *Odensvi*, *Odenslunda* or *Onslunda*. Thorsten Andersson (1979, p. 129) has given support to the idea that the name is not to be equated with **Ullinn*: "Der schwedische Ortsname *Ullentuna* enthält den Namen des Gottes awn. *Ullr*, nicht den des Gottes awn. *Ullinn*. Die Form *Ullen-* ist analogische entstanden." Another explanation was given by Hjalmar Lindroth (1915, p. 87), who suggested that its written form *Wllinntuna* from 1572 bears witness to an original **Ull(ar)-vin-tuna*[35], *Ullentuna* being an ellipse of such a name. Whatever the explanation, Elgqvist (1947, p. 25) rejects the idea of the name being anything other than theophoric, probably meaning 'enclosed farmyard, dedicated to [the god] Ullr'. Certainly, the written form of the name in 1554 is *Vltuna*, but its elusive modern form might be explained by comparing it to analogically similar places such as *Sollentuna* and *Vallentuna*, also in Uppland.

Somewhat simpler are examples ending in *-åker*, Elgqvist (1947, p. 18) considering both Swedish *Ulleråker* to be theophoric.[36] A considerable amount of scholarly work has gone in to the study and interpretation of the Nordic *-åker* names, as the literary sources give few hints of their supposed religious importance. Here, however, I wish to keep the focus on the subject of *Ullr*, and will not dive more deeply into the meaning of the word *åker*, other than to point out that its occurrence with all major deities in Swedish place names give it a similar outlook as the *lund(a)* names. A further interesting and intriguing observation regarding the *-åker* names is their prominence as parish or hundred names, Elias Wessén (1923, p. 10) pointing out their distinction from the *-vi* names, which occur considerably less frequently in parish names. It is of interest in this context that the Swedish *Torsåker* and *Odensåker* both appear as parish names, whereas *Ulleråker*

35. For a Swedish **Ullarvin*, see Chapter 4.2.1.
36. A third *Ulleråker* was listed by Lundgren (1878, p. 73) as being theophoric, but was later proven incorrect by Hjalmar Lindroth in a letter to Elias Wessén (Wessén, 1922c, p. 119), in which he identified its original form as *Uttersåker.*

never achieved parish status. One did, however, become the name of a *härad* in Uppsala.[37]

Eric Elgqvist (1947, p. 33) considers *Ulleråker* near Uppsala one of the most important theophoric place names in Sweden. It is, indeed, of special interest in this discussion, as it is the only *Ullr* name that appears in the old Norwegian-Icelandic literature, always referring to a farm or royal farmstead near Uppsala.[38] In the *Saga Ólafs hins helga*, from Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla* (Snorri Sturluson, 2002), *Ullarakr* is also said to have functioned as a *þing* venue when the king visited. The dominating view has thus been that the modern *Ulleråker* was given its name on the basis of an original *Ulleråker*, a field dedicated to the cult of Ullr, on which a *þing* used to be held (Sahlgren, 1932, p. 36). The exact location of the *Ulleråker* thing venue has nonetheless been the subject of frequent discussions throughout the years. Kjellberg (1913, p. 131) tried to place the location of the thing venue on what is today the grounds of Helga Trefaldighetskyrkan (Church of the Holy Trinity) in Uppsala, a prominent church originally erected in the 13th century, an idea which garners legitimacy from some of the archaeological material found in the region (Elgqvist, 1947, p. 34). It has been argued that the original *Ulleråker* would probably have had its glory days before modern Gamla Uppsala became the most prominent place in the region – a period that Elgqvist (1947, p. 35) dates to before the 5th century.

Relevant to this discussion is the idea that the Swedish *-tuna* and *-åker* names also share an intimate social and organizational relationship. Both Sune Lindqvist (1918, pp. 6-30) and Erik Brate (1918a, pp. 207-213) have argued that the many theophoric *härad* names with *-åker* are found in relation to similarly theophoric *-tuna* names (*Thorsaker–Thorstuna*, *Ulleråker–Ultuna*, and so on), giving the notion that an established tradition of basing theophoric *-tuna* names on theophoric *-åker härader* (or the other way around, given that the *-åker* names might have been transferred to *härader* only at later points in time) must have existed at some point, especially in the Uppland regions of Sweden, where the *-åker* names commonly refer back to traditional *þing* venues.[39] Sahlgren (1932, p. 36) goes as far as to claim that the hundred of *Ulleråker* is an ellipse for an original **Ullartunaakir*, where the *åker* on which the thing was held belonged to the then larger *Ultuna*, which was later swallowed up by *Ulleråker*, when the *-åker* names were elevated to

37. The relationship between parishes and *Ullr* (and *Njörðr*) place names is ambiguous and deserves a deeper independent discussion, and will thus be further ventilated in chapter 3.2.3.
38. The name appears in various forms and with various uses in *Krákumál*, in *Óláfs saga Helga*, in *Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar*, and in *Þorsteins saga Víkingssonar*. Saxo gives the place the Latin name *Campus Laneus* 'Wooly field', probably a misinterpretation of its originally theophoric meaning. Both Wessén (1922b, p. 98) and Vikstrand (2001, p. 183) nonetheless consider these literary mentions of a farm named *Ullarakr* uncertain, questioning whether it ever existed, and whether or not it can be equated with the modern hundred of *Ulleråker* in present Uppland. In none of the aforementioned literature is the name *Ullarakr* an especially elevated or otherwise important position. LP (p. 578) has *Ullarakr* as "slette i nærheden af Uppsala."
39. Lindqvist (1918, p. 4) considers the hundreds of *Thorsaker*, *Ulleraker*, *Junaker*, *Frösaker* and the three *Akerbo*, to refer back to original thing venues held on an *åker* ('field').

härader.

4.1.2. Norway

In Norway (Fig. 9), the most commonly accepted theophoric *Ullr* names are found in combination with the following Old West Norse second stems: *-land*[40] 'land', *-þveit*[41] 'clearing', *vin* 'meadow', *hváll* 'isolated height [most often round in shape]', *áll* 'deep channel in water', and *øy*[42] 'island'. The following words are found in combination with the alternative form **Ullinn*: *hof* 'religious building', *vin* 'meadow', *akr* 'field', and *vangr* 'level ground, meeting place'. A considerable amount of more debated second stems are also found in Norway, including *berg* 'mountain, hill', *dalr* 'valley', *eng* 'meadow', *nes* 'headland, isthmus', *vík* 'bay, inland' and so on. These will be dealt with in Chapter 4.2.2.

According to Elgqvist (1955, pp. 24-27), all the Norwegian *Ullr* names recorded by Magnus Olsen have been questioned. Elgqvist finds it impossible to meaningfully establish a specific number of trustworthy names, although he gives 34 potential candidates (Elgqvist, 1955, p. 124). The number of names appear to be slightly fewer than in Sweden, Stefan Brink (2007, p. 116) counting them at 27. As is apparent from the above, there is a notable difference in the nature of the Norwegian *Ullr* names and their second stems, which can, in a sense, be considered substantially different from their Swedish counterparts. It is noteworthy that the remarkable Swedish *-vi* names are completely absent in Norway, with a greater number of *-vin* and *-land* names – two elements which are significantly rarer in Sweden. Magnus Olsen (1915, pp. 73-78) records a total of seven *-vin* names, and a surprising 12 *-land* names, making them the distinctly most common Norwegian second stems. The theophoric interpretation of Norwegian place names on *Ullr* is nonetheless somewhat complicated by the nature of the second stems. In Sweden, many apparently theophoric first stems are combined with second stems of a rather unambiguously religious nature (such as *-lund*, *-vi*, *-åker*), a fact that more often that not is sufficient for a theophoric interpretation to be satisfactory. As noted above, the Norwegian second stems are of a more ambiguous nature, containing words often denoting natural places in the landscape, where a theophoric meaning might not be easy to establish. In the case of *Ullr* in Norway, the only unambiguously religious place name might perhaps be *Ullinshof*.

As early as 1900 (NG 4, p. 223) Oluf Rygh discussed the *Ullarland* names, remarking that 12 or 13 *Ullarland* could be found in the country, going on to argue that the simplest explanation

40. The meaning of *land* is somewhat ambiguous. For discussion, see below (same chapter).
41. The word *þveit* has a somewhat unspecified meaning. Rygh (1898, p. 83) has it as "udskilt Part, for sig beliggende Jordstykke."
42. According to Elgqvist (1955, p. 20), citing Fritzner (1867, p. 354), *øy* alternatively occurs with the meaning "flad Landstrækning langs ved Vand eller Elv, især saadan, som er udsat for at oversvømmes deraf."

would be to consider these names to be created from the name of the god. However, Rygh argues, due to the commonness of these names, such an explanation might not always be satisfactory. Rygh nonetheless notes that in at least one case, a Norwegian *Ulleland* is found immediately adjacent to the two *Frøiland* and *Totland* (from *Freyr* and *Þórr*), suggesting that at least a portion of those names must be theophoric. Indeed, the volume of *Ullarland* names alone can not disqualify it from being a theophoric name, especially if one keeps in mind the numerous Swedish *Ull(e)vi* names, which are more or less unanimously considered theophoric despite their large numbers. All the same, as noted, above, some difficulty arises due to the nature of the *-land* second stem, which is considerably more ambiguous than the Swedish *-vi*, and thus harder to interpret. Olsen (1915, pp. 79-86) considers all 12 instances of *Ullarland* in Norway to be theophoric, but also points out that many are not necessarily independently coined names, some of them probably being named after originally theophoric locations. As Olsen demonstrates, the religious *-land* names have had their epicenter in Hadeland og Land, in Akershus, from whence they slowly decline outward. As he adds, the fact that many *setr* 'seat, residence' in the northern mountain areas, many *land* in the western mountain areas, and many *vin* names in the eastern mountain areas, are found in combination with the names of gods, in places where such name types are typically non-existent (and where the second stems denote a type of landscape uncommon in these regions), supports the idea that several of the theophoric names in Norway are due to the expansions of these cults across specific regions – the "original" theophoric names being found in the typical heartlands of these cults. Should one examine the individual assessments of the Norwegian *Ullarland* names in NG, one finds that Rygh himself, and others involved in the project, certainly considered most of these names to be theophoric (NG 10, p. 336; NG 11, p. 454; NG 12, p. 338; NG 13, p. 71, and so on).

The meaning and age of the *-land* names nonetheless varies considerably. According to Rygh (1898, pp. 63-64) there are a total of ca. 2000 *land* names in Norway, found as first, second and stand-alone stems. As second stems, they are typically associated with words denoting the position or characteristics of the place in the landscape (*Haaland*, *Holand*, *Breiland*, *Langeland*, and so on), but relatively frequently also with either the names of pagan gods, or with words associated with pagan cults (as in *Ullarland*, *Frøysland*, *Njarðarland*, *Totland*, *Frøyland*, *Helgaland* or *Hofland*). According to Rygh, a large part of the *land* names in Norway are from the Viking Age, and a number of them from more ancient times, although not as old as the *-vin* names. According to Ståhl (1970, pp. 81-83), the age of the *land* names vary significantly. He dates the oldest *land* names to the Migration Age, here probably in combination with *Ullr* and *Njörðr*, as in Norway.

The specific meaning of the word *-land* also fluctuates, often denoting the quality of the landscape ('land', 'terrain', 'ground', 'floodplain' or, in religious contexts, 'ground dedicated to a god's

cult'. *-land* is also found most notably with *Þórr*, Magnus Olsen recording a total of nine such names. Despite the commonness of the *Ullarland* names, they can hardly match the Swedish *Ull(e)vi* names in their implications for religious history, partly because of the comparatively even spread of *Ullr* second stems in Norway, and partly because of the non-specific definition of the *land* word. Out of the 27 Norwegian *Ullr* names counted by Brink, *-land* is the second stem in 44% of the cases (compared to the 65% of Swedish *Ull(e)vi* names, which are also more numerous), and *-vin* in 26% of the cases. These numbers can hardly be interpreted in a similar fashion to the Swedish *-vi* names. Indeed, Ullr can hardly be considered to have been especially associated with *land* in Norway in the same way that the god was associated with the *vi* in Sweden. The relatively narrow definition and religious usage of the *vi*, and its remarkable geographical distribution, make such a theophoric interpretation considerably more satisfactory in the case of Sweden.

The Old Norse *vin* is related to Gothic *winja*, and is a feminine noun meaning 'meadow' or 'grass lane'. As was noted earlier, the theophoric *-vin* names in Norway are especially numerous in combination with *Ullr*, **Ullinn*, *Freyr* and, interestingly, *dís*. Especially interesting is that conclusive *Þórr* names in combination with *-vin* are unknown, Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 90) making the statement that "Gudenavnet Tor sammensættes ikke med *vin*." Importantly, Olsen argues, the reason behind *Þórr*'s absence with *-vin* is his lack of association with grass meadows or agriculture in cult worship. To his mind, the reason for the common association of the *vin* with gods such as Freyr, Ullr (**Ullinn*) and *dís*, is their important roles in fertility cults.[43] As far as the age of the *-vin* names go, Oluf Rygh (1898, pp. 63-64) considered them older than the *-land* names. Stefan Brink (1983, p. 12) also considers them especially old, pointing out Valter Jansson's important study which concludes that the oldest *-vin* names might have originated around the birth of Christ. An even older interpretation of the age of the *vin* names in Norway, has been that they belong to "det første ariske landnaam", and thus to the younger Stone Age, making them more than 4000 years old. This idea was rejected by Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 92), who argued that many of the *-vin* names in Norway are surprisingly easy to track down etymologically; if the *-vin* names truly had survived since 2000 years before the birth of Christ, these names would have been significantly more difficult to explain etymologically, and they would also have differed more across the country because of their age.

43. Important to keep in mind here is that Þórr certainly appears to have had a fertility role in specific cultural regions, and is referred to as a god of fertility by Adam of Bremen (book four) in his description of the cult in Uppsala, Sweden (see Adam of Bremen, 1959, p. 208).

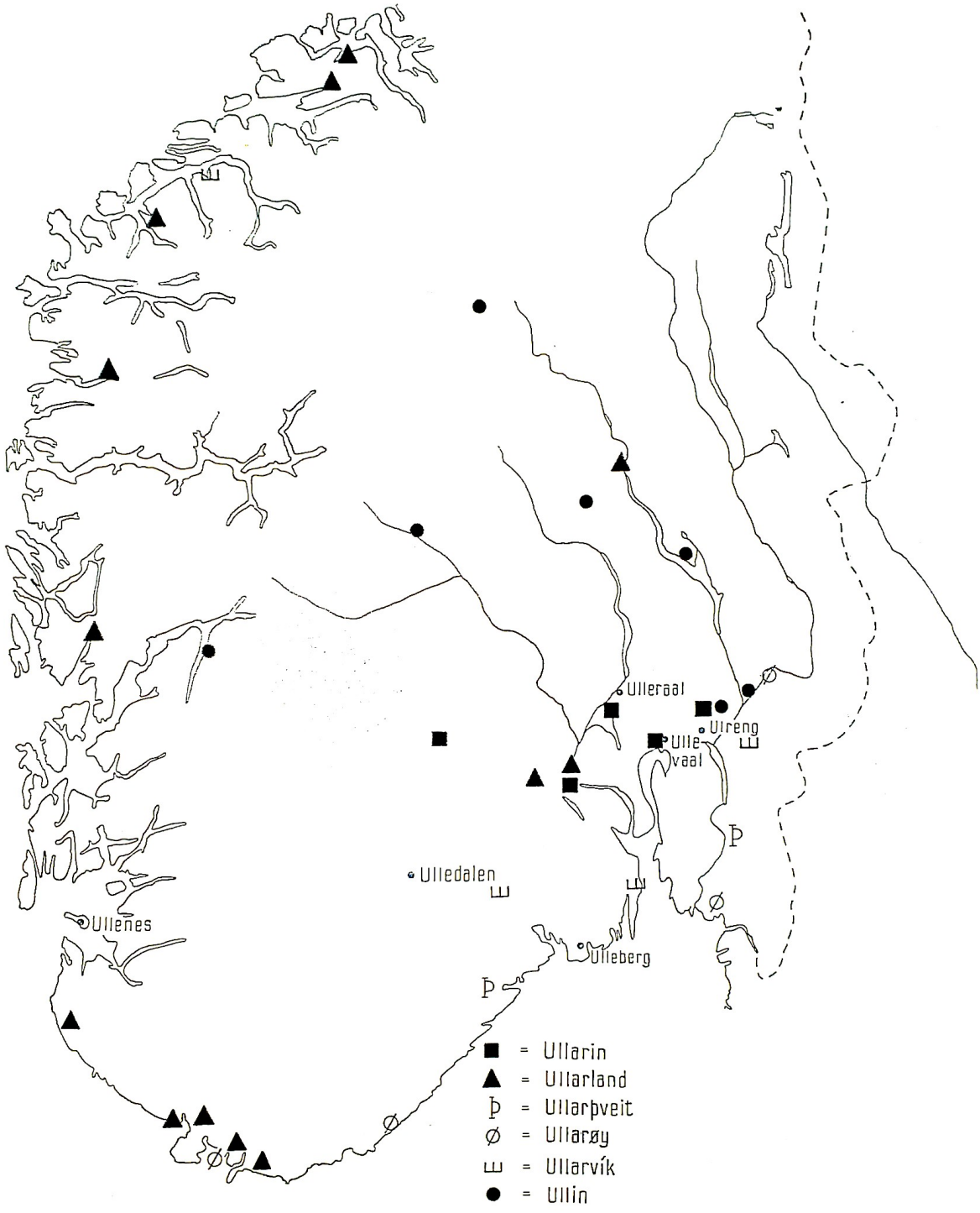

Fig. 9. Map of place names in Norway, in which the theophoric names *Ullr* and **Ullinn* are thought to surface. Names denote original name forms, rather than modern. Norway's northernmost *Ullr* name, *Ullland*, in Sørli, Lierne, Nord-Trøndelag, has been left out (from Elgqvist, 1955, p. 25).

The Norwegian *-akr* names would also seem to reflect the same ideas as the *-vin* names. Olsen demonstrates that those same gods associated with a *vin* can also be found in association with an *akr*. The word *akr* itself has obvious similarities to the *vin* names in an agricultural sense, denoting a type of fertile field, suitable for religious worship. Olsen suggests that the *akr* denoted that part of the cult which first and foremost profited its farmer and his crops, through food and sustenance, whereas the *vin* denoted that part of the cult which profited the life and well-being of his cattle, through the meadow – both constituting a group of words associated with a fertility cult (Olsen, 1915, pp. 90-91). Olsen records two Norwegian *Ullinsakr*, and one *Ullarakr* (along with the expected *Frøysakr*), and shows that no *Þórsakr* compounds exist in (south-eastern) Norway. The numerous Swedish *Torsåker* might be explained by a difference in cult roles, Adam of Bremen (book four) of course explicitly characterizing Þórr in Uppsala as a fertility god (see Adam of Bremen, 1959, p. 208).

The *hof* names in Norway are interesting for a number of reasons: 1) they denote a type of religious building, suggesting a custom clearly distinct from the traditional religious practice of worshipping outdoors, which is reflected in most religious second stems (*vin*, *akr*, *vangr*, and so on).[44] 2) They are also generally recognized as typical age-indicators in theophoric place names. The three *Ullinshof* in Norway, all found in the two adjacent regions of Hedemark and Romerike (Olsen, 1915, p. 73), make up what Elgqvist (1955, p. 124) considers the only counterparts to the directly cult-related Swedish *Ull(e)vi* names. Nonetheless, it is important to understand in this context that the previously mentioned *-hof* names are not combined with the first stem *Ullr*, but with **Ullinn* – an **Ullarhof* is completely unknown.[45] This might be another primary indicator of the younger age of the **Ullinn* names, but other circumstances regarding *Ullinshof* have serious implications for our understanding of the nature of the *Ullr* cult in Norway. As Olsen (1915, p. 183) has pointed out, the *Ullinshof* places stand out in comparison to the other typical *Ullr* places in Norway, in that they seem to be set in surprisingly important locations in the social landscape,[46] two of the riding churches in former Raumaríki (modern Romerike) being placed in an *Ullinshof*. The lack of an **Ullarhof* might suggest that the *Ullr* (as opposed to **Ullinn*) place names were no longer being created when the *hof* names started surfacing, and that only a small section of the population still worshiping Ullr developed an alternative variation of the name, which therefore

44. Oluf Rygh (1898, pp. 55-56) points out that the neutral word *hof* should be understood as meaning 'heathen temple', or 'house, farm'. Additionally, the *hof* found in theophoric place names must be clearly distinguished from another neutral word, *hov*, meaning 'elevation [in the landscape]', a word which for all practical purposes is not present in theophoric place names, and always appears with its definite article, as in *Hovet*.
45. Out of the seven **Ullinn* names in Norway, three take the second stem *hof*, whereas the four others take the second stems *akr* (2), *vangr* (1) and *vin* (1).
46. As Elgqvist (1955, pp. 124-125) has noted, three of the four remaining **Ullinn* places are also set in surprisingly prominent locations, especially *Ullinsin* in Vaage, which neighboured the *alþing* in Gudbrandsdalen.

came to be associated with more recent cult sites, such as the *hof*.

Elgqvist (1955, pp. 125-128) has asserted that **Ullinn* at one point might have been an important, if not the most important, deity in Norway. As a believer in the idea that Ullr was originally the foremost god of the Swedes (the tribe, *svear*), he suggests that the original influx of the Ullr cult into Norway might not have had the impact it later came to have. When the Swedes first gained influence in south-eastern Norway, their traditional cult of Ullr only had a limited impact on the inhabitants of the region, which is reflected in the fact that the *Ullr* places in Norway are of significantly lower social status than the later **Ullinn* names (Olsen, 1915, p. 183). Later, Elgqvist argues, the Swedish dominion in Norway gained more power and influence as their position in the country was consolidated (probably in a specific region, perhaps Raumaríki and Heiðamörk). As a result of this, the Swedes' traditional cult of Ullr garnered more influence and importance, but to further the perception of the god, his name was given an alternative suffix as a means of "nobelizing" him – something which would have happened during a period when cult worship had been moved indoors, and resulted in many of the new **Ullinn* names having *-hof* endings. Other contributing factors might have been the high popularity of *-hof* names (especially *Þórshof*) in Norway, and their apparent absence in Sweden. Therefore, *-hof* names might have been applied to **Ullinn* as an act of appeasement to the cultural tradition of the local population.

The one Norwegian *Ullensvang*, in Hordaland, has been the subject of considerable discussion, not necessarily regarding its originally theophoric nature (which is more or less unanimously accepted), but due to its position as a central place during the establishment of Christianity, and its role as a parish. Indeed, it is one of the numerous **Ullinn* places in Norway located on important legal and Christian sites. *Ullensvang* consists of the first stem **Ullinn* and the second stem *vangr*. Magnus Olsen (1915, pp. 130-151) has lead a substantial discussion on the meaning and role of the *vangr* in pre-Christian society, arguing that it might have referred to a meeting place, and/or a place where things were held. This view has since been echoed by Botolv Helleland (2002, p. 107) who also saw that *Ullensvang* refers to a place associated with the god *Ullr* (**Ullinn*), where legal gatherings were held. Olsen (1915, pp. 136-137), however, had postulated that the meaning of *vangr* might in some cases have been related to a temple-like building (maybe 'temple [on level ground]'?), as is evident from its apparent relation to the *-hof* names. Indeed, it is of note that *Ullensvang* shares its first stem with the numerous *Ullinshof*. It is also asserted by Olsen (1915, p. 140) that most *vangr* names are found in central places (mostly from pagan times) of religious significance – regardless of whether they traditionally denoted a building or not. Helleland (2002, p. 78), however, underlines that the word *vangr* itself contains no evidence of references to buildings, and any meeting place or centre of religious importance could

equally well have been outside, in the open air. Helleland (2002, p. 107) considers it reasonable to assume that here the name arose in conjunction with a cult dedicated to **Ullinn*, but comments that it seems improbable that the site was used continuously for worship of this cult all the way down to the introduction of Christianity, noting: "Ullensvang may nevertheless have been a religious and secular centre throughout this period, possibly with other cultic functions than those linked to Ullinn. Its role as a centre made it natural to build a church here following the introduction of Christianity" (Helleland, 2002, p. 107). Helleland furthermore argues that the name persisted because of the site's historical importance and because of its firmly established name and role in the region.

Ulleraal is the name of a village in Buskerud, Norway. As with *Ullensvang*, the name is almost certainly theophoric. Its second stem has been suggested as **alh*, probably a type of pre-Christian shrine, by Rygh and Falk (NG 5, p. 191). In a later volume, however, Rygh and Kjær (NG 12, p. 186) suggest the more reasonable idea of the second stem referring to *áll*, a word with a variety of meanings, including 'deep channel in water'[47]. It might be noted that Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 275) considered *Ulleraal* a clear theophoric name, but found no reason to support the idea of an explanation based on **alh*.

Ullevaal is the name of a farm in Akershus, Norway. According to Olsen (1917, p. 47), it is almost certainly a theophoric name, but its second stem has been the cause of significant discussion. In 1898, Oluf Rygh (NG 2, p. 101) argued that the name's first stem is the name of the god, *Ullr*, and its second stem refers to an original *váll* 'clearing of land' or 'earth which has been cleared through burning'. Rygh pointed out the possibility of the farm originally having been named simply *Váll*, having the god's name added only later, potentially when the farm was dedicated to the god. According to Olsen (1917, pp. 47-48), however, it is exceedingly uncertain whether the second stem actually refers to the word *váll*. As he notes, an old rule with regard to theophoric place names, is that one does not find place names with a god's name in combination with words relating to clearings of the land, or other words indicating human settlement.[48] Olsen, therefore, suggests the possibility of the name relating to Old West Norse *hváll*, sometimes found in the form of *hóll* (still used in Icelandic for an) 'isolated height [most often round in shape].' Elgqvist (1955, p. 23) considers this explanation the most plausible. Indeed, other evidence suggests that pagan gods were worshipped at high points in the landscape. Other pre-Christian cult sites in Norway with names of similar meanings supposedly include *Baldrshóll*, **Njarðarhóll*, *Frøyberg*, **Baldrsberg* and *Ulleberg* (Olsen, 1917, p. 49).

47. For all meanings, which are difficult to relay in English, see Elgqvist, 1955, p. 20.
48. Compare *Ullestad* (NG 11, p. 533).

A number of considerably more ambiguous *Ull-* names in Norway, such as *Ullarøy*, *Ullarþveit*, *Ullarvík*, *Ulreng*, *Ulledalen* and *Ulleberg* can not be conclusively determined to be theophoric names to the same degree as the previously discussed ones, and will thus be discussed in the following chapter regarding disputed etymologies.

4.2.0. Disputed Etymologies for Place-Name Elements on *Ull-*

As Vikstrand (2001, p. 175) has pointed out, it has long been asserted that a numerable amount of Scandinavian place names with the first stem *Ull-* might not refer back to an originally theophoric name, but might instead refer to a variety of profane words or appellatives denoting topographical features or other characteristics of the surrounding landscape.[49] This chapter will thus start off by discussing the different possibilities for alternative etymologies, and will then continue by discussing specific uncertain place names in different regions, beginning with Sweden and Norway.

The most popular of these explanations has been that a hydronomic (water-denominating) word in the form of **ull-* must have existed in the Swedish and Norwegian languages. This would certainly explain many of the Swedish *Ull-* names denoting waters, or with second stems related to water, as with the three *Ullen* lakes, *Ullsjö*, *Ullasjön*, *Ullerö* (as *Ullerud*), *Ullervattnet* and *Ullstämma*. It has most commonly been suggested that a hydronomic **ull-* could be derived as an ablaut of the Old Swedish verb *vælla* 'to surge, bubble up, flow, stream, float profusely' (Sw. 'välla, bubbla upp, flöda, strömma, ymnigt flyta'), created from its weak grade **(w)ull-*. This word is found in Old West Norse (as well as in Icelandic and Old Icelandic) as *vella* 'to exuberate, bubble as liquid at boiling point' (Sw. 'sprudla, bubbla som vätska i kokande tillstånd'), stemming from a Proto-Germanic **wellan* (Vikstrand, 2001, p. 175; Hellquist, 1948, p. 1387). Cognates of this root certainly seem to have been used for rivers in England, as is evident from, for example, *Welney* and related names (Ekwall, 1928, p. 447). As has been pointed out in previous chapters, Eric Elgqvist (1955, p. 73) attempted to contend the existence of an undocumented Old Swedish word **ulder*, in Old West Norse as **ullr*, denominating a type of natural spring, a well-spring (Sw. *källsprång*), from which the god's name was also derived. According to Vikstrand (2001, pp. 181-182), this idea has significant problems, and Elgqvist's attempts to tie *Ullr* place names to locations containing natural springs, has proven even more problematic.

Other suggestions of explanations for place names have been made relating to names for the vegetation, *Eriophorum*, a genus of wooly plants, commonly found in the Nordic countries, and with a variety of different species. Lyttkens (1904-1915, vol. 2, pp. 1359-1361) mentions the

49. Gösta Holm (1991, p. 348) has suggested that some *Ull-* names in Sweden might refer to the underlying appellative of the name *Ullr* (in Old Swedish probably **ulder*), rather than the name of the god. This would render those place names with the meaning '[…] of splendour', rather than '[…] of the god Ullr'.

Swedish group name of this genus as *Ull*, *Ullgräs* or *Ullax*, often seen in various forms as *ängsull*, *ängull*, *harull*, and so on.

Vikstrand (2001, p. 176), meanwhile, mentions a previous suggestion by Gösta Holm (1991, p. 346), which is to consider the possibility of some *Ull-* place names as referring to a personal name, **Ulle*, otherwise undocumented in Swedish. As noted in Chapter 3.3., Vikstrand (2001, p. 167) sees no problem with an **Ulle* having once existed, but considers it likely that such a name probably would have been a hypocoristic development from names on *Ulv-*, rather than from the name of the god, *Ullr*.

Clearly, in single instances, different explanations are often necessary, sometimes based on the place name's previous forms in historical documents or its position or role in the surrounding area – conditions which oftentimes make a theophoric explanation questionable. Such single instances are perhaps *uggla* 'owl' in *Ulleberg*, the personal name *Ola*, *ól* 'strap' or *urð* 'accumulation of stones' in *Ulevattnet*, and so on. In addition, *úlfr* 'wolf', or the personal name *Úlfr*, are not unreasonable explanations in individual cases (Janzén, 1940, pp. 151-152 & pp. 167-168).

The following is a walk-through of individual place names in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and the British Isles, where a theophoric explanation is questionable, less reasonable or otherwise unsatisfactory.

4.2.1. Sweden: Problematic Place Names

A typical example of the above disputes is seen in the fact that *Ullen* occurs on three separate occasions as the name of lakes. For this reason, the most common explanation has been to regard it as being formed from Old Swedish *vælla* (SOV 14, p. 95), even though Elof Hellquist (1903-1906, pp. 674-675) argued for a theophoric explanation. A similar name, *Degerullen* (*diger* 'big') certainly speaks for a profane explanation, and a similar etymology is probably suitable for other water-related Swedish names such as *Ullervattnet*, *Ullånger*, *Ulltjärn* and *Ullfjärden* (Vikstrand, 2001, p. 175), as well as *Ullsjön* and *Ullasjön* (Elgqvist, 1955, p. 28). If it was not for the very similar *Frövättern*, the Swedish lake *Ullvättern* would likely also be considered unambiguously profane. Elof Hellquist (1903-1906, p. 673) argued that it should be considered theophoric because of the aforementioned analogical similarity to *Frövättern*, as did Olsen (1915, p. 182). This idea was nonetheless disputed by Noreen (1920, p. 30) who considered the name to refer to the same hydronomic word as in other Swedish *Ull-* lakes.

There might also be some ambiguity in regard to the word *-æng* 'meadow', which, according to Noreen (1917, p. 98), very rarely occurs in theophoric place names. Elgqvist (1947, p 18), once again, considered two of the three Swedish *-äng* names, *Ulleräng* in Stockholm county, and

Ullerängen in Västra Götaland county, to be clear theophoric names. *Ullängen* in Stockholm county, on the other hand, appears to be less certain. Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 73) records a single theophoric *-æng* name in Norway: *Ullereng* ('Ullr's meadow') in Romerike. While this name alone can hardly help support for the theophoric nature of its Swedish counterparts, it is interesting to note that the only theophoric *-æng* name recorded by Olsen in Norway is found in combination with *Ullr*.

The Swedish *Ullånger*, a parish in Ångermanland county, might be one of the most elusive Swedish *Ull-* names. Most researchers accept a non-theophoric explanation for the name, although theophoric explanations have also been presented. As early as 1878, Magnus Fredrik Lundgren (p. 72) argued for the name's first stem to be equated with the god, an idea echoed by his contemporary Johan Nordlander (1881, p. 12). Tor Karsten (1915, p. 31) also argued for the theophoric nature of the name, but was criticized by Hjalmar Lindroth (1917, pp. 25-26), who pointed out that the name occurred too far north, and could hardly be considered theophoric. As Lindroth points out, its 1316 written form *vldanger* should also raise concerns. Torsten Bucht (1966, p. 144) meanwhile argued for the name to be equated with a previous, but today completely lost, creek in the region, **Ull(a)* 'the surging, streaming one'. Nonetheless, Lars-Erik Edlund (1994, p. 148) has pointed out that this explanation must be dismissed "av sakliga skäl". Gösta Holm (1991, p. 676) argued that *Ullånger* must be one of the oldest names in Ångermanland county, and goes on to suggest an explanation related to a personal name on *Ull-*, an idea dismissed by Edlund (1994, p. 148) on the basis of the supposed old age of the place name. Edlund furthermore suggests that an explanation related to the earlier noted plant, *Eriophorum*, in Swedish as *ängsull*, should be further investigated. The most reasonable explanation is probably to consider the first stem to be created, again, from a word **ull-*, from Old Swedish *vælla*, and so on (Brink, 1987, p. 476). Indeed, Wahlberg (2003) lists *välla* (Old Swedish *vælla*) as a potential etymology for the place name in his entry on *Ullånger* in his Swedish place name dictionary. Elgqvist (1955, p. 30) also considers the name exceedingly difficult, suggesting a hydronomic explanation, perhaps 'the bay by the spring'. Perhaps *Ullånger*'s status as a parish should lend further support to a profane explanation. The second stem *-ånger* (Old Swedish *anger*, Old West Norse *angr*) probably originally meant 'bay, fjord', and is found exclusively along the coastlines and fjords of Sweden and Norway (Holm, 1991). It is not typically found with the names of gods.

-land (see also Chapter 4.1.2 above, on the Norwegian *-land* names) occurs in the two Swedish names *Ullanda* in Gävleborg, and a now extinct *Ullanda* in Bohuslän. The former was considered theophoric by both Lindroth (1946, p. 25) and Elgqvist (1948, p. 26). Its oldest form appears as *Wllaland* in 1550, and the second stem would probably then mean 'ground, dedicated to a god's cult.' However, there is a slight degree of uncertainty surrounding the latter name: the oldest

form of *Ullanda* in Bohuslän county, given in 1391, is *Vllalandum* (note dative case), and Elgqvist (1948, p. 26) considers it more likely that the name is derived from the name of the nearby lake, *Ullervattnet*, which most likely is not a theophoric name. Lindroth (1946, p. 82) suggests that the first stem *Ull-* in the oldest form **Ullalanda* (the assumed nominative form of the 1391 written dative form *Vllalandum*) might derive from the name of a creek/small river, and should not be considered theophoric.

The Swedish *Ullberga*, a farm in Södermanland county, is also considered profane by Eric Elgqvist (1955, p. 30). Elgqvist argues that it most likely stems once again from the suggested Old Swedish **ulder* 'well-spring' (see also Chapters 3.1 and 4.2.1), and refers to natural springs that could supposedly be found in the region. According to Vikstrand (2001, p. 182), however, the current owners of *Ullberga* are not aware of these springs, and Vikstrand (2001, p. 174) is ultimately prone toward a theophoric explanation. A similar name, *Uleberg* in Dalsland (written *Ulleberg* in 1681), also is considered profane by Janzén (1940, pp. 167-168), who argues for an etymology related to either *uggla* 'owl', or *urð* 'heap of stones'. *Uleberg* might nonetheless have a theophoric counterpart in the Norwegian *Ulleberg* in Vestfold, as well as in *Ulberg* in Oppland, the latter (*Uleberg*), however, definitely stemming from an original *úlfr*, appearing as *Vlvæbærgh* in 1370, *Wlberg* in 1469, *Vllberg* in 1594, and so on (NG 4, p. 132). A third example is *Ullberg* (written *vllebergghe* in 1472) in the province of Medelpad in northern Sweden. According Brink (1987, p. 476), this name is generally considered profane (Elgqvist, 1947, not even bothering to list it in his overview of theophoric *Ullr* names), even though earlier scholars postulated a theophoric explanation. As with many other similar names, linguistic conditions for the name's earlier forms can hardly exclude a theophoric explanation.

