**Harbours of the North Atlantic (AD 800-1300)**

What makes a harbour a harbour if there are hardly any remains left on land and under water? That´s just one of many questions that a new research project which has now been given funding by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG) hopes to answer. The project focuses on Viking and medieval harbours in Iceland, Shetland, Greenland, Faroe and Norway and is called “Harbours in the North Atlantic (AD 800-1300) (HaNOA)”. HaNOA is a highly interdisciplinary project. It will make use of written sources such as legal texts and sagas, investigate a number of sites with archaeological and geophysical methods both on land and under water, and involve other specialists such as geomorphologists, geologists and climatologists. The investigations focus on the topography of the harbours, the function of their components, the geomorphological changes they went through, the role of ballast, and oceanographic characteristics. Legacies on land and under water are examined together in order to gain a holistic understanding of the ports from a nautical and economic historical perspective. Although the project spans a geographically broad area it investigates a contiguous historical economic region. The ports chosen for this project (such as Kaupangr in Iceland) play a key role in the Viking Age settlement and colonization process of these North Atlantic islands.

HaNOA is run by Prof. Dr. Claus von Carnap-Bornheim at the Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology (ZBSA) at Schleswig ([www.zbsa.eu](http://www.zbsa.eu)) and Dr. Natascha Mehler, Department of Prehistory and Medieval Archaeology at the University of Vienna (<http://histarch.univie.ac.at/>) and involves a network of specialists from all these places. The project is part of the DFG´s newly established large focal programme on “Harbours from the Roman Empire to the Middle Ages” which will run for the next six years to come and includes a number of projects taking place all over Europe.