



# Special Lecture -Vol.3

## “Archaeologies of the Ragnarök? A Sixth-Century Climate Disaster and its Viking-Age Legacies”

2023

Jun

6<sup>th</sup> Tues

15:15 - 16:45 JST

### Lecture Abstract

There is now general agreement among geoscientists that in the year 536 CE, and for varying lengths of time thereafter, several parts of the northern hemisphere experienced a prolonged solar darkness. Caused by a layer of stratospheric debris from at least two, and possibly more, major volcanic eruptions occurring in the period 536-540, what is now known as the 'dust veil' blocked the sun's warmth from reaching the earth. Numerous textual sources independently describe what was clearly a cultural disaster of some magnitude, with a range of catastrophic effects including crop failure, famine and civil strife. The impact was especially severe in the marginal environments of Scandinavia, leading to immense loss of life, before society gradually recovered (and took new forms) in the following centuries leading up to the Viking Age. Some scholars, including myself, have suggested that a distant memory of the dust veil lay behind the story of the Fimbulwinter, the three-year season of unending cold and darkness that marked the beginning of the Ragnarök, the end of the world in Norse mythology. Drawing on both archaeology and text, this talk will explore this unprecedented climate disaster as it affected the peoples of late Iron Age Scandinavia.



*Professor*

## Neil Price

Neil Price holds the Chair of Archaeology at Uppsala University, Sweden, where he has also been appointed Distinguished Professor by the Swedish Research Council. He has previously taught at the universities of Oslo, Stockholm, and Aberdeen. A leading expert on the Viking Age, his fieldwork, teaching, and research has taken him to more than 40 countries. Neil is a Fellow of numerous learned academies in Britain and Scandinavia, including Sweden's oldest, the Royal Society of Sciences; in 2017 they awarded him the Thuréus prize for his lifetime achievements in Viking studies. His publications have appeared in 20 languages, and he is a frequent consultant and contributor to television and film.

### Organizer

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### Contact

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### Registration

Via Google Form  
<https://forms.gle/6MqLkGRnCXxz74aNA>

### Admission Fee

Free

### Platform

Zoom meeting