Other *Ull-* names potentially denoting elevations or rocks in the landscape are *Ullåsen* in Västergötland and *Ullahau* on Gotland. According to Kalén (1922, p. 62), the former most probably should be equated with an original *Hellesåss*, perhaps from *häll* 'flat rock'. According to Olsson (1994, p. 124), *Ullahau* is undoubtedly a profane name, which probably originated in the 18th century. Olsson nonetheless remarks that fitting a personal name into the first stem is difficult. Folk stories in the region, however, tell of an old woman, *Ulla*, that is buried in the sand dunes of the area. As Olsson suggests, more befitting would probably be to consider *Ulla-* a corruption of an original *rulla-* 'rolling' – descriptive of the "rolling" sand dunes of the surrounding landscape (Olsson, 1994, p. 124).

Another name which has caused significant confusion is the Swedish *Ullälva*, found twice in Östergötland. At first glance, its second element *älva* seems to refer to Swedish *älv* 'channel, ditch, small river'. According to Vikstrand (2001, p. 182) a reasonable explanation is to consider its second

stem *-älva* to be derived from *älve*, a neutral side form of *älv*, whereas its first stem *Ull-*, once again, derives from the verb *välla* 'surge, flood' (Old Swedish *vælla*, Icelandic *vella*, and so on). Hellquist (1903-1906, p. 675) had earlier suggested that *-älva* was a corruption of *-ærvi* 'inheritance'. Its first element, therefore, might refer to the proposed personal name, **Ulle*, making the name of the place 'Ulle's inheritance'. This would certainly be in line with another place name suggested as having this same meaning, namely the Swedish *Ullervad*, found in Västergötland (Lindroth, 1917, p. 26).[50] Elgqvist (1955, pp. 30-33) considers Hellquist's explanation highly unsatisfactory, and also rejects the possibility of the name being theophoric, going on to mention a number of possibilities related to water, *Ull-* once again, according to him, stemming here from a hypothetical Old Swedish **ulder*.

Supposedly, *-vin*[51] appears in the Swedish parish name *Ullene* (written as *Ollenee* in 1334) in Västergötland. The name, it might be noted, surfaces in a distinctly Swedish-Norwegian cultural region (Sahlgren, 1919, p. 94), and the fact that the *-vin* names are especially numerous in Norway (see Chapter 4.1.2) might point to its theophoric nature. Sahlgren (1932, p. 60), however, did not seem to consider the Swedish *Ullene* to be a theophoric name, if we consider his claim that *Ullr* never surfaces in parish names (as noted, *Ullene* is, in contradiction to this, the name of a parish).[52] A more satisfying explanation (Elgqvist, 1947, p. 27) might be to consider the name to refer to the name of the fabric, *ull* 'wool', or to the previously mentioned plant, *Eriophorum*, found in Swedish as *ängsull*. Perhaps the fact that the single occurrence of *Ullene* as the name of a parish should be considered an indicator of the name being strictly profane. Archaeological evidence, however, might speak against the idea of a profane *Ullene*. *Ullene* parish is an exceedingly old settlement, containing archaeological material dating back to the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, including *menhir* stones, stone circles and a grave field (Riksantikvarieämbetet, Fornminnesregistret: Inventering för Ullene, 1983). *-vin* names are certainly otherwise present in the Swedish place name material, Ståhl (1970, pp. 66-67) pointing out several examples in the provinces of Västergötland, Södermanland, Jämtland, and so on. In this context, however, it has to be noted that *-vin* stems in combination with any other pagan god in Sweden are completely unknown,[53] Vikstrand (2001) recording *Ullene* as the only such example in the Mälardalen region.

50. This comparison falls short, however, if one considers *Ullervad* in Västergötland, as Noreen (1901, p. 12) and Elgqvist (1947, pp. 21-23) do, to be a later form of an original *Ullarvi*. According to Elgqvist, this is almost definitely the case, and its curious form should be explained by considering the original *a* in its first stem *Ullar-* to have been weakened to *æ*, and then *e*. The *r* in the genitive was preserved unusually long, and its second stem *-vi* had its vowel weakened to *e*, and later supplanted by *a*.
51. For a discussion of the age and meaning of *vin*, see Chapter 4.1.2.
52. For a discussion of *Ullr* in parish names, see chapter 4.2.3.
53. The one Swedish *Törne* is arguably a *-vin* name, possibly of the same type as the Norwegian *Þór(v)in*. Whether the first stem refers to the name of the god is nonetheless highly questionable. Olsen (1915, pp. 62-63) considers the idea unlikely, as *-vin* names found in combination with the names of gods (*Óðinsyn*, *Njarðarin*, *Ullarin*, *Fröysin*) typically

Ståhl (1970, pp. 66-67), who considers *Ullene* to probably mean 'wooly meadow', argues that most *-vin* names arrived at least before the end of the 6th century, and thus can be considered relatively old. Although the scholarly inputs on *Ullene* lean heavily toward a theophoric explanation (Lindroth, 1914, p. 27; Wessén, 1921b, p. 124; Elgqvist, 1947, p. 26; Jansson, 1951, p. 75; Vikstrand, 2001, p. 167), I would argue that the meaning of the name must remain uncertain, for reasons stated above.[54]

Another disputed example is the Old Swedish place name *Ullarø*, which occurs in three places in Sweden: 1) a farm in the county of Älvsborgs län, Dalsland, 2) two neighbouring parishes in Värmland; and 3) in a now lost *Ullerö*, formerly a small peninsula, which nowadays constitute an island, and which appears to have been the original eponym for the two aforementioned parishes (Elgqvist, 1947, p. 27; Falck-Kjällquist, 1983, p. 152). The farm name is listed by Lundgren (1878, p. 72) as theophoric, noting that: "*Ullerö,* gård under gamla Nes s. […], är väl samma ställe som nuv. Ullerön." The two parish names in Värmland appear in modern Swedish as *Ullerud*, and have been debated at length on numerous occasions. The name, contrary to its modern form, is clearly formed from the first stem *Ullar-* and the second stem *-ö* 'island'. The names, given to two adjacent parishes, today known as *Nedre* ('Lower') *Ullerud*, and *Övre* ('Upper') *Ullerud*, are both found in their oldest form as *vtreullærø* in 1315, and *vllarø* in 1326 (then a single unit [Falck-Källquist, 1983, p. 152]). According to Elgqvist (1947, p. 27) the place got its modern *-rud* name through folk etymology, where it was connected to the otherwise common *-rud* names. Whether this place name should be considered theophoric or not is a matter of debate. Vikstrand (2001, pp. 179-181) has pointed out that a hydronomic **Ull-* name with an *-ar* suffix in the genitive can not be linguistically separated from theophoric names containing the name *Ullr* in the genitive. The second stem *-ö*, Vikstrand continues, is relatively common in combination with the names of gods, and historical conditions in the region certainly constitute no hindrance for a theophoric explanation – the place being a "betydande järnåldersbygd".

Close to what is today the parishes of *Ullerud*, is the previously mentioned island of *Ullerö*. Vikstrand writes: "Man kan mycket väl tänka sig att denna ö med sitt strategiska läge har fungerat som samlingsplats med bl.a. rituella funktioner för Ullerudsbygden och att den burit ett teofort namn, 'guden Ulls ö'" (Vikstrand, 2001, p. 180). Elof Hellquist (1903-1906, pp. 673-675), as noted

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have their first stem in the genitive case, which is not the case with the Norwegian *Þórin* nor the Swedish *Törne*; and a **Þórsvin* is completely unknown. Erik Noreen (1920, p. 22) agrees with the uncertainty of *Törne*'s theophoric nature. Lindroth (1914, p. 27) has nonetheless recorded a supposedly theophoric *-vin* name in Sweden: *Torsne* (*Þórr* + *vin*) in Alunda parish, Uppland.

54. The runic inscription *ullir*, found on a 15th or 16th century cabinet, retrieved from Ullene gamla kyrka, must be considered late, and certainly inspired by the place name, as has been pointed out before (Lundahl, 1957, pp. 57-58; Jungner & Svärdström, 1970, p. 428).

above, considered most such water-related *Ull-* names to be theophoric, stemming from the name of the god, although in many cases, he expressed some uncertainty. In the case of the island of *Ullerö*, he (1903-1906, p. 674) pointed out the possibility of the name *Ullerö* simply being an older name of what is today *Klarälven*, the big river in the region – an idea earlier postulated by Lundgren (1878, p. 72), where *Uller-* was derived from an undocumented hydronomic **Ull*, although considering this hypothesis unlikely. The name certainly finds identical parallels in Norway, among them *Ullarøy* in Østfold, a place generally considered theophoric (NG 1, p. 251; Olsen, 1915, p. 180). On this basis, both Noreen (1920, p. 27) and Hellquist (1903-1906, p. 674) were also prone toward a theophoric explanation for *Ullerö*. Indeed, Noreen additionally points out that the Norwegian *Ullarøy* is found in close proximity to *Óðinsøy*, and the Swedish *Ullerön* is found adjacent to *Onsön* – a relationship which, he argues, is intentional. Falck-Kjällquist (1983, pp. 152-155), nonetheless, argues strongly for a profane explanation, for both the Swedish and the Norwegian versions. To her mind, a significantly more satisfying explanation is to consider the first stem *Ull-* in the Swedish *Ullerö* to refer to the watercourse in which the island (or former peninsula) was located, with *Ull-* stemming once again from Old Swedish *vælla* 'bubble, boil'. Falck-Kjällquist (1983, p. 153) points out that the watercourse is "strid och fiskrik och dess vatten bubblar och sjuder speciellt vid sjön Lusten och i forsarna vid Deje." For all practical purposes, the question of *Ullerö* must thus be considered unsolved.

In connection to documents mentioning what is today the modern parishes of *Ullerud* discussed above, we also find the curious *wllærørh*, a name which has been the subject of much discussion. Hellquist (1903-1906, p. 674) felt that *wllærørh* should be considered a genitive form of the Old Swedish parish name discussed above, *Ullærø*. As Elgqvist (1947, p. 27) has pointed out, however, Hellquist's explanation has not been widely accepted. Lindroth (1914, p. 24) argued that the word is to be understood as an ellipse of his postulated (see above, note to Chapter 4.0) *Ullærvi*, *Ullærvi's rø*ı, where the first stem *Ull-* refers to the purported personal name **Ulle*, the second stem being Old Swedish *rør* '[small] channel, small passage' or 'reed-covered area'. Elgqvist (1947, p. 28) is prompted to give another explanation, on the basis that the sole mention of *wllærørh* occurs in the context of salmon fishing. He suggests that the second stem, rather than the Old Swedish *rø*ı, is to be understood as Old Swedish *ør* 'sandbank or stone foundation where fishing takes place'.

One of the most mysterious *Ull-* names in Sweden must undoubtedly be *Ullstämma*, found in two different and apparently independent locations: in Trögds härad, Uppland and in Hanekinds härad, Östergötland. In 1955, Elgqvist (p. 33) brought the name up for discussion, arguing that its second element*, stämma*, refers to either the Old Swedish *stæmma* (alternatively *stemna* or *stempna*), meaning 'breakwater, dam', or the Old Swedish *stæmna* (sometimes as *stemna*) meaning

'gathering at a specific place and time, meeting', preferring the former. According to Elgqvist, in the case of Östergötland, this word can probably be equated with the underlying word in the name of the village of *Stämma*, in Askeby socken, also in Östergötland. To Elgqvist's mind, the first element would then refer once again to the word discussed in Chapter 3.1., Old West Norse **ullr* (Old Swedish **ulder*) 'well-spring' (Sw. *källsprång*), and the meaning of *Ullstämma* would be 'the breakwater at the well-spring'. This view has been disputed by Vikstrand (2001, pp. 181-182 & pp. 186-188), who, as noted above, is critical of the idea of an Old Swedish **ulder* even having existed. As Vikstrand himself (2001, pp. 186-188) has demonstrated, the name's relation to a breakwater or dam seems exceedingly uncertain for historical reasons, as Vikstrand notes:

> Att det skulle röra sig om fördämningar för vattenkvarnar finner jag dock av historiska och topografiska skäl inte troligt för de båda *Ullstämma*-namnen […] Vattenkvarnen introducerades i Norden först under medeltiden, och vid åtminstone Ullstämma i Litslena sn finns inga möjligheter till sådana anläggningar.

The alternative explanation related to the meaning 'gathering at a specific place and time, meeting' is not all too convincing either, for geographical reasons. Indeed, the thing venue in this region was never in the immediate vicinity of Ullstämma, but rather in Enhälja. A 'meeting'-related explanation would thus, Vikstrand argues, have to rely on a supposed subordinate meeting place having been in *Ullstämma*, or to an older structure of geographical and legal organization of which we know nothing about. Should a 'meeting'-related explanation be plausible, it might nonetheless have implications for the understanding of Ullr as a god related to law and justice (see Chapter 9). Nevertheless, many previous scholars have assumed a sacred explanation for the name, Hellberg (1986, p. 51) commenting that: Namnet […] torde erinra om att guden *Ull* i egenskap av rättens övervakare har helgat forntida tingsplater." A more recent contribution made in conjunction with an archaeological excavation of the site in Östergötland (Ericsson & Strid, 2007, p. 11) concluded that the name must be profane, denoting a place where embanking has taken place for the purpose of flooding the surrounding areas with water – the first stem *Ull-* referring to the characteristics of the embanked water:

> Vår slutsats blir alltså den följande: *Ullstämma* syftar på en plats där man dämt i syfte att framkalla översvämning av den omkringliggande marken. Bestämningen *Ull* syftar på egenskaperna hos det vatten, vare sig det nu rör sig om en bäck eller om källsprång, som dämts upp (Ericsson & Strid, 2007, p. 11).

Even more uncertain instances of theophoric *Ullr* names include *Ullered* in northern Västergötland, the oldest forms of which, *Vllero* (1413) and *Vlläraff* (1470's), have prompted Ivar

Lundahl (1955, p. 141) to argue for an original **Ullarhov* (from *hof*), an explanation which seems unlikely for a number of reasons. As noted above (Chapter 4.1.2), in both Norway and Sweden, an **Ullarhof*/**Ullarhov* is unknown. Only *Ullinshof* (from **Ullinn*), surfacing thrice in Norway, is known. Elgqvist (1947, p. 30) also considers the name difficult, arguing that definite explanations for the second stem *-red* are impossible to give. Perhaps, Elgqvist notes, the name should be considered as being identical to *Ullerö*. Its later form *Vlerudh* (1615) nonetheless suggests that, just like the parishes of *Ullerud* (see above, same Chapter), it was connected to the *-rud* names based on folk etymology. I would suggest the name perhaps to be equated with *Ulerud* in Dalsland (as *Ullerudh* in 1597 and *Vlerudh* in 1600), which, according to Janzén (1940, p. 167), has its first stem in the etymology of the dialectal Swedish *ul* (Old West Norse *urð*) 'clough, animal den, den'. Other names with this etymology are potentially *Ulshögen* (Janzén, 1942, p. 81), *Uleberg* and *Uddalen*. Another possibility, once again, is a relation to *uggla* 'owl', or a personal name, *Ugla* (Janzén, 1940, pp. 167-168).

Ullersbro and *Ullersund* are probably named after the previously mentioned *Ullered* in the same region. Perhaps they should be considered ellipses of this name: **Ulleredsbro*, **Ulleredssund* (Friberg, 1938, p. 117). Another *Ullbro* is found in Uppland, as the name of a village immediately adjacent to *Ullunda*. It has been assumed in the past that *Ullbro* (from *bro* 'bridge') is an ellipse of *Ullunda*, **Ullar(lunda)bro* (Sahlgren, 1957, p. 54; Hellberg, 1986, p. 51). Vikstrand (2001, p. 177) ultimately agrees with this explanations, but points out that the apparent lack of a bridge in this location in any of the older maps might strengthen the plausibility of the word, again, stemming from a hydronomic **Ull-*. Another *Ullebro*, in Östergötland, is considered strictly profane by Franzén (1982, pp. 104-105), probably created from a personal name **Ulle*, perhaps in reference to the bridge builder himself.

Ullfors in Uppland is also somewhat interesting. Vikstrand (2001, p. 176) considers the name ambiguous. It has been suggested that the name is an older form of what is now the river of *Tämnarån*. Vikstrand nonetheless rejects this idea, and leans toward a theophoric explanation, especially considering the presence of a theophoric *Odensfors* in the adjacent area. Another possibility, according to Vikstrand, is to simply consider it to refer again to the Old Swedish *vælla*. Even more intriguing is the idea that the place name has an Icelandic parallel: *Ullarfoss*, immediately adjacent to *Goðafoss*, in Skjálfandafljót, Iceland (Ólafur Lárusson, 1942, p. 79; Turville-Petre, 1964, p. 183; Svavar Sigmundsson, 1992, p. 244).

According to Sahlgren (1923, p. 116), Elias Wéssen considered the one *Ullersätter* in Västmanland to be theophoric, and, indeed, part of a name-pair with the adjacent *Frövi*. Sahlgren is nonetheless critical of this approach, arguing that “Hela denna forskningsmetod, som ur två

olikartade ortnamn konstruerar fram gudapar, är ytterst betänklig.” As Sahlgren demonstrates, the name *Ullersätter* most probably is derived from a personal name **Ulle*, in turn derived from *Ulve* or *Ulv*. This view is echoed by Ståhl (1985, p. 62), who has the name as *Ullersäter*. The same origin probably applies to *Ullstorp* in Skåne county, which (apart from appearing too far south to be plausibly associated with *Ullr*) goes back to an original *Ulfstorp*, from *Ulv* (Toll, 1923, p. 9), the second stem *-torp* going back to Old Swedish *þorp* 'cottage, homestead'.

Whether or not the two Swedish *Ullnäs* (from *näs* 'headland, isthmus') and *Ullekalv* (from *kalv* 'calf'), all in Östergötland, are theophoric is a matter of debate. All three names find a neighbouring *Ullevi* in the same region. This relation has prompted Wessén (1922b, p. 112) to argue for the names having intentionally been paired for religious purposes. Indeed, Elgqvist (1947, p. 24) considers it likely that *Ullnäs* is an ellipse from the older *Ullevi*; **Ullevinäs*. In this context, Wessén also (1921a, pp. 91-92) considered *Ullekalv* to be an ellipse for an actual **Ullevi-kalv*. Vikstrand meanwhile argues that another name, *Stora Ullnäs* in Västmanland, is clearly profane, “beläget i en bygd vilken saknar såväl förhistorisk bebyggelse som gammalt namnskick” (Vikstrand, 2001, p. 170).

In both Sweden and Norway, a group of names with the second stem *bolstad* (Old Swedish *bolstadher*, Old West Norse *bólstaðr*) 'living place, farm-stead' can also be found. In several cases, the names occur with first stems supposedly denoting a pre-Christian cult. In Sweden can be found the two *Ulberstad* (written *vllabolstaþ* in 1367) in Östergötland and *Ullbolsta* (written *vllabolstad* in 1316) in Ulleråkers härad, Uppland. It is nonetheless questionable whether these names actually denote a pre-Christian religious cult. Lindroth (1914, p. 23) commented that: “Här kan inte gärna gudens namn ingå.” As Vikstrand (2001, pp. 394-395) has pointed out, previous research on the names suggested the first stem was based on a personal name, but other names such as *Nalbesta* (from *Njörðr*) and *Fröbbesta* (from *Freyr*) suggest they might have been theophoric. Vikstrand ultimately considers these names exceedingly difficult to explain. Hellberg (1986, p. 64) has nonetheless suggested a theophoric explanation for one of the two names, arguing that it should be considered an ellipse of an original **Ullarguðabolstaðr* 'living place for a priest of Ullr'. For a summarization of previous research on the possibility of theophoric *bólstaðr* names, I refer to Vikstrand’s chapter on the subject (Vikstrand, 2001, pp. 394-395).

4.2.2. Norway: Problematic Place Names

Out of the possibly hydronomic Norwegian *Ull-* names, *Ulla* (written *Vllen* in 1552), a farm in Møre og Romsdal, is probably the most certain to be associated with water. It is a *-vin* name, with the first stem probably referring to an original Old West Norse *vella* 'boil, seethe, stream'. According

to Elgqvist (1955, p. 36) it refers to an original mill-stream on the farm named **Ull*. Vikstrand (2001, p. 176) considers *Ulla* the only hydronomic *Ull-* name which definitely refers to a *water-course*, rather than the quality or the characteristics of the water.

Ulleren occurs a number of times in Norway, among them as the name of a parish in Hedemarken, Hedemark, and the name of two farms in the same parish (*Store* and *Lille Ulleren*). As for the farms, Rygh (NG 3, p. 188) claimed that "At ull- her ikke kan være Gudenavnet Ullr, maa tages for givet." To Rygh's mind, *Ulleren* and the five neighbouring *Ull-* places *Ullerbraaten*, *Ullerengen*, *Ullerhaugen*, *Ullermoen* and *Ullermyren* (note definite article) are all profane.[55] The first stem *Uller-* is supposedly derived from the name of a stream which leads out from the west of *Ulleren* parish into the river of Glommen, whereas the second stem is an otherwise unknown word **erni*. Another name in Norway referring to the same water-course is supposedly *Ulleviken* in Romsdal, Møre og Romsdal (NG 13, 142). The original written form of the *Ulleren* farms appears as *Vllerni*, something which prompted Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 181) to argue for a *-vin* explanation. In his mind, *Ulleren* should be equated with the numerous other *Ullarvin* names in Norway.

Elgqvist (1955, p. 36) also lists *Ulledalen* in Telemark county (*Vlledalen* in 1665) as a potential *vella* name, opposing, earlier literature, which seems to have preferred a theophoric explanation. Rygh and Kjær (NG 7, p. 354), for example, claim that the name "Er mulig et opr. **Ullardalr*, sms. med Gudenavnet *Ullr*." Later, Rygh and Olsen (NG 10, p. 366) took the discussion in a more nuanced direction, debating a number of possibilities, including an original **Ullár* (from *á* 'small river, creek'), or **Ulludalr* (from the female name, *Ulla*), as well as a theophoric explanation strengthened by the presence of a neighbouring place containing the name *Njörðr*. Olsen (1915, p. 75) lists the name as theophoric.

Another historically debated name is *Ullanhaug* (previously *Ullenhaug*) in Hordaland. The name has been given, first and foremost, to the 131 metre high *haugr* 'mound, sepulchral mound, cairn' just south of the border of the city of Stavanger, and also to the farm which is located just north of this mound. Olsen and Rygh (NG 10, pp. 200-201) consider the name to refer back to an original **Útland(a)haugr*, from *útland*, a profane name with various meanings pertaining to 'land, where one does not have one's home', 'land, which lies outward to the west of Norway', 'oriental land', 'coast or outskirt by the sea'. This word is also found in the farm name *Utland*, with the meaning 'outer farm'. This view was later disputed in a long essay by Harald Hveberg (1937, pp. 49-67), who argued that the name *Ullanhaug* goes back to an original **Ullar(v)in-haugr*, and thus is a *-vin* name, the first stem being the genitive of the name of the god, *Ullr*, and *haugr* a younger addition to the name. Hveberg considered the name an important remnant of pre-Christian cult, and

55. Neither Elgqvist (1955) nor Olsen (1915) list these five *Uller-* names as theophoric.

tied it to the adjacent *Jåtten*, which goes back to an original *Játún* – both names, in Hveberg's mind, referring to pre-Christian cult places.

The Norwegian *Ulnes* and *Ullenes* find a potential parallell in the Swedish *Ullnäs* (see Chapter 3.2.1). However, Rygh and Kjær (NG 4:2, p. 259) argue for the former to be equated with an original *Ulfnes*, from the name of the animal, *ulv* 'wolf'. *Ullenes*, on the other hand, is listed as theophoric by both Elgqvist (1955, p. 23) and Olsen (1915, p. 76), as well as by Rygh and Olsen in NG 10 (p. 264): "Sandsynlig **Ullarnes*, sms. med Gudenavnet Ullr."

An original **Ullarþveit* might be present in at least two Norwegian place names. According to Rygh and Kjær (NG 1, p. 132; NG 7, p. 92; NG 8, p. 13), the three adjacent farms of (*søndre*, *nordre* and *vestre*) *Ultvet* (written *Vllæþueit* in its oldest form, and *Vllethuedt* in 1593) in Østfold county, and *Ultveit* (written *Vlthuedt* and *Vllethuedt* in 1593) in Aust-Agder county, are possibly theophoric – whereas the one *Wlthuedt* in Bratsberg, Telemark county is a less certain but plausible contender.[56] Elgqvist (1955, p. 23) lists all three instances (including *Wlthuedt* in Telemark) as potentially theophoric, while Magnus Olsen (1915, pp. 73-75) records only the two former (*Ultvet* in Østfold and *Ultveit* in Aust-Agder) instances as theophoric. As for the second stem *þveit*, Rygh has the meaning as "udskilt Part, for sig beliggende Jordstykke" (Rygh, 1898, p. 83).

Ulreng in Akershus county (earliest written form *Vllerengh*) is another name that only "could be" theophoric (NG 2, p. 266). Elgqvist (1955, p. 22) lists it as theophoric, echoing Olsen (1915, p. 73). It is the only theophoric *-eng* name listed by Olsen, Noreen (1917, p. 98) pointning out that Nordic *-æng* names surface very rarely with the names of gods. As noted in Chapter 3.2.1, three *Ull-* + *-æng* (Norw. *-eng*) names are found in Sweden, out of which only two (both with first stem *Uller-*) can be considered more certain (Elgqvist, 1947, p. 18).

Three Norwegian *-vík* names, *Ulviken* (Akershus county) and two *Ulleviken* (in Vestfold and Telemark respectively), are potentially theophoric. Rygh (NG 2, p. 169), however, considers *Ulviken* uncertain, probably stemming from an original *ulv* 'wolf', whereas to his mind the two *Ulleviken* might stem from an original **Ullarvík*. The most likely explanation is that the two latter are theophoric. Elgqvist (1955, p. 23), nonetheless, lists all three names as theophoric, as does Olsen (1915, pp. 73-77). However, Rygh and Kjær (NG 6, p. 227) still consider the possibility of the name *Ulleviken* deriving from "en Stamme Ull-, som maa være uafhængig af Gudenavnet." In NG 7 (pp. 171-172) Rygh and Kjær suggest that all three instances might potentially derive from a female name, *Ulfhildr*, which appears in other place names. It might be noted that the *Ull-* + *-vík* names have no parallels in Swedish place names, except for one potential *Uggleviken* (note definite

56. A fourth name, *Ultvet* in Buskerud county, almost certainly stems from another word (probably *ulv* 'wolf'), appearing in its written form as *Vlfthuedt* in 1578. Rygh and Falk comment (NG 5, pp. 27-28) that: "Navnet maa være forskjelligt fra Ultveit."

article), which, according to Harry Ståhl (1982, p. 22) stems from an original **Ulvaviken* 'The Wolf Bay'.

As noted in Chapter 4.1.1, in Norway, there are also five *-berg* 'mountain, hill' names with the potential first stem *Ullr*, in the forms of *Ulleberg* (1), *Uleberg* (3) and *Ulberg* (1). NG nonetheless shows an extraordinarily diverse list of etymologies for the first stems. The only clearly theophoric *-berg* name is *Ulleberg* in Vestfold (NG 6, p. 315). Two of the three *Uleberg*, on the other hand, supposedly stem from **Urða(r)bergar* (from the Old West Norse *urð* 'heap of stones' [NG 7, p. 223; NG 5, p. 373]), while the third comes from **Ulfhildarberg*, from the female name *Ulfhildr* (NG 8, p. 186). NG also sees the one *Ulberg* as stemming from an original *Ulfaberg* (NG 4, p. 132), probably in the same way that *Ulgestr* stems from an original *Ulfgestr* (Olsen, 1914, p. 249). Elgqvist (1955, p. 22) lists only *Ulleberg* as being theophoric, like Olsen (1915, p. 75).

Ullarøy appears as the name of a total of four different locations in Norway. Olsen (1915, p. 181) considers all four instances to be theophoric, and in this is supported by Elgqvist (1955, p. 24). NG, however, considers only three of the four instances to be theophoric (NG 1, p. 251; NG 3, p. 187; NG 9, p. 217). The one *Ullerø* in Østfold has been disputed by Falck-Kjällquist (1983, pp. 154-155), who considers it likely that the name might be of the same etymology as the the Swedish *Ullerö*, which in her mind refers to a type of water-course (see Chapter 3.2.1). Rygh (NG 1, p. 251), however, considers *Ullerø* in Østfold to be a clearly theophoric name. To Rygh's mind, strengthening this notion is the fact that an adjacent peninsula to the west of *Ullerø* is named *Þórsnes*. This specific *Ullerø* is assumed to have once been an island, but is today a peninsula. *Ullarøy*, in Hedemark, is the only name considered profane by Rygh (NG 3, p. 188). He bases this assumption on the notion that this *Ullarøy* has been named after the neighboring *Ulleren*, which he considers a profane name created from a hydronomic first stem *ull-*, and the second stem *-erni* (see discussion on *Ulleren* above). As noted above, Rygh's assumption was criticized by Olsen (1915, p. 181), who argues for *Ullerni* to be considered a typical theophoric *-vin* name, and thus for *Ullarøy* to be considered theophoric along with it.

An extremely elusive *Uller* surfaces a single time in Norway, in Akershus. Its quite extraordinary 1312 written form *Vlloom* prompts Oluf Rygh (NG 2, p. 238) to suggest that it might actually be due to a spelling error. If *Uller* is a compound word, Rygh suggests that its second stem could be either *lá* or *ló*, two words with uncertain meanings. In regard to these words, Rygh (1898, p. 63) comments that:

> Ordet synes at forekomme i adskillige Gaardnavne som 2det Led, men dets Betydning i denne Anvendelse er uklar, og det er meget vanskeligt at holde det ud fra andre i Lyd nærstaaende Sammensætningsled, især

> fra *ló* […]. Disse to Ord forblandes allerede i Middelalderens Skriftform saa ofte i Navne, at der kunde blive Spørgsmaal, om de ikke er forskjellige Former af et og samme Ord; af Hensyn navnlig til den nuværende Udtale bliver dog dette maaske mindre sandsynligt. *lá* findes i det gamle Sprog brugt om Strandvandet ved Havbredden og hos Digterne om Havet; i Nutidens Folkesprog om Sumpvand, især jernholdigt Vand. Ingen av disse Betydninger giver dog en tilfredsstillende Forklaring paa alle de herhen hørende Navne.

Zoëga (2004, p. 262) has the English meaning of *lá* as 'the line of shoal water along the shore.' As mentioned, the place name *Uller* appears to potentially be a single stem, and Rygh (NG 2, p. 238) continues by suggesting an etymology he considers somewhat unsatisfactory, related to *ull* 'wool', the problem being that not only does *wool* not appear to have been given to place names in Norway in general, but "allermindst usammensatt". Eric Elgqvist (1955, p. 37) is prompted again to suggest an etymology related to his postulated Old West Norse ***ullr* 'well-spring', where *Uller*'s 1348-1349 written form *Vllum* is the dative plural of this word. In line with his theory of *Ullr* being related to natural springs, Elgqvist suggests furthermore that *Vlloom* might be linguistically associated with the place name **Vimir* or **Vimar* (surfacing in Norwegian documents in the genitive, *Vima* and the dative, *Vimum*). According to Olsen (1906, p. 125), these place names might be related to the Old High German plural *uuimi*, which he later (1915, p. 40) has as 'gushing springs' (Norw. "framsprudlende kilder"). Olsen, Elgqvist and Rygh, ultimately, do not consider the name theophoric.

4.2.3. *Ullr* in Swedish Parish Names

As noted earlier, in Chapter 4.1.1, Jöran Sahlgren (1932 , p. 60) has made the statement that *Ullr* and *Njörðr*, in their capacity as especially old deities, do not appear in parish names, the assumption being that parishes were established as Christian organizational districts, and that active pagan cult sites, rather than the supposedly abandoned ones of Ullr and Njörðr, were especially vulnerable in this regard. Sahlgren's statement was not made in a vacuum. Elof Hellquist postulated the same idea in 1922, in his etymological dictionary over the Swedish language: "[…] icke i ett enda säkert fall uppvisat i sockennamn […]" (1948, p. 1274). Nonetheless, this statement has encountered a number of issues, in that actually at least three apparently theophoric *Ullr* names do appear in parish names. These names have all been discussed in previous chapters, and include *Ullene* parish in Västergötland, the two parishes of (*Övre* and *Nedre*) *Ullerud* (*Ullerö*) in Värmland, as well as *Ullervad* in Skaraborg's county, Västergötland.[57] As noted earlier, the theophoric nature of these names can be and has been questioned by some scholars, and should perhaps be questioned further

57. A fourth case, *Ullånger* parish in Ångermanland's county, is too uncertain to support this discussion.

on the basis of their status as parish names. Nonetheless, Sahlgren's statement of the absence of *Ullr* in parish names remains problematic.[58]

4.2.4. *Ullr* Place Names in Denmark

As de Vries (1957, p. 154) among others have noted, no place names in Denmark can be shown to conclusively consist of the first stem *Ullr* in reference to the god. For a number of the potential Danish place names, the second stem *þorp* 'cottage, homestead' seems to disqualify a theophoric explanation, and instead suggests an etymology based on a personal name (Kousgård Sørensen, 1992, p. 163); among them are a considerable amount of *Ullerup* names, at least 14 to my count. Vikstrand (2001, p. 167) considers at least the one *Ullerup* in Tårnby, close to central Copenhagen, to possibly be created from the personal name **Ulle*, which in turn is a hypocoristic development of a two-stem compound on *Ulv-*. Other such place names include *Ullerup* in Sønderborg, Southern Jutland; *Ulkerup* in Egebjerg; *Ulstrup* in Vig, as well as *Ulstrup* in Grevinge – the latter three all in north-west Sjælland (Olrik Frederiksen, 1981, pp. 63-64). de Vries (1957, p. 154) nonetheless mentions a number of earlier but uncertain suggestions of theophoric place names including *Ulborg*, *Ulbjærg*, *Ulsted*, *Ulbølle*, *Ulslev* and *Ullemarke*.

4.2.5. *Ullr* Place Names in Finland

Two places in Finland, about which I have not been able to gather much information, which might relate to the name of the god, are 1) *Ullava å* (Finnish *Ullavanjoki*), a creek in the municipality of the same name, in the county of Vasa, and 2) *Ullenböle* (Finnish *Ullenpyöli*), a village in the municipality of Salo, in the county of Åbo and Björneborg (Zilliacus and Ådahl-Sundgren, 1984, p. 83).

Ullenböle is of special interest, as it echoes the first stem of the Swedish *Ullentuna*. Because of the lack of genitive *s* the name nonetheless suffers from the same problematic nature as *Ullentuna*, and it is difficult to equate it with the Norwegian **Ullinn* off-hand. Rolf Saxén (1905, pp. 28-29) comments briefly on the name that "*Ullenböle* är väl att uppfatta som en af dessa i officiella källor så vanliga försvenskningar af finska namn (jfr *Kanturböle* m. fl. i Bjärnå). Första leden är troligen personnamnet *Ulli*, *Ullr*." Nonetheless, as we have seen, an Old Swedish personal

58. Sahlgren's concept of active pagan religious sites being especially exposed to the expansions of Christianity is questioned by Vikstrand (2001, p. 175), who points out that the idea of "cult place continuity" has been disputed in later research. The earliest churches were, indeed, not generally built on pagan religious sites. Despite this, Vikstrand acknowledges the extraordinary fact that no *Ull(e)vi* (apparently overseeing the one *Ullervad*, which probably stems from an original *Ullarvi*) have become parishes. Vikstrand suggests that the lack of *Ullarvi* parishes might be due to these cult sites still being too active to be considered a reasonable place on which to establish a church, or because these places were considered too contaminated by paganism to be suitable for Christian churches – an explanation that probably has to be dismissed, as many probably active *Odensvi*, *Torsvi* and *Frösvi* places were given parish status.

name **Ulli* (**Ulle*?) is never recorded in extant Swedish sources, nor is *Ullr* ever found as a personal name outside the name of the god. *Ulli* does of course surface in Old Icelandic, in *Heimskringla*, as a potential nickname for *Erlendr* (see Chapter 3.3.2). Perhaps the name has been coined in reference to the *Ullentuna* in Uppland.

4.2.6. *Ullr* Place Names in Iceland

Ólafur Lárusson's (1942, p. 79) overview of cultic place names on Iceland lists a numerable amount of *Ullar-* names, the vast majority of which, for all practical purposes, probably stem from *ull* '[sheep] wool'. However, distinguishing the two words *ull* and *Ullr* is problematic, as they share the same suffix for the singular genitive case: *-ar* (*ullar*, *Ullar*). Two examples, however, are of considerable interest (Ólafur Lárusson, 1942, p. 79; Turville-Petre, 1964, p. 183; Svavar Sigmundsson, 1992, p. 244): *Ullarfoss*, in Skjálfandafljót, Iceland, appearing next to an apparently theophoric *Goðafoss* ('Fall of the gods'), and one *Ullarklettur* next to one *Goðaklettur* ('Cliff of the gods'). Should these names be genuinely theophoric, they would naturally have implications for our understanding of the age and survival of the Ullr cult. If the cult of Ullr was still active during the settlement of Iceland, to such an extent that place names on the island were dedicated to him, it would also open up possibilities for the name of the god potentially appearing in place names on the British Isles, which were settled by Norsemen earlier.

