

PREFACE

In 2012, The Research Council of Norway (NFR) began funding a large-scale research project at the five archaeological University Museums in Norway, with the aim of increasing collaboration amongst these institutions. The project, *Forskning i Felleskap* (Joint Research Programme), covered three different themes, selected by the participants based on their own archaeological research interests. One of these themes was agrarian societies, and this book is a result of the Agrarian network and four years' worth of meetings and discussions and work. In this, we present current research from the members of the network as well as results from recent excavations concerning settlement, climate and landscape studies of prehistoric and, in some cases, early medieval rural societies in Norway. Our research scope is national, but rather than an overall picture, this collection presents insights into very specific aspects of rural societies stretching from the Late Neolithic to the Early Medieval Period in various parts of Norway. Our presentation of botanical data from Western Norway, while regional in focus, is an exception in that it provides a comprehensive review of all archaeo-botanical analyses conducted over the years in this area, as well as their research potential. This summary is unique in the corpus of Scandinavian archaeo-botanical literature.

We, the editors, would like to thank all those who have participated in this research network over the years, The Research Council of Norway for its financial support and, of course, the authors who have contributed to this volume. We would like to thank the university museums and, in particular, Professor Håkon Glørstad, the project leader and initiator of this venture, without whom it would not have been possible. One of the stipulations of the original application to the research council obliges the museums involved to maintain the established networks beyond the funding period. So, to borrow a famous phrase, this is not the end. It is hopefully not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning. Dear readers, we hope you will enjoy this volume, and look forward to the future research in this area.

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The editors



KNOWLEDGE THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESCUE INVESTIGATION

Hundreds of fieldworkers take part in the 100–150 archaeological excavations carried out annually in Norway. Without the efforts of the entire archaeological community, the research presented in this book would not have been possible. The words of Director Håkon Glørstad and Vice-director Karl Kallhovd, speak for us all: “Rescue archaeology and research are commonly considered two separate worlds (...) we have made large excavations the engines of research development.”