



Kevin P. Smith

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Kevin Smith is an archaeologist with fieldwork experience in Alaska, Newfoundland, eastern temperate North America, and the North Atlantic. For the past 25 years, his research focus has been Iceland, where he is most interested in the 12th-13th century and the processes of regional political consolidation and economic integration that led to the formation of a short-lived, unstable, and independent state in the mid-13th century. However, he is also interested in the post-medieval period, the archaeology of North Atlantic colonialism and the integration of the North Atlantic region into globalized economic systems.

A consistent theme has been a concern for questions of scale and temporality: not only the social, spatial and temporal scales at which past systems and subsystems were organized, operated, and integrated human/environmental networks but also the scales at which archaeological datasets are formed and comprehended – and the lack of fit, or differential fits, between what we hope to study and what we use and have available to study it.

Another consistent theme explores the differential roles of historical/documentary and archaeological data sets for understanding past processes of change and organizational complexity. Within the past few years, he has become quite interested in developing an archaeology of law, seeing law and legal processes as an essential nexus within which symbolic logic and daily practice intersect the scales of the society, the household, and the individual.

Currently, he is developing a regional project in interior western Iceland, having completed two pilot seasons at the sites of Skógarnes, Stóri-Ás, and (primarily) Gilsbakki – a Viking Age through early Sturlung period elite center that lost out in the competition leading to regional state formation, later medieval ecclesiastic center, and post-medieval parish center.

Kevin is deputy director of Brown University's Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, which puts him in charge of daily operations, a small staff, incredible students, diverse and research-ready collections, exhibition development, and more.