4.2.7. *Ullr* Place Names in the British Isles

The possibility of *Ul-*/*Ull-* names on the British Isles containing the theophoric name *Ullr* has never been properly explored. Both England and Scotland contain a considerable amount of names with the first stem *Ull-* or *Ul-*, most of which are assumed to have Nordic origins. Arne Kruse of Edinburgh University (personal correspondence) has nonetheless commented that there is no known way of distinguishing between the personal name *Úlfr*, the animal name *úlfr* and the theophoric name *Ullr* in such names. Interpretations need to draw heavily on historical written accounts, archaeological accounts or other historical sources. Some authors (MacBain, 1922, for example) seem to have preferred etymologies related to the assumed Old Norse personal name, *Ulli*, rather than *Úlfr*, despite *Ulli* being more or less unknown (see Chapter 3.3.2).

Many of the names in England are recorded as far back as 1086, and are found in the so-called *Domesday Book*, which surveyed large areas of the British Isles, most prominently England and Wales. Compared to Scandinavian place name records, 1086 is an extremely early account. It is ultimately exceedingly unlikely, however, that any theophoric *Ullr* name should surface on the British Isles, Ullr being an apparently uniquely Nordic deity, who by the time of the settlement of

the British Isles by Norsemen at the end of the 8th century had his glory days behind him. The following is a rundown of such names on the British Isles that are open to consideration.

England

I have been able to identify a total of 13 names in England containing the first stem *Ull-* or *Ul-*. The bulk of these names appear to show a north-central distributional pattern, with single occurrences as far south as Warwickshire, Herefordshire, Kent and Leicestershire.

Ullswater, on the border of the two historical counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, in the Lake District of North West England, is a prominent lake. Its 1230 written form *Ulueswater* and its 1323 written form *Ulveswatre* would appear to bear witness to an original *Úlfr*, a personal name (Kökeritz, 1939-1940, p. 18). Its genitive *s* would seemingly prevent it from stemming from an original *Ullr*.

Uley (written *Euuelege* in 1086), a village in Gloucestershire, England, is created from an Old English first stem *īw* meaning 'yew [tree]', and a second stem Old English *ley* meaning 'wood, clearing in wood' (Cameron, 1963, p. 188).

Ulleskelf (*Oleschel* in 1086, *Ulfskelf* in 1170-1177), in the Selby district of North Yorkshire, England, stems again from the original personal name, *Úlfr*. The second stem derives from Old English *scelf* 'rock, ledge, shelving land' (Cameron, 1963, p. 177), or from Old Norse *skjalf* 'shelf' (Fellows-Jensen, 1972).

Ulpha is a village in Cumbria, England. According to Cameron (1963, p. 176) the name undoubtedly stems from the original name of the animal, *wolf* (evident from its 1279 written form *Wolfhou*), whereas the second stem derives from Old Norse *haugr* 'mound, hill'.

Ullesthorpe (*Ulestorp* in 1086) in Leicestershire also stems from an original personal name, *Úlfr*, and the second stem from Old Norse *þorp* 'cottage, homestead' (Cameron, 1963, p. 84; Fellows-Jensen, 1978, p. 120). It has a Scandinavian counterpart in the Swedish *Ullstorp* (see Chapter 4.2.1).

Uldale in Cumbria, England (*Ulvesdal* in 1216) stems either from the original personal name *Úlfr*, or the animal name *úlfr* 'wolf', and a second stem Old Norse *dalr* 'valley'. According to Cameron (1963, p. 80), the first stem refers to the animal.

Ulceby (*Ulesbi* in 1086) in Lincolnshire, England, stems from the personal name *Úlfr*, and the second stem *býr* 'village' (Reaney, 1960, p. 164).

Ulcombe in Kent, England (written *Ulancumbe* in 946) means 'valley of the owl, or of a man called **Ūla*', Old English *ūle* (Mills, 2011, p. 474). This is similar to *Ulgham* (*Ulweham* in 1242) in Northumberland, England, which means 'valley or nook of the owls' (Mills, 2011, p. 474).

Ullock (*Ulvelayk* in 1245) denotes two villages in Cumbria, England , and derives from the animal name *úlfr* 'wolf', and the second stem from Old Norse *leikr* 'game, play, sport', meaning therefore 'place where wolves play' (Ekwall, 1920, p. 89).

Ullenhall in Warwickshire, England, is an especially interesting name, containing a first stem similar to the many Norwegian **Ullinn* names, such *Ullensvang* (see Chapter 4.1.2). Lacking the genitive *s*, however, the name finds closer parallels in the Swedish *Ullentuna*, as well as the Finnish *Ullenböle*. Nonetheless, the name appears as *Holehale* in 1086, and the unanimous interpretation seems to be to consider the first stem to derive from a supposed male personal name, Old Norse or Old English **Ulla*[59] (supposedly, with the Old English genitive *-n*), and an Old English second stem *halh* meaning 'nook, corner of land' (Mills, 2011, p. 473). As mentioned, the lack of genitive *s* probably means it cannot be equated with **Ullinn*, although its oldest form *Holehale* hardly seems to properly support an interpretation based on an assumed Old Norse name **Ulla*.

Ulrome in the East Riding of Yorkshire (*Ulfram* in 1086) probably means 'homestead or village of a man called *Wulfhere* or a woman called *Wulfwaru*', both being Old English personal names, the second stem being Old English *hām* 'homestead' (Mills, 2011, p. 474).

Ullingswick (as *Ullingwic* in 1086) in Herefordshire, England, is, once again, derived from an Old English (or Old Norse) personal name **Ulla* with an *-ing* suffix, and a second stem *wīc* 'dwelling, (dairy) farm' (Mills, 2011, p. 474).

Ulley in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, England, is not to be confused with *Uley* (see above). *Ulley* (*Ollei* in 1086) probably derives from Old English *ūle* 'owl' and a second stem *ley* 'wood, clearing in wood' – 'woodland clearing frequented by owls' (Mills, 2011, p. 474).

Scotland

As with England, Scotland boasts a numerable amount of names beginning with both *Ull-* and *Ul-* – the origins of which are, as one would expect, assumed to be Nordic. I've been able to identify 11 instances. The regional distribution reveals that the names appear in primarily a north-central region, with two occurrences on the southernmost areas of the country.

According to Mills (2011, p. 473), *Ulbster* (*Ulbister* in 1538), in the former county of Caithness, in the Scottish Highlands, stems from the original personal name *Úlfr*, and an Old Norse second stem *bólstaðr* 'living place, farm-stead'. According to MacBain (1922, p. 12), on the otherh and, *Ulbster* stems from a "favourite name", *Ulli*. Whatever the case, it is unlikely that any name

59. Mills (2011, p. 473) prefers an Old English origin for this name, whereas Margaret Gelling (1984) gives it a Scandinavian origin.

containing *bólstaðr* would be theophoric. It has an interesting Scandinavian counterpart in the two Swedish *Ulberstad* (written *vllabolstaþ* in 1367) in Östergötland, and *Ullbolsta* (written *vllabolstad* in 1316) in Ulleråker, Uppland (see Chapter 3.2.1).

Ullapool (written *Ullabill* in 1610) in Ross shire, in the Scottish Highlands, means 'Wolf's farm', and derives from the personal name *Úlfr*, and a second stem probably related to Old Norse *bœli* 'farm, dwelling' (Mills, 2011, p. 474). MacBain (1922, p. 12), however, again seems to favour an explanation related to the Old Norse personal name, *Ulli*. Mackay (2011, p. 185) considers the second stem to be derived from an original *bol* 'settlement', a corruption of *bólstaðr*. Johnston (1934, p. 318) meanwhile comments that the **Ulla-* may be from *Olaf*, such as in *Ollaberry*.

Ulva, a quite prominent island in the Inner Hebrides of Scotland, has a disputed etymology. According to Mackay (2011, p. 185), the name derives from an Old Norse personal name (or nickname), *Ulfa*, and means 'Ulf's island', an idea shared by Alex MacBain (1922, p. 56) and Johnston (1934, p. 318). The second stem, to Mackay's mind, is related to Old Norse *ey* 'island'. A non-Gaelic origin for the name was earlier suggested in 1775 by Samuel Johnson, who claimed that "the Earse language does not afford it an etymology" (1775, p. 330).

Ulhava, "an islet near Duncraig," Scotland, supposedly shares the same etymology as *Ulva*; stemming from the original personal name, *Ulfa*, the second stem deriving from Old Norse *ey* 'island' (MacBain, 1922, p. 56).

Ulladale, a cliff on the Outer Hebrides, Scotland, supposedly stems from a personal name, *Ulli*, and a second stem, Old Norse *dalr* 'valley' (MacBain, 1922, p. 12). Johnston (1934, p. 318), however, suggests an alternative explanation, relating the first stem to Old Norse *öla* 'alder', and has the meaning of the name as 'valley of alders'.

Ullipsdale, in Kildonan, Sutherland, Scottish Highlands, "is doubtless 'Wolf's dale,' after Gaelic phonetics had hardened the F of Ulfs (genitive of Ulfr) into a P before S" (MacBain, 1922, p. 12).

Ullinish, in Skye, Inner Hebrides, Scotland, is made from either the Old Norse animal name, *úlfr* 'wolf' (genitive plural *úlfa*), and a second stem *nes* 'headland, isthmus, promontory', meaning 'promontory of the wolves' (Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba, entry for *Ullinish*), or from a personal name *Ulli*, rendering the name 'Ulli's point' (MacBain, 1922, p. 38).

Ulloch, in Balmaghie, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland, appears in its earliest form as *Vlioch*. The name, according to Johnston (1934, p. 319), stems from Gaelic *uallach* and means 'proud, high place'.

Ullie, a strath through which the River Helmsdale flows, probably contains a Gaelic word *Uille* or *Iligh*. The meaning is obscure (Johnston, 1934, p. 318).

Ulsta (in Jedburgh, Scottish Borders) and *Ulston* (Shetland), despite the vast distance between them, probably share the same origin: the personal name *Úlfr* and the second stem *-sta* (from *staðr*) 'place, town'. *Ulston* appears in its earliest form in 1150 as *Ulvestoun* (*-town*?) (Johnston, 1934, p. 319).

The Isle of Man

Viking presence is known on the Isle of Man, and valuable archaeological remains bearing witness to Nordic presence on the island have been found for example in the parish of Braddan, where the former church, Kirk Braddan, contained an ancient cross covered with unique symbols of mythological nature. Nonetheless, once again, only a handful of place names relevant to this study can be found on the island.

In 1890, A. W. Moore (p. 298) made the most extraordinary claim, that the name of *Ulist*, in the parish of Kirk Braddan, derives from a supposedly obsolete Scandinavian proper name "*Ullr*, or *Ulli*, 'akin to Gothic *wulþus*, "glory,"' the name of one of the gods, the stepson of Thor […] ULIST (*Ulls-staðr*), 'Ull's Stead'" (*sic!*). Later (1890, p. 300), Moore makes it clear that he is referring to the modern Manx place name *Colooneys*, or *Collooneys* (supposedly not to be confused with the modern *Collooney* in County Sligo, Ireland[?]) which, according to Kneen (1925, pp. 173-203), appears in its earliest form in Manx as *Ulyst* in 1511, and as *Quoole Ulist* in 1643. This interpretation by Moore is exceedingly problematic. First of all, as noted in Chapter 3.3.2, it is uncertain whether or not the proper name *Ulli* was ever actually related to *Ullr*, and whether the two have a shared background in the Gothic *wulþus* 'splendour, glory'. As noted in Chapter 3.3.2., *Heimskringla* certainly seems to imply it as a nickname for *Erlendr*. Secondly, no personal name *Ullr* is ever recorded in the extant sources, and, as with other names such as *Ullestad* and *Ullestrup*, a theophoric *Ulls-staðr* would not have been likely considering the well-established notion of *staðr* and similar words never appearing in theophoric names (see Chapter 4.1.2). Much more reasonably, Kneen (1925, pp. 173-203) suggests that the name stems from an original Old Norse *Ólafsstaðr*, drawn from the personal name *Ólaf*, and the second stem from *staðr* 'place, stead, farm', the Manx *cooill* 'corner, nook' being added later. According to Kneen, several kings of the Isle of Man were named *Olaf* or *Olave*.

Ulican (*Owlican* in 1643) in Kirk Braddan, Isle of Man, probably derives from the Irish *uiadh* 'tomb, cairn', later 'penitential station',[60] probably like other Isle of Man names such as

60. The number of names pertaining to *Ull-*/*Ul-* in Ireland itself is surprisingly low. Only three names are of interest for this study, all of which are assumed by most scholars to have Irish, rather than Nordic, origins. 1) *Ulster* is the name of the northernmost province of Ireland, Mills (2011, p. 474) giving the meaning of the name as *Land of the Ulstermen*. The first part of the word, *Ul-* apparently refers to the tribe, Irish *Ulaidh*, and the second part stems from either Old English or Old Norse genitive *-s* + Irish *tír*, or the Old Norse *staðr* 'land, territory'. According to Mills "[t]he meaning of

Ellican and *Welkin* (Kneen, 1925, pp. 173-203). Moore (1890, p. 363), however, also briefly mentions *Ulican*, and suggests a potential original form **Oolican*, from *ulla* (? [*sic!*]).

As demonstrated above, it is exceedingly uncertain whether or not the theophoric (or personal) name *Ullr* ever surfaces on the British Isles, even though a handful of scholars have suggested as much. It might probably be assumed that the Ullr cult was abandoned before the settlement of the British Isles, and on the basis of the fact that Nordic place names on the British Isles tend not be be theophoric in general, it would seem far-fetched to propose that any place names on the isles would contain a name pertaining to the archaic deity Ullr.

4.3. Potential Associations with Other Deities in Place Names

As indiciated in Chapter 2.1., the idea of pairs of religious deities in place names has been around for a significant amount of time, and stems most particularly from the works of Magnus Olsen and Elias Wessén. In the case of *Ullr*, scholars have attempted to associate his place names with a wide range of numerous other Scandinavian pagan deities, most prominently *Freyr* and *Njörðr*, but also *Hærn*, *Þórr*, *Skaði* and the *dísir*, all of which are more or less common in Nordic place names (Brink, 2007). Most attempts at pairing have been based on geographical closeness, and more often than not have tried to logically justify the connection of pairs with references to mythological literature or to the second stems with which the place names are connected.

4.3.1. *Ullr* and *Freyr*

In 1915, in his *Hedenske kultminder i norske stedsnavne*, Magnus Olsen discussed a number of propositions relating to pairs of religious deities that he felt could be found in place names, indicating some kind of relationship. One of Olsen's strongest arguments was an association between *Freyr* and *Ullr* (**Ullinn*), which seems to exist in a number of Norwegian place names (Figs. 10 & 11) – an association which he felt bore witness to an ancient "male pair of gods", both related to a joint fertility cult. To his mind, the many *Ullr*, **Ullinn* and *Freyr* names found in relatively close proximity to each other (and in different regions of the country),[61] and in two cases

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the tribal name is obscure" (Mills, 2011, p. 474). Its oldest mentioning is ca. 150, as *Ouolountoi*, ruling out any and all possibilities of the name referring to Old Norse *Ullr*, which at such an early stage would have preserved its original word-initial *w-* (something which [Olsen, 1931, p. 133] would have happened around the 7th century), from its Proto-Germanic originator **Wulþuz*. 2) *Ullard* (Irish *Ulaidh Ard*) in Kilkenny, Ireland, supposedly means 'high penitential station', and is similar to another Irish name 3) *Ullauns* (Irish *Ulán*), also found in Kilkenny, again meaning 'penitential station', both with the first stem Irish *uiadh*, originally meaning 'tomb, cairn', and later 'penitential station' (Mills, 2011, p. 474).

61. Olsen mentions three major locations in Norway in which *Ullr* or *Ullinn* can be found coupled with *Freyr*. 1) In Nordre Land, in Oppland county, is *Ullensaker*, 3 km north of which lies *Frøisland* and 3 km south of which lies *Frøisli*. 8 km east of *Frøisli* lies *Frøsaaker*. 2) In Hallingdal, in Buskerud county, another pair is found in the two *Ulsaaker* and *Frøsaaker* (within 20 km of each other). 3) In Gudbrandsdalen, also in Oppland county, are the two

with *akr* as second stems, bore witness to an overarching fertility cult, in which the *akr* did not merely represent a place of cult worship (a field), but an entire settlement in which cult worship of a particular type took place (Olsen, 1915, p. 103).

Lending strength to Olsen's argument of *Freyr* and *Ullr* being intentionally coupled, was his position that the previously discussed (see Chapter 3.2), and otherwise undocumented word, **Fillinn*, in the Norwegian place name *Fillinsin*, in Vaage, northern Gudbrandsdalen, denoted a god identical to Freyr, ultimately translated as 'he who belongs to the ground (the earth, the mountain),' and that *Fillinsin* had been deliberately named in association with the adjacent *Ullinsin*, a name referring to **Ullinn*, who in Olsen's mind was identical to the god Ullr. According to Olsen, the farm name *Lýgin* (also with the second stem -*vin*), located in between the two *Fillinsin* and *Ullinsin*, supports his argument of an association between **Fillinn* and **Ullinn*. Here, Olsen imagines that the name *Lýgin* derives from a Germanic stem, *leug-* 'confirm through agreement', the same word as Gothic *liuga* 'marriage', and Old High German *urliugi* 'war'. In the Norwegian place name in question, the word would have approached a meaning akin to '(place, which through) oathly agreement (has been made holy and sacred)', and denoted a thing place which stood in formal connection between the two *Ullinsin* and *Fillinsin*. Ultimately, to Olsen's mind, the different adjacent place names of *Ullarin – Frøysin*, *Ullinsaker – Frøysakr* and *Ullinsin – Fillinsin*, found in different parts of the country, also bore witness to the identical nature of **Ullinn* and *Ullr*, and **Fillinn* and *Freyr* (Olsen, 1915, pp. 103-106 & pp. 235-241; Hellquist, 1917, pp. 165-166). Olsen explains the nature of this fertility cult by means of a most extraordinary investigation of mythological and folkloristical nature, ending up with the conclusion that the male cult of Freyr and Ullr centered around the *akr* (field), representing the motherly earth on which the two fertility gods (both representing different states of the heavens, Freyr the cloudy and rainy sky, Ullr the dry and sunny one) had different purposes, Ullr fertilizing the soil with barley, and Freyr with oat (Olsen, 1915, pp. 106-115; Hellquist, 1917, pp. 174-176).

The idea of a "male pair of gods", and the way in which Olsen reaches his imaginative conclusions, must be considered somewhat controversial, a fact recognized by Elof Hellquist in his contemporary review of Olsen's work in 1917 (p. 175): "Utan tvifvel rör sig förf. här på ganska osäker mark." It might be noted that Sahlgren (1950, p. 2) also refers to Olsen's work as his "lika fantasirika som skarpsinniga arbete."

Ullinsin and *Fillinsin* (Olsen, 1915, pp. 101-103 & p. 182; see Chapter 3.2).

Fig. 10. Map of place names in Sweden, in which the names of the gods Ullr and Freyr are thought to surface. Circle with cross denotes parishes in which both and *Ullr* and *Freyr* surface. The northernmost region containing the two names *Frösön* and *Ullvi*, Jämtland, has been left out (from Elgqvist, 1955, p. 81).

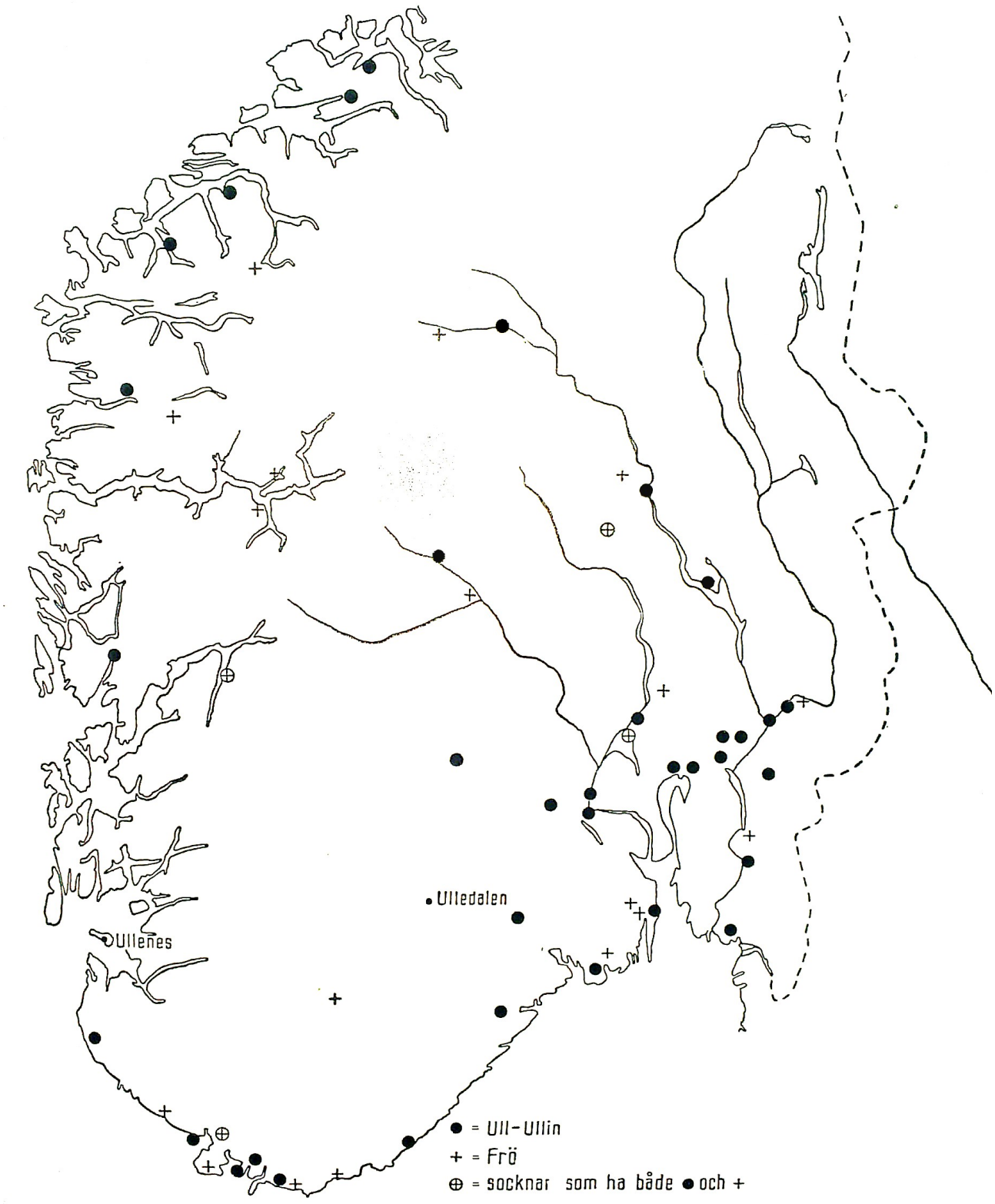

Fig. 11. Map of place names in Sweden, in which the names of the gods Ullr (*Ullinn) and Freyr are thought to surface. Circle with cross denotes parishes in which both and *Ullr* (**Ullinn*) and *Freyr* surface. Norway's northernmost *Ullr* name, *Ullland*, in Sørli, Lierne, Nord-Trøndelag, has been left out (from Elgqvist, 1955, p. 85).

Eric Elgqvist (1955, p. 85) has nonetheless argued that a similar relationship to the one found by Olsen in Norway can also be found in Sweden, listing a number of instances in which cult places thought to be dedicated to *Freyr* are found within 10 km of such places dedicated to *Ullr*.[62] As we shall see, the ambiguous picture these scholars present with regard to intentionally coupled gods (especially *vanir* gods) nonetheless raises questions as to whether or not this methodology is feasible, and as to how historical relationships between the different gods in question might have fluctuated. As Elgqvist points out, the available material also seems to support the notion that *Freyr* is younger than *Ullr* (Elgqvist, 1955, p. 93), which possibly questions a pairing.[63]

4.3.2. *Ullr* and *Hærn*

One of the most controversial and frequently discussed elements in the Swedish place-name material is the ambiguous **Hærn* – a name otherwise unknown from extant literature. Research on the name took off in 1898 when Hans Hildebrand (1898, p. 6) pointed out the peculiarity of the fact that the word (in modern Swedish as **Härn*) more often than not surfaced in place names with the second stem *-vi* (as in *Härnavi*/*Ärnavi*), a word so characteristic of religious place names that its presence alone prompts theophoric explanations. Without furthering his remark, the issue was later taken up by Magnus Olsen, in his text "Hærnevi: en gammel svensk og norsk gudinde" (1908). Olsen argued here that the name was related to a name frequently occurring in old Norwegian-Icelandic literature as a nickname for the goddess Freyja, namely *Hǫrn*. More importantly, Olsen thought himself able to show that the Swedish place names involving *Hærn-* were found adjacent to place names with both *Ullr* and *Þórr*. According to Oskar Lundberg (Lundberg & Sperber, 1912, p. 20), *Härnevi* is found adjacent to *Ullr* in at least three of the name's four occurrences in Sweden: twice in Uppland and once in Östergötland. Another etymology for **Hærn* was nonetheless presented by Hans Sperber (Lundberg & Sperber, 1912, pp. 41-49), and came to be largely accepted by scholars at the time,[64] in which the word **Hærn* is to be understood first and foremost as a

62. Elgqvist lists the following: *Ullunda*, west of Enköping, in relation to *Frösvi* at Sagån; *Ulleråker* in Simtuna in relation to *Fröslunda* in Altuna; *Ullvi* in Irsta in relation to *Frösåker* in Kärrbo; *Ullevi* in Gåsinge in relation to *Frustuna*, also in Gåsinge; *Ullunda* on Selaön in relation to to *Fröslunda* on the same island; and *Ullered* on Kållandsö in relation to to the adjacent *Fröslunda*. Another possibility is *Ullavi* in Kil, in relation to *Frösvidal* in the same place. A relation between *Ullevi* on Gårdby and *Fröslunda* in Stenåsa, both on Öland, is also a possibility (Elgqvist, 1955, p. 86).
63. An equivalent to the Norwegian *Freyr* and *Ullr* relationship has also been suggested (Wessén, 1923, pp. 5-8; Sahlgren, 1932, p. 61; de Vries, 1957, pp. 156-158; Hellberg, 1983, p. 93, and others) in the supposed similar connection between *Ullr* and *Njörðr* in Swedish place names.
64. Olsen himself adopted this etymology (1915, p. 198). Sperber was admittedly criticized by Hjalmar Lindroth, who somewhat uncertainly argued that the name should be related to the Finnish *Aarni(o)*, the name of a demon who "vaktar nedgrävda skatter". Lindroth also saw considerable linguistic problems in the etymology presented by Sperber, and contended that the original form of *Hærn* must have been *Ærn* (Lindroth, 1915, pp. 59-61). Hellquist (1917, p. 170) also expressed some support for Olsen's former etymology pertaining to Freyja's nickname *Hǫrn*, namely that the relationship between Old West Norse *Hǫrn* and Old Swedish *Hærn* should be considered the same as that between the Old Icelandic *vǫrn* and *sǫgn* and the Old Swedish *værn* and *sæghn* – "alltså en *ni*-stam, som i isl. glidit öfver till *ō*-

feminine substantivization of the *-īna* adjective **harwīna* 'of flax' (similarly, see Chapter 3.2), from an Old Swedish equivalent to the modern Swedish and Danish *hör* (in Icelandic *hör* or *lín*), Old West Norse *hǫrr*, Old High German *haru*, as well as New High German *Har*, all meaning 'flax'.[65]

Although the immediate etymological relation to Freyja's nickname *Hǫrn* had largely been disproved by this time, the identification of **Hærn* as referring to a female fertility goddess took a life of its own. The idea that **Hærn* was a fertility goddess, either independent in her own right or closely related to or identical with Freyja, retains a lot of merit (largely because of the name's supposed association with male fertility gods in place names), and has been taken as fact by a variety of scholars (for examples and discussion, see Hellberg, 1986, p. 54 & p. 70; Lindeberg, 1997, p. 108; Karlenby, 1997, p. 270; Forsgren, 2010, pp. 105-125; Forsgren, 2012, pp. 277-280).

In 1995, however, Lennart Elmevik presented a new etymology for the word (Elmevik, 1995a, pp. 72-73) which, instead, attempted to establish **Hærn* as actually being a name for Freyr: to Elmevik's mind, the word is related to an Old Swedish **ærin* (originally related to *ár*, as in the formula *til* ***árs*** *ok friðar*), with the meaning of *ársguð*, namely 'god of year's good crop'. Elmevik's etymology was nonetheless problematized by Vikstrand (2001, pp. 308-310) who pointed out that an explanation with an original word-initial *H* is more satisfactory than one without, and also that the gender of the name simply can not be determined. To Vikstrand's mind, however, it is extremely likely that the name does indeed denote a deity (known or otherwise) of some kind, and the conditions in the regions where the name surfaces indicate that the cult to which the deity belonged is "mycket ålderdomlig och knuten till en central samhällsnivå."

**Hærn*'s relation to *Ullr* in place names, if it exists, would certainly seem to reflect the idea of *Ullr* representing a male god (supposedly personifying the sky), and *Hærn* representing a fertility goddess connected with the earth – the two intrinsically related and worshipped in a single cult. Although this is mythologically intriguing and tempting from the standpoint of religious history, Vikstrand (2001, p. 106 & p. 310) has nonetheless demonstrated that a relationship between *Ullr* and *Hærn* hardly can be supported by the place name material as a whole. The same conclusion was reached by Eric Elgqvist almost 50 years earlier (1955, p. 120), in his statement that: "Lindroths krav [in regard to the use of place names to confirm religious pairs] synes åtminstone i det närmaste uppfyllt i fråga om gudaparet Ull:Njord men knappast beträffande Ull:Hærn."

As for a relation between the actual goddess Freyja and *Ullr* in place names, further problems arise. Indeed, the name of *Freyja* in Scandinavian place names has in recent years been the matter of heated debate, and it is ultimately difficult to distinguish the name from that of *Freyr*.

stammarnas deklination."

65. For a more recent theory pertaining to *Härn* as a sun goddess, based on archaeological finds, see Forsgren (2010, pp. 105-121).

In a number of cases it is also reasonable to associate many *Frö-* names not with *Freyja*, but with *frö* 'crop', and other related words (see Elmevik, 1995b, pp. 12-15; 1997, p. 107, etc; 2005, pp. 136-138; Vikstrand, 2001, pp. 72-73 and related references). Nonetheless, no formal connection between the names can be argued to exist at present, and the overall lack of immediate connections between **Hærn* and *Ullr* would suggest even less likelihood of any potential relationship between *Freyja* and *Ullr*.

4.3.3. *Ullr* and *Njörðr*

Much more substance for the establishment of a relationship between two gods seems to be present in the case of *Ullr* and *Njörðr*. Large contributions to this assumption were made by Elias Wessén in the 1920s, particularly in a number of publications between 1921 and 1924.[66]

It has long been postulated and accepted within the field of Scandinavian place name research that the god known in Nordic mythology as *Njörðr*, must have, at some point, been a female deity, or had a female counterpart, judging from the presence in Swedish place names, of a figure called **Njärd* (probably as **Njörð*). It is also accepted that *Njörðr* etymologically relates to the goddess *Nerthus*, classically mentioned by Tacitus (see, for example, Turville-Petre, 1964, p. 171, and so on). As for the question of how *Nerthus*/**Njärd* eventually ended up as a male god (and the mythological father of Freyr and Freyja), there has nonetheless been great debate. A popular theory was presented by Axel Kock as early as 1896, which was later criticized and expanded upon by Jöran Sahlgren (1918, pp. 22-27). Nevertheless, the idea of **Njörð* as being a female goddess in Sweden has been given further support by the name's apparent association with male gods in place names: Elgqvist (1955, p. 115) counts at least five more or less certain instances where **Njörð*(*r*)/**Njärd* is associated with *Ullr* in Swedish place names: *Ullentuna* with *Närtuna* in Skepptuna parish, Stockholm; *Ullvi* in Irsta parish, Västmanland, with *Närlunda*; *Ullevi* with *Närlunda*, both in Gåsinge parish, Södermanland; *Ullevi*, west of Linköping, with *Mjärdevi* in the same region; and *Ullevi* in Järstad parish, Östergötland, with *Mjärdevi* in the same region. Elgqvist also mentions an additional potential instance in the case of *Ullvi* in Hackås parish, Jämtland (the northernmost *Ullr* name in Sweden) with *Norderön* in the same place. A handful of additional instances where the distance between the two places reaches more than 10 km have been ignored here.

Vikstrand (2001, pp. 104-105) investigates all of the closest theophoric "neighbours" found within 10 km of the Swedish *Njörðr* names, and finds an abundance of place names within this

66. "Forntida gudsdyrkan i Östergötland. 1" (1921a), "Hästskede och Lekslätt" (1921b), "Forntida gudsdyrkan i Östergötland. 2" (1922a), "Till de nordiska äringsgudarnas historia" (1922b), "Minnen av forntida gudsdyrkan i Mellan-Sveriges ortnamn" (1923) and *Studier till Sveriges hedna mytologi och fornhistoria* (1924).

range. These, however, are not necessarily *Ullr* names, but *Freyr*, *Óðinn*, **Njörð*(*r*), and others as well. Another analysis by Vikstrand, examining theophoric neighbours within 5 km, shows a much more fruitful result, revealing that out of the approximately 16 places bearing the name *Njörðr* in Sweden, four are found within 5 km of an *Ullr* name (followed by three *Óðinn*, two *Þórr*, and one *Freyr*). Additionally, of the five *Närlunda*, four are found within 3,5 km of either a *Torslunda* or an *Ullevi*, "något som kan tolkas som ett ganska starkt indicium på parvis uppträdande teofora ortnamn" (Vikstrand, 2001, p. 106). At least one more clear association can be found between **Njörð*(*r*) and the male god *Freyr* as far north as in the two *Norderön* and *Frösön* in Jämtland. The available information thus supports the idea that **Njörð*(*r*) might have been perceived as a female deity in Sweden, and that she was associated with a number of male fertility gods, which would appear to include Ullr.

In Norway, Elgqvist (1955, p. 115) counts three instances where the masculine form *Njörðr* (gen. *-ar*) arguably could be associated with *Ullr* in place names: *Ulleraal* in Haug parish, Buskerud, with *Norderhov*; *Ulleberg* in Tanum parish, Jarlsberg and Larvik, with *Nalum*; and *Ulleland* in Haa parish, Stavanger, near both *Nærland* and *Njæreim*.

3.3.4. *Ullr* and *dís*

On the grounds that the only two deities apparently associated with *dís* in place names appear to be *Þórr* and *Ullr*, Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 185) postulated that the *dísir* (female mythological beings [see, for example, Gunnell, 2000, pp. 117-149]) were worshipped as the most revered beings in what was then Opplandene, together with a male god – either Ullr (also in the form of **Ullinn*) or Þórr (who both appear to have been prominent in these regions). Olsen had previously pointed out that the circumstances surrounding *Ullr* (**Ullinn*) and *Þórr* in Norwegian place names suggested that the two gods could have been "lokale dubletter af én og samme gud, en himmelsgud" (Olsen, 1915, p. 202).[67] Olsen nonetheless later went on to disprove this possibility in the same publication, but the idea of a (geographical) relationship between the *dísir* and a male god persisted for him. Olsen argued that the male gods eventually pushed the *dísir* into the background, and whereas the male gods continued to be worshipped publicly, the worship of the *dísir* continued only privately, the traces of their public worship surviving only in a number of place names.

Eric Elgqvist (1955, pp. 116-119) later re-assessed the arguments surrounding Olsen's theory of a connection between *Ullr*/**Ullinn* and *dís* place names, concluding that "Ortnamnen ge icke heller genom sitt antal särskilt starkt stöd åt antagandet, att Ull varit nära förbunden med

67. Such circumstances were, for example, based on the perceived pairing of *Ullr–Hærn* and *Þórr–Hærn*, as well as *Ullr–dís* and *Þórr–dís*. Other indicators such as the similar regional distribution of *Ullr* and *Þórr* names in Norway were seen to strengthen this possibility.

diserna" (Elgqvist, 1955, p. 120). Admittedly, the *dís* names in Norway are found in a considerably narrow region on the country, a fact which had originally prompted Olsen's theory on their relation to Þórr and Ullr. Of the five Norwegian places named *Dísin* (*dís* + *vin*, in its modern form as *Disen*), three are certainly located in relation to *Ullr* localities: the farm *Disen* (or *Korndisen*) in Nes lies next to *Ullershov* – the place of one of the main Holy Trinity churches in Romerike; *Disen* in Østre Aker, Akershus, lies in proximity to *Ullevaal*; and finally, *Disen* in Ulleren parish, Hedemarken, lies next to *Ullarøy*. It is also worth noting that the two remaining *Disen* lie close to two major Holy Trinity churches as well, although not in immediate proximity to an *Ullr*/**Ullinn* locality. It must be admitted that the *Ullr–dís* relation is somewhat appealing in the case of Norway, judging from the place name material in the country, but despite Olsen's best attempts at also tying the *dísir* to *Ullr* in Sweden, the evidence there is simply not strong enough to support the idea. The lack of numerable *dís* names in Sweden prompts Olsen to search for answers elsewhere, in the mythological saga literature, mentioning the *dísablót* and *dísaþing* which apparently took place in Sweden (Olsen, 1915, pp. 186-193).[68] Another problematic aspect of Olsen's theory is his assumption that the fertility cult involving Ullr and *dísir* had its male deity swapped in preference of another fertility deity, Þórr, at a later point. It is curious that a cult tied to Ullr would swap this deity in favour of Þórr, despite the fact that the general assumption is that Ullr might have been an older version of what later became Freyr (see Chapters 4.3.1 & 8). One would thus think that the male role in this cult, if swapped, would have been taken over by Freyr, but a *Freyr–dís* relationship is nowhere to be found. Furthermore, it has been argued by some that Þórr's role as a fertility god is limited to Sweden (and in particular Uppsala).[69] It is here at least that we find an explicit reference to Þórr as a god related to fertility, in the comments made by Adam of Bremen (book four, see Adam of Bremen, 1959, p. 208).

