



[Tingvatn7.jpg](#)



[Tingvatn8.jpg](#)

Tingvatn

The Tingvatn field is one of the most fascinating areas for historic monuments in Vest-Agder. It is also one of the most valuable. On the plain here are one rectangular and three round stone circles, and more than ten burial mounds. Folklore has much to tell about the historic monuments at Tingvatn. The stone circles in particular have given rise to many legends.

Archaeologists believe that the monuments at Tingvatn are burial mounds – albeit unusual ones – dating from the Iron Age. How old they are is not known for certain. They probably date from the first few centuries of the Christian era, but they may even date right back to the Bronze Age.

A burial field and the site of an assembly

However, in folklore, Tingvatn is exactly what the name suggests (in Norwegian, 'ting' is a legislative and judicial assembly of free men dating from the Scandinavian Middle Ages): the site of an assembly dating from the dawn of history, from an age when the farmers themselves passed verdicts at the ting. In many places in both Norway and Sweden, stone circles are called "dommerring" or "judges' circles", and it is still commonly believed that such monuments were used for legal proceedings.

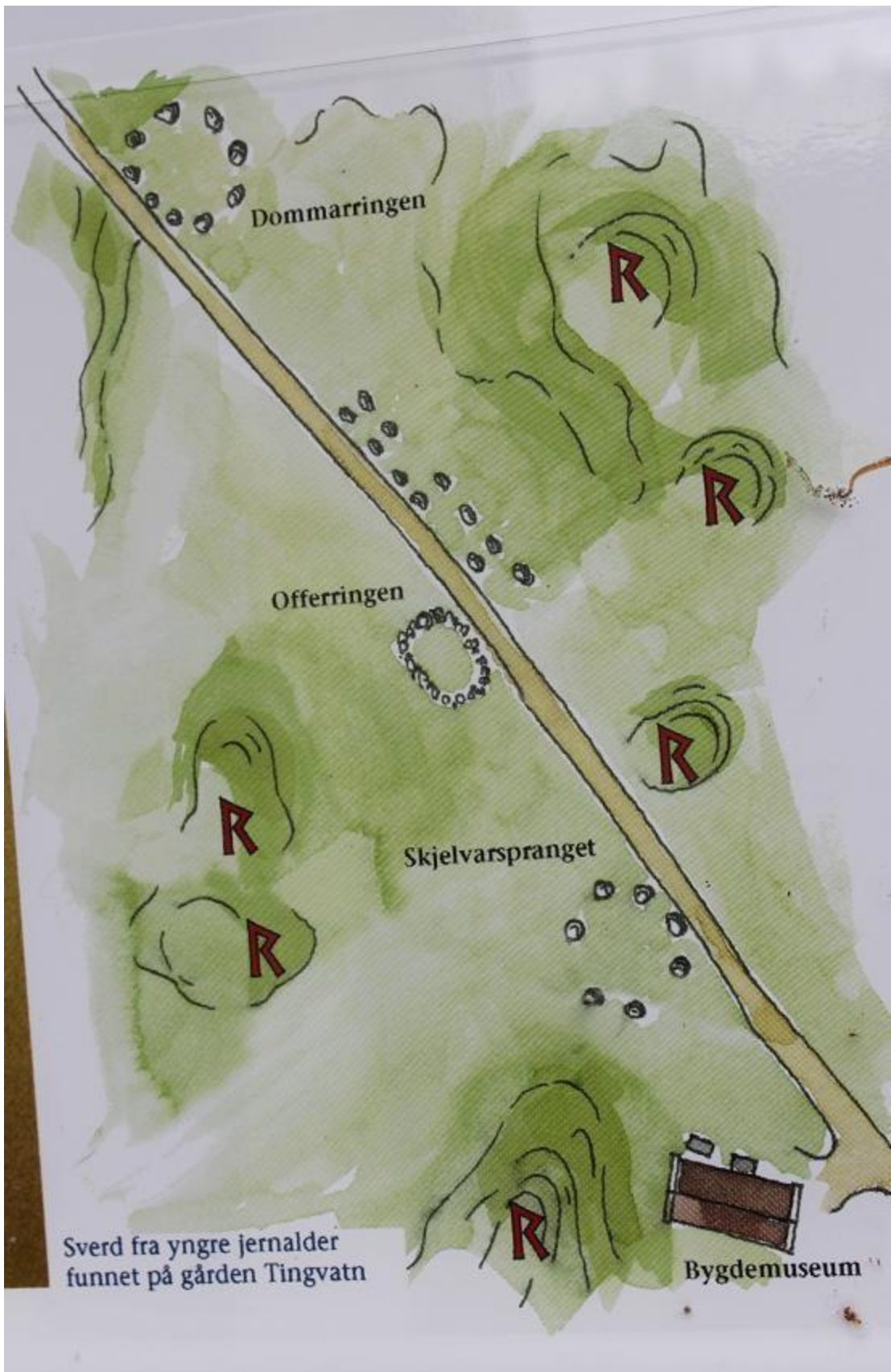
At Tingvatn, this belief gains support from written sources. During the Middle Ages, Tingvatn was in fact the mid-point of the judicial region of Vats. Vats, or Vatne, is the old name for Tingvatn, and the farm here was for many centuries the judicial centre in an inland district which, in addition to Hægebostad and Eiken, covered Bjelland and Grindheim. On the western side of the national highway is the farm of Tingvatn itself, where the ting was situated during the Middle Ages. The ting mound itself was destroyed long ago. Between the burial field – which is called "the old ting place" – and Tingvatn farm is Galgebakken, which was reputedly a place of execution in olden times.

Skjelvarspranget ('Skjelvar's leap')

The stone circle on the northern edge of the field consists of 7 erect stones and has a diameter of 15 metres. The site has been known by several names: Sjusteinsringen, Skjelvarspranget and Holmgangsringen. Associated with the circle is the legend of a young girl named Skjelva who was sentenced to death. According to this legend, she would not be executed if she could leap from stone to stone around the circle. It is said that Skjelva managed to jump between all the stones right up to the final, decisive leap. She then fell leaping for the seventh stone and died. The stones are 6 metres apart. Within the stone circle is a low burial mound. During the 1890s, a fire grave was found in this mound. Just south of Skjelvarspranget is a large, round stone circle called Offerringen ('the sacrifice ring').

Dommarringen

Further south is Nisteinsringen. This stone circle is also known as Dommarringen. It is said that the judges each sat on their own stone when they had to pass judgement on judicial matters at the ting. Between Dommarringen and Skjelvarspranget are two parallel rows of erect stones. There are a total of 11 stones here, but there would have been more in the past. These "streets" are not known elsewhere in Norway. It is possible that the stones had a slightly different form in the past, and that some stones were moved in connection with the development of the old valley road which passes nearby.



Dommarringen

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Offerringen



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Skjelvarspranget

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Bygdemuseum

Sverd fra yngre jernalder funnet på gården Tingvatn





[Stoplesteinan1.jpg](#)



[Stoplesteinan2.jpg](#)



[Stoplesteinan3.jpg](#)



[Stoplesteinan4.jpg](#)