

Making the most of scientific dates in Viking Age Iceland

Cathy Batt, University of Bradford and Magdalena Schmid, University of Iceland

Recent decades have seen significant developments in the understanding of scientific dating methods and their use in the construction archaeological chronologies. These approaches offer an exciting opportunity to review and develop the dating obtained from archaeological excavations in Viking Age Iceland, providing improvements in precision, archaeological and statistical interpretation.

This paper explores how Bayesian statistical analysis and a detailed understanding of the origin of dates, can be combined with archaeological stratigraphy and, potentially, typology, to produce precise chronological frameworks using existing data from recent excavations in Iceland, for example Sveigakot, Hrísbú, Hofstaðir and Aðelstræti. We will go on to show how such approaches can form the basis of regional analyses, to gain the maximum information possible from scarce archaeological resources and allow models of interaction across the North Atlantic to be proposed and tested.