4.3.5. *Ullr* and *Skaði*

In 1914, an attempt was made by Swedish linguist Hjalmar Lindroth, to associate *Ullr* also with the assumed theophoric element *Skaði/Skeðja* in Swedish and Norwegian place names. The idea of the *Skaði* mentioned in the Norwegian-Icelandic literary sources appearing in Scandinavian place names has been the subject of some discussion. As is well known, the Old Icelandic *Skaði* is actually a masculine word form, despite the figure being presented as a female in the literary sources, but Lindroth demonstrates the appearance of an apparently female word form *Skeðja* in a number of Swedish and Norwegian place names.

68. Hellquist (1917, pp. 168-169) also recognizes the problematic nature of these conclusions.
69. It should be noted that this idea has been criticized by Gunnell (2009).

According to Lindroth (1914, pp. 7-8), four locations in Norway contain the word *Skeðja* as the first stem, two of which can arguably be found in proximity to an *Ullr* name. In addition, four more considerably uncertain *Skaði-* names might also be present in Norway (Lindroth, 1914, pp 30-31), three of which might be found in association with *Ullr* (Lindroth, 1914, p. 35). In Sweden, Lindroth counts at least 25 more or less certain instances in which *Skeðja* surfaces as the first stem of a place name (1914, pp. 11-25). According to Lindroth, Sweden also contains at least three instances in which the masculine word form *Skaði* appears as the first stem (Lindroth, 1914, p. 29). Lindroth finds a potential association with *Ullr* in six of these Swedish *Skeðja* places, and two of the *Skaði* places, something which, to Lindroth's mind, bears witness to "två skilda, men till varandra knutna gudars kulter" (Lindroth, 1914, p. 36).

According to Lindroth (1914, p. 48), on a number of occasions, the *Skeðja* places in Sweden might, together with the *Ullr* places, also be found in close geographical association to *Finn-* names. To his mind, these associations all point towards Skeðja and Ullr having been Germanic gods, who, after being overtaken by more powerful Germanic gods (such as Þórr, Óðinn and Freyr), and the subsequent dying-out of their previous cults, came to be taken up by a people referred to as Finns. To Lindroth's mind, Skaði's apparent association to bows and hunting might have taken root because of this. On the basis of a long and thoughtful mythological study, Lindroth reaches the conclusion that Ullr and Skaði were both moon gods, Ullr representing the shining full-moon, and Skaði the dark, lower moon. Ultimately, for Lindroth, Ullr and Skaði were a male pair of gods, but as the cult required a female role as well, Skaði's persona split into two – Skaði and Skeðja. In short, he felt that the favouring of male–female pairs might furthermore have sparked such a division of the original Skaði. As to the functions of this cult, and Skaði's later literary association with Óðinn, Lindroth (1914, p. 65) writes the following:

> Det ligger närmst att tänka på inflytande på växtligheten och väder och vind samt på förarskap för avlidna andar och befattning med dödsriket. Beröringspunkter med såväl Njord som Odin ha då uppenbarligen icke saknats, tillräckliga för sammankoppling till äkta par. Denna inkorporering av de gamla huvudgudarna har skyddat dem från att helt gå under, då de nya gjorde sitt intåg. Med dessa fick, tror jag, solen och alla därtill knutna riter en mer avgjord övervikt än förut över månen och den däri ursprungligen rotade mytologin […]. Med denna utgångspunkten blir det möjligt att också i Ull-Skades litterärt styrkta befattning särskilt med vinter och jakt (med båge och pilar) se innifrån utvecklade drag […] Skidåkningen har lätt kunnat träda till genom den speciella miljön; men även den kan vara internt utvecklad.

Lindroth's ideas, however, were not conceived in a vacuum. In 1904, Henrik Schück (pp. 226-227) had made similar arguments, seeing in Skaði an old variation of Ullr, largely based on

their similar characteristics, ascribed to them by Snorri: “Skade har […] från början varit en manlig gud, och denna manliga gud måste hafva varit Ull” (Schück, 1904, p. 226). Schück also argued that Skaði had gone from an original male god (based on the word’s masculine stem form), to a female goddess, through a process in which the pre-historic cults of Skaði and Nerthus became intertwined, and the two deities were perceived as united in marriage. When *Nerthus* changed to a masculine *u*-stem, and thus came to be perceived as a male, Skaði had to undergo a similar change, for two males could not have been married.[70]

Also Schröder (1941, pp. 74-116) argued quite extensively for a potential relationship between the two gods, postulating (similarly to Nils Lid) that the name *Ullr* might be related to 'wool', and that Skaði might be related to Ullr in her capacity as a representation of the goat (see also Elgqvist, 1955, p. 72). Schröder also argued that Skaði and Ullr might have constituted a more northern variation of the sibling-pair Freyr and Freyja, and that their father might have been Þjazi, the father of Skaði in the literary sources. Ivar Lindquist (1929a, pp. 14-15), considering the ideas, alluded to the fact that the idea of Skaði being associated with skiing and winter seems older than the idea of Ullr being associated with these same characteristics: As early as in *Ragnarsdrápa*, from the early 9th century, the goddess is referred to as *ǫndurdís*. Ullr, on the other hand, is only referred to as a god of skiing and snow-shoes in Snorri Sturluson’s *Prose Edda* (see also Chapter 10).[71]

All in all, Lindroth’s study must be considered highly speculative, something the author himself recognizes (Lindroth, 1914, p. 67). The original attempt at associating Ullr with Skaði through place names seems to be based on confirmation bias. Would such an association even have been attempted through place names, had the literary associations to winter and hunting not been there? I personally have considerable problems about accepting the idea of Ullr as an original moon god, older even, than one related to the sun cult. Given that the identification of *Skeðja* with a goddess is accurate, the association with her to *Ullr* in place names nonetheless seems flimsy. As the author himself recognizes (1914, p. 8 & p. 49), potential relations to *Njörðr*/**Njärd* might also be deduced for *Skeðja*, which leads me to believe that this methodology is as problematic as the one applied in attempts at associating any other “pairs” of gods. Lindroth’s “success” at identifying *Skeðja*- names with *Finn*- names appears even more suggestive of this fact.[72]

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70. Schück furthermore pointed out, as Lindroth did, that Swedish place names such as *Skedvi* probably were analogical to other names such as *Torsvi*, *Frösvi*, *Odinsvi*, *Ullevi* and *Nærdævi*, and simply denoted *Skaði*’s *vé*.
71. I have been made wary of a number of additional scholars postulating a relation between Ullr, Skaði, Finns and Sami people, but have not had the time to further assess this material. For references and a discussion, I refer to Elgqvist (1955, p. 59 & pp. 104-110), who ultimately dismissed Ullr’s relation to Skaði.
72. In another study (Lindroth, 1915, pp. 90-91), Lindroth argued that the *Ullr* and *Skaði*/*Skeðja* names were also found in connection to *Ærn*- names, in which *Ærn*, to Lindroth’s mind, was the original form of the place name element *Hærn* (typically considered to denote a female deity), and denoted a Finnish “demon”, further reinforcing the Finnish connection (see also Chapter 4.3.2).

4.3.6. Conclusions on *Ullr* in Place-Name Pairs

As noted above, the theories postulating a potential relationship between Ullr and other deities being reflected in place names are largely built on the assumption of a co-worshipped male–female couple (*hieros gamos*), playing a central role in a fertility cult, in which the female part assumed the role of the motherly earth, and the male part the role of the sky, fertilizing the earth (as perhaps seen in *Skírnismál*). According to Elgqvist (1955, p. 115), referring to Wessén, worship of religious "couples" in adjacent cult places was a salient feature of public cult in farming communities in eastern Sweden, an idea apparently supported by Magnus Olsen.

It would appear that the relationships between *Ullr* and other deities in place names in Norway and Sweden reveal more about the other deity in question rather than *Ullr*. In the case of the name **Njörð*(*r*), its relationship to *Ullr* and other male deities certainly adds support to the idea that this deity must have been perceived as female (or had a female variation) – contrary to its portrayal in Nordic literary sources as male. The same goes for **Hærn*, a deity whose mysterious nature (and gender) must rely partly on its potential relation to other gods in place names – although it is ultimately questionable whether any relationship between **Hærn* and *Ullr* can really be postulated based on the Swedish place name material. As for *Freyr*, his apparent relationship with *Ullr* in place names certainly reveals information about intricate religious and historical circumstances even if these are difficult to ever fully comprehend.

The strongest relationship implied through place names would nonetheless appear to be that between *Ullr* and **Njörð*(*r*). **Njörð*(*r*)'s indisputable existence in the form of a female deity makes her relationship to *Ullr* significantly more appealing than one relying on any supposed male pair. On the other hand, the relation between *Freyr* and *Ullr* place names in Norway and Sweden is appealing, but, in my opinion, should be considered more a sign of other historical relationships, rather than of a male-pair fertility cult. It must be admitted on the other hand that the evidence of a relationship between the *dísir* and *Ullr* in Norwegian place names is surprisingly strong, and arguably ranks right up there alongside the relationship between *Njörð*(*r*) and *Ullr*. Despite the lack of Swedish evidence, a relation as apparent as in the two examples of *Disen–Ullarøy* and *Disen–Ullershov*, right next to each other, is largely unaccounted for in any other pair (Elgqvist, 1955, p. 121). Lindroth's (1914) attempt to associate *Ullr* with the apparently theophoric first stem elements *Skaði* and *Skeðja* in Swedish and Norwegian place names, is nonetheless a study of exceedingly problematic nature, and equally problematic conclusions.

4.3.7. Critical Remarks on the Concept of Sacred "Pairs" in Place Names

Ultimately, the degree to which "adjacent" theophoric place names can be considered to have been deliberately named in conjunction with each other for the purpose of cult worship must be questioned, especially in such cases where the distance between the two names reaches as much as 20 km. The assessment of religious pairs in place names could be improved upon through statistical analysis:[73] What is the chance, for example, that any two randomly selected (theophoric) place names within each specific province or county of Scandinavia, would reach an average distance between each other which is equal to the average distance between two supposedly deliberately adjacent place names? Such questions must find their answers in statistical assessments of information that could be deduced from databases of place names. The question reaches a critical point if one considers the wide range of confusingly diverse and ambiguous relationships which have been suggested throughout the years as existing on the basis of theophoric place names – not only names involving *Ullr*, but also names involving other deities such as *Freyr*, *Freyja*, *Hærn*, *Njörðr*, *Þórr*, *Týr* and *Óðinn* as well. Mythological or literary connections may well lend support to such arguments based on place names, but they can hardly confirm them to any considerable degree, especially in those cases where the mythological and historical connections themselves are ambiguous, disputed or considerably unclear (such as those between Ullr, Njörðr, Freyr and Freyja).

The problematic nature of this methodology is particularly apparent in previous research. Many place names held to constitute part of a place-name pair suggested by one author, might be used by another author to postulate a different place name pair with another god. For example, *Norderön* in Jämtland, held by Elgqvist to potentially pair up with *Ullvi* in the same county, is countered by Vikstrand's claim that the same *Norderön* "obviously" constitute a name pair together with the adjacent *Frösön*.[74] Similar problems persist within Elgqvist's own research: the *Ullevi* in Gåsinge parish, is held by Elgqvist to pair up with the *Freyr* name *Frustuna*, and then later, the same *Ullevi* is held to be paired with *Närlunda*. The two conclusions can hardly both be correct, even though, empirically, the names *do* occur in close proximity to each other. Naturally, one of the two conclusions must be rejected. Another possibility is, of course, the possibility of an intrinsic historical relationship between all the different deities in question, which ultimately led to a place-name permanency of confusing and ambiguous nature.

Finally, the problem cannot be put more plainly than by Sahlgren in 1923 (p. 116): "Hela denna forskningsmetod, som ur två olikartade ortnamn konstruerar fram gudapar, är ytterst betänklig." In short, it must be questioned whether or not place names with vastly different second

73. An interesting similar analysis was made by Vikstrand (2001, pp. 104-105), with valuable results.
74. It must be admitted, however, that Vikstrand's claim holds considerable merit, and the two *Norderön* and *Frösön* might be one of the strongest cases of a place-name pair in Sweden (see also Vikstrand, 1993).

stems (*vi–sätte*ɪ, *lund–åke*ɪ, *foss–ö*, and so on) can ever be considered as associated strictly on the basis of their first stems.

4.4. Summary of Place Names Chapter

To summarize the place name evidence given in this chapter, concerning Ullr: The regional distribution of the theophoric *Ullr* names in Sweden clearly follow a south-central pattern, similar to that of Norway (see Chapter 4.1). Sweden contains approximately 35 more or less certain *Ullr* names. These are especially numerous in the region considered as having been traditionally inhabited by the *Svear* (that is, the Swedish tribe), but also stretch into regions inhabited by Geats, and, uniquely, even as far south as Öland and the Gutnish Gotland. The northernmost candidate is found in Hackås parish, in Jämtland. The most distinguishing feature of the Swedish *Ullr* names is their association with *vi* (Old Norse *vé* 'shrine'). Indeed, *Ullevi* and its different variations are so prominent that they must be considered a defining feature of the god's cult in Sweden, with occurrences as far apart as Dalarna, Gotland and Jämtland. Most clearly theophoric, in addition to those names associated with the *vi* 'shrine', are those place names with *lund* 'grove', *tuna* 'enclosed farmyard (dedicated to a god's cult)', *aker* 'field', and *ö* 'island'. It is also noteworthy that the Swedish *Ullr* names seem to generally belong to an older strata of place names, found in regions characterized by evidence of extremely old settlement. As noted in Chapter 4.2.3., assumptions have been made that *Ullr* does not appear in Swedish parish names, the idea being that the cult of *Ullr* must have died out by the time the establishment of the first Christian parishes on pagan cult sites began. This assumption, however, has been shown to be considerably shaky, as *Ullr* actually appears to surface in at least three Swedish parish names.

In Norway, as noted above, the same south-central distribution as that found in Sweden is present in the *Ullr* place names. The country contains between 27 and 34 more or less certain *Ullr* names, the northernmost candidate being in Lierne, in Nord-Trøndelag. Unique to Norway is the presence of an otherwise unknown place name element, **Ullinn*, thought to be a younger by-form of the original *Ullr*. The seven Norwegian **Ullinn* names are characterized by their association with *-hof* (*Ullinshof*), a younger name element than the typically Norwegian *-vin* and *-land*, commonly found in association with *Ullr*. While **Ullinn* can not conclusively be shown to surface outside of Norway, at least one potential candidate can be found in the Swedish *Ullentuna*. Most clearly theophoric in Norway are those names associated with the words *vin* 'meadow', *land* 'land', *hof* 'religious building', *akr* 'field' and *øy* 'island', other words of less certain sacred connotations being *berg* 'mountain, hill', *nes* 'headland, isthmus' and *dalr* 'valley'. Whereas the Swedish *Ullr* names are characterized by an association with typically cultic name elements (*vi*, *lund*, *åker*), the bulk of

Norwegian *Ullr* names are interestingly associated with *land* and *vin*, words denoting natural locations in the landscape. Equally interesting, is the fact that no Norwegian equivalent of the prominent Swedish *Ullevi* is known.

In contrast to Norway and Sweden, no place names in Denmark can be shown to conclusively contain the first stem *Ullr*. Although a considerable amount of *Ullerup* and similar such names are present in the country, the general conclusion is that these names contain a first stem denoting a personal name, rather than that of a god, especially since the second stem contains the word *þorp* 'cottage, homestead'. Other Danish examples, such as those brought up by de Vries (1957, p. 154), are also considerably uncertain.

Only two potential *Ullr* candidates are present in Finland: *Ullava* and *Ullenböle*. Although no additional information can be given on these names, *Ullenböle* is of special interest as it echoes a first stem found in the Swedish *Ullentuna*.

Iceland, on the other hand, contains a considerable amount of place names beginning with *Ullar-*, most of which for all practical purposes must be considered related to the feminine noun *ull* 'wool'. Two instances, however, are of special interest, as they surface adjacent to apparently theophoric place names and share the same second stem: *Ullarklettur* next to *Goðaklettur*, and *Ullarfoss* next to *Goðafoss*. It must be noted that the appearance of *Ullr* place names in Iceland have serious implications for the understanding of the survival of the Ullr cult. Certainly, the lack of such place names on the British Isles and the general lack of knowledge of Ullr in old Icelandic and Norwegian literary sources add doubt to the theophoric authenticity of the aforementioned Icelandic place names.

An analysis of the numerable *Ull-*/*Ul-* names on the British Isles shows that every single such instance is considerably uncertain. Most commonly, as in Denmark, the names can be shown to contain a first stem pertaining to an Old Norse personal name (*Úlfr*, *Ólafr*, etc.), or the name of an animal (Old Norse *úlfr* 'wolf', Old English *ūle* 'owl'). Even though many of the names on the British Isles are found in north and central regions of the country (areas most closely related to the Norwegians), several such names are also found in the southernmost areas of the region.

An analysis of name pairs in the Swedish and Norwegian place name material concludes that the most fruitful potential association of *Ullr* with another deity in place names (if it ever existed) is with the female *Njörð*(*r*) in Sweden. Another potential relationship is possibly found in *Freyr*, although the author prefers another explanation for this spacial distribution rather than the idea of a name pair. An association with the uniquely Swedish **Hærn* (purportedly a fertility goddess, potentially identical to *Freyja*) has also been examined, but is shown to be somewhat uncertain. An association between *Ullr* and the *dísir* has also been examined, concluding that such a

relationship is found in at least three surprisingly strong instances in Norway. Sweden, however, offers no evidence of such a relationship outside of the historical and mythological literary accounts mentioning the *dísaþing* and the *dísablót*, neither of which is necessarily linked to Ullr. In general, however, the concept of "pairs" of religious deities being reflected in place names remains essentially problematic: The author has noted here the non-conclusive nature of range-based relationships in place names, and how such data can be and has been used to produce contradictory results. As noted, the use of statistical analysis of material in map-linked place name databases might shed more light on the long-term usefulness of this methodology.

5.0. Ullr in Literary Sources

As noted at the start, the literary mentions of Ullr are few and far between, and it has long been assumed that this suggests his worship had declined to the point of non-existence by the time the first Nordic literary works were written down. Contrary to his prominence in Swedish and Norwegian place names, Ullr does not take an especially noteworthy or influential position in those few literary works that refer of his existence. Ullr is nonetheless clearly known from both skaldic poetry, Eddic poetry, and from Snorri's *Edda* and related texts, as well as from a number of kennings appearing frequently within saga literature. Furthermore, as will be shown, Saxo also seems to mention Ullr under the Latin name *Ollerus*, in a story otherwise unknown outside of Saxo's account. Within saga literature, however, it is noteworthy that explicit mentions of Ullr outside of kennings are unknown, with the exception of *Klements saga* – a story of particularly interesting nature, which shall be further discussed later in this chapter.

The purpose of the following chapter is to discuss the *explicit* mentions of Ullr in literary sources, and the immediate implications of these accounts from a religious and mythological perspective. As such, this chapter will not deal with *implicit* mentions of Ullr thought to surface in other literary sources. Such instances shall be dealt with in ensuing chapters focusing explicitly on more theoretical and implied aspects of the god.

5.1.0. Eddic Poetry

Only two Eddic poems explicitly mention Ullr by name – *Grímnismál* and *Atlakviða*. Curiously enough, these poems are regarded by many as belonging to an older strata of Eddic poetry, and might reflect religious and mythological beliefs older than those in later poems (see, for example, Turville-Petre, 1964, pp. 8-17 and related references). In both poems, as in most other written sources (see above), Ullr is mentioned only in passing, and the god takes no prominent position within the primary storyline. However, the few mentions of the god that are found here, arguably shed light on the former prominence of Ullr, especially within certain key areas of life, particularly, perhaps, law and justice. They also underline the perception of Ullr as a religious deity, his characteristics as a subject of cult worship, and his potential relation to the sun, among other things.

5.1.1. *Grímnismál*

Grímnismál is the first of the Eddic poems in the Codex Regius manuscript to give mention of Ullr, and is of particular interest to the study of the god, as it is also the only poem to mention him by name on two separate occasions within the poem. On the first occasion, Ullr is mentioned as the

second (after Þórr, and before Freyr) of a number of gods within Nordic mythology listed in the poem, along with his particular area of residence within the mythological world:

> Ýdalir heita, þar er Ullr hefir
> sér um gorva sali;
> Álfheim Frey gáfo í árdaga
> tívar at tannfé
> (*Grímnismál*, str. 5).[75]

Whether or not *Ýdalir* 'Yew dales'[76] is a genuine remnant of heathen belief, or a literary invention for the sake of alliteration or other types of stylistic devices, is a matter of debate. It has been argued that the mythological *Ýdalir* has a potential real life reflection in the Norwegian farm name *Yddal* in Hordaland (*Ydall* in its oldest written form, 1610 [NG 11, p. 202]). The name's earliest form certainly leaves its origins open for discussion. In practical terms, *ýr* 'yew', is a historically common tree type found in south-central Scandinavia, and according to Olaf Hansson (1931, p. 130) there is significant reason to believe that this Norwegian farm name, indeed, is theophoric in nature, referring to an original Ullr cult:[77]

> Mytologisk sétt er det ogsa sers forvitnelegt. I vest ikkje so langt herifrå ligg Tysnes – *Njarðarlög* – med ei rad av namn med mytologisk upphav. Og ikkje langt nordvest ifrå Yddal ligg Baldersheim – heimen til den fredsæle guden Balder. No var det nok ikkje berre den fredsæle guden dei dyrka. Ikkje mindre dyrka dei veideguden Ull. Han budde i *Ýdalir*. Ok skulde der nokonstad vera ein høveleg heim for denne guden – ikkje so altfor langt frå hine –, er naturtilhøvi råkande nok her i denne avstengde dalen med fiskerike vatn og alltidgrøne barlinder ikring veidelande. […] Det synes soleis vera all grunn til å tru, Yddal ikkje er noko nyare namn, men at det er plantenamnet *ýr* som utgjer fyrste lekken av namnet.

Didrik Arup Seip (1957, p. 168) is also open to this explanation, along with Asgaut Steinnes (1949-1951, pp. 396-404). Steinnes goes as far as to claim that the one *Ývin* (*ýr* + *vin*), in Tune, Østfold, Norway, bears witness to Ullr's former cult. Steinnes also notes the rarity of Norwegian place names containing the word *ýr*, with only one or two additional examples in the country. Steinnes argues that *Ývin* must have been the original name of Ullr's homestead, and that the skald, familiar

75. Neckel and Kuhn (1983, p. 58)
76. Some earlier scholars, such as Finnur Magnússon (1821-1823, v. 1, p. 152 & p. 194) and Niels Matthias Petersen (1849, p. 288), argued that *Ýdalir* could mean 'rain dales', probably on the basis that *Ý-* stemmed from an original *ýða* 'water'. Säve (1860, p. 83) put the matter to rest in his first lecture as professor of Nordic Languages at Uppsala University, by arguing that the interpretation of *Ý-* as stemming from *yða* is based on a misunderstanding of the Icelandic word *iða* 'stream (whirl)', and that *Ý-* must stem from *ýr* 'yew'.
77. Ivar Lindquist (1929a, p. 11) mentions briefly that a Swedish reflection of *Grímnismál*'s *Ýdalir* is *Idala* 'yew dale', in Fjäre, Halland.

with the landscape, might have used the more "prosaic" terminology *-dalir* instead, perhaps based on the valley that runs through *Ývin* and the adjacent *Alfheimar*. Of particular interest is Steinnes' claim that three more or less adjacent farms in Tune bear names similar to the ones in *Grímnismál*, namely the aforementioned *Ývin*, *Alfheimar* and, potentially, a *Valaskjalf*. Nonetheless, Magnus Olsen (1931, p. 131) pointed out in an older article, that the explanation of *Yddal* as referring to Ullr's *Ýdalir* was presented by both Oluf Rygh and P. A. Munch in earlier publications, where they assume an original form **Ýdalr*. In NG 11, p. 202, however, this claim appears to have been taken back, where, instead, the name is said to refer to an original **Ýtridalr* 'Outer dale'. According to this interpretation, the *dd* in *Yddal* would have formed through an assimilation of *td* to *dd*.

Another possibility is that the name could be considered as referring to a profane 'Yew dale', without religious connotations. This explanation is taken up by Olsen (1931, p. 133), who furthermore comments that, from the name alone, we can hardly draw conclusions of religious nature. Certainly, the possibility of alliterating *Ýdalir* with *Ullr* depends on the word-initial *w* having dropped from *Ullr*'s original *Wulþus* (see Chapter 2.1) – a development which should have taken place around the 7th century (Olsen, 1931, p. 133).[78] Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that *Ýdalir* would seem to be a later addition, at least compared to certain other features of the god (mentioned later in this chapter) which are mentioned or alluded to in other places. Nonetheless, as has been suggested by Läffler (1911), in a highly regarded study of the account of the "evigt grönskande trädet vid Uppsala hednatämpel" by Adam of Bremen (book four), there might be reason to assume that the enormous and ever-flourishing tree that supposedly grew at the Uppsala temple (see Adam of Bremen, 1959, p. 207) was actually a giant yew tree. In this context, it has been postulated by Åke Ohlmarks (1943, pp. 153-207; 1963, p. 236) that yew trees rather typically can be found in groves or hursts of religiously suitable nature, and thus that the whole sacrificial grove (*blotlunden*) at Gamla Uppsala might itself have largely consisted of yew trees.[79] The idea of Ullr being associated with such yew trees would thus apparently be in line with the well-established notion of Ullr's primary sphere of influence having been the aforementioned regions of Uppland (see Chapter 4.1., and so on). However, the fact that Ullr's living place is referred to in *Grímnismál* as *-dalir* 'dales, valleys' is seemingly unexplainable in this context, as the regions in and around

78. In this context, it should be noted that Robert Bevan-Jones (2002, p. 134 & pp. 158-159) has postulated that the Scottish place name *Udale* 'yew valley' is also theophoric, and named by settling Norse pagans in relation to the god Ullr, an idea that seems highly improbable. As we have seen in Chapter 4.2.7., no place name on the British Isles appears to have its basis in the name of the god Ullr. The tree name *yew* is otherwise commonplace in English and Scottish place names (*Urie* in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, and *Uley* in Gloucestershire, England, for example), even though the second stem *dale* in *Udale* admittedly hints at Nordic origins (Mackay, 2011, p. 185; Cameron, 1963, 188). It is also difficult to understand why the settlers would prefer to name a location after their god's (supposed) mythological homestead, rather than the god himself, as appears to have been common practice in Scandinavia.
79. Olsen (1915, pp. 192-193) also postulated a connection between Adam of Bremen's account of the tree in Uppsala, and the Ullr cult in the same region.

Gamla Uppsala and those places named after the god hardly support the claim of the god having been specifically associated with or as "living" in valleys.[80] Ohlmarks (1948, p. 258) also postulated that this strophe indicated a cult shift from sun cult to a fertility/vegetation cult. Freyr, after Ullr had established his *Ýdalir*, took over, and received *Álfheimr* as a tooth gift. This would have taken place during a period of great climate change, in which the sun cult (with its center in Håga, Sweden) slowly died out, and was replaced by a fertility cult. Ullr's *Ýdalir* in this context would represent Sagittarius, the archer (with the sun beams as arrows), and Freyr's would represent the Capricorn (a fertility symbol). Dronke (2011, p. 127) also argues for a similar explanation, noting that Freyr apparently receives his *Álfheimr* as a gift from the gods, after having taken over after the ancient Wuldor-Ullr.

The nature of the aforementioned strophe and its particular position in *Grímnismál*, however, might be of more interest for a discussion of Ullr than the contents of the strophe itself. The mention of Ullr and his residence as second in order (of importance?), only after Þórr (and before Freyr, who is mentioned in the *same* strophe), seems to elevate the god to a position otherwise not present in the literary sources. Even more elusive, and the source of great debate, is the continuation given in the following strophe:

> Bær er sá inn þriði, er blíð regin
> silfri þǫcþo sali;
> Válasciálf heitir, er vélti sér
> áss í árdaga (*Grímnismál*, str. 6).[81]

Surely, one would expect *Válasciálf* (named here) to be the *fourth* hall – Grímnir having previously mentioned Þórr's *Þrúðheimr*, Ullr's *Ýdalir*, and Freyr's *Álfheimr*. Nonetheless, the scribe refers to *Válasciálf* as the third hall, as if equating the two previously-mentioned locations, *Ýdalir* and *Álfheimr*. This fact prompted Erik Brate (1914, pp. 13-14) earlier to assume an intentional indication by the scribe of the identical nature of Freyr and Ullr – the two names simply denoting one and the same god, *Álfheimr* being his domain and *Ýdalir* his homestead. While such an assumption seems unlikely (in spite of the two gods being related to similar areas [see Chapters 4.3.1 and 8]), the circumstance is a curious one, and a closer look at the two manuscripts in which the poem survives, AM 748 4 to and Codex Regius, reveals that both manuscripts denote *Válasciálf* as the third hall, as well as the following one, *Sǫkkvabekkr* (str. 8), as the fourth. Olsen (1915, pp. 303-304) problematized Brate's assumption, claiming that the wording in the strophe could as well be

80. For an explanation to this inconsistency, see Chapter 5.3.
81. Neckel and Kuhn (1983, p. 58).

interpreted as suggesting that the two deities simply shared the same living-space – an explanation in line with Olsen's assumption of Freyr and Ullr constituting a "male pair of gods", and being worshiped on similar cult sites (see Chapters 8 and 3.5). Brate himself (1918b, p. 98) disliked Olsen's alternative explanation, claiming that:

> Att två olikartade gudar dyrkas på samma offerplats, är dock något annat än att de mytologiskt hava samma boning […]. Det är för mig omöjligt att inse möjligheten av en sådan tolkning, då första halvstrofen blott talar om *Ýdalir* som bostad åt Ull och den andra om *Álfheimr* som bostad åt Frej och ingen antydan finnas i strofen om att två gudar äga samma bostad.

Certainly, the circumstances regarding the numbering and ordering of *Grímnismál*'s cataloging of the gods and their homesteads can hardly be taken as a direct indicator of the identical nature of the two gods. Other potential explanations for the poem's curious catalogue is that it might be the result of extensive editing and potential errors.[82] The fact that AM 748 4 to and Codex Regius are both thought to be based on the same older manuscript (see, for example, Pulsiano & Wolf, 1993, p. 100) would explain the consistency in wording between the two manuscripts.

It might also be noted that Ohlmarks (1948, p. 256) points out Sigurd Agrell's proposition, that the contents of the *Grímnismál* catalogue answer to the "senantika zodiakens elva solhus, vilka på germansk botten översatts till eddamyt på samma sätt som veckodagarnas namn." According to this idea, Ullr would answer to the Capricorn.[83] According to Ohlmarks (1948, p. 256), Þórr's occurrence as the first god, and Ullr as the second, might reflect a period during the 10th century in which Þórr dethroned Ullr as sky god, Ullr having been the royal sun god of the Bronze Age.

The next place in *Grímnismál*, in which Ullr is explicitly mentioned, is strophe 42:

> Ullar hylli hefr oc allra goða,
> hverr er tecr fyrstr á funa;
> þvíat opnir heimar verða um ása sonum,

82. According to de Vries (1934b & 1952), the numbering could not have been original, as it does not participate in the alliteration, among other things. Other circumstances pointing towards potential inaccuracies are the odd use of explicit numbering (*þriði* appearing as the first numeral), the inconsistent use of the words *heiti* and *vera*; *Valasciálf* not having an owner, and so on. For an extensive discussion and critique of de Vries' arguments, see Elizabeth Jackson (1995).
83. The idea of the *Grímnismál* catalogue of the gods and their living places having represented months and astronomical signs was popular in earlier research. Finnur Magnússon (1821-1823, v. 1, p. 196) held that Ullr's *Ýdalir*, according to *Grímnismál*, answered to the astrological sign of *Sagittarius* (the archer), which covers the wintery period between November 21st and December 21st. As to why Ullr is mentioned as one of the first gods (and not the last, as the period of November–December would imply) is because this period was considered the first in the year by the individuals who first composed the poem. Similar ideas have also been heavily espoused by Bob Lind in a somewhat pseudo scientific study from 1996 (pp. 72-80, and so on). See also Björn Jónsson's *Star Myths of the Vikings* (1994) for similar ideas.

þá er hefia af hvera (*Grímnismál* str. 42).[84]

The strophe is probably the most intriguing mention of Ullr in old Nordic literary sources. As noted above, *Grímnismál* marks the only instance of the god occurring twice in the same poem, in both cases in a context prompting questions as to the god's apparent importance at the time of its composition. Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 236) took the strophe in question as meaning that the subject on the poem, *Grímnir*, was actually Ullr, arguing that the highest god (Óðinn) would not promise the blessing of another prominent god (Ullr clearly being elevated above other gods in the context of the strophe [*Ullar hylla oc* ***allra goða***]): "[…] den øverste gud (Odin) kan ikke give et løfte i en anden øverste guds navn." Undoubtedly, the phrasing of this call for help seems to put Ullr above all the other gods, his favour/blessing (*hylli*) being apparently more important than that of any other god, even in the words of Óðinn himself (if Grímnir is to be understood as Óðinn). Partly for this reason, this strophe (like the former) has often been taken as an age-indicator for the poem itself, suggesting it contains remnants of an older religious cult in which Ullr still held a prime position.

The wording of the strophe is nonetheless shadowy. Nowhere in any other literary source is Ullr mentioned in a similar context or key role of importance. Perhaps this strophe should instead be considered as being first and foremost another indicator of Ullr's supposed connection to law and justice – Óðinn in his time of trouble considering anyone who removes the flames from his sides to be especially just, and thus worthy of the favour of, in particular, the old god of law and justice, Ullr.[85] Ohlmarks (1948, p. 263), however, also notes Ullr's apparent association with the open sky in this particular strophe, where, as it is being spoken, the kettle is taken down by Agnar (for an in-depth explanation, see Chapter 7), thereby exposing Grímnir (Óðinn) to the opening in the roof (Icel. *ljórinn*) – an idea presented as early as in the first *Arni Magnæan* edition of the *Edda* (1787), and also taken up by Bellows (1936, p. 101), Dronke (2011, pp. 132-133) among others. Bearing this in mind, Finnur Magnússon (1824-1826, v. 3, p. 34), for example, interpreted this strophe as an account of Ullr's role as a god of winter, and his ability to quench the heat from the cauldrons surrounding Óðinn:

> At *Ullers* Yndest först loves kommer vel deraf, at han var den blandt Asa-Guderne som forestod Vinteren, följelig ogsaa Kulden (han kunde altsaa dæmpe den Hede der maatte være ved de gloende Kjedler, og lönne Odins Befrielse fra Flammerne ved lignende Velgjerninger i Nödstilfælde) […].

84. Neckel and Kuhn (1983, p. 66).
85. As will be noted below, similar connections between Ullr and law and justice can be seen in the *Atlakviða* poem (see below, same chapter, as well as Chapter 9).

Ursula Dronke (2011, p. 127), on the other hand, argues that strophe 42 denotes Ullr as the sun itself, "who hates to see the Earth burned by inhospitable Man." According to Dronke (2011, p. 133) the strophe additionally implies that the cauldrons are to be taken down from the roof holes and put upon the fires surrounding Óðinn, dousing the fires and allowing for meals to be made – an intrinsic part of hospitality within old traditions: "because the earth's soil will be burnt by the fire of the sun, through human meanness, if no one cooks to feed others. If you have no hospitality, you will have no life."

