



NAME

Dagfinn Skre

TITLE OF PRESENTATION

Norðvegr – Norway: from sailing route to kingdom

ABSTRACT OF PRESENTATION

When the kingdom of Norway emerged in the Viking Period (c. 900 AD), it acquired a most unusual type of name. The normal Early-Medieval European kingdom's name would be composed of the name a tribe or people with a suffix denoting 'territory'; for instance, *Denmark*, the 'mark' (land) of the Danes, or *England*, land of the Angles. But Norway (Old Norse *Norðvegr*) is composed of 'north' and 'way', denoting 'the sailing route to the North'. To my knowledge this is the only instance of a kingdom being named after a communication route. How can this be? The story behind the name, which will be unravelled in the presentation, involves Vikings, seafaring, and the conditions for survival, prosperity and political dominance in the rugged landscape of the Norwegian coast.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dagfinn Skre was born 1954 in Bergen. He is currently Professor of Archaeology (Iron and Viking Age) at the University of Oslo. Skre is a member of The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy (Sweden), as well as the German Archaeological Institute. His research spans a wide array of topics within Iron and Viking Age as well as Medieval archaeology, in particular social structure, economy, and rural and urban settlement history. Skre has directed several excavation and research projects, the most prominent of them being the Kaupang Excavation Project which studied the Viking-Age town Kaupang, South-Eastern Norway. Currently he is directing the Avaldsnes Royal Manor Project, which involves excavations of one of the earliest royal manors in Norway, located in Western Norway. The main objective of the project is to study economic, political and cultural developments related to the formation of the Norwegian kingdom (c. 900–1100) and of precursory polities through the first millennium AD.