The second part of the strophe ("þvíat opnir heimar verða um ása sonum"), however, is arguably even more elusive. Finnur Jónsson (1932, p. 71) commented that: "Digteren synes at mene, at guderne vil kunna se Odin og den fare, han er i, og vil kunne komme ham til hjælp, når blot kedlerne fjærnes. Det hele er noget mystisk." Dronke (2011, p. 133) argues that "ása sonum" means "men", namely "humans". This half-strophe certainly seems to imply, that it is primarily the act of exposing Óðinn to the open sky that would give the helper the favour of Ullr. Indeed, Óðinn is not entirely freed by Agnar, only exposed to the sky by means of removing the kettles from the roof. The second half-strophe's emphasis on the terminology "opnir heimar" further implies that it is the exposure of Óðinn to the sky that is inferred. There have been suggestions that, perhaps, this is an archaic remnant reflecting the idea that the gods must be exposed to the open air to carry out their powers, in line with the idea that the Germanic gods were worshipped outdoors.[86] The explicit mention of Ullr in this context certainly puts him in an immediate relation to the sky. According to Henry Adams Bellows (1936, p. 101), however, the use of Ullr in this strophe was strictly related to his alliteration with the word *hylli*, an idea which hardly seems plausible, considering *Grímnismál*'s mention of the god's living place in strophe five, as well as his position and general importance within the poem.[87]

86. Compare, for example, the incapability of Þórr (another god of the sky) indoors, in the stories of Útgarðaloki and of Hymir.

87. Concerning the context (in which Ullr is placed alongside Freyr), it might be argued that the following strophe, str. 43, also alludes to Ullr and his relation to bows:

> Ívalda synir gengo í árdaga
> Scíðblaðni at scapa,
> scipa bezt, scírum Frey,
> nýtom Niarðar bur (*Grímnismál* 43 [Neckel & Kuhn, 1983, p. 66]).

The name *Ívaldi* probably means 'ruler of bows' (literally 'ruler of yew'), from *ýr* 'yew' and *vald* 'power, authority' (see, for example, Olsen, 1915, p. 237 and Schröder, 1941, pp. 16-17). The strophe is of interest not only because it immediately follows strophe 42, which mentions Ullr by name, but also because it mentions Freyr and his ship *Skiðblaðnir*. Indeed, Freyr and *ships* have been thought to be related to Ullr from other sources (see Chapters 8 and 4.3.1). Ívaldi as the father of *Ívalda synir*, however, is probably identical to the father of Þjazi, mentioned in various forms as *Alvaldi*, *Auðvaldi*, *Ölvaldi*, *Olvaldi*, and so on. It might thus be assumed that the use of *Í-* as the initial vowel of the name in *Grímnismál* str. 43 is strictly alliterative, and has no actual connection to *yew* as a material for making bows. This circumstance is, however, of extra interest in light of Schröder's theory of Þjazi being the father of Ullr (Schröder, 1941, pp. 74-116, especially p. 109). Nonetheless, I find no reason to consider this to be any more than

5.1.2. *Atlakviða*

The poem *Atlakviða* contains the second and last explicit mention of Ullr in the Eddic poetry. The context of the poem is that Guðrún, angry at her husband Atli's dishonest behaviour, reminds him of the various oaths he has sworn. The last one, sworn on the ring of Ullr, is presumably the most solemn (Holtsmark, 1941, p. 8; Turville-Petre, 1964, p. 182).

> 'Svá gangi þér, Atli, sem þú við Gunnar áttir
> eiða opt um svarða oc ár of nefnda,
> at sól inni Suðurhǫllo oc at Sigtýs bergi,
> hǫlqvi hvílbeðiar oc at hringi Ullar'
> (*Atlakviða* str. 30).[88]

Ullr is otherwise not mentioned in *Atlakviða*, and it might be assumed from the poem that oaths sworn upon the "ring of Ullr" were common practice. This notion is certainly strengthened by archaeological finds (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010; Grandin & Hjärthner-Holder, 2008, and so on) in places such as Lilla Ullevi, in Bro parish, Uppland, Sweden, of over 65 ring amulets thought to have had a relation to the Ullr cult in the region (as indicated by the place name),[89] as well as by the well-established fact that oaths sworn upon rings (so called *baugeiðar*) were common practice both in Iceland and in Scandinavia historically (Ström, 1961, pp. 43-45; Näsström, 2002; Steinsland, 2007, p. 271 & p. 309, etc), where the ring itself was one of the defining features of oath swearing during the Viking Age (Habbe, 2005, pp. 134-135).[90]

The degree to which the four oaths mentioned in the strophe relate to each other, whether or not they reflect a particularly solemn type of oath, and, frankly, what exactly they denote, is uncertain. The first oath might quite unproblematically be understood as referring to 'the morning sun', namely, the sun "climbing towards its zenith" (Dronke, 1969, p. 64; also Holtsmark, 1941, p. 3). According to Hermann Pálsson (1955, p. 189), swearing an oath upon the sun itself "er mjög fornlegt", and it might be suggested that this practice is as old as the idea of *Ullar hringr* itself. The second oath has generally been translated as 'Sigtýs' [the victory god's, namely Óðinn's] mountain'. Dronke (1969, p. 64) notes that high points in the landscape oftentimes were considered holy, and might be dedicated to gods. Óðinn's association with *berg* might lend further support to his position as god of the dead – hills and barrows often being seen as the dwelling-places of the dead.

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hypothesizing at best.

88. Neckel and Kuhn (1983, p. 245).

89. For a discussion of the rings in question, see Chapter 6.3.

90. Richard North (1997, p. 244) argued that the common Old English *wuldorbeag* 'ring of glory', might be related to this strophe in *Atlakviða*, even though the exact historical connections of the oath-ring and 'glory' (*wuldor*, *Ullr*) remain unclear.

The third oath in particular has been the subject of much discussion. The word *hǫlqvi* is generally accepted as denoting a horse name, *hǫlvkir*, which surfaces on a number of other occasions within Nordic literary sources. The word *hvílbeðiar* means 'bed', and the phrase is often understood as akin to 'bed', 'room [of the bed]', 'house' and so on (Dronke, 1969, p. 64). In 1941 (pp. 1-10) Anne Holtsmark nonetheless presented a new interpretation of this oath, in which *hǫlqvi hvílbeðiar* denoted the sanctity of marriage, where the house, the home and all it stands for, strengthens the marriage pact, and puts it on equal footing in comparison to the remaining three oaths. To Holtsmark's mind, an oath sworn upon the 'bed', or the 'house' is hardly suitable in company of oaths such as the one sworn upon the sun, Sigtýs' mountain and Ullr's ring. Naturally, *hǫlqvi hvílbeðiar* should denote something of equal significance: "I *hvílbeðjar hǫlkvir* må vi også se en konkret ting som er fylt av helligdomens kraft og mystikk" (Holtsmark, 1941, p. 3). Holtsmark's idea is echoed by Dronke (1969, pp. 64-65), who argues that: "the poet may have chosen the kenning 'horse of the pillows of rest' here precisely because he wished to succinctly evoke the image of the horse-headed bed-post, sacred to Freyr, patron of marriages, by which the marriage oath was sworn."

In 1948, Åke Ohlmarks (p. 266) argued that the strophe as a whole bore witness to how the "holy oaths" were sworn. Ohlmarks imagined that the oath was sworn under four sacred circumstances, and that they were ordered as two: 1a) by the sun in the south, 1b) at Sigtýr's mountain, and 2a) by the throne (*hǫlkvir hvílbeðiar*) of the chieftain, 2b) on Ullr's ring. In 1963 (1963b, p. 234), Ohlmarks attempted even more strongly to make sense of the relation between the four oaths, postulating that the four oaths denoted three gods, and constituted a formula similar to the ones found in other poems, where the first oath (*sól inni Suðurhǫllo*) denoted the sun-god, the second (*Sigtýs bergi*) denoted Óðinn, the third (*hǫlqvi hvílbeðiar*) represented Þórr (here, Ohlmarks interpreted the phrase as 'the sitting-cushion's hollowed out vehicle', namely, Þórr's wagon), while the fourth (*hringi Ullar*), once again, denoted the sun-god, Ullr. Therefore, Ohlmarks argued, the sun in the south and Ullr's ring must have been intimately connected, perhaps denoting one and the same thing (the sun-disc as Ullr's [the sun god's] "ring"), *Atlakviða*'s strophe bearing witness to a more archaic variation of the triad Óðinn–Þórr–Freyr, namely Óðinn–Þórr–Ullr.

One might perhaps suggest as a compromise, that the four oaths, all and together, denote a location and a particular type of occasion: an oath sworn upon Ullr's ring during a marriage ceremony (see Holtsmark, 1941, p. 1-10), on a mountain dedicated to Óðinn, when the sun was at its highest point in the sky, shining down upon them.

As with *Grímnismál*, the reference to Ullr in an apparently cultic and religious context, without any immediate importance to the storyline as a whole, seems to bear witness to the age of

the poem. Indeed, other details in *Atlakviða* in particular also hint of old age (Genzmer, 1926, p. 134; Dronke, 1969, pp. 42-45; Clunies Ross, 1970, pp. 63-65). Perhaps it should not be surprising to see the god mentioned particularly in those poems thought to belong to an older stratum of Eddic poetry.

All in all, the evidence of Ullr from the Eddic poetry seems to suggest that Ullr was an archaic god already at the time of the composition of the two aforementioned poems. The absence of Ullr in remaining Eddic poetry should also not be forgotten, which arguably speaks volumes as to the general lack of knowledge of the characteristics of Ullr and his former cult among the population of Iceland and Norway. Nonetheless, what little information *Grímnismál* and *Atlakviða* give have been integral to studies and theories concerning the god all throughout the history of scholarship.

5.2. Skaldic Poetry and Kennings

Skaldic poetry also gives evidence to the earlier role of the god. One finds Ullr as a frequently occurring element in a number of kennings, many of which can be assumed to have been drawn upon by Snorri Sturluson for his description of the god in *Snorra Edda*. Ullr kennings can be divided into four primary categories: 1) kennings for *shield*, 2) kennings for *warrior* and *battle*, 3) genealogical kennings, and 4) kennings for Ullr himself. The kennings for *battle* are mainly secondary kennings, in which a kenning for *shield* is combined with the word *él* 'storm, snow storm' ('storm of shields'). It would seem likely that many of the following kennings refer back to what can only be assumed to be an otherwise lost myth involving the god, while others are essentially of genealogical nature, relating Ullr to Þórr and Sif, whose occurrences in older poems are difficult to explain.[91] Some kennings, primarily the kennings for Ullr himself, are only preserved in Snorri's *Edda*, but will be listed in this chapter for the sake of consistency. Snorri's own accounts of the god (including the information deduced from his kennings for *Ullr*) will then be discussed separately in the following chapter.

A total of about 35 different kennings from Skaldic poetry and the *Snorra Edda* involve Ullr in one way or another.[92] The following is a list of those kennings divided into the four primary categories:

91. This arguably includes Eddic poetry, where Þórr appears just before Ullr in *Grímnismál* str. 4 and 5 (see Chapter 5.1.1).

92. My list is primarily based on the Lexicon of Kennings, a database developed for internet use, and available at *https://notendur.hi.is//~eybjorn/ugm/kennings/kennings.html* (last viewed 2015-04-21). This database is in turn primarily based upon Rudolf Meissner's *Die Kenningar der Skalden* (1921) and Finnur Jónsson's *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning* (originally published between 1912-1915). I have also used Ernst Kock's *Notationes norrœnae* (1923-1944), *Den norsk-isländska skaldediktningen* (1946-1949) and Helge Ljungberg's *Tor: undersökningar i indoeuropeisk och nordisk religionshistoria* (1947) for kennings alluding to Síf and Þórr.

1. *Shield*	2. a) *Warrior*	2. b) *Battle*	3. a) *Þórr*	3. b) *Sif*	4. *Ullr*
askr Ullar	[ask-]sögn Ullar	él Ullar	Ulls mágr	móður Ullar	sonr Sifjar
far Ullar	[él-]herðandi Ullar	él [kjóla Ullar]	Ullar mágr		stiúpr/stjúpsonr Þórs
kjóll Ullar	hjaldr-Ullr	[él-]Freyr [kjóla Ullar]	Ullar gulli		bogaáss
skip Ullar	[hríð-]Ullr [hrotta]	él [skips Ullar]	Ullar stiúpfaðir		ǫndurás
sundvigg Ullar	rand-Ullr				veiðiás
	snyrti-herðir [sundviggs Ullar]				skjaldarás
	Ullr almsíma				
	Ullr [benloga]				
	Ullr branda/Ullr brands				
	Ullr [böð-Gefnar]				
	Ullr [egghríðar]				
	Ullr [eggveðrs]				
	Ullr [geirvaðils]				
	Ullr [ímunlauks]				
	Ullr [oddgaldrs]				
	Ullr [oddsennu]				
	Ullr skerðings				
	Ullr [undleygs]				
	Ullr [undlinns]				
	Ullr [veggjar				

	Heðins]				
	Ullr [þrymu randa]				

The time-span of the use of these kennings is rather wide, with a number of Ullr kennings appearing as early as the 10th century, and at least one as late as the 14th century. Of particular interest, however, are a number of 10th-century kennings: "gulli Ullar" (*Þórsdrápa* str. 18), "Ullar mágr" (*Haustlǫng* str. 15) and "Ulls mágr" (in a *lausavísa* by Eysteinn Valdason). Of special interest is the latter, found in one of the three surviving strophes by Eysteinn Valdason (who is only referred to by Snorri), as a kenning for Þórr. The strophe in question reads as follows, as preserved in *Skáldskaparmál*:

> Svá brá viðr at sýjur
> seiðr rendi fram breiðar
> jarðar; út at borði
> Ulls mág[s] hnefar skullu
> (*Skáldskaparmál* 4).[93]

Not only does this kenning mark one of the oldest surviving accounts of the perception of Þórr and Ullr ever having had a family relationship, it also contains the only known use of an apparently incorrect genitive ending for the god. *Ullr*, being a masculine *u*-stem, should strictly be found with its genitive form *-ar*, which it does in every other instance of the genitive case appearing in kennings and in place names. As noted in Chapter 4, place names containing the first stem genitive ending *-s* can typically be used to rule out a potentially theophoric *Ullr* name, *-s* instead indicating a personal name, such as *Úlfr* (*-s*), *Ólafr* (*-s*), and so on. The oldest manuscript in which Eysteinn's strophe survives is GKS 2367 4 to (containing Snorri's *Skáldskaparmál* among other things), and Finnur Jónsson (1967-1973, v. 1a, p. 140) renders the line "vllz mags", later commenting "mags: *næppe* mag*ar*". Anthony Faulkes (1998, p. 15) supplies the *s* in *mágs*, as it is unclear from the manuscript page what suffix follows.

There is certainly a possibility of Eysteinn having intentionally used *-s* for the genitive ending mainly for alliterative purposes, coupling it with the following *mágs*, but the usage is curious, as it occurs in a comparatively early strophe, and is apparently unique. The only other case in which the name of the god appears with the genitive ending *-s* is in its alternative Norwegian form **Ullinn* (*Ullinsin, Ullinshof*, and so on, see Chapters 3.2 and 4.1.2). As noted earlier, one of

93. Snorri Sturluson (1998, p. 15).

the primary problems with the **Ullinn* word is that no remnant of it survives in literary sources, and its potential relationship to *Ullr* can only be assumed to be similar to that of *Óðinn* and *Óðr* (see Chapter 3.2). Perhaps, Eysteinn's 10th century use of the kenning "Ulls mágr" might be seen as an archaic and poetic remnant of this alternative form (**Ullinn*), which otherwise only survives in Norwegian place names. Indeed, according to evidence presented by Lid (1925), it seems possible that a Norwegian gen. *ullins-* could have theoretically appeared simply as gen. *ulls-* in particular circumstances.[94] As will be noted in Chapter 11, Icelandic *ullinseyru* occurs in one of its Norwegian variations as *ullsøyra*, and in one of its Swedish variations as *ullesöra* (Lid, 1925, pp. 139-140), and *ullins-* might relate to *ulls-* and *ulles-* as *drängens* does to *dränges*, where *-n-* dropped between word-final vowel and genitive *-s*. Additional evidence for the possibility of *ullins-* contracting to *ulls-* can be found in the Norwegian farm name *Ulsaaker*, found in various written forms as *Vllesaack* (1528), *Wldsagh* (1578), *Vllenßagger* (1593), *Vllendtzagger* (1604), *Vlensager* (1657) and *Vlsagger* (1723), the first stem here being drawn from an original **Ullinn* (NG 5, p. 125).[95]

The old usage of "gulli Ullar", "Ulls mágr" and "Ullar mágr" as kennings for Þórr is, naturally, of particular interest for our understanding of the accuracy of Snorri's later account telling of the god's relationship to Þórr and Sif (see also Chapter 5.3). Even though no kennings for Sif with the use of the name Ullr are found in the extant sources outside of Snorri's account, their relationship might nonetheless be deduced from the wording of the Þórr kennings: "Ullar/Ulls mágr" ("relative of Ullr"), "gulli Ullar" ("step-father[?]/provider[?] of Ullr") – arguably indicating only a legal relationship, rather than a blood one. In terms of religious history, the relationship between the two gods is a curious and elusive one, and it is difficult to fully explain in a coherent way. As we shall see, there is good reason to believe that the relationship to Þórr that appears in kennings is only secondary in terms of mythology: The skalds, having been aware of the relation between Þórr and Sif, found it logical to refer to Ullr as the stepson of Þórr – although, as noted

94. Åke Ohlmarks (1958, pp. 310-311), in the only commentary I've been able to find on this peculiar use of the genitive case, argues that the use genitive *-s*, instead of the customary *-ar*, might indicate an East Nordic origin for Eysteinn's poem (lending support to his claim that Eysteinn's father was Danish), rather than a West Nordic one. As Per Vikstrand (personal correspondence) has shared with me, however, as far as the place name material is concerned, *Ullr* does not surface with genitive *-s* in neither West nor East Nordic material. Genitive *-ar* moved to *-s* only during the Middle Ages, and only in East Nordic regions – but definitely not in Old West Norse and Old Icelandic, and certainly not in the end of the 10th century.

95. Other indicators of Eysteinn's potential awareness of more archaic mythological knowledge, however, includes his use of the name *Hrímnir* as an otherwise unknown *heiti* for Óðinn, a name which normally appears as the name of a *jǫtunn*. Of additional interest is the disputed nationality of Eysteinn himself. Åke Ohlmarks (1958, pp. 309) noted the peculiarity of Eysteinn's patronymic, *Valdason*, which implies that his father would have been named *Valdi*. *Valdi* is nonetheless a name otherwise unknown in the Icelandic sagas and in *Landnámabók*, and only surfaces as a secondary element in names such as *Ávaldi* or *Sigvaldi*. There is a possibility that Eysteinn's father might have been named *Valdimarr*, for which both *Valdi* and *Valdarr* were nicknames, something which would suggest an origin in Denmark or Norway. Ohlmarks himself suggests that Eysteinn Valdason might have been identical to an Eysteinn Mánason from Reykdæla saga. Should Eysteinn have been Norwegian, the possibility of him having had knowledge of the Norwegian side-form **Ullinn* (with the possible genitive *Ulls*) is thus increasingly likely.

above, this proposition assumes an original mythological perception of Sif as the actual mother of Ullr, his "real" father being as yet completely unknown to us. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the kennings relating Ullr to Sif are only preserved by Snorri himself, making it possible that Snorri might have only deduced Sif's status as mother to Ullr from Ullr's appearance in kennings for Þórr. Logically, if Þórr is the "mágr" ('relative', 'brother-, father- or son-in-law') and the "gulli" ('step-father'[?], '[generous] provider'[?]) of Ullr, the mother should have been Þórr's wife, Sif.[96]

As noted above, one might entertain the possibility that the idea of Sif as being the mother of Ullr was simply invented by Snorri himself, on what he considered good grounds, based on his knowledge of mythology. The original relationship between Ullr and Þórr might arguably have been such, that Þórr (a god of the sky) came to be perceived as a "relative" of the previous sky god, Ullr, when he reached his height of influence, and that perhaps the kenning is simply to be understood as meaning "relative of a sky god."

The oldest kenning suggesting a relationship is *Haustlǫng*'s "Ullar mágr" (*mági* from the grammatical context of the strophe), from the beginning of the 10th century, by Þjóðólfr ór Hvini. The word *mágr* means 'relative', 'brother-, father- or son-in-law', and might be interpreted by another reader as meaning any of the aforementioned words. Considerably more problematic is the alternative wording *gulli*, which surfaces a single time in *Þórsdrápa* (from the end of the 10th century), by Eilífr Goðrúnarson. LP (p. 208) has Old Icelandic *gulli* as a masculine noun, meaning literally 'step-father' (Da. *Stedfader*), and uses *Þórsdrápa* str. 18 as an example. Kock and Meissner (1931, p. 56 & p. 60), however, has the word as a feminine noun, originally *goll* (later *gull*), with various meanings such as "*gold, das metall und daraus verfertigtes*", "*freigebiger fürst*", and "*freigebige*", and also uses *Þórsdrápa* str. 18 as an example. Perhaps Ivar Lindquist (1929b, p. 101) is correct, when he gives the translation of *gulli* as Swedish *fostrare* 'fosterer, provider, upbringer', and *mágr* (Lindquist, 1929b, p. 87) as Swedish *frände* 'friend, kinsman'. Arguably, a later skald having read the words "Ullar mágr" might have perceived it with the meaning '*step-father* of Ullr', and thus felt it appropriate to use *gulli* as a more direct reference to his interpretation of Þórr as a "[generous] provider (step-father)" of Ullr. The word *gulli* certainly also alliterates well with *Ullar*, considerably better than *mágr*, something which might have tempted the skald to stretch the mythological boundaries.[97] It must be noted that Snorri himself also seems to allow for this sort of

96. Ohlmarks (1958, pp. 310-311) argues that Eysteinn's "Ulls mágr" is inspired by *Haustlǫng*'s "Ullar mágr", and also points out that *Þórsdrápa*'s use of "gulli Ullar" is simply a variation of the same meaning, namely 'step-father of Ullr', on the basis that "the sun god Ullr" was perceived as the son of the "sun goddess Sif" from an earlier marriage. As I argue below, however, I do not agree with the notion that Sif had any actual connections to Ullr in religious worship.
97. It must be noted, that *Haustlǫng*'s strophe alliterates *mági* with the following *grápi*, rather than with *Ullar* itself. This might imply that the use of the word *mágr* (however it was to be interpreted) was of most importance for the

interchangeability, where one god might represent all gods, and one relation might represent all relations, and so on (see Chapter 5.3). Over and above *Haustlǫng*'s presumably older mythological knowledge of Þórr's and Ullr's supposed relation, its composer, Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, was Norwegian, from a country where Ullr had historically been of some prominence, and it might be suggested that this fact alone would have conditioned Þjóðólfr for a more accurate perception of mythological conditions in ancient Norway. *Þórsdrápa*'s composer, Eilífr Goðrúnarson, on the other hand, was Icelandic, and might have relied more heavily on previous material in his use of mythological kennings, rather than cultic memory.

As to the question of Ullr's father, numerous propositions have been made throughout scholarship. Niels Åge Nielsen (1969, p. 115) postulated, based on a unique reading of the Sparlösa rune stone, that Sif's earlier husband might actually have been Njörðr, who would consequently also be the "biological" father of Ullr. This idea is nonetheless unsatisfactory, since, as has been noted in Chapter 4.3.3., it has been argued that Njörðr was originally perceived as a female deity in Sweden, the place where Ullr was most prominently worshipped. As noted elsewhere, the female status of Njörðr (as Nerthus) is probably an older variation of this Germanic deity. It might thus be assumed that Njörðr could not have been the father of Ullr.

Other explanations of Ullr's fatherhood include Franz Rolf Schröder's (1941, pp. 74-116, esp. p. 109) theory, which held that Skaði and Ullr might have constituted a more "northern" variety of the sibling pair Freyr and Freyja, whereby Ullr and Skaði were the son and daughter of Þjazi. This reflects an argument made earlier by H. A. Guerber (1909, p. 139), who commented that: "His [Ullr's] father, who is never mentioned in the Northern sagas, must have been one of the dreaded frost giants, for Uller loved the cold and delighted in travelling over the country on his broad snowshoes or glittering skates." Viktor Rydberg (1886, p. 601, p. 693, and so on) meanwhile argued that Ullr inherited his skills in hunting and archery from his father, Egill-Örvandill (who was himself a great archer and legendary hero), from an earlier marriage with Sif. He was, thus (according to Rydberg's interpretation), also a cousin to Skaði and a half-brother to Svipdagr-Óðr. Earlier, Finnur Magnússon had argued as far back as 1821, that Ullr's father must have been Óðinn. To Finnur's mind, Ullr was a god of winter, and, as such, his brother and kinsman must have been Baldr, the god of light and summer. Therefore, their shared father would have been that of Baldr, namely, Óðinn: "Begge Brödres Fader var vistnok Himmelguden *Odin*, som udsender baade *Vinter* og *Sommer*" (Finnur Magnússon, 1821-1823, v. 2, p. 260). In spite of all these suggestions, it is difficult to see how any other deity within the corpus could have even been perceived as the

accuracy of the kenning, whereas Eilífr Goðrúnarson's use of *gulli* was dependent on the nature of its following word, *Ullar.*

"biological" father of Ullr, as Ullr is often understood by scholars as having himself been one of the older native gods of Sweden and Norway. As such, no other known deity fits the role of being his predecessor.

As to the question of Sif, her name might etymologically be associated with Gothic *sibja* and Old High German *sibba*, alluding to 'relation [by marriage]' (Simek, 2007, p. 283). Of Sif herself little is known, beyond the claims that her hair was made of gold (potentially alluding to wheat). Nordic place names hardly shed light on any supposed cult following. If Sif had a clear relation to the earth or to agriculture, a relationship to the sky/sun god Ullr would theoretically make sense, but such a relationship can hardly be supported outside far-fetched assumptions based on the literary ideas given above. Nonetheless, many theories alluding to this possibility have been presented, in attempts to make sense of Ullr's relationship to Sif. For Finnur Magnússon (1821-1823, v. 1, p. 195 & v. 2, p. 260), since Ullr was a god of nature, who personified the winter, he must also have been the son of the personification of the earth, Sif: "han er Sön af *Sif* (*Jorden* nemlig, fra hvem *Dunsterne* opstige) […]" (Finnur Magnússon, 1821-1823, v. 1, p. 195).[98]

The most exhaustive theory was probably presented by Henrik Schück (1904, pp. 196-197 & pp. 219-221), who argued for the somewhat imaginative proposition that Snorri's Ullr kenning "sonr Sifjar" bore witness to a complicated and archaic vegetation myth. To Schück's mind, Snorri had misunderstood whatever source he had in front of him, and "sonr Sifjar" is to be understood as meaning "son of an in-law-relationship" (drawn from the etymological background of Sif's name). Sif, he felt, was not actually a goddess in the true sense of the word, but rather a "theological" goddess, an abstract concept personified in poetic language. Instead of Ullr being the actual son of the goddess Sif, Schück continues, Ullr was actually the *father* of the "son of an in-law relationship" – namely, Óðinn, a vegetation god. Schück saw the answer to the problem as being found in Saxo's myth of Ollerus, as it is similar to various other myths in which Óðinn is replaced as a ruler by other deities. To Schück's mind, Óðinn's departure represents his death at the hands of his brother, the seasonal alternation god Ullr. Ullr, thereafter, marries Óðinn's lover Rind, and brings about the rebirth of Óðinn, who makes an eventual return – the myth in its whole symbolizing the eternal cycle of the seasons, winter giving birth to summer, and vice versa: "Mytens natursymbolik är tämligen genomskinlig: vintern dödar sommaren, men föder honom på nytt. […] Årstiderna voro ju i en ständig omväxling, och liksom vintern är sommarens fader, är också sommaren vinterns fader" (Schück, 1904, p. 221).

Schück's view is speculative, and I find it difficult to base any theory upon the supposition

98. Helge Ljungberg argued for a similar idea, postulating that the relationship of Ullr to Síf (as her supposed son) indicates that Ullr, "i likhet med Tor", was not an original sky god, but rather transformed into one after his meeting with the earth goddess, Síf (Ljungberg, 1947, p. 206).

that Snorri simply severely misinterpreted a kenning. Indeed, Schück seemingly overlooks the historical use of "Ullar mágr", "Ullar gulli", and so on, as kennings for Þórr, which apparently existed long before the time of Snorri, expressions which in-and-of-themselves seemingly imply that Sif, indeed, was the mother of Ullr. As was noted above, there is also the possibility that Sif's status as mother to Ullr was simply deduced from his "relation" to Þórr by Snorri himself, as his *Edda* is the only source of this motherhood. Both Schück and Finnur Magnússon, however, touch upon interesting ideas. It certainly seems plausible that an archaic earth–sky relation hides behind Ullr's and Sif's literary association.

Sif's supposed historical association to Ullr nonetheless remains unexplained. It might be possible, however, that Ullr's relation to Sif is only artificial, Sif having been taken up as the mother of Ullr in an attempt to make sense of an old and archaic god who was otherwise difficult for the skalds at the time to fully grasp – her name and golden hair perhaps having been perceived as being potentially related to what little knowledge still remained of Ullr's old status as sun god.

On the use of "skip Ullar" and related variations as a kenning for *shield* there has also been great debate. There can be no doubt, that these kennings are the only surviving remnants of an Ullr myth. It might be deduced from them, that Ullr was once associated with or owned a ship, perhaps even named *Skjǫldr* (LP, p. 578), or that the god owned a shield that was suitable for travel on the seas or on snowy plains or mountains (see, for example, Finnur Magnússon, 1821-1823, v. 1, p. 195; Lindquist, 1926, pp. 99-100). As we shall see in Chapter 6, there is also reason to believe that these kennings relate Ullr in some way to the sun. The implications of these kennings and Ullr's relation to ships and shields shall be further expanded upon in later chapters, as the proposed theories are often of highly speculative nature and thus deserves a proper investigation in a less quantitative chapter.

Were it not for the claim by Snorri Sturluson that Ullr "hefir hermanns atgervi" (*Gylfaginning* 31), the use of Ullr in kennings for *warrior* would be rather uncomplicated. As it stands, it is questionable to what degree these kennings reflect a mythological tradition, and to what degree they simply function as alliterative elements. Admittedly, Snorri himself points out in *Skáldskaparmál* 1 that names of gods may be used to refer to other gods (see, for example, Davidson, 1993, p. 62), and it seems safe to assume that Ullr's prominence in *warrior* kennings might not necessarily have ever had any basis in mythology. As is well-known, (Abram, 2011, p. 101), gods (of any kind) might be inserted into kennings alluding to *warrior*, without necessarily having any mythological substance behind them, two such examples being Guðormr sindri's *Hákonardrápa*, in which both Njörðr and Baldr are used in kennings for warrior, and where the only basis for the choice of god is its suitability for alliteration. Another example is Eyvindr Finnsson's

(or Þórgeirr höggvinkinna's, depending on interpretation) use of Njörðr in a kenning for *warrior* in a verse in *Heimskringla*. As Abram writes:

> […] his choice of god-names has no real significance – any god can serve as the base-word in the kenning, and its selection depends on how it fits into the metre of the stanza, rather than the identity of the deity. […] Perhaps the 'god of weapons' kenning represents the limits of the mythological imagery acceptable to a king who rejected paganism (Abram, 2011, p. 101).[99]

Neither Njörðr nor Baldr are ever mentioned by Snorri as gods of war or battle, yet the two names still surface in such kennings. Outside Ullr's apparent relation to shields, how Ullr's *warrior* kennings tie in with Snorri's claim of the god's possession of "hermanns atgervi" is unknown. It might be presumed that Snorri's claims are simply based on his awareness of the kennings, rather than any additional mythological knowledge, not least because Snorri himself recounts no myth involving the god to support his ideas. Perhaps, the considerably frequent historical use of Ullr in kennings for *warrior* (compared with many other gods) prompted Snorri to add "ok hefir hermanns atgervi" as a finishing comment to his description of the god.[100]

5.3. Snorri and the *Prose Edda*

Snorri Sturluson was clearly aware of the existence of a god named Ullr, and mentions him in a number of places in his *Prose Edda*. Even though the god never takes a prominent or otherwise important position in any of Snorri's texts, and never appears as the subject of a myth, it does seem apparent that Snorri was aware of a number of features and characteristics of the god otherwise not mentioned in alternative sources. In *Gylfaginning*, unlike his prominence in *Grímnismál*, Ullr is the second to last god to be mentioned, succeeding Váli and proceeding Forseti:

> Ullr heitir einn, sonr Sifjar, stjúpsonr Þórs. Hann er bogmaðr svá góðr ok skíðfærr svá at engi má við hann keppask. Hann er ok fagr álitum ok hefir hermanns atgervi. Á hann er ok gott at heita í einvígi (*Gylfaginning* 31).[101]

99. Abram's discussion regards the tensions between two religions facing the poets of Christian kings, but I believe that a similar methodology might have been applied in earlier times – where gods in and of themselves represented strength and power, a superhuman state, and as such could always be used in kennings alluding to *war* or *battle*, if the alliterative circumstances prompted it.

100. This prominence in warrior kennings might in and of itself indicate the god's prominence in earlier times. Perhaps the god came to be perceived as related to war as the expansions of the *svear* (the tribe to which he is thought to most certainly have been related) increased in both Norway and Sweden. Indeed, as Elgqvist (1947, pp. 145-152) points out, it would appear as if many of the *Ullr* place names in Sweden have been "forced" upon the *götar* by the expansions of the neighbouring *svear*, and Elgqvist suggests that similar expansions of the Ullr cult took place in Norway, when the **Ullinn* variation was first established there (see Chapter 3.2).

101. Snorri Sturluson (2005, p. 26).

Later, in *Skáldskaparmál*, Ullr is mentioned once again, although the only additional information on his persona which is revealed, refers to his role as a hunting god *(veiðiáss*) and shield god (*skjaldaráss*):

> Hvernig skal kenna Ull? Svá, at kalla hann son Sifjar, stjúp Þórs, öndurás, bogaás, veiðiás, skjaldarás (*Skáldskaparmál* 14).[102]

Some of Snorri's claims are undoubtedly questionable. In the following I shall discuss, one by one, all the characteristics mentioned by Snorri, and attempt to evaluate their historical accuracy.

As noted above, the idea of Ullr being the son of Sif and step-son of Þórr appears to contain some degree of historical authenticity, even though the exact nature and circumstances of these relations are difficult to explain. As we have seen (Chapter 5.2), "Ullr's relative" as a kenning for Þórr seems to have been used even in the earliest extant skaldic poetry, material upon which Snorri surely based some of his claims. The question remains, though, as noted above, whether the original source meant to suggest simply that the two gods were related, and that Snorri took the wording (wrongly) as meaning 'step-father'.

Regarding Snorri's claim of Ullr being "bogmaðr svá góðr", it has long been assumed that this has its roots in historical beliefs. The basis for this assumption has been that Ullr's homestead in *Grímnismál* str. 5, *Ýdalir* 'yew dales', contains a passive reference to Ullr's association with bows – the finest and most skillfully crafted bows having been made from yews (see, for example, Ström, 1961, p. 106; Turville-Petre, 1964, p. 182; Bellows, 2004, p. 88; Simek, 2007, p. 375, and related references). There is, of course, the possibility that Snorri, having been aware of *Grímnismál*'s reference to *Ýdalir*, made the same assumption – since the only known reference to Ullr as a "bogmaðr" comes from Snorri himself. Naturally, this hypothesis assumes that Snorri was aware of the yew tree and its use in making bows. However, it is difficult to make sense of a relationship in which *Ýdalir* worked as the basis for Ullr's relation to bows, even though the yew tree itself was unknown in Iceland. Certainly, the likelihood must be that his association with *Ýdalir* was proceeded by his association with bows. As we have seen in the previous chapter on *Grímnismál*, there is good reason to believe that *Ýdalir* was itself is a literary invention. There is therefore a strong possibility that things were the other way around, and that the "composer" of *Grímnismál*, aware of Ullr's role as a hunting/bow god, and aware of the way in which fine bows were made (namely, from yew trees), found it appropriate that such a god should be given a homestead in

102. Snorri Sturluson (1998, p. 19).

which yews grew far and wide: the Yew Dales. If the composer was Norwegian, and unaware of Ullr's former prominence in, particularly, Sweden and Uppland, the *Grímnismál* reference to Ullr as living in "dales/valleys" would have been unproblematic, even if it was to become a source of confusion to later scholars.[103]

According to Richard North (1997, p. 244), certainly, the idea of Ullr as a *bogmaðr* seem to be deep-rooted, and tie in with the use of the Old English word *wuldorgeflogene* 'glory flown things' (from *wuldor*, cognate to Ullr's historical Gothic form *wulþus*, see Chapter 2.1), in the verse *Nine Herbs Charm*, as these objects "appear to be shot out of the sky as poison against which the poet's nine herbs or *wuldortanas* ('glory-twigs') operate […]." While this might echo Åke Ohlmarks (1983, p. 368) comment that "Ulls vapen är framför allt bågen med solstrålen som pil," both ideas in and of themselves must be considered conjecture at best.

It is Snorri's idea of Ullr as being a ski god that has led scholars to assume a religious relation to the winter, and in particular the clear, bright winter sky, coupled with its stars in the night (de Vries, 1957, p. 162, and more). The idea of Ullr being a skiing god, however, has only one potential literary reflection, in Saxo Grammaticus' description (to be further discussed in the following chapter) of the figure Ollerus – with the one difference that Saxo's account apparently gives him (bone) *skates* rather than skis. Lindquist (1926, p. 100), somewhat imaginatively, argued that Saxo's depiction of Ullr as using skates (see Chapters 5.4 and 10) might actually be a result of a historical misinterpretation of the idea of "Ullr's ship" (a shield) being used for travel across snowy plains. An old storyteller, he feels, might have claimed that "Ullr's ship was a *kjalke* he used for traveling across the sea" (*sea* being derived from the use of the kenning "Ullr's ship"), the Norwegian word *kjalke* both meaning *sled* (which is what Lindquist argues the shield was used as during winter), and *jawbone*. If a younger generation, less in contact with the "original" myths, interpreted the use of the word *kjalke* as meaning *jawbone*, rather than *sled*, Saxo's depiction of Ullr using a "bone" would have been born. In a later publication, Lindquist (1929a, p. 13) nonetheless stressed that Ullr's "original" characterstics were those of the bow and of hunting, but felt that the god's association with skis and winter was a later development, an idea which would have originally spawned in Norway,[104] where hunting with the bow and skiing during winter were highly interrelated. It was Lindquist who argued that Ullr's supposed appearance with a bow on the Danish

103. As noted above, Asgaut Steinnes (1949-1951, p. 397) offers the explanation that Ullr's original homestead would have been *Ývin*, a farm name in Tune, Østfold, Norway. The skald, familiar with the landscape, could have used the more "prosaic" denomination *-dalir*, perhaps in reference to the valley that runs between *Ývin* and the adjacent *Alfheimar*.

104. Karl Bernhard Wiklund (1928, p. 29) argued that the association between hunting with bow and skiing was more likely to have taken root in Norway, since hunting (and thus survival) during the winter-seasons of the far north must have *exclusively* been carried out on skis: It should therefore not be surprising that the god of bows and hunting (Ullr) in such a region would have become associated also with skis.

Gallehus horns (dating from the 5th century), apparently without skis, bore witness to the fact that the perception of Ullr as using skis must have been late, and probably a Norwegian invention. Indeed, the old *Grímnismál* poem, str. 5, only bears witness to the fact that Ullr might have been associated with bows (yew), rather than with skis. The explicit idea of Ullr using skis (and snow-shoes) comes solely from Snorri's account (see Chapter 10).

As B. A. Thurber (2013, pp. 197-211) has demonstrated, however, little difference in the concepts of *bone skates* and *skis* seems to have existed in medieval Scandinavia, and Saxo's and Snorri's differing accounts in this regard might simply be interpreted as regional variations of the idea of the god "sliding", and actually using skis or skates to travel. As Thurber argues, *skis* as a means of travel had been commonplace in Scandinavia for such a significant amount of time, that when bone skates became known to the Vikings, they might not have distinguished the two to any greater extent, but rather considered skates just another variation of skis.

In line with his claim in *Gylfaginning* of Ullr as skiing, Snorri gives Ullr the kenning *ǫnduráss* (an expression that seems to have no support in any other sources), a compound word, the first stem of which is the singular of *andrar* (sing. nom. *ǫndurr*), a word which apparently meant 'snow-shoes', rather than 'skis' (Cleasby & Guðbrandur Vigfússon, 1874, p. 20; Zoëga, 2004, p. 15; Thurber, 2013, p. 206). As Thurber (2013, pp. 208-209) convincingly demonstrates, however, the two types of objects are closely related and even interchangeable within literary sources.[105]

Although not mentioned in Snorri's initial account of the god in *Gylfaginning* in *Skáldskaparmál*, as noted above, the god is given the additional kenning *veiðiáss* 'hunting god'. Arguably, hunting is an activity which might be interrelated to the activity of skiing. Indeed, Thurber (2013, pp. 209-210) once again notes that the literary evidence demonstrates that skiing and hunting appear to be closely related activities, stressing that: "In *Völundarkviða*, the three brothers are said to 'skriðo ok veiddo dýr' (slide and catch animals) […]. It seems likely that the three brothers hunted on skis because that was a common activity, as shown by the references to Skaði and other hunters equipped with skis."[106]

Naturally, the idea of Ullr having been a skiing/hunting god is somewhat contrary to the popular perception of the god having had a prime position in a fertility cult (of which Snorri says nothing, possibly on the basis that the Ullr cult was long abandoned by Snorri's time, and the fact that Ullr appears to have been most prominent in Sweden, with which Snorri had little contact). Just Bing (1916, pp. 107-124), in an ambitious but largely ignored study of the god, nonetheless

105. For a problematization of Saxo's account, see Chapter 10.

106. Lending potential support to the historical authenticity of the perception of the god as a hunter and a skier, is arguably the so called Böksta/Balingsta stone (rundata U 855), found between the towns of Böksta and Balingsta (see Chapter 6.2), Uppland, Sweden; a large 11th century (although the dating is debatable) rune stone of apparently pre-Christian origins, depicting what appears to be a man on skis wielding a large bow (Silén, 1983, p. 88).

recognized the obvious discrepancy between these two concepts, arguing strongly for the idea that the accounts of Ullr in the literary sources actually reflect two stages of the god's existence, first as an *original* fertility god, and later as a winter god, whose attested attributes of ski and bow were inherited from an older god, Skaði, who, famously, is given these same (apparently masculine) attributes by Snorri. According to Bing (1916, pp. 117-123, esp. p. 118), Skaði's name (grammatically masculine) and attributes bear witness to her earlier historical position as a male god, married to the historically female deity, Njörðr (see Chapter 4.3.3). To Bing's mind, the accounts of Skaði and Njörðr in the mythological literature as two polar opposites in marriage is a reflection of their former cultic positions as a "good" fertility/summer goddess (Njörðr/Nerthus) and an "evil" winter/skiing/hunting god (Skaði). On Skaði's former role, Bing writes (1916, p. 121):

> Dersom den idé holder stik at desse skikkelser har samme oprindelse, saa skulde vi her ha fundet en indogermansk, primitiv gud, en ond vætte som bor i fjeld og utørk, som skyter ulykke, sot og død over folk og fæ, og hvis dyr er ulven, menneskets fiende. Det er forstaaelig at denne gud siden har forandret skikkelse, og at utviklingen har forsøkt at mildne hans gru, idet han kom i de gode gudernes selskap. […] I Indien og i Hellas er det pest, men i Norden vet man at den egentlige ulykke er vinteren. Derfor er denne guddom blit utstyret med ski (skøiter hos Sakse).

As time went by, Bing argues, Skaði's association with the fertility goddess slowly made the two switch gender, and the former role of Skaði went from "vinterens fæle jætte", to "en kvinde og hendes bue hadde tapt sin gru, hennes ski talte ikke længer om vinterens haardhet" (Bing, 1916, p. 122). Her attributes were then transferred to Ullr, whose masculine role and close relation to Njörðr (Nerthus) in his position as original fertility god, made him more suitable for Skaði's masculine attributes. Bing's learned examination in regard to the ambiguous nature of Ullr is ambitious, but to me hardly satisfying. The idea of Ullr having "inherited" (without further explanations as to how this would have happened) the attributes of Skaði, who herself changed from an original male winter-demon, to a female goddess (without, at any point, losing her masculine attributes along the way), seems far-fetched at best.

Snorri's next claim, of Ullr being "fagr álitum", has been used by several scholars, past and present, to support the theory of the god's possible role as a former sun or sky god. This position has been backed by use of Ullr's etymological history, his name being interpreted in various forms as meaning 'glory', 'brilliance', 'radiance', and so on, all stemming from Gothic *wulþus* (see Chapter 3.1).[107] As I shall demonstrate, however, it appears increasingly likely that Snorri's claim of Ullr

107. As noted in Chapter 3.1., at least one scholar, Lindquist (1926, p. 96), attempted to relate the name to the Gothic

being “fagr álitum” has less historical authenticity than previously assumed. Indeed, it has to be noted, that the use of this phrase, “fagr álitum” (generally translated as “beautiful to look upon”) is not unique to Ullr. Snorri uses this terminology for other figures on a number of different occasions in his texts, most importantly in *Gylfaginning* itself:

> Sá er nefndr Búri. Hann var **fagr álitum**, mikill ok máttugr (*Gylfaginning* 6).[108]

> Hár segir: ‘Annarr son Óðins er Baldr, ok er frá honum gott at segja. Hann er beztr ok han lofa allir. Hann er svá **fagr álitum** ok bjartr svá at lýsir af honum, ok eitt gras er svá hvítt at jafnat er til Baldrs brár […] (*Gylfaginning* 22).[109]

The expression is also used in his *Prologue*:

> Einn konungr er þar var er nefndr Munon eða Mennon. Hann átti dóttur hǫfuðkonungs Priami, sú hét Troan. Þau áttu son, hann hét Tror, þann kǫllum vér Þór. […] En er hann var tíu vetra þá tók hann við vápnum fǫður sins. Svá var hann **fagr álitum** er hann kom með ǫðrum mǫnnum sem þá er fíls bein er í eik (*Prologue* 9).[110]

As has been noted earlier (Chapter 2.1), Eugen Mogk (1907, pp. 117-120) made an exceedingly questionable attempt at equating Ullr with Loki, partly based upon the aforementioned account by Snorri, who, of course, also characterizes Loki with the similar words “Loki er fríðr ok fagr sýnum, illr í skaplyndi, mjǫk fjǫlbreytinn at háttum” (*Gylfaginning* 33 [Snorri Sturluson, 2005, p. 26]). Indeed, alone the word *fagr* is used numerable other times in Snorri’s texts, and is on one occasion also given as an attribute of the god Dagr: “Var þeirra son Dagr. Var hann ljóss ok fagr eptir faðerni sínu” (*Gylfaginning* 10 [Snorri Sturluson, 2005, p. 13]).

It appears as if “fagr álitum” is a type of standardized formula, and its application to gods such as Baldr and Búri raises questions as to its distinguishing features. It is possible, that Snorri applied the description to gods about which he knew only little, as a generic, descriptive phrase. Certainly, its use in Snorri’s description of Baldr, the best god, fair and loved by all, appears to be practically valid from a mythological standpoint. On the other hand, I find it exceedingly difficult to use Snorri’s description of Ullr as “fagr álitum” to support any theory as to the god Ullr’s individual

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verb *wleitan*, with the more generic meaning 'to see', whose root alluded to 'appearance [of the face]'. Combining this etymology with Snorri’s account, Lindquist explained Ullr’s name as “den utomordentligt sköne”.
108. Snorri Sturluson (2005, p. 11).
109. Snorri Sturluson (2005, p. 23).
110. Snorri Sturluson (2005, p. 4).

role or characteristics in the past.

According to Richard North (1997, pp. 243-246), however, Snorri's use of the terminology "fagr álitum" for Ullr is intentional, and based on historical tradition, with several cognates on the British Isles. North notes that the word *álitum* is based on the original Old Icelandic *[v]litir* 'colours'. As he stresses, the Old English cognate to this word, *wlite* 'brightness, radiance', is often used on numerous occasions within Old English literary sources in conjunction with *Ullr*'s Old English cognate, *wuldor* 'glory, brilliance'.[111] According to North, this proves that **Wullr* or **Wullinn* (from **Ullinn*) "was linked with **wlitir* in a lost poetic source" (North, 1997, p. 243). While North's sources for these alliterative pairs are all Christian, to his mind, "its use in a common Germanic past indicates that the association of radiance with *wuldor* is ancient." North's claim is provocative, but I have a hard time fully accepting this postulation. It is entirely possible that the Old English usage of *wlite* in conjunction with *wuldor* has no poetic or mythological substance behind it, and was used strictly for its alliterative appeal or as part of a formula. Whether or not Snorri was aware of this pairing or not is another question, but his usage of the same Icelandic formula for gods other than Ullr (*wuldor*) suggests he was not.

As has been noted above, Snorri's next claim, that Ullr "hefir hermanns atgervi", is also problematic, and more or less unverifiable. Remnants of this idea might be seen as surviving in a row of kennings, many of which are attested as early as the 10th century (see Chapter 5.2),[112] and might lie behind Snorri's idea, but any direct association between Ullr and warriors or warfare is otherwise unknown. In fact, as with Ullr's supposed role as a hunting god, the idea is seemingly at odds with the popular perception of Ullr having had a prime position within a fertility cult, based around agricultural practices, supposedly in conjunction with an earth god/goddess. As was postulated in the previous chapter, there might be reason to believe that the use of Ullr in kennings for *warrior* has no mythological basis at all, and simply fits in as an alliterative element, based on the fact that names of gods might be used interchangeably in *warrior* kennings. It seems likely, that the prominent historical use of Ullr in kennings for *warrior* is what prompted Snorri to give Ullr "hermanns atgervi" in the finishing words of his sentence.

The last claim made by Snorri in regard to Ullr, is that the god was good to call upon in single-combat ("gott at heita í einvígi"). There are two possible explanations for this claim: 1) that the claim stands in relation to Ullr's presence in kennings for *warrior*, an idea I find highly unlikely, as the two statements appear separated in Snorri's account, and because single-combat and war (as

111. For example, *wuldre gewlitegian* 'to radiate with glory', and *wlitescyne wer in his wuldorhoman* 'a radiant shining man in his glorious body' (North, 1997, p. 243).
112. "Ullr branda" and "Ullr veggjar Heðins" (both from *Vellakla*, by Einarr Helgason skálaglamm), "Ullr geirvaðils" (*Hákonardrápa*, by Einarr Helgason skálaglamm), *Lausavísa* (["single stanza"] by Eyvindr Finnsson skáldaspillr).

in *warriοr*, *battle*, and so on) are two highly distinctive concepts; and 2) that the claim reflects Ullr's potential historical role as an upholder of law and justice (see Chapter 9). The use of trial-by-combat or single-combat (Old Norse/Old Icelandic *einvígi*, and more specifically known as *hólmganga*) as a means of settling legal or judicial disputes is ancient in Scandinavia, as well as in Germanic history in general. In Sweden,[113] the practice was regulated in *Hednalagen* (Old Swedish *Heþnalagh* 'Heathen Law'), fragments of which survive in a reference by Swedish historian Olaus Petri (1493-1552).[114] Should the perception of Ullr as related to law be accurate, I find it exceedingly likely that Snorri's reference is a trustworthy reflection of a historical belief. Additional discussions on Ullr's potential role as a god of law and justice will be given in a Chapter 9.

Ullr is mentioned only one more time by Snorri, in the beginning prose of *Skáldskaparmál*, in a context the implications of which are unclear and potentially irrelevant to our understanding of the god:

> Þá gengu æsir at gildi sínu, ok settust í hásæti tólf æsir, þeir er dómendr skyldu vera ok svá váru nefndir: Þórr, Njörðr, Freyr, Týr, Heimdallr, Bragi, Víðarr, Váli, Ullr, Hænir, Forseti, Loki. Slíkt sama ásynjur: Frigg, Freyja, Gefjun, Iðunn, Gerðr, Sigyn, Fulla, Nanna. Ægi þótti göfugligt þar um at sjást. Veggþili öll váru þar tjölduð með fögrum skjöldum. Þar var ok áfenginn mjöðr ok mjök drukkit. Næsti maðr Ægi sat Bragi, ok áttust þeir vit drykkju ok orðaskipti. Sagði Bragi Ægi frá mörgum tíðendum, þeim er æsir höfðu átt (*Skáldskaparmál* 55).[115]

This marks another peculiar mention of Ullr, seemingly in passing, in which the god lacks any form of relevance for the ensuing story. Nonetheless, Åke Ohlmarks (1963b, p. 232 & pp. 236-239) assumed a relationship between the two gods Ullr and Hænir, partly based on their association at the feasting table in this aforementioned beginning of *Skáldskaparmál*. Ohlmarks postulated a three-part variation of the Nordic sun god, where Ullr represented a Swedish variation, Heimdallr a Norwegian variation, and Hænir, potentially, a Danish variation. Hænir's position as commensal to Ullr at the feasting table thus seemed obvious to Ohlmarks. He explained Ullr's presence at the table by means of arguing that the feast at the bottom of Ægir's deep-sea hall, to which no light could reach, had to be lit up by the light of the sun-god himself (Ohlmarks, 1963b, p. 234), an argument that seems rather far-fetched. Certainly, the gods seem to be mentioned here in what appears to be some form of order of relevance, Þórr clearly holding a prime position as the first one, followed by Njörðr and Freyr. The same is seemingly true for the goddesses as well, Frigg and

113. See also the *hólmgöngulög* in *Kormáks saga*, for an Icelandic account of a similar tradition.
114. For a translation and interpretation of the only surviving fragment of *Hednalagen*, see Läffler (1880), and for additional discussion, see von Friesen (1902, pp. 109-112).
115. Snorri Sturluson (1998, p. 1).

Freyja being mentioned as the first two. Ullr holds a position between two secondary gods, Váli and Hænir, and is thereby hardly elevated to any position of importance, despite his appearance as one of the twelve dinner guests. This is quite different to *Grímnismál*, where Ullr appears as second only to Þórr (see Chapter 5.1.1).

5.4. Saxo Grammaticus

The only Latin account in which the name of the god surfaces, is Saxo Grammaticus' euhemeristic historization of Nordic mythology, where he appears as *Ollerus*, in a story which is otherwise unknown outside of Saxo's account. It is interesting that a Danish historian living in the 12th century should be aware of such relatively detailed characteristics of the god, some of which are arguably echoed by the description given by the Icelander Snorri Sturluson. From a linguistic perspective, however, the form *Ollerus* remains curious. Axel Olrik (1892, p. 83) pointed out that *Ollerus* undoubtedly answers to Icelandic *Ullr*, but notes that the expected Danish latinization of the word would have been **Ullerus*, or, as Ivar Lindquist (1926, p. 99) points out, **Ulderus*. In Danish, the progression from *u* to *o* (*a*-umlaut) is never found in *u*-stems, and more importantly, the lack of the stereotypically Danish *d*-insertion (*Ullr* → *Ulder*) gives it away as an intrinsically Norwegian word form. It should be noted that Saxo generally follows the grammatical patterns that one should expect from a Danish native (i.e. *ei*, *au*, and *øy* swapped in preference for *e* and *ø*), but on a number of occasions, he "slips up" and appears to use grammatical forms that would not have been natural to the Danish language at the time. Thus, Olrik concludes (1892, p. 130) that the origin of Saxo's account of *Ollerus* must have been Norwegian-Icelandic, further lending support to the notion that Ullr was an exclusively Swedish-Norwegian god.

Ollerus only appears in Saxo's third book of the *Gesta Danorum*, where Saxo tells the story of Othinus (Óðinn), who, because of his adulterous history with Rind (attempting to produce a son capable of avenging Baldr's death), is driven from his kingdom in Byzantium by force. Saxo relates how, in Othinus' stead, Ollerus took his place – not only as his successor, but as Othinus himself, assuming his name, and being elevated to godhood. After about ten years of Ollerus having ruled Othinus' kingdom in his name, the exiled Othinus was pardoned, and Ollerus was himself driven from Byzantium, and interestingly enough, to the land of the Swedes, where he tried to once again rise in the ranks, but was eventually beaten to death by the Danes. The account adds, that rumour has it, that Ollerus was so skilled in witchcraft, that when traveling the seas, he did so, not on a ship, but on a bone on which magic spells had been carved, and thus, could proceed as seamlessly as if with oars.[116]

116. It must be noted, that nowhere does Saxo directly mention the idea of the *bone* being a skate.

Saxo's account remains the only surviving myth involving Ullr, and is riddled with implications of mythological and historical nature. It is also the only occasion in which Ullr is explicitly associated with Óðinn outside *Grímnismál*. As noted earlier, Just Bing (1916, pp. 109-110) argued that Saxo's account was a reflection of the historical pushing-out of Ullr by Óðinn (in the Nordic countries), and that the myth needs to be interpreted in terms of its ending: Ullr being driven from Byzantium by Oðinn, the new god, and eventually killed. As Bing writes: "Odinsdyrkelsen er det nye som antas, og Odin gaar ind paa Ulls plads mellem guderne" (Bing, 1916, p. 110). As early as 1848 (p. 5 & p. 26), however, Karl Weinhold had noted that the Saxo myth of Ollerus was similar in kind to that of Óðinn and Mithotyn, as well as the myth of Óðinn's replacement by Vili and Vé, in that all three myths revolved around Óðinn's replacement by other deities. Later, Henrik Schück (1904, pp. 184-190) made the same observation, and argued that the story reflected Oðinn's and Ullr's roles as "alternation gods" (Sw. *växlingsgudar*). Schück ultimately agreed with Weinhold, noting that the Ollerus myth is simply a variation of other similar myths. Schück (1904, p. 186) consequently imagined that Mithotyn and Ollerus were also one and the same, an idea echoed by Hjalmar Lindroth (1914, p. 51). Lindroth sees *Mithotyn* stemming from an original *Mið-Óðinn*, in which the first stem *Mið* is identical to Swedish and Norwegian dialectal *me* 'superstition', 'magic', and so on, rendering the name as having the meaning 'Magic-Óðinn' – a reflection of Saxo's claim that Ollerus was "skilled in witchcraft". The idea that the aforementioned myths reflected a similar concept was also entertained by Turville-Petre (1964, p. 184), who points out that the myth arguably implies that Ullr and Mithotyn "competed with Óðinn for sovereignty." This appears to be the most widely accepted theory. Indeed, Gro Steinslands (2007, p. 272) similarly comments in recent years that: "Man har föreslagit att berättelsen innehåller rester av en mycket gammal kultändring från Ull till Oden."

Another interpretation is given by Åke Ohlmarks (1963a, p. 48), who, arguing elsewhere for Ullr's position as an original sun god (see Chapter 7), felt that the Saxo myth of Ollerus' ascent to power, and eventual downfall and death in Sweden, might instead reflect the sun's birth and short lifespan in the east, and bloody death as it sets in the west after sailing across the sky. According to Ohlmarks, one might, with some imagination, see the "bone" described by Saxo in some of the Bronze-Age rock carvings of the simplest ships (as found in Sweden and Norway), which are akin to bones in shape, with a single large "skate" at the bottom. For Ohlmarks (1983, p. 368), Saxo's account was thus a variation of Snorri's description of shields being called "Ullr's ship", the original myth recounting the story of "solsköldens färd över himmelsoceanen." Saxo, to Ohlmark's mind, was reinterpreting the story in terms of a journey across an ice-clad sea on a bone, instead of the sun-disc's journey across the ocean sky. As he notes (Ohlmarks, 1963b, p. 235 & 1947, pp. 209-

210), it is tempting to assume that the Danes saw Ullr as an enemy, since the god seems to be completely absent in Denmark (perhaps replaced by Týr, who is much more prominent in Denmark, and also virtually absent in Sweden),[117] especially since Ollerus was apparently eventually beaten to death by Danes ("a Danis interfectus est") in Sweden, where he was most prominently worshipped. Indeed, it is not difficult to see Saxo's account as an allusion to a vague memory of Ullr having once been the royal god of Sweden, and especially that of the *Svear*, who were enemies of the Danes. One might even imagine a scenario in which those of Ullr's cult once attempted, perhaps successfully, an invasion of Denmark, later to be driven out and have their royal kingdom (imagined by Ohlmarks as the Håga region of Uppland) destroyed.[118]

5.5. *Klements saga*

The only instance in which Ullr surfaces in an Icelandic saga outside of a kenning is in an intriguing passage in *Klements saga* (*Klemens saga* in some sources), a 13th-century saint's life, one of the earliest to be translated into Icelandic from its original Latin. The saga is a translation from the Latin text *Passio sancti Clementis*, and survives in its whole in manuscript AM 645 to, and is dated to between 1220 and 1249. In it, the saint, Pope Clement I of Rome (d. 99), is mentioned for having defamed the pagan deities. The passage of interest is as follows (from Lassen, 2011, p. 101):

> […] hann segir, at Þórr sé eigi goð fulltrúi várr ok inn sterksti áss áræðisfullr, ok er nær hvars sem hann er blótinn; en þá ósæmð ok óvirðing veitir hann Óðni órlausna fullum ok hvarfsemi, at sá Klemens kallar hann fjánda ok óhreinan anda; en hann kveðr Freyin portkonu verit hafa; fælir hann Freyr; en hræpir hann Heimdall; lastar hann Loka með slægð sína ok vélar, ok kallar hann ok illan; hatar hann Hæni; bölvar hann Baldri; tefr hann Týr; níðir hann Njörð; illan segir hann Ull; flimtir hann Frigg; en hann fær Gefjon; sekja dæmir hann Sif.

The names of the gods are naturally part of alliteration. However, of particular interest is the *interpretatio* of the pagan gods from Latin to Icelandic. In the text's Icelandic translation (as seen

117. For a possible relation between a Danish Týr and a Swedish-Norwegian Ullr, see Olrik and Ellekilde (1926-1951, v.1, pp. 559-562).

118. As noted in Chapter 2.1., Viktor Rydberg (1886, p. 600) took a different approach, arguing that Saxo's *Rollerus* (book five, chapter two) was the same as Ollerus, and consequently the same as Ullr. According to Rydberg, the two names *Ollerus* and *Rollerus* stand in relation to each other as *Ólfr* does to *Hrólfr*, where *Hrólfr* is a contraction of *Hróð-úlfr*. This indicates, according to Rydberg, another (unrecorded) contraction, **Hróð-Ullr*. Rydberg's propositions has not been taken seriously by academia in general, and must be considered shaky at best. Richard North (1997, pp. 244-245) takes a unique approach, in a somewhat farfetched investigation of the word *wuldor* (cognate to *Ullr*) in Old English (noted above in Chapter 5.3). North notes that Woden's (Óðinn) association with *wuldor* in the Old English verse *Nine Herbs Charm*, where he strikes an adder with *wuldortanas* 'twigs of glory', might be reflected in Saxo's story, where Othinus "takes over" and drives *wuldor* (Ollerus, Ullr) out. For North, "[…] the alliteratively convenient *Woden-wuldor* combination may reflect a period in England in which Woden, on analogy with the situation in Denmark, appropriated this sky *numen*'s as one of his own" (North, 1997, p. 246).

above), a total of 14 gods are mentioned, whereas the Latin original only mentions nine. The passage reads as follows (from Lassen, 2011, p. 101):

> Iovem dicit deum non esse, Hercules conservatorum nostrum dicit esse immundum spiritum, Venerem deam sanctum meretricem esse commemorat, Vestam quoque deam magnam ignibus crematam esse blasphemat. Sic sanctam deam Minervam et Dianam et Mercurium simul et Saturnum et Martem accusat, numina etiam universa blasphemat.

John Lindow (2001b, p. 443) comments on the curious addition of five more gods in the Icelandic translation that: "the eloborate listing here, with its alliterative sensibility, must be an expansion provided by the translator." It might be presumed that the Icelandic Þórr corresponds to the Roman Jupiter, Óðinn to Mercury, and Freyja to Venus, but beyond these three, it is difficult to determine which Roman deity corresponds to which Icelandic. According to Lindow (2001b, pp. 443-444), in this case, the idea of *interpretatio* here involves reference to a pantheon or society of gods, rather than individual deities. As Lindow notes, what is of particular interest is the translator's enthusiastic addition of a number of gods whose names and qualities appear to have been chosen strictly for the sake of alliteration, the integrity of the original text clearly coming second to its literary devices. However, as noted above, the mention of the gods here goes beyond alliteration, not only in terms of the additions, but also because the different insults in question seem to find clear reflections in the mythology encountered elsewhere. As Lindow writes: "Loki's cleverness and tricks and ultimate evil agree perfectly with his person in the vernacular mythology. So too, I think, does the use of the verb *níða* for Clement's defamation of Njörðr" (Lindow, 2001b, p. 443). In the case of Ullr, on the other hand, the use of the word "illan" seems to lack any form of mythological background. The mention of the god himself, however, gives further evidence of a clear continuing awareness in Iceland of the name of Ullr around the time of Snorri and his *Edda*, which is said to have been compiled around this same time, and not least in the monasteries and schools where translations of this kind took place.

6.0 Archaeology and Ullr

As has been noted, the archaeological sources directly relating to Ullr, are even scarcer and more unreliable than those found in the old literature, and are, in most cases, considerably uncertain. Of most value, however, are the recent excavations carried out at sacred locations apparently named in honour of the god (in particular Lilla Ullevi in Uppland, and the historical town of Ullevi near Linköping in Östergötland). In addition to these, there is reason to discuss at least two pre-Christian rune stones in Sweden which have been said to bear his picture, and one of them his name in writing. A number of exceedingly uncertain instances of archaeological nature which have been connected to Ullr have been left out of the discussion here.[119] We will start with the rune stones.

Fig. 2. Vg 119. Sparlösa rune stone. Southern (IV) side. Alrikr on horseback (bottom of picture) sacrificing the sword to Freyr-Ullr, according to Nielsen (1969). Picture: Rolf Broberg.

6.1. The Sparlösa Stone

The Sparlösa stone (rundata Vg 119), in Sparlösa, Västergötland, Sweden, is one of the most frequently debated rune stones in Scandinavia. Probably dating from around the year 800, the stone bears a number of elusive inscriptions and pictures from pre-Christian times.

In a much criticized study from 1969, Niels Åge Nielsen held that the Sparlösa stone was erected and carved in direct reference to the god Ullr, in conjunction with Freyr, two gods he held to be one and the same. Using an apparently unique way of approaching the **u**-runes of the stone, Nielsen attempts to demonstrate that not only does the **u**-rune sometimes function

119. For example, I have decided to leave out the golden figurines from Lunda, even though the archaeologists behind the excavation (Andersson, et. al., 2004, pp. 142-144) argued that they potentially might have represented Ullr. Bronze Age rock images potentially alluding to what later became the Ullr cult will also be left out of this discussion (but will be discussed in Chapter 7).

with the value of a word-final **-ʀ**, but also as an initial **u-** in the following word. In Nielsen's own words:

> […] Elisabeth Svärdström mentions one of the observations which have helped me towards a solution of several of the inscription's difficulties. She concurs in the view that in certain cases on the Sparlösa stone, the **u**-rune is used with the value of **ʀ**. I hope to demonstrate below that where a **u**-rune is used at the junction of two words, in places were [*sic!*] there is no word division, it sometimes serves not only as final **-ʀ** in the first word but also as initial **u-** in the second. This usage is not really different, for example, from the way an **a**-rune can be used as final **-a** in one word and initial **a-** in the next (Nielsen, 1969, pp. 102-103).

Using this methodology, Nielsen sees Ullr's name on five separate occasions on the Sparlösa stone, a number of times in direct conjunction with Freyr – as "Freyr-Ullr". Nielsen's interpretation (1969, p. 105) argues that the Sparlösa stone tells the story of a king, Alríkr who has erected the stone in memory of his father, a man named Øyuls, a former king of Uppsala. Øyuls gave good harvests to his people, but Alríkr himself has not had the same success. As a result of his failures, Alríkr offers a sword, previously belonging to his father, to the fertility god Ullr (who in Nielsen's mind is the same as Freyr). Nielsen (1969, pp. 114-122) then continues with a large religious-historical overview of the characteristics and contact points between the two gods Ullr and Freyr, their genealogies and similarities. According to Nielsen (1969, pp. 122-125), the various pictures on the Sparlösa stone also reflect various characteristics of the god Freyr-Ullr, as well as details from the storyline. Of particular importance, apparently, is the picture of the aforementioned sacrifice of the sword by Alríkr to Freyr-Ullr, from the back of his horse, on the southern side (IV) of the stone (Fig. 2).

As noted above, Nielsen's study has been considered imaginative and farfetched. John Lindow (2001a, p. 301) comments that: "Niels Åge Nielsen argues bravely but, I fear, on rather sparse evidence, that the Sparlösa runic inscription is all about Ull." Aslak Liestøl (1970, pp. 202-203) comments that "Under behandlinga av Sparlösa kjem forf. med eit runologisk resonnement som eg har vanskeleg for å godta." Liestøl goes on to argue that Nielsen's runological methodology, of combining two possibilities for interpreting the usage of various runes, is deeply problematic, and that the author's mythological overview which follows hardly helps the runological argument.

There are, however, other problematic aspects of Nielsen's argument, and especially the mythological assumptions, which he uses to justify the identical nature of Ullr and Freyr. Nielsen writes for example that:

> "[…] it has been supposed that Ullr was a son of Sif by an earlier marriage. We are nowhere told that Sif was married to anyone other than Thor. But now we have the information that Ullr is identical with Freyr, whose father was Njǫrðr, it seems possible that Sif was Njǫrðr's wife before she married Thor" (Nielsen, 1969, p. 115).

This hardly seems likely, since, as has been noted in Chapter 3.6., Njǫrðr was clearly perceived at some point as a female deity in Sweden, which is the place where the Sparlösa stone is found, and where Ullr was most prominently worshipped.

6.2. The Böksta Stone

Another stone which has been argued to contain references to Ullr, is the Böksta stone (sometimes referred to as the Balingsta stone: rundata U 855), a large rune stone found between the two villages of Böksta and Balingsta, in Uppsala municipality, Uppland, Sweden, which appears to depict a somewhat displaced man on skis, wielding a large bow with an arrow (Fig. 1). In addition, the primary picture in the middle of the stone appears to depict a large man on horseback wielding what can clearly be distinguished as a spear, and apparently hunting a horned animal (depicted in the bottom right of the rune scrollwork), upon whose head stands a small bird-like figure, closely followed by two dogs (or wolves?). Outside of the rune scrollwork, in the top-right hand corner of the stone, flies what appears to be a bird.

The stone's runic inscription contains a text of typical, generic nature, a memorial in honour of a deceased son and brother. Previous scholars, most prominently von Friesen (1899-1901) and Wessén and Jansson (1951, pp. 505-511) discussed the stone, all of them arguing that it depicted elk hunting at winter, with dogs and falcons. The reason for the assumption of season, of course, is the little man on skis in the bottom-left hand corner of the rune scrollwork, indicating that the stone is intended to depict a wintery period and hunting.

On the dating of the stone, von Friesen (in Wessén & Jansson, 1951, p. 510) comments that: "Rundjurets mönster ansluter sig till andra sådana från 1000-talets mitt, vadan ristningen torde förskriva sig från omkr. 1050. Intressant är att intet kors, ingen from önskan antyder att ristaren är kristen." von Friesen makes other long-drawn conclusions about the background of the stone, arguing that a young man has died, whose favourite sport, or profession, was hunting with falcons, something his close family members wished to convey in their memorial. It might also be assumed, according to von Friesen, that this stone is the only stone carved by the rune master in question, presumably the one *Ärnfast*, who is named in the runic inscription.

Fig. 1. U 855. Böksta/Balingsta rune stone. Bottom left of stone: man on skis wielding bow with arrow, thought by Silén (1983) to be Ullr.

Stones depicting similar sceneries are, however, extremely rare. Wessén and Jansson (1951, p. 511) only find similar depictions of what might potentially be hunting on a stone from the Isle of Man, and on the Alstad stone in Norway. The assumptions made by von Friesen (who finds considerable historical support for his argument) and Wessén and Jansson, are level-headed enough to make mythological explanations seem superfluous. The idea of the stone depicting a hunting scene was echoed in 1988 by Sabine Sten and Maria Vretemark (1988, p. 154), who claim that "The runestone from Balingsta parish in Uppland shows a compleat [*sic!*] hunting scene with a rider, dogs, trained raptors and the prey itself."

In 1983, however, Lars Silén (pp. 88-91) argued for a mythological explanation, claiming that the two human-like figures on the stone should be interpreted as Ullr and Óðinn. While Silén ultimately agrees with the winter-intepretation of the scenery, he comments that: "Älgjakt till häst i den snövinter som skidlöparen skulle ange, detta synes vara ett opraktiskt företag som väl knappast varit brukligt någonsin" (Silén, 1983, p. 88). To Silén's mind, one might interpret the stone's imagery not as depicting a concrete situation, but rather as a depiction of the *concept* of hunting,

pictured with characters which, at the time, symbolized this practice. As a potential symbol of hunting and skiing (see Chapter 4.3), Ullr certainly fits this role perfectly. Silén (1983, pp. 89-90) notes furthermore that the figure on horseback is wearing a helmet, and has a pointy beard on his chin. To his mind, this, coupled with the two dogs, Freki and Geri, and the two birds, Hugin and Munin, as well as the spear, Gungnir, calls for an explanation related to the god Óðinn. Silén (1983, p. 90) also points out that the previous explanation by von Friesen, that (based on the shape of the horns) the animal is an elk, is incorrect, and that it should instead by interpreted as a deer, which "i mytologien Oden gärna förbinds med" (however that may be).

According to Silén (1983, p. 90), the explanation of the skier as Ullr "[…] förlänar ett avsevärt mått av trovärdighet åt den anförda tolkningsmöjligheten." I personally find considerable problems in accepting such an interpretation. Should we accept the idea of the stone as dating from around the year 1050 (as suggested by von Frisen, see above), Ullr's presence is extremely unlikely, considering that all the extant evidence suggests that Ullr's worship is sure to have died out out long before the year 1000. Furthermore, no explanation is given as to why Óðinn and Ullr would be appearing on the same stone (although, naturally, several scholars have seen them as being related in some way, as in Saxo). It seems highly questionable to what degree the two figures are even associated on the stone. One notes that the typical coiling rune style of the rider and his horse are seemingly lacking in the little figure with the skis, who seems curiously out-of-place in the general scenery of the stone. Perhaps, the skier should even be understood as a later addition to the original carving. This might be supported by the fact that he appears sandwiched in between the edge of the rune scrollwork and the horse, the tip of his arrow almost touching the back hoof of the horse. It is admittedly of interest that the stone completely lacks any Christian imagery or references, but reaching for an explanation related to Ullr must still be seen as considerably unsatisfying. Most probably, the skier is meant to represent some aspect of hunting not otherwise present in the primary scenery.

6.3. Lilla Ullevi in Uppland

Lilla Ullevi, a village plot in the parish of Bro, in Upplands-Bro, Uppland, Sweden, was excavated in 2007 and 2008. The excavation, which was primarily prompted by the place name of the location, which to a degree suggested religious activity (see also Chapter 4.1), and the surrounding region's rich archaeological finds from previous excavations (including a grave field and a pre-historic settlement), yielded exceedingly interesting results in light of the probability of the excavated cult site having been established in conjunction with a cult dedicated to the god Ullr.[120]

120. For a detailed outline of the excavation at Lilla Ullevi, see the excavation reports released by the Swedish

Of particular interest are 65 amulet rings (Sw. *amulettringar*) and a stone platform found at the site, as they all appear to have been used for ritualistic purposes. The site was originally registered as a medieval village plot, but it was later discovered that the chronological timeline for human activity in Lilla Ullevi is considerable, stretching from the early Bronze Age up until around 1900 (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, p. 49).

Some of the defining features of Lilla Ullevi as a cult site are first and foremost a small mountain ridge, a stone platform, fencing around the site, and a number of pole groups located a few meters away from the platform, which is where many of the 65 amulet rings (see below) excavated on the site were found (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, pp. 50-52). According to Hållans Stenholm, the stone platform in particular is the result of "en omfattande arbetsinsats", and it is likely that the location was not built as a private space, but rather as a public site of importance to the regional collective. Of particular interest is also the fact that the platform has been without a roof, and that all signs of the cult site at Lilla Ullevi seem to point towards activities outdoors, under the open air, rather than in direct association with a hall or other type of building (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, p. 51 & p. 54). The excavation has also revealed that the cult site at Lilla Ullevi was abandoned for about 550 years (around the year 850), after which a medieval settlement (of less interest for this study) was established around the year 1300 (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, p. 49). Hållans Stenholm also postulates that the archaeological evidence suggests that a "ritual closing ceremony" took place, in which the stone platform was covered by a layer of silt up to one meter thick: "Övertäckningen kan tolkas som en avslutningsritual för att stänga, låsa och avsluta aktiviteterna och därmed den laddning som dessa behäftat platsen med" (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, p. 55). Unfortunately, few similar sites have been excavated, and it is difficult to determine to what degree this practice would have been normative. Torun Zachrisson (2014, p. 112) points out that the platform at Lilla Ullevi is somewhat unique in comparison to similar platforms from the same time period, in that these platforms appear

Fig. 5. Amulet rings from Lilla Ullevi (from Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, p. 52). Photo: Mathias Bäck.

Riksantikvarieämbet (2010-01-19), written by Ann-Mari Hållans Stenholm, and available at http://www.arkeologiuv.se/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Lilla-Ullevi-bytomt-arkeologisk-unders%C3%B6kning.pdf (last viewed 2015-04-22).

to have been established in a more organic and unorganized manner, whereas Lilla Ullevi's platform has a more planned and architectural impression (Fig. 4).

As noted above, of particular interest here is the find of no less than 65 ritualistic amulet rings on the site, which, based on metallographic analysis, has been dated to the Vendel period, between the years 660 and 780 AD (Grandin and Hjärthner-Holdar, 2008, p. 6). Other finds, which Hållans-Stenholm links to the supposed Ullr cult on the site, are arrow tips and lance tips, as well components thought to have formed part of a close-combat shield, both of which potentially tie in to Ullr's (mythological) role as a god of bows and single combat (see Chapter 5.3). These finds all date to a period during which the Vendel cult site is thought to have been active (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, pp. 52-53). The rings found at the site have been compared to the Þórr's hammer rings, common from the same time period, but whereas the Þórr's hammer rings are most commonly found in association with graves, the amulet rings are frequently found in association with settlement areas. A comparison in size between the two ring types also underlines that the amulet rings are consistently smaller than the Þórr's hammer rings (which appear to be more suitable in size for necks), and seem to have been intended for use on the arms (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, pp. 54-55). The amulet rings found in Lilla Ullevi are primarily attached to other (smaller) rings by use of various methods (by smithery or locking devices). A few rings had three minor rings attached to them (Fig. 5), normally separated from each other, "men på en, eventuellt två ringar, var de hoplänkade med varandra i ett intrikat system så att de låste varandra" (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, p. 54).

The name *Lilla Ullevi* is certainly of particular importance for the interpretation of the site as a religious space referring to Ullr (see also Chapter 4.0). The name, however, is somewhat complicated by the lack of historical records, its earliest certain mention being from 1543. The situation is further complicated by the existence of an adjacent *Stora Ullevi* (recorded as such in 1382), but according to Vikstrand (2009-2010, p. 59), it might be suggested that the two locations have originally belonged to two separate village areas. Vikstrand further comments that the historical conditions in terms of grounds and ownership in the locations covering Lilla Ullevi and its adjacent villages of Skällsta and Klöv are considerably complex, and it seems difficult to fully grasp the historical ownership structure and division of the region. As noted above, after the site's abandonment (around the year 850), the earliest medieval settlement began around the year 1300, after which it was once again abandoned 150 years later, during the middle of the 1400's. About 100 years later came the first recorded mention of *Lilla Ullevi*, but Vikstrand nonetheless finds it difficult to believe that a late-medieval location such as this would have received the new pagan name *Ullevi*. To Vikstrand's mind, it is more likely that the place bore the name *Ullevi* already at the

time of its “original” medieval settlement around 1300. Vikstrand ultimately prefers an explanation relating to the existence of a pre-historic, Vendel era *Ullevi*. Even though the site was abandoned for a considerable time period (550 years), one might assume that the old cult site was known in a larger region, and that this fact among others increased the name’s chances for survival (Vikstrand, 2009-2010, pp. 59-60).

Fig. 4. Aerial view of Lilla Ullevi cult site. Yellow lines mark the fencing around the site. White lines mark the mountain ridge below the platform. Top right of the picture shows the platform (from Hållans-Stenholm, 2009-2010, p. 50). Photo: © 2007 Hawkeye flygfoto.

6.4. Ullevi in Östergötland

A site of less importance for the specific understanding of the Ullr cult (but of interest for the understanding of what constituted as *vé*) is perhaps Ullevi in Östergötland, which lends further active evidence for the significance of the *Ullevi* place names (Fig. 7). During an excavation of the historical town of Ullevi, near Linköping in Östergötland, Sweden, archaeologists discovered what could potentially be the outlines of a *vé* 'shrine' that was apparently dedicated to the god Ullr. The site in question is located immediately south of the town, and was excavated a couple of years before the Lilla Ullevi site in Uppland. Characteristic features of the site include a rectangular, fenced-off area with a paved road leading into its south entrance. Like other *Ullevi* places, the site is relatively old, dating from between 400 BC and 400 AD. Anders Andrén (2005, p. 112) comments that:

> A special paved road connected the settlement with the demarcated area, and within the enclosure about forty hearths and cooking pits have been found, with burnt and unburnt bones from domesticated animals. The demarcated area and the name of the place show that this was a local 'sanctuary' to the god Ull, where people slaughtered livestock and prepared food.

The most valuable feature of these sites is that they suggest that here, at last, we are coming into direct contact with the remnants of people who worshipped Ullr. These locations also lend further support to the importance of place names as potential indicators of actual cults, and that the continuity of these names are valuable remnants of religious and social history.

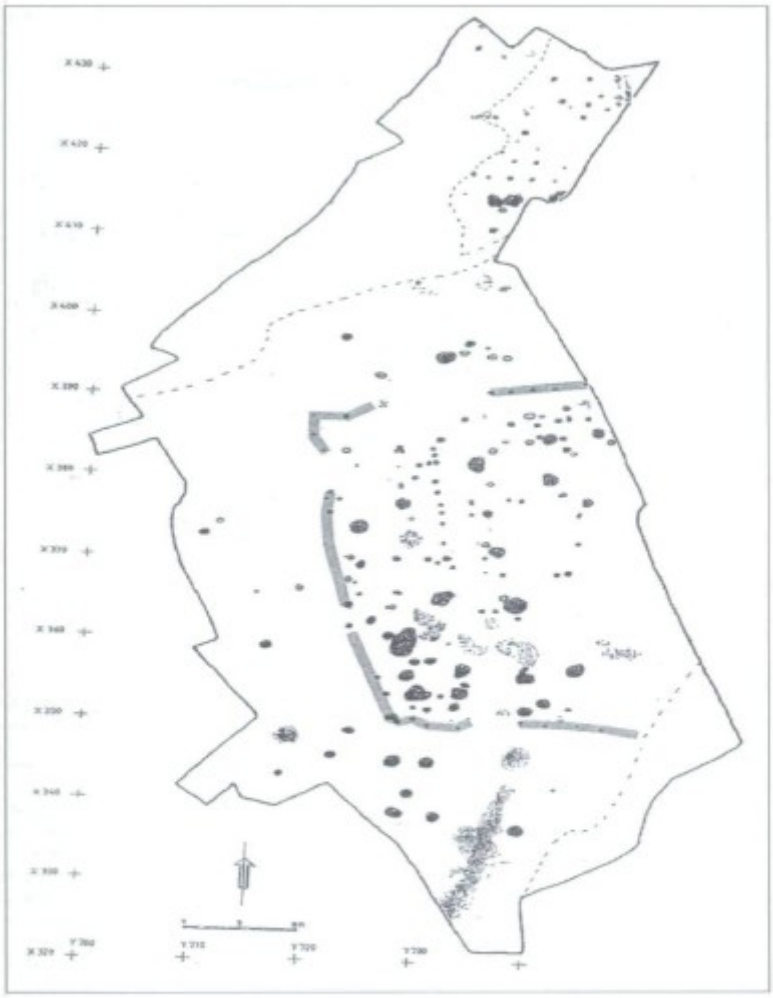

Fig. 7. Overview of excavated cult site in Ullevi, Östergötland. The irregular, rectangular area potentially showcases the outlines of a *vé* (from Andrén, 2007, p. 111).

The following chapters will begin this essay's theoretically approached section. The information deduced from the previous 6 chapters will here be assessed and brought into the context of wider theories pertaining to Ullr's specific role and characteristics in cult worship. The first of these chapters, on Ullr as a Sun God, will discuss the most widely espoused theory of Ullr's persona in recent years.

7. Ullr as a Sun God

As has been noted often above, numerous indications imply, that Ullr might have once been a sun god. More specifically, Ullr has been thought by some to have been a Swedish and Norwegian sun god of the Bronze Age, a god who, by the time of the Viking Age and the first Nordic literary sources, had faded only into the distant cultural memories of the descendents of those who had known his former cult. This proposition, taken up most prominently by Ohlmarks (1943, 1947, 1948, 1963a, 1963b, and so on) and most recently by Dronke (2011), has been one of the most frequently espoused theories regarding the god's role in modern scholarship. The postulation raises questions as to the degree to which Ullr might actually be associated with the archaic sun cult that is known to have existed in the Bronze Age, and for which the archaeologists have found much evidence.

As noted in Chapter 3.1., there is little question, that Ullr's name, typically considered a cognate to Gothic *wulþus* 'splendour, glory', a *tu*-derivative of the Indo-European root **u̯el-* 'to see', would seem to support the notion of Ullr's association with a sun cult. Of particular interest is the argument made by Palmér (1930-1931, pp. 290-291), that the semantic development of **u̯el-* started at an original 'to see', later to take on the alternative meaning 'shine'. *Wulþus* might therefore originally have existed with the semantic meaning 'radiance, glance, sheen', reminiscent of the sun. Similar semantic developments can be demonstrated in words denoting closely related concepts, such as 'blind' and 'dark'. In Wulfila's Gothic Bible, the word *wulþus* appears to denote "divine radiance or the reflection of the divine radiance"[121] (Palmér, 1930-1931, p. 291), and it might be safe to assume that the original meaning of the theophoric name element might have been 'the radiant one', 'the splendorous one', and so on. One might thus, perhaps, assume that Ullr's name was given to him through a direct association with the sun's radiating glory, in the same way Þórr's name relates to his association with thunder (cf. PG. **þunraz* 'thunder').

The degree to which one might assume that Snorri's use of the terminology "fagr álitum" stands in relation to *Ullr*'s etymology or his function in religious worship is nonetheless uncertain. Ivar Lindquist (1926, p. 96) Palmér (1930-1931, p. 291), and, to an extent, Richard North (1997, p. 243), all use Snorri's account to support a theory related to the sun, 'splendour', 'glory', and so on, but, as has been demonstrated in Chapter 5.3., it is exceedingly uncertain to what degree Snorri's claim might be used to support such an assumption. The formula appears standardized, and is used similarly to characterize Baldr and Búri.

It has been sufficiently demonstrated in previous research, that Ullr is an archaic god, and

121. Swedish "gudomlig glans eller återskenet från den gudomliga glansen" (Palmér, 1930-1931, p. 291).

that his worship, already by the time of the late Viking Age, had dwindled into non-existence (see, for example, Sahlgren, 1932, pp. 61-62). In this context, Jan de Vries (1934a, pp. 193-206, esp. p. 203) argued that masculine *u*-stems such as *Óðr*, *Njörðr* and *Ullr*, used in names of ancient Germanic deities, indicate that these gods belong to one of the oldest layers of Scandinavian religion. Jungner (1924, p. 8) similarly argued that the Ullr cult must have originated as far back in time as before the birth of Christ.

If Ullr was once an important god, the literary sources give few hints thereof. As noted in Chapter 3.2.3., it is questionable whether the god surfaces in Swedish parish names, a circumstance which has prompted the possibility of all Ullr cult sites having been abandoned for some time by the start of Christianity in the Nordic countries. As both Eric Elgqvist (1947, p. 60) and Per Vikstrand (2001, p. 190, etc) have both pointed out, Ullr's place names in Sweden are certainly found in areas characterized by extremely old settlement, even though the centrality of these locations wary. Of particularly high status appear to have been the Ullr localities around Uppland, Sweden, which appear to have been the centres of religious life and of the sun cult in particular, during the Bronze Age (Ohlmarks, 1947, p. 201). Ullr's age would thus certainly allow for the possibility of the god having been related to such an ancient sun cult. Both Bronze Age and early Iron Age evidence (such as rock images and particular picture stones) imply that the sun cult must at some point have been a dominating religious practice in the Nordic countries. Indeed, it stands beyond any doubt, that the sun cult was a defining feature of religious life during the Bronze Age and early Iron Age, especially if we consider the older Gotland picture stones. As Axel Olrik and Hans Ellekilde (1926-1951, v.1, p. 71) comment: "Denne soldyrkelse er broncealderens særkende: den kan kun svagt følges ned i jærnalderen, og den er fremmed for eddamytologien."

It is in the literary material, however, that the hints of Ullr's personal relation to the sun are most prevalent. It certainly seems more rule than exception, that in those contexts where Ullr is mentioned, archaic and difficult mentions of the sun are not far away. As has been previously pointed out (see Chapter 5.1.1), numerous scholars have sought to see Ullr's relation to the sun and the open sky in *Grímnismál* str. 42, where his favour and that of all of the gods is promised anyone who exposes Óðinn (Grímnir) to the sky. Sharp-witted analysis has concluded, that the context of Óðinn's entrapment between the two "fires" was such, that the two fires referred to the heat sources upon which kettles or cauldrons were placed. When not in use, these kettles were hung up in the ceiling, as a means of covering the louvre in the roof (Icel. *ljórinn*). Some have said that in the following strophe of *Grímnismál* (str. 43), Agnar has hauled down the kettles from the roof, exposing Óðinn to Ullr and the open sky, bringing fresh air and covering the fires.

In *Atlakviða* str. 30, it has been noted that the oath sworn upon "hringi Ullar" is mentioned

together with an oath sworn “at sól inni Suðurhǫllo.” Hermann Pálsson (1955, p. 189) has pointed out that such an oath sworn upon the sun “er mjög fornlegt”, while Åke Ohlmarks (1983, p. 369) argued that the sun in the south and Ullr’s ring were actually one and the same, Ullr’s “ring” being the glorious sun-disc at its highest point in the sky. It has furthermore been established that the *hringr* sometimes was considered an allusion to the sun itself, as is evident from both place names and mythological literature. The ship in which mythology tells us Baldr burned, bore the name *Hringhorni* 'ship with circle [sun?] on the stem', and King Skjöldr’s ship in the *Beowulf* legend likewise bore the epithet *hringedstefna* (Ohlmarks, 1946, pp. 199-200), a peculiarity also noted by Gelling and Davidson (1969, p. 157).

I personally believe, that in addition to these points, numerous other instances in the literary sources hint of Ullr’s relation to the sun, not least in *Grímnismál* itself. They might even refer to of a sun myth. Of particular interest are the strophes immediately proceeding *Grímnismál*’s str. 42, in which Ullr is mentioned by name:[122]

Árvacr oc Alsviðr, þeir scolo upp heðan,
svangir, sól draga;
enn und þeira bógom fálo blíð regin,
æsir, ísarn kól (*Grímnismál* str. 37).

Svǫl heitir, hann stendr sólo fyrir,
scioldr, scínanda goði;
biorg oc brim ec veit at brenna scolo,
ef hann fellr frá (*Grímnismál* str. 38).

Scǫll heitir úlfr, er fylgir ino scírleita goði
til varna viðar;
enn annarr Hati, hann er Hróðvitnis sonr,
sá scal fyr heiða brúði himins (*Grímnismál* str. 39).

Grímnismál strs. 37 and 38 find an interesting parallel in *Sigrdrífumál* str. 15:

Á skildi kvað ristnar, þeim er stendr fyr skínandi goði,
á eyra Árvakrs ok á Alvsvinnz hófi,
á því hvéli, er snýz †und reið Hrungis,
á Sleipnis tǫnnum ok á sleða fjǫtrum.

122. The strophes for the following two poems are all taken from Neckel and Kuhn (1983, p. 65 & p. 188 respectively).

Bearing in mind the well-established knowledge of an ancient Bronze Age tradition, of the horses dragging the sun across the sky, reflected, for example, in the Trundholm chariot, it is easy to imagine that *Sigrdrífumál* str. 15's "shield", namely, the sun itself (which stands before the "shining god"), is being dragged by the two horses, Árvakr and Alsviðr. Indeed, *Grímnismál* str. 37 seems to confirm, that the shield, is the sun itself. Considering the earlier noted evidence, and the age of the famous Trundholm chariot, who else could the "shining god" with the shield be, than Ullr, 'the radiant one', who is regularly connected with shields? Strophe 38 speaks explicitly about the interesting relation between the shield and the sun, before which the "shining god" stands once again. One might imagine the sun god as wielding the sun itself as a shield, thus the explicit mention of the shield standing *before* the shining god, as the shield stood before the warrior.[123]

Strophe 38 also names the peculiar *Sköl* (named in another manuscript as *Svalinn*, 'Cooler'), apparently the shield itself, which, if it should ever be removed, will cause the world to burn. The strophe seems contradictory. Supposing that the shield itself is the sun, what would *Sköl* denote? One might suggest the moon. Ancient tradition has it, that the sun and the moon chased each other across the heaven (see, for example, Lindroth, 1914, p. 52-67). One might interpret the idea as suggesting that, should the moon ever fall, the sun will forever scorch the earth through its constant presence in the sky. It is imaginable, that the moon itself was considered a "cooler" of earth, which appeared at night in the sun's stead. It is noteworthy in this context that *Grímnismál* str. 39, which follows, contains ideas of the moon, and also famously recounts the *Gylfaginning* myth of the wolves chasing both the sun (*skírleita goði*) and the moon *(brúði himins*). It might not be a coincidence that when Ullr surfaces in one of the following strophes (42), in which he takes a position above all the other gods, it is in immediate relation to the sun or the sky.

Regarding the famous use of the kenning *Ullar skip* and *Ullar askr* 'Ullr's ship' for *shield* (briefly mentioned in Chapter 5.2), one can only imagine that the shield was once considered Ullr's vehicle, that is the sun itself, probably denoting its journey across the clear-blue ocean sky (see, for example, Gelling & Davidson, 1969, p. 151). Indeed, this kind of idea seems prevalent among numerous peoples, the cultures of whom have developed in close conjunction with the geographical realities of their settlement. The idea of the sky itself as an ocean, a reflection of that on earth, upon which the sun sails, is common in primitive cultures (see, for example, Ohlmarks, 1947, p. 136). The idea was clearly understood in Bronze-Age Sweden, as is evident from the numerous rock

123. Other attempts at explaining Ullr's relation to shields have also been made. Finnur Magnússon (1821-1823, v. 1, p. 195) argued that shields were "ypperlig Beskjærmelse for Krigeren, naar han gik mod Vinden eller lagde sig til Hvile." Ivar Lindquist (1926, p. 99) made a more elaborate attempt at demonstrating that the shields themselves might have historically been used as "vehicles", and that the old Cibris used the shields to slide down snowy mountains.

images upon which the sun and the ship is portrayed (Gelling & Davidson, 1969, p. 49). Åke Ohlmarks (1963a, p. 48) states the following on the perception of the relation between shields, ships and the sun:

> Föreställningen om solskölden i himmelsskeppet möter oss också i sagan om *Skjǫldr*, den eponyme stamfadern för den forndanska Skjoldungaätten, Beowulf-eposets *Scyld*, vilken som litet barn kommit seglande i ett skepp med en guldsköld till ödanernas land och som vid sin död sattes ut på samma vis – en vacker och gripande bild av bronsåldersmänniskans identifikation av människolivet med solens dagsfärd över himlen. Kung "Skölds" skepp hade soltecknet i stäven, var *hringedstefna* som så många av hällristningsbåtarna, och en gyllene härsköld sattes i masten över den dödes huvud när dödsskeppet styrde för fast roder ut i havet mot väster.

Swedish rock images bear great witness to the importance of the relationship between shields, ships and the sun. Indeed, the iconic rock images from Bohuslän and Östergötland are largely characterized by symbols pertaining to the sun and its cult, where the ships take a central position, something stressed from an early point by Oscar Almgren (1927, p. 8). The oldest picture stones from Gotland also depict not only the characteristic sun wheels in conjunction with the two horses, but also the primitive ships themselves, similar in kind to those presented on the rock images. Particularly common on the Gotland stones are also the shields upon which the same whirling sun-wheels (Fig. 6) have been drawn (see, for example, Nylén, 1978).

On kennings for weapons, Snorri Sturluson recounts the following:

> Skildir eru kallaðir – ok kenndir við herskip – sól eða tungl eða lauf eða blik eða garðr skipsins. Skjǫldr er ok kallaðr skip Ullar eða kennt til fóta Hrungnis er hann stóð á skildi. Á fornum skjǫldum var títt at skrifa rǫnd þá er baugr var kallaðr, ok er við þann baug skildir kenndir (*Skáldskaparmál* 49).[124]

Once again, we are met with the concept of shields themselves having been the ship of the sun (or the "sun of the ship", as told by Snorri). The strange practice recounted by Snorri, in which a *baugr* 'ring' was carved upon shields of old, is perhaps reminiscent of "Ullr's ring" (the sun disk), upon which the *baugeið* 'ring-oath' was sworn.

With the association between Ullr, shields, ships, and the sun firmly established, it is interesting to consider the ship burials and settings so prominently found in Nordic culture and in archaeological remains. As Åke Ohlmarks (1946, p. 71) pointed out about the surviving remains of Nordic ship burials, "De allra flesta skeppen segla med förstäven i sydlig riktning", and the ships

124. Snorri Sturluson (1998, p. 67).

were imagined as actively sailing towards the sun in the south (Ohlmarks, 1946, p. 137, etc). This fact is interesting in light of the *Atlakviða* str. 30 oath, which is sworn on the sun in the south, "at sól inni suðurhǫllo", the sun here perhaps being identical to "Ullr's ring" mentioned in the same strophe (see Chapter 5.1.2). As Ohlmarks (1946, pp. 195-219) has demonstrated, there is some reason to believe that the burial ships themselves might have been meant to represent the sun ship, and thus constituted symbolic references of sailing the dead toward the southern sun, so as to ultimately associate the them with the sun (perhaps helping to ensure their eventual return in the sky at dawn).

As noted above, the degree to which the south-Scandinavian Bronze Age rock images, on which a sun cult and its various characteristics is commonly represented, might be associated with a Bronze Age worship of Ullr (or an earlier version of him), is debatable. Axel Olrik and Hans Ellekilde (1926-1951, v. 1, pp. 558-559) certainly argued that the sun god that could be discerned on Scandinavian rock images from the Bronze Age, reflects the god that later came to be known as Ullr. The idea of Ullr possibly appearing on rock images was first presented as early as 1915 (pp. 61-67), when Just Bing mentioned in passing that Ullr, the god of bows and hunting, might be present on rock images from Sweden, in the shape of a man with a bow. Oscar Almgren (1926, pp. 117-119) had similarly argued, that the images of archers apparently being chased away by a man with axe, might symbolize a conflict between two religious traditions, a depiction of a "seasonal drama", summer chasing winter away (perhaps an allusion to the change postulated to have taken place by Ohlmarks and others, in which Ullr's sun cult was replaced by Freyr's earth-oriented fertility cult). In recent years, however, such over-reaching ideas have been questioned.

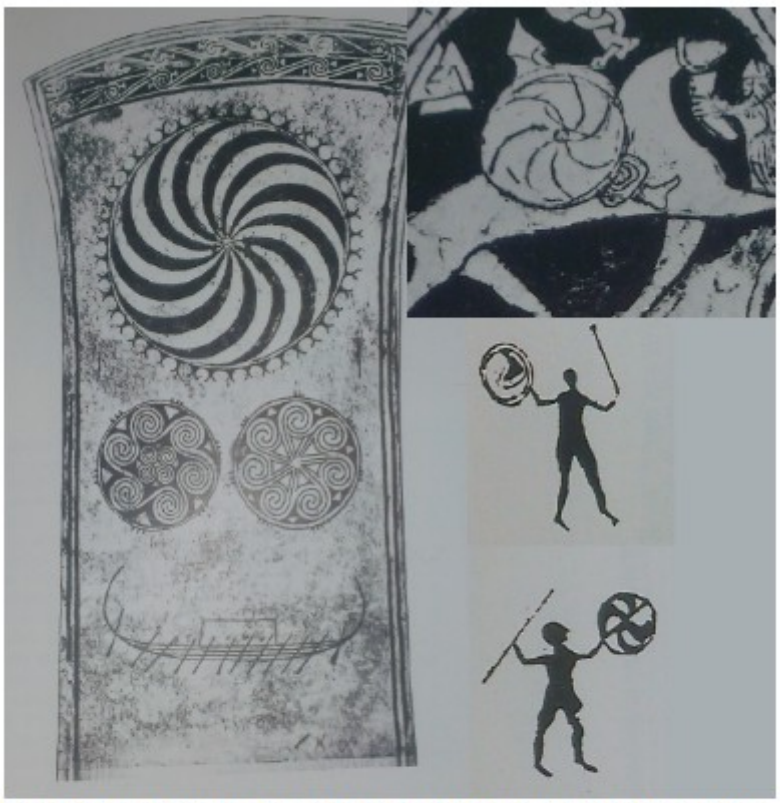

Fig. 6. Gotland picture stones. Left: Bro kyrka (I), sun wheels and ship. Top right: detail from Lillbjärs (III), man on horse wielding shield painted in sun wheel pattern. Bottom right: details from stone in Vallstenarum, Vallstena, Gotland, showing men with shields painted in sun wheel pattern (from Nylén, 1978).

In this connection, it might nonetheless be noted that a comparison of maps of *Ullr* place names and the placing of the south-Scandinavian Bronze Age rock images (Fig. 13) in Sweden reveals that the sun cult images of ships and sun symbols are far from limited to those regions characterized by *Ullr* names, and are particularly prevalent also in Bohuslän and Skåne. Nonetheless, those regions in which the Ullr cult appears to have been particularly prevalent, that is Uppland, Södermanland and Östergötland, certainly do contain high concentrations of similarly styled rock images. In Norway, rock images of the south-Scandinavian persuasion are particularly prevalent in Vest-Agder, Rogaland and the border-regions to Sweden, around Østfold and Vestfold, as well as in Sør-/Nord-Trøndelag (some here, however, not being of the south-Scandinavian type). Of particular interest here are Vest-Agder and Rogaland, which contain both a concentration of *Ullarland* names, including an *Ullarøy*, and also numerous boat images from the Bronze Age. A number of *Ullarland* (and an *Ullarvík*) place names are also found along the western coastline of Norway, all the way up to the border-regions of Sør-Trøndelag and Nord-Trøndelag. Various types of *Ullr* and **Ullinn* names are also considerably prevalent in Norway in the areas in and around Østfold, Vestfold, Akershus, Oslo, southern Oppland, and so on (see Chapter 4.1.2). In these regions, the rock images are concentrated around southern Østfold and Vestfold, and once again showcase numerous images indicative of sun worship, most prominently in the form of sun symbols and ships. Arguably, such evidence might open up the possibility of some potential relationship.

Fig. 13. Map of south-Scandinavian rock images in Scandinavia. Darker regions indicate high concentrations of rock images. Photo: Länsstyrelsen i Västra Götaland.

In relation to the idea of Ullr having been connected to the sun, stands the possibility of Ullr having been worshipped in conjunction with a female deity (especially in Sweden), something argued by numerous scholars (see Chapter 4.3). It is easy to imagine that Ullr's role in such a cult, if connected to the sun, would have been one of fertilizing the soil, through his wider position as a god of the sky. The role of the earth in such a cult could arguably have been taken by Njörðr (Njärd), Hærn, or even Freyr – all of whom have been argued to have had connections to Ullr, as postulated by scholars in the past. Magnus Olsen (1915, pp. 106-115 [see also Hellquist's explanation of Olsen's arguments, 1917, pp. 174-176]) argued for similar ideas, noting that Ullr's supposed

worship in conjunction with Freyr constituted a different kind of fertility cult in which Ullr took the role of the dry and sunny sky, fertilizing the soil with barley, and Freyr the rainy and cloudy sky, fertilizing it with oat (see also Chapter 4.3.1).

Similar considerations to those used when establishing place name "pairs" of gods have to be kept in mind when making comparisons of this nature. One might naturally also find the names of other gods in close association with the aforementioned rock images, in spite of the leap in time.

8. Ullr and Freyr

As shown in Chapter 4.3.1., it has long been postulated by various scholars that Ullr and Freyr seem to have once had an intimate historical relationship. Some scholars (Brate, 1914; Wessén, 1929; Sahlgren, 1932; Schneider, 1938; Nielsen, 1969) have even gone as far as to equate to two gods.

Assumptions of Ullr and Freyr having been identical, have been made on various grounds. Brate (1914) and Schneider (1938) claimed that *Grímnismál* strs. 5 and 6, and the subsequent problems in the numbering of the places of the gods (see Chapter 5.1.1), were indicative of the two gods being identical, the idea being that the composer of the poem seemingly equated *Ýdalir* and *Álfheimr*, considering both of them to be the second home-stead. Wessén (1929-1930) suggested that Ullr may have gone under the honorary title *Ullr freyr* 'Ullr the Lord', and argued in various other studies that the place name material at least indicated that the two gods, if not identical, might have succeeded each other, Freyr being the younger heir to the former Ullr fertility cult. Sahlgren (1932) followed up on these ideas and argued that *Freyr* is a noa name for *Ullr*, suggesting that *Ullr* and *Njärd* might simply be older variations of what later became *Freyr* and *Freyja*. Niels Åge Nielsen (1969) similarly argued that Freyr and Ullr were one and the same, on the basis that the two gods were supposedly explicitly equated with each other in the inscription on the Sparlösa rune stone (see Chapter 6.1).

These ideas might be said to reflect the earlier postulation made by Magnus Olsen (1915) on the basis of place names, that Freyr and Ullr constituted a male pair of gods, both part of a fertility cult, and were associated with sacred fields (*åkrar*) in Norway (see also Chapter 4.3.1). Olrik and Ellekilde (1926-1951, v. 1) meanwhile argued that *Grímnismál* str. 5 might indicate that Freyr, rather than being equal to, was seen as a younger son of Ullr, Ohlmarks (1948, p. 258) arguing that the same strophe indicated Freyr's pushing out of Ullr, a transition from a sun cult to a more fertility and earth oriented cult. This idea was brought up again in recent years by Dronke (2011, p. 127), who argued that: "A younger figure of Wuldor-Ullr is remembered as the baby sun-god Freyr, just cutting his first tooth and inheriting 'Elfworld' for it, as a present from the gods." As noted in Chapter 2, numerous other scholars (for example, Bing, 1916; Lid, NK 26) have postulated that Ullr and Freyr were alternation gods, representing winter and summer respectively. Eric Elgqvist (1955, pp. 78-96) systematically investigated the place name evidence in regard to the relation between the two gods, and concluded the following (Elgqvist, 1955, pp. 92-93):

> Att döma av utbredningen av de svenska och norska ortnamn, i vilka Ull-Ullin och Frö ingå, ha bärarna av dessa gudanamn stått varandra mycket nära. […] I regel påträffar man med Frö sammansatta ortnamn i utkanterna av Ullkultens kärnområden. Från dessa utgå på ett fåtal ställen utlöpare av Frö-namn […].

> Fördelningen av de med Ull och Frö sammansatta ortnamnen synes stödja antagandet, att namnet *Frö* är yngre än *Ull* och att det snarast tillkommit en gud, vilken kunnat betecknas som *Ullr freyr* 'Ull herren'. Betydligt svårare än att konstatera, att Ull och Frö varit nära lierade, är att fastslå, i vilket förhållande de stått till varandra.

With regard to this question, it appears to me that the place name evidence and the literary sources actually give contrary indications as to the relation between the two gods. Of the literary sources, only *Grímnismál* str. 5 hints at a direct relationship, in its apparent equating of the living-spaces of the two gods, who are named in the same strophe. Nonetheless, the degree to which this circumstance can be used to draw religious-historical assumptions like those noted above is exceedingly questionable. Other instances in *Grímnismál* provide potentially stronger indications of a relation having existed between the two gods. Strophe 37 speaks of the *skírleita goði* (the sun) being chased by the wolf, Sköll. If the previously mentioned *skínanda goði* (str. 38) is to be interpreted as Ullr, as I believe, then, perhaps, *skírleita goði* could be seen as a younger variation of the same formula, referring to a similar sun-moon myth. *Grímnismál* str. 43 speaks of the *skírum Frey*, while *Skírnismál* talks of "Álfröðull" (also in kennings for the sun) over whom Freyr rules.[125] There is thus some reason to believe that the two deities were in some way historically closely related, perhaps long before the time of the Eddic compositions. The argument that Freyr once took over in a period of religious change, in which the sun cult was gradually abandoned in favor of an earth-oriented fertility cult, is certainly tempting. Judging from the excavation of Lilla Ullevi, in Uppland, Sweden (see Chapter 6.3), a stone platform apparently used for religious purposes and cult worship under the open air, appears to have been abandoned in a ritualistic closing ceremony, in which the platform around the year 850 was covered in up to one meter of silt, such as to demonstrate the closing and abandonment of the site (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, p. 51 & pp. 54-55). One wonders whether the ritual closing of the platform at Lilla Ullevi is a result of such a religious shift.

It might also be valuable to consider the role of *Njörðr*/*Njärd*/*Nerthus* with regard to the relationship between Ullr and Freyr. Njörðr is said to be the father of Freyr and Freyja in the literary sources, but it might also be assumed that Njörðr was once perceived as a female deity in Sweden (*Njärd*) in the distant past, perhaps in conjunction with a male god, first Ullr, later Freyr (see Chapter 4.3.3). Further evidence for a relationship between the three gods might be present in the well known Icelandic legal formula "Hjálpi mér svá Freyr ok Njörðr ok inn almáttki Áss." As to the question of the identity of the "almáttki Áss", numerous theories have been presented, most prominently involving Þórr and Óðinn. Wessén (1924, p. 128), like many others, argued that the

125. Admittedly, Snorri (*Gylfaginning* 24) also refers to Freyr with the words: "Hann ræðr fyrir regni ok skini sólar ."

formula undoubtedly has its roots in a genuine tradition. If this formula is archaic, and one considers Ullr's potential links to legal matters and oaths (see Chapter 9), the invocation of him in this context (at least at some point) would not be surprising, especially in light of the evidence brought up by Olsen for the god's relationship to *þing*-venues in place names, as well as his appearance in *Atlakviða* str. 30. Elias Wessén (1924, pp. 127-129) admittedly argued that the "almáttki áss" here undoubtedly denoted Þórr, but also pointed out that Freyr might have earlier replaced an original Ullr in the formula – as he arguably did in place names according to Wessén. The circumstances which brought about the relation between Ullr, Njörðr and Freyr in mythology and place names are nevertheless extremely difficult to convincingly explain.

In spite of the above, it should not be forgotten that at least two scholars have seriously opposed the notion of Ullr and Freyr being identical or closely related: Jan de Vries (1934a & 1957, pp. 294-295) and Rudolf Simek (1993, p. 339). The literary evidence certainly seems to clearly distinguish between the two deities, and suggest they existed alongside each other. The place name material only indicates that the two gods might have once been worshiped in closely associated cults. With regard to Sahlgren's and Wessén's argument, that *Freyr* might be a noa name for the god Ullr, the prominence of both name types in both Sweden and Norway once again implies that the two names denoted distinct deities. If *Freyr* was a noa name, one would imagine that the older, more "taboo" *Ullr* names would potentially have been avoided, and/or gone out of use. Nevertheless, both name types seem to have enjoyed continuous use throughout history. Adjacent cult places might perhaps indicate two chronological layers of religious worship in the case of Ullr and Freyr, as has been suggested by the aforementioned scholars, but the considerable prominence of the two names seems to indicate that they were considered two distinct deities, to which locations were dedicated separately. Judging from the studies made by Wessén and Elgqvist in particular, it nonetheless seems possible that Freyr was the one who took over, sites dedicated to him being placed adjacent to those places where Ullr had previously been worshipped. In relation to this one might consider Sahlgren's and Wessén's claims that Ullr and Njärd (a place-name pair for which there is serious evidence) might be older variations of what later became Freyr and Freyja.[126] Nonetheless, it seems safe to assume that as far as *Ullr*, *Njörðr* and *Freyr* in Swedish place names are concerned, a complex but nevertheless intrinsic historical relationship seems to be concealed somewhere behind them.

126. As to the question of *Freyja*'s presence in Scandinavian place names, and to her relation with *Freyr*, however, nothing can be certain (see, for example, Elmevik, 1995b, pp. 12-15; 1997, p. 107, etc; 2005, pp. 136-138).

9. Ullr as a God of Law and Justice

The idea of Ullr as a god associated with law and justice has been around for some time, most importantly because of the mention in the Eddic poem *Atlakviða* (strophe 30) of an oath being sworn "at hringi Ullar" (see Chapter 5.1.2). The first to postulate that Ullr was at some point intrinsically related to law and justice in cult worship was Magnus Olsen (1915, p. 187 & p. 221, and so on), who argued that Ullr was "tingfredens og retssikkerhedens haandhæver" (Olsen, 1915, p. 221). Olsen's claims were later echoed by Elias Wessén (1924, p. 129), who claimed that:

> Man har utan tvivel rätt att med Magnus Olsen identifiera denna Ulls ring med den heliga tempelring, vid vilken edar avlades under anropande av Frö och Njord och Tor. Då Oden i konung Geirröds hall lovar "Ulls huldhet och alla gudars" åt den som löser honom från eldarna, kan detta uttryck möjligen vara hämtat från någon forntida löftesformel. I Uppland, där kult och ting stått i urgammal nära förbindelse med vartannat, ingå Ulls och Tors namn i beteckningar för hundaren: *Ulleråker* mitt i det gamla Tiundaland, ej långt från Gamla Uppsala, och *Torsåker* i medelpunkten av Fjädrundaland. Ett yngre namn är sannolikt *Frösåker* […]. Vid sidan av Tor framträder sålunda Ull såsom tingsfredens och rättsordningens värnare. I denna egenskap ersättes han sedermera, liksom i förbindelsen Nerthus-Njord, av Frö.

As noted in Chapter 8, Wessén (1924, pp. 127-129) had argued that Ullr's role in the aforementioned Icelandic legal formula, "Hjálpi mér svá Freyr ok Njörðr ok inn almáttki áss," was taken over by Freyr, a change similar to that postulated by Wessén as having taken place in Swedish place names, where Freyr was thought to have taken over after the old Ullr cult had lost its influence. As noted previously, Wessén held that the formula had its roots in genuine legal tradition, but that the "almáttki áss" undoubtedly denoted Þórr. The Icelandic philologist Hermann Pálsson (1955, pp. 187-192) brought new attention to the plausibility of Ullr's connection to the formula. Unlike Wessén, however, Hermann postulated that the unknown deity might have denoted the god Ullr himself, rather than Þórr. He points to the ancient nature of oath swearing upon rings in Germanic culture, and that Þórr could hardly have been the intended third deity in the formula, since Þórr in ancient religious tradition was worshipped first and foremost by farmers and peasants, rather than by nobility and chieftains, the people primarily involved in the swearing of oaths upon rings (Hermann Pálsson, 1955, p. 190). Additionally, for Hermann, the broad and common worship of Þórr hardly fits with the formula's use of an apparent titular name, rather than the actual name of the deity. According to Hermann, one might assume that the formula originally included the actual name of the third deity, but later came to drop it, after the worship of this particular god ended. This idea, Hermann continues, also rules out Óðinn as being the third deity, since Óðinn's appearance in

numerous well-known *heiti* implies he would never have been evoked in a legal formula under the title "inn almáttki áss". To Hermann's mind, Ullr's explicit association with legal oaths sworn on rings in *Atlakviða* str. 30 must be considered the strongest evidence for his potential presence in the legal formula in question. Both *Grímnismál*'s and Saxo's accounts of Ullr as being a god above others, a "höfuðguð" (Hermann Pálsson, 1955, p. 191) also implies his relation to former nobility, and thus the likeliness of the god surfacing in a legal formula used by the upper classes of society. According to Hermann, Ullr's association with both Freyr and Njörðr in Swedish and Norwegian place names (see Chapters 4.3.1 and 4.3.3) must also not be forgotten when considering who the "almáttki áss" actually was (Hermann Pálsson, 1955, p. 192).

Naturally, it seems possible that the nature of this particular legal formula might have changed throughout the years. Wessén (1924, p. 128) argues that the formula has its roots in ancient tradition, in which case one might assume that the perception of who the unknown third deity denoted could have fluctuated depending on region and tradition. It seems possible that the deity might have been perceived as Þórr in Icelandic tradition. Assuming that similar formulas were also in use in Sweden and Norway, however, it seems tempting to imagine that the third deity in these regions might have been perceived as Ullr. Indeed, given the historical prominence of both Ullr, Freyr and Njörðr in Sweden, it seems possible that an Icelandic variation of this legal formula would have dropped Ullr as the third deity, given the little knowledge Icelanders had of this old, Scandinavian deity. While Freyr and Njörðr, however, are still thought to have been worshipped in Iceland after the island was settled, little to no signs of an Ullr cult can be found here (see, for example, Ólafur Lárusson, 1942, p. 79; Turville-Petre, 1964, pp. 165-166)

Increasingly, I find it possible that also *Grímnismál* str. 42 does contain some valuable remnants of Ullr's earlier relation to law and justice, as Ullr's favour and that of all the gods is promised to anyone who saves Óðinn from the flames surrounding him. It must be assumed, indeed, that the seizing of Grímnir and his subsequent imprisonment and torture is an act of profound moral and legal injustice in the light of the cultural circumstances of the poem. As noted in Chapter 5.1.1., Dronke (2011, pp. 132-133) expresses similar opinions on the same strophe, commenting that:[127]

> The Sun God, Ullr-Wuldor, and indeed all the gods, give their blessing to anyone who puts a cauldron to cook on his fire as his first act of the day, because the earth's soil will be burnt by the fire of the sun through human meanness, if no one cooks to feed others. If you have no hospitality, you will have no life.

127. Strangely enough, as late as 1969, Dronke (1969, p. 65) did not seem to have recognized Olsen's and Wessén's arguments, commenting in regard to *Atlakviða* str. 30 that "[...] no reason for this association has so far been established."

One might certainly assume from the text, that anyone who frees Óðinn from the flames is considered especially just, an upholder of the old tradition of hospitality, and whose favour would be better to receive than that of the old god of law and justice, Ullr? As noted in Chapter 2.1., according to Viborg (1843, pp. 104-107), Olsen (1915, p. 197 & p. 201), Olrik and Ellekilde (1926-1951, v. 1, pp. 559-562) and others, Ullr can be seen as a Swedish and Norwegian variation of the Danish Týr, who is also thought to have had the role as a god of law and the thing (see, for example, Helander, 1906, p. 192; Turville-Petre, 1964, pp. 180-181). As Josef Helander (1906, p. 192) points out, the two ideas of a god of the sun/sky and a god of justice are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, as Helander (1906, p. 192) writes:

> Solens gud var den allt skådande och allt vetande […], den som oemotståndligt uppdagar det onda och bestraffar det. Rätten skipades under öppen himmel i gudarnas åsyn och helst på en högt belägen plats […]. Den isländska Grágás tillmäter ock solen stor betydelse för tingsförhandlingarna. Mot öster vände domaren sitt ansikte, och åt solsidan höllos förhandlingarna. Vid solen aflades ock eder enligt Atlakviða.

The idea of *light* exposing injustice still lives on in modern language. The English expression *bring to light* 'expose' demonstrates well-enough the extent to which this concept survives. Thus, it does not seem far-fetched to suppose that a sun god could also have had the role of a god of law and justice. The sun's position in the sky, as a bringer of light, an exposer of darkness and evil, certainly fits adequately with the idea of criminals carrying out their practice "by the cover of darkness."

Also relevant in this context is that according to both Elgqvist (1948, p. 60; 1955, p. 19) and Vikstrand (2001, p. 190), the *Ullr* names in Sweden are generally found in very old settlements. Elgqvist (1948, p. 60) also points out that these places are generally also found in central positions in the social landscape.[128] Elgqvist makes the argument that the Ullr cult held an especially distinguished position in the *Svea* dominion:

> De svenska Ull-helgedomarna ha i regel ett centralt läge i urgamla bygder. Här må erinras om *Ulleråker* i hjärtat av Tiundaland, om *Ullunda* vid Enköping i centrum av Fjädrundaland och om *Ullevi* i den östgötska kärnbygden vid Linköping. Flera av dem ha varit förbundna genom en jämförelsevis god väg, den från de svenska landskapslagarna kända Eriksgatan. Denna har sannolikt berört följande tolv Ull-helgedomar: *Ulleråker* i Uppsala, *Ullevi* vid Nyköping, *Ullevi* i Kimstad, *Ullevi* vid Linköping, *Ullevi* vid Skänninge, *Ulunda* vid Billingen, *Ullervad* vid Tidan, *Ullvi* vid Köping, *Ullvi* i Munktorp, *Ullvi* i Irsta och *Ullunda* vid Enköping. Denna tydliga anknytning till Eriksgatan är ett synnerligen värdefullt

128. According to Vikstrand (2001, p. 190), however, this is not always the case. In fact, Vikstrand (2001, pp. 174-175) argues opposite on an earlier occasion, noting that most names (especially the *-vi* names) occur in "mycket gamla bebyggelsemiljöer", but in spite of this show a low degree of centrality and high status indicators.

vittnesbörd om Ullkultens ställning i det gamla sveaväldet (Elqvist, 1955, p. 19).

Interestingly, Elgqvist also considers a number of *Ullr* cult places to have been associated with some important *þing*-venues in Sweden, particularly those in Uppsala, Enköping, Linköping, and Skara (old Götala). He also notes that some bigger cities (Uppsala, Enköping, Köping, Nyköping, Askersund, Linköping, Skänninge and Västervik-Gamleby) were established in close proximity to some sacred places devoted to Ullr (Elgqvist, 1955, p. 19), which might have implications for the social significance of Ullr on a larger scale.[129]

Of particular interest for the understanding of Ullr as a potential god of law and justice is the 2007 find of 65 amulet rings in Lilla Ullevi, Upplands-Bro, Sweden (see Chapter 6.3). The rings have been dated to a period between 660 and 780 AD (Grandin & Hjärthner-Holdar, 2008, p. 6), which covers the time-span during which Vendel era activity has been established on the site (Hållans Stenholm, 2009-2010, pp. 52-53). The rings might be assumed to have been used for ritualistic purposes, and are particularly interesting when related to the name of the site, which implies religious activity of a cult dedicated to Ullr, and brings to mind, again, Ullr's literary association with the oaths sworn upon rings, mentioned in *Atlakviða* str. 30. A stone platform uncovered on the site, the result of a considerable work effort, also indicates religious worship under the open air, which is interesting in relation to the earlier postulation made by Helander (1906, p. 192), that legal matters were held under the open air, in exposure of the sun, on elevated locations in the landscape (such as a platform?).[130]

The aforementioned material seem to imply that Ullr has once had an intimate relation to

129. In this connection, the Swedish place name *Ullstämma* (found in two different locations in Sweden; in Trögds härad, Uppland and in Hanekinds härad, Östergötland) has historically been suggested to derive from a second stem meaning 'meeting, gathering at specific place and time'. Elgqvist (1955, p. 33) brought this name up for discussion on at least one occasion, arguing that its second element*, stämma*, refers to either Old Swedish *stæmma* (alternatively as *stemna* or *stempna*), meaning 'breakwater, dam', or Old Swedish *stæmna* (sometimes as *stemna*) meaning 'meeting, gathering at a specific place and time', preferring the former. According to Elgqvist, this meaning probably applies in the case of the village of *Stämma*, in Askeby socken, Östergötland. Here, the first element, as noted in Chapter 3.1., would seem to refer to Old West Norse **ullr* (Old Swedish **ulder*) 'well spring', rather than the theophoric name *Ullr*, the meaning of *Ullstämma* being 'the breakwater at the well-spring'. In more recent times, however, this view has been disputed by Vikstrand (2001, pp. 181-182 & pp. 186-188), who is critical of the idea of an Old Swedish **ulder* even having existed. As Vikstrand (2001, pp. 186-188) has demonstrated, the name's relation to a 'breakwater, dam' is exceedingly uncertain for historical reasons, but at the same time, the alternative explanation (related to the meaning 'meeting, gathering at a specific place and time') is unconvincing for geographical reasons, since the *þing*-venue in this region was not in the immediate vicinity of Ullstämma, but rather in Enhälja. A 'meeting'-related explanation would thus have to rely on a supposed subordinate meeting place having existed in Ullstämma, or on an older structure of geographical and legal organization of which we know nothing. Consequently, Vikstrand finds himself unable to solve the mystery of the *Ullstämma* name. A 2007 study, part of an archaeological excavation of the Ullstämma site in Östergötland (see Chapters 4.2.1 and 9), has nonetheless convincingly concluded that the name most probably is not theophoric, and that it "syftar på en plats där man dämt i syfte att framkalla översvämning av den omkringliggande marken" (Ericsson and Strid, 2007, p. 11).

130. Sahlgren (1918, p. 39) has also sought to associate a golden neck ring found in Askersund, Närke, Sweden, with an extinct place name nearby, *Ullevi*. Sahlgren sees this ring as related to the ring with which Ullr is associated in *Atlakviða* str. 30.

law and justice. Along with Hermann Pálsson (1955), it must be accepted that the previously discussed strophe in *Atlakviða* is the overwhelmingly strongest indication of this relation, and in conjunction with Hållan Stenholms excavation of Lilla Ullevi's amulet rings, there seems to be physical evidence of rings having been specifically used in conjunction with the practical worship of Ullr. As noted above, however, it must not be assumed that the two concepts of a sun god and a law god were seen as mutually exclusive. Indeed, Ullr might have been both.

10. Two Variations of Ullr

All in all, one of the most difficult problems we are faced with, when studying Ullr, has to be the ambiguous nature with which the god is presented in various sources. The most difficult problem seems to be the combination of indicators, pertaining to Ullr's role as a god of winter, skiing, bows and hunting, and his potential role as a god of the sky, and/or a fertility god, possibly worshipped in conjunction with a female deity (see, for example, Chapters 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). This problem, to which there seems to be no clear or unambiguous solution, has naturally prompted numerous explanations throughout the history of scholarship (see Chapter 2.1). In spite of its problematic nature, the question still has to be faced by anyone approaching the figure of Ullr. So, finally, to what degree might we combine Ullr's purported role as a god of winter, hunting and skiing, with his supposed role as a fertility god, a god of the sun and the sky?

As noted earlier, Ullr's association with shields (see Chapter 5.2) has for some reason commonly been used to explain his association with winter. For example, Finnur Magnússon (1821-1823, v. 1, p. 195) argued that shields were perfect cover for warriors, when travelling through (snowy) winds and when lying down to rest. Rudolf Much (1895, pp. 35-36) meanwhile argued that the kenning "Ullr's ship" (a *shield*) was an allusion to Ullr's role as a god of skiing (or "snow-shoes", as Snorri has it – see chapter 5.3), in that the word for *skiing* was semantically similar to that of *shield*, and alluded to the idea that various types of wooden boards – such as shields and skiis (snow-shoes) – denoted similar concepts, and had historically been misconstrued such as to associate Ullr, apparently incorrectly, with shields. Hjalmar Lindroth (1914, p. 48), on the other hand, argued that Ullr had originally been worshipped in conjunction with Skaði (known in parts of Sweden as *Skeðja*), but was later pushed out and taken over by stronger Germanic gods, after which the two gods were partially taken up by "Finns" (Sámi people?) – something which would explain why both deities were associated with hunting and winter. Just Bing (1916, p. 114), who argued that Ullr was an original fertility god (see Chapter 2.1), believed that his wintery attributes were actually inherited from the originally male "winter demon" Skaði, when Skaði changed to a female. Ivar Lindquist (1926, p. 99) meanwhile made an elaborate attempt at demonstrating that the shields themselves might have historically been used as "vehicles", and that the old Cibris used the shields to slide down snowy mountains. As has been noted earlier, Lindquist nonetheless argued in a later publication (Lindquist, 1929a, pp. 13-15) that Ullr's association with *bows* was clearly distinct from his association with *skiing*, and that the latter was a later development that must have taken place in Norway. To Lindquist's mind, Ullr's appearance on the 5th-century Danish Gallehus horns, apparently without skis, bore witness to the fact that the god had not originally been associated with

skis and winter, but rather solely with bows and hunting. Regardless of this, it is difficult to see how the two concepts of bows and skiing could have been perceived as being as distinct as Lindquist would have us believe. In addition, the appearance of Ullr on the Danish Gallehus horns seems exceedingly unlikely, considering Ullr's apparent absence in Danish place names. Of interest, however, is Lindquist's (1929, pp. 14-14) observation that the goddess Skaði's association with winter seems much older than Ullr's association with winter. The 9th-century skaldic poem *Ragnarsdrápa* plainly refers to the goddess Skaði as *ǫndurdís*, probably alluding to the probability of Skaði having been particularly associated with Norway and the northern regions around Trondheim and Hålogaland (Davidson, 1993, pp. 61-62). Ullr's association with skiing, on the other hand, comes solely from Snorri's 13th-century account (see also Chapter 5.3). Åke Ohlmarks (1947, p. 209) meanwhile attempted to explain Ullr's apparently accepted wintery attributes by referring to the emigrating (and later re-immigrating) Goths, who might have portrayed their northern sky god, Ullr, as a type of national figure, characterized by the romantic southern perception of Scandinavia as being snowy and cold. Jan de Vries (1957, p. 162) similarly argued that Ullr might have represented the clear-blue winter sky, and its thicket of bright stars at night, judging from the name's etymology.

A number of key factors must be kept in mind when delving into the issue of Ullr's association with winter further. It must never be forgotten that our understanding of Ullr as a supposed god of winter, bows, hunting and skiing, is solely based on the words of Snorri Sturluson in his *Prose Edda* (see Chapter 5.3). Only two other sources faintly pertain to this purported role: *Grímnismál*, str. 5, in which Ullr is referred to as living in a place known as *Ýdalir* (see Chapter. 5.1.1), and Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum* (book three, chapter four), in which *Ollerus* is referred to as travelling across the sea on a bone driven in magic (see Chapter 5.4). The former has prompted the assumption that Snorri's account of Ullr as a god of winter is accurate, on the basis that the finest bows were created from the *ýr*, the yew tree, and that bows were used for hunting at winter. As for the latter, Saxo's use of the terminology "bone" (Lat. *os* 'bone') has prompted virtually all scholars to assume an allusion to old bone skates, supposedly a variation of Snorri's account of Ullr as travelling on skis (or snow-shoes). How Saxo's account should actually be understood is nonetheless uncertain. The interpretation of "bone" as alluding to "bone skates" relies upon the supposition that Ollerus traveled across frozen ice, which might admittedly be appropriate for a god of winter. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Saxo does not expand upon his claim, and nowhere are we told that the "sea" (Lat. *mare* 'sea') upon which Ollerus travels with his magic-driven bone, is frozen. In fact, when Saxo claims that Ollerus' bone is as effective in overcoming the obstacle of the sea as rowing, the natural implication is that he is talking of *water*, rather than

ice. Nonetheless, it must be admitted that no other explanation than "bone skates upon frozen water" seems totally feasible in interpreting Saxo's claim. As noted earlier, Åke Ohlmarks (1963a, p. 48) attempted to explain Saxo's "bone" as an allusion to Ullr's relation to ships, on the basis that the oldest and most primitive ships, such as those of the Bronze-Age rock images, are reminiscent of bones, with a single, large "skate" on the bottom.

It is easy to imagine that Snorri's attribution of Ullr having wintery characteristics is the result of a personal interpretation of the information given in *Grímnismál*. Given that Snorri was aware of the practice of making bows from the yew tree, Snorri may simply have deduced that Ullr was related to bows, and thus hunting. It must be assumed that the practice of hunting (as opposed to agriculture) seemed especially associated with winter, and that Ullr, therefore, was thought of as a god of winter (see also Chapter 5.3). It might be noted that Snorri's first account of Ullr in *Gylfaginning* speaks of him only as skier and archer – and that it is only in *Skáldskaparmál* that the god is first referred to as a hunting god (*veiðiáss*). In contrast to this stands both Saxo's text, a seemingly independent account of Ullr as being, perhaps, related to winter, and *Grímnismál*'s mention of Ullr as living in *Ýdalir* 'Yew Dales'. My postulation thus relies upon the supposition that neither *Grímnismál* nor Saxo's account have anyhing to do with Ullr's supposedly wintery role. In support of this, however, it has been demonstrated in Chapter 5.1.1., that it seems increasingly plausible that *Ýdalir* is a literary invention. As for Saxo's account, I have demonstrated (see above) that there are significant problems in interpreting Saxo's "bone" as a "skate upon ice", even though it must be admitted that no convincing explanation can be given outside of this well-established idea.

Could Ullr have been a god of the sky, the sun, fertility, winter, hunting and bows, all at the same time? Naturally, the different concepts seem contradictory. A sun god characterized by wintery attributes would appear alien to our understanding of the sun as being integral to fertility and agriculture, not least considering the famous lack of sun during the winter months of the North.[131] Perhaps, the various sources might be interpreted as reflecting two layers of religious traditions. This possibility naturally raises the question as to what idea is the "original" in terms of Ullr's perceived characteristics in religious worship. Given Ullr's purported origins as a personal god possibly developed on the basis of a Nordic Bronze-Age sun cult, it seems difficult to imagine Ullr's wintery hunter attributes having been older. One wonders why they survived into the medieval literary sources in favour of his assumed association with the sun. Naturally, however, one should remember that Ullr appears to have been an essentially Swedish god, in which case it should

131. This being said, it must be kept in mind that single gods might have been perceived differently by different people in different contexts. Whether the name *Ullr* referred to a single god, identical in nature to all peoples among whom he was worshipped, is thus uncertain.

seem natural that the West Nordic literary sources would preserve little information thereof. The question remains as to how Ullr came to receive his winter/hunting characteristics in the *Snorra Edda*. I am afraid, that neither the time scope nor the length of this study allows for such an investigation to be properly carried out, but it might be considered valuable subject-matter for future analysis.[132]

132. My supervisor has made me aware of the possibility of a former sun god having been perceived as "going and hunting" during the winter months, when the sun is only briefly available, and when agriculture is obstructed by the climate. It must be admitted that it is somewhat tempting to imagine that a seasonal change in the perception of Ullr as a religious deity eventually "froze" at its winter-perception, if the cult was abandoned in favour of another, newer cult (perhaps the cult of Freyr, who is known to have been associated with agriculture and sunshine). In the case of such an event, it is natural that the "winter" side of Ullr was the only one that survived into literary sources.

11. *Ullinseyra*

Finally, one has to consider the intriguing continuing existence of a word potentially related to *Ullr* in the Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic languages, an anatomical term denoting the flaps of the heart (*auriculae cordis*), which according to folk tradition were generally cut off by hunters from dead animals and thrown away for superstitious purposes.[133] The word appears (among numerous other forms) in Icelandic as *ullinseyra* (*úllinseyra* according to Nils Lid [1925, p. 133]), in Norwegian as *ullsøyra* and in Swedish as *ullesöra*. Mentioned by Ólafur Briem in 1945 (pp. 182-183), the author's brief comment is as follows:

> Að lokum skal minnst á Ullinseyrun, sem eru separ hjá hjartanu á dýrum. Þessum „eyrum" er alltaf fleygt, þegar slátrað er, en um leið á að rista kross í hjartað á skepnunni. Talið er, að þessi siður sé leifar af gamalli fórn til guðsins Ullins. Þessi Ullinn er annars hvergi nefndur í fornritum, en norskar örnefnarannsóknir hafa leitt ýmislegt í ljós um tilveru hans. Virðist hann vera sami guðinn og Ullur, aðeins á eldra stigi. En Ullur var orðinn gamall guð, þegar Ísland byggðist, og var dýrkun hans þá tekin að þverra. Blómaskeið Ullins hlýtur því að hafa verið löngu fyrir Íslands byggð. Það er því óhugsandi, að fórn til Ullins hafi verið framin sem slík á Íslandi. Átrúnaður á Ullinseyrum hlýtur því að stafa frá æva fornum blótsiðum, sem tíðkuðust í Noregi, áður en Ísland byggðist. Elli þessa siðar sést líka á því að menn hafa afbakað orðið Ullinseyru með ýmsu móti til þess að reyna að gera það skiljanlegt. Er nóg að minna á orðmyndina ólánseyru. Sennilega hafa heiðnir menn á Íslandi ekki vitað, hvers vegna Ullinseyrunum var fleygt, en aðeins gert það af gömlum vana. Og þannig hefur siðurinn haldist fram á þennan dag, þótt tilgangurinn væri gleymdur fyrir Íslands byggð. Þetta dæmi sýnir okkur öllum öðrum fremur, hve einstakar venjur geta orðið lífseigar, þótt þær hafi losnað úr tengslum við uppruna sinn. Það er örnefnunum að þakka, að fræðimönnum nútímans hefur tekist að skýra meðferðina á Ullinseyrunum. En vafalaust eru miklu fleiri venjur okkar komnar alla leið aftur úr heiðni, þótt mönnum hafi ekki tekist að rekja slóðina (Ólafur Briem, 1985, pp. 395-396).

The various forms in the different languages are as follows (from Lid, 1925, pp. 128-133 and Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon, 1995, p. 1084):

Iceland	Norway	Sweden	Denmark	Faroe Islands
óhljóðseyru	*uljoøyra*	*olydingsöron*	*kællingører*	*ólætisoyra*
ólánseyru	*ulingsøyra*	*olydiga örat*	*kællingeører*	*ólívsoyra*
óljóseyru	*ulyøyra*	*oduglingsöra*		*ulvoyra*
Ólafseyru	*uleoøyra*	*tjuvöron*		*ólisoyra*
Úlfsljótseyru	*uloøyra*	*villöra*		

133. I would like to thank Kári Pálsson at the University of Iceland for bringing this word and its tradition back to our attention.

ólögseyru	*ulydighetsøre*	*ondmansöron*		
úllinseyru	*uvliøyre*	*illkallsöra*		
	uljobjølla	*olycksöron*		
	vidløyra	*oäringsöra*		
	villøyra	*ullesöron*		
	ljoøyra	*ullasöera*		
	styggemansøyra	*ullasöer*		
	ugleøyra			
	ullsøyra			
	uljoøyra			
	uljodøyra			

The enormous amount of local and regional variations of a similar kind probably allude to the fact that they are all reinterpretations of an original first stem, which has otherwise died out in the various languages. In some cases, folk etymology has formed the basis for an explanation related to the tradition of hunters cutting the “ears” off before processing the heart further. In Sweden, *ullasöer* has been explained by claiming that they were cut off because if pregnant women ate food processed from a heart with the *ullasöer* still on them, the child would be born with various deformities. Here, *ull-* is interpreted as a Swedish feminine noun meaning 'wart with hairgrowth' (Lid, 1925, pp. 133-134). The use of the terminology *ullins-*, *ulles-*, *ulls-* can hardly have been drawn on literary tradition, as the Nordic literary sources give no hints of an **Ullinn* ever having existed (see Chapter 3.2). At the same time, the genitive *-s* in the Norwegian and Swedish variations indicate that the word probably is not drawn upon an original *Ullr*.

In spite of the variations, there is a clear continuity in the three variations Swedish *ullesöra*, Norwegian *ullsøyra* and Icelandic *ullinseyru*. According to Lid (1925, p. 139-140), the pronunciation of *ulls-* in *ullsøyra* in the town of Ullensvang is the same as the pronunciation of *Ulls-* in the farm name *Ullsåker* (also as *Ulsaaker*, which comes from an original *Ullinsaker*). One might imagine that the original first stem was originally *ulv*, and that subsequent variations took off as noa names: famously, the *ulv* 'wolf' has arguably been the subject of more noa names than any other animal in Scandinavian tradition (see, for example, Sahlgren, 1918, pp. 4-7). The various forms in Swedish and Norwegian also allude to the fact that the “flaps” were seen as “evil” or “forbidden” (*oduglingsöra*, *ondmansöron*, *olycksöron*, *styggemansøyra*, and so on). Nonetheless, the explanation of *ullins-* as stemming from an original **ullinn* is too appealing. Lid certainly imagines that the theophoric stem, given that it denoted a god identical to Ullr, might have

originally been attached as a replacement for the original word *ulv*, because of Ullr's association with hunting (Lid, 1925, p. 143). Odd Nordland (KLNM 12, p. 522) argues the same:

> Eit tilsv. partial-o. har helde seg i samband med jakt og med slaktning like ned i våre dagar: Ein lapp av hjarta vert skoren av og lagt bort el. kasta bort, og denne delen vart kalla: *Ullinsøyra*. (*Ullr*/*Ullin* var ein dugande bogeskyttar og skiløpar, og hadde nær tilknytnad til jakt.)

It should be borne in mind that Ásgeir Blöndal Magnússon (1995, p. 1084) records the Icelandic *ullinseyru* word's earliest mention as occurring in the 17th century. He nonetheless sticks with Briem's, Lid's and Nordland's theory, commenting that: "Separ þessir hafa sýnilega verið tengdir dýrkun eða trú á *Ullin*."

Given the word's potential cultic background and connection to hunting tradition, it is interesting to suppose that the three variations *ullinseyra*, *ullsøyra* and *ullesöra* are all variations of the same first stem. According to J. Götlind (in Lid, 1925, p. 140), *ullins* might stand in relation to *ulles* as *drängens* does to *dränges*, *-n-* having dropped between word-final vowel and genitive *-s*. This would seemingly open up for the possibility of the 10th century word form *Ulls* having been derived from **Ullinn* rather than *Ullr*, and that the two words, indeed, denoted the same deity (see Chapter 5.2).

12. Summary

The following seeks to provide a brief summary of the central points of the previous chapters. Naturally, it is difficult to draw any long-reaching conclusions from an essay of this nature, and while Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10 sought to discuss the overarching theories in regard to the discussed source material, this chapter will summarize some of the central points that have been made throughout the essay as a whole.

Although numerous theories have been presented throughout scholarship (see Chapter 2), Ullr's name is generally thought to stem from Gothic *wulþus* 'splendour, glory'. This etymology stands in positive relation to one of the most heavily espoused theories of Ullr's role in religious worship, namely his position as a sun god. Of particular importance in this regard is Johan Palmér's (see Chapter 3.1 and 7) discussion on the semantic development of *wulþus*, whose Indo-European root **u̯el-* is thought to have started off at an original 'to see', later to take on the meaning 'shine'. Similarly, *wulþus* itself is thought to have originally denoted 'radiance, glance, sheen', later to take on the religiously suitable meaning "divine radiance or the reflection of the divine radiance". This possibility might indicate, contrary to what Sahlgren (see Chapter 3.4) has claimed, that *Ullr* was, indeed, not a noa name, but rather a descriptive personal name in the same vein as *Þórr*, where the god's name is a reflection of his association with natural phenomena, in the case of Ullr, the sun, and in the case of Þórr, thunder (cf. PG. **þunraz* 'thunder'). A comparison of the geographic locations of *Ullr* place names and of Scandinavian Bronze-Age rock imagery showcasing sun cult symbols, revealed ambiguous results – showing that sun cult imagery is also prevalent in regions not necessarily characterized by *Ullr* place names. Of particular interest, however, is the region of Vest-Agder in Norway, which contains a high concentration of Bronze-Age sun images, as well as a cluster of *Ullr* place names. It is suggested in Chapter 9, that the theories of Ullr's relation to the sun, and his relation to law and justice, are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and might quite unproblematically be combined into one.

The numerous Scandinavian place names involving Ullr's name, indicate that the god was at some point of major importance in, particularly, pre-historic Sweden. Although this essay has not dealt with the origins of the Ullr cult, Eric Elgqvist (see Chapters 2.1 & 9) has argued, quite convincingly, that the Ullr cult originated in Mellansverige, and was the major religious power of the *Sveaɪ*, to such an extent that the cult and its place names was forced upon the neighbouring *götaɪ*. Attempts have been made to settle the question of the relation between the Swedish *Ullr* names, which show a clear south-central distributional pattern and association with cultic place-name elements, and the Norwegian *Ullr* names, which show a similar distributional pattern, but a

lesser association with clearly cultic place-name elements, but it is nonetheless difficult to fully explain what association the cults might have had in the two countries, and of the practical similarities of their worship. Ullr's exclusivity to Norway and Sweden, however, is supported by the toponymic, literary and archaeological evidence, which show little to no traces of the god outside of the two aforementioned countries.

In both Sweden and Norway, *Ullr* place names are found adjacently to places thought to be named after the god *Freyr* (see Chapters 4.3.1 & 8). This relation has been taken as an indicator of Freyr's replacement of Ullr after the Ullr cult lost its influence and importance. It is postulated in Chapter 8 that this religious shift might be reflected in the excavated cult site at Lilla Ullevi in Uppland, Sweden, where a platform used for religious purposes is thought to have been covered in up to one meter of silt, in a manner such as to mark the closing and abandonment of the site. Ullr's relation to *Njörðr* and *Hærn* in Swedish place names (as well as the *dísir* in Norwegian place names) is also taken as an indicator of the gods former relation to a female (earth/fertility) goddess, an ideally especially appealing in light of the idea of Njörðr having been perceived as a female goddess in Sweden (see Chapters 4.3.2 & 4.3.3).

In Chapters 5.2 and 11, is is postulated that the 10th-century Skaldic kenning *Ulls mágr* might contain a contracted genitive form of the apparently unique Norwegian variation **Ullinn*. This possibility is exemplified by the existence of a wide variety of Scandinavian variations of the Icelandic anatomical term *ullinseyra*, used to denote some "flaps of the heart" (*auriculae cordis*), which in folk tradition were generally cut off from the heart of the animal by hunters, for superstitious purposes. The tradition is continuous in all Nordic countries, and the names of the flaps include the Norwegian and Swedish variations *ullsøyra* and *ullesöra*. Numerous scholars have seen the Norwegian **Ullinn* in the first stem of the Icelandic variation *ullinseyra*, and is suggested that the Swedish and Norwegian variations contain forms where *-n-* has dropped between word-final vowel and genitive *-s*, reflecting an original *ullins-*. Ullr's association with hunting by Snorri Sturluson has been used to explain the word, and its existence could potentially be used to ultimately settle the question as to the identity of the deity named **Ullinn* and its relation to *Ullr*.

It is discussed in Chapters 5.2 and 5.3 to what extent Snorri Sturluson's claim of Sif being the mother of Ullr can be considered accurate. It is deduced from the use of kennings that Sif's relation to Ullr was only postulated by Snorri himself, based on his knowledge of the kennings alluding to Þórr as the "step-father" of Ullr. As to the original use of these kennings, it is questionable to what degree the use of the word Old Icelandic *mágr* might be used to justify a meaning related to 'step-father'. The use of the word *gulli* in the *Þórsdrápa* str. 18 kenning *gulli Ullar* is considerably problematic, and it is postulated that the meaning of the word in this context

might have been '[generous] provider (step-father?)', and probably based on an interpretation of the earliest known similar kenning, used in *Haustlǫng* str. 15. It is argued, that the original relation between Ullr and Þórr might have been that between two sky gods, and that the meaning of the word *mágr* might allude to 'relative', rather than 'step-father', in which case Ullr's association with Sif (only found in the *Snorra Edda*) would be inaccurate. It is also argued (see Chapter 5.1.1) that *Grímnismál*'s claim of Ullr living in a place known as *Ýdalir* might have been a literary invention, without any necessary basis in religious perceptions.

Chapter 10 postulates that the literary and the place name material give contrary indications as to the nature of the Ullr cult, and might reflect two stages of the god's role in religious worship. The seemingly conflicting relationship between Snorri's claim of Ullr being a god of snow, bows and hunting, and the place name and Eddic suggestions of Ullr potentially having been related to the sun, perhaps in conjunction with a female (fertility/earth) goddess, should be resolved in future research.

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