Í Uppistovubeitinum. Site and settlement

Fornfrøðilig rannsókn í Uppistovubeitinum í Leirvík

Símun V. Arge

Føroya Fornminnissavn, Hoyvík, Pb. 1155, FR-110 Tórshavn, the Faroe Islands.
Tel.: +298 10700; fax: + 298 12259; e-mail: svarge@fms.fo.

Úrtak

Síðan 1988 hava fornfrøðiligar rannsóknir verið gjørdar í Uppistovubeitinum í Leirvík, sumrini 1990, 1996 og 1997 tó undantikin. Greinin er ein stutt framløga av fyribilsúrslitunum, tí rannsóknin er enn ikki liðug. Fornfrøðiligu leivdirnar vísa, at búleikast hevur verið á staðnum í tíðarskeiðinum 12.-14. øld – ein tíðarfesting, ið samsvarar væl við tvær kolevnis-14 tíðarfestingar. Til nú eru funnar leivdirnar av 5 bygningum. Fornfrøðiliga tilfarið er sera áhugavert og fjøltáttað; tað vísir á arbeiði bæði á sjógvi og á landi, og m.a. vísa ílatabrot av leiríløtum, ið eru innflutt av meginlandinum – úr Belgiu og Rhin-økinum – at tætt samband hevur verið við útheimin.

Í eini roynd at seta bústaðaleivdirnar í Uppistovubeitinum í eitt búsetingarsøguligt høpi, verður miðaldar kirkjutoftin Bønhústoft, ið liggur tætt hjá, tengd at hesum leivdunum heldur enn at býlinginum við Garð, ið vanligt hevur verið. At enda verður víst á, at rannsóknin undirstrikar, at búsetingarliga fyribrygdið garðsheyggjar eisini er týðningarmikil táttur í fornfrøðiligari og búsetingarsøguligari gransking í Føroyum.

Abstract

Since 1988 archaeological investigations have been carried out on the site of *í Uppistovubeitinum* in the village of Leirvík with the exception of the summers of 1990, 1996 and 1997. The excavations have revealed medieval settlement remains dated archaeologically to 12th-14th Century, wich corresponds well to the results of two carbon 14 datings. So far the remains of 5 buildings have been revieled. The artefactual assemblage is very interesting and complex, and reflects both agricultural as well as marine occupation; the artefacts, i.e. imported pottery from Paffrath and Andenne, also indicate strong connections with the outside world.

In order to give a picture of the settlement in a historical context, an attempt is made to assess the archaeological remains of *í Uppistovubeitinum* in relation to the medieval church ruin *Bønhústoft* next to the site instead of the ancient settlement *við Garð* as traditionally has been done. At last it is stressed that the excavation also accentuates the problem complex of farm-mounds in the Faroes.

Introduction

Hardly had Føroya Fornminnissavn, the Faroese National Museum, wrapped up the investigations of the exciting Viking-Age farmstead at the site of *á Toftanesi* in the village of Leirvík, before a new site in the same village was brought to our attention, fig.1. Investigations of the new site, called *í Uppistovubeitinum*, commenced in 1987 and although the excavation is as yet incomplete, and the forthcoming material as yet only partially studied, I would like to give a brief presentation of the investigation and advance certain settlement development reflections based on the material at hand[1].

Í Uppistovubeitinum – the excavation

The site of *í Uppistovubeitinum* lies some 250 m inland from the coast, 20 m above sea level, on the eastern side of the stream

Fróðskaparrit 45. bók 1997: 27-44

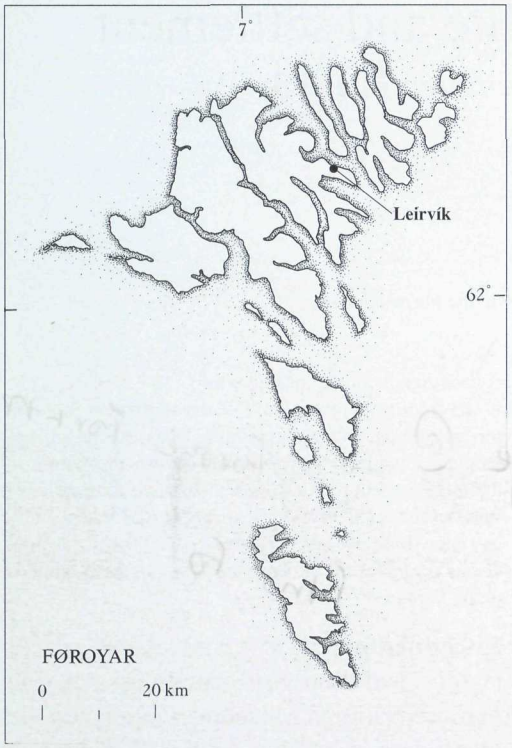

Fig. 1. Map of the [illegible]
Kort av Føroyum

Brúsá uppermost in the so called »old« infield.

As far back as is known the site has been under cultivation. However there was a conspicuous elevation in the terrain, and under cultivation large stones kept turning up. Local tradition has it, that the site was once settled, but due to recurring spring floodings the settlement moved up to the site of *við Garð* on the western side of the stream. In the 1970'ies the area was earmarked for development, and our involvement became actual with several observations on the site from 1977 and onwards. A private house was built close to the elevation and a series of electric cables were laid down within the area. In 1987 machines were brought in to dig the foundations for a cement fence. Our observations resulted in a stop of the work, and a salvage excavation was established the following year. With the exception of the summers of 1990, 1996 and 1997 excavations have been resumed yearly each summer[2].

Settlement remains

The area under investigation measures some 235 m^2 and covers only the section of the elevation lying within the privately owned lot. This means that the settlement is not excavated as a whole, and that the buildings are only partially investigated, fig. 2.

The excavation, at this point with an accumulation of cultural layers measuring ome 175 cm. has revealed the remains of n extensive settlement consisting of at least six house structures.

The plan, fig. 3, is based on the level achieved in 1995. The buildings House C and D are totally excavated as opposed to the rest of the site and thus the impression of contemporaneity must be taken lightly.

House A is apparently a longhouse with curved longwalls. Most of the building lies beyond the excavation limit so that we have no idea of its bredth, however ca. 11 m of the eastern long wall have been registered. Investigations reveal that the wall is built of turf with an inner stonebuilt lining which was preserved in several courses. Along the inner side of the wall several large flat stones are placed at certain intervals – noticeably in the southern area. These could

Fig. 2. *Photo of the area excavated seen from south. Photo: Føroya Fornminnissavn; S. V. Arge 1995*
Fotomynd av útgrevstrarøkinum sæð sunnanífrá

be sill stones, but are more likely post stones for the roof-bearing posts. These were thus placed along the walls and not down the middle of the house, as is so typical for the Viking-Age longhouses.

In the southernmost part of the building a fair amount of well preserved wood was found. The wood formed part of the floor structure, amongst other things, as cover for a draining trench. Furthermore sec-

Fig. 3. *Plan showing the area excavated in 1995. GV & SVA del*
Flatatekning av útgrevstrarøkinum í 1995. GV & SVA teknaðu.

ondary floor-layers indicate a secondary occupation of the building.

House B could be registered for an extent of some 7 m and was probably some 3 m wide. The walls were slightly curved and were of the usual type with a stone built double wall filled with earth and gravel. The building's floor layers are as yet unexcavated.

House C had the same type of walls as House B. To the west there was an entrance marked by a large threshold stone. Massive timber constructions were used in the floor structure.

The building's size and shape is still somewhat uncertain; however we are probably dealing with a small east-west built building with an entrance through the western gable.

The investigated part of House D measures 4x3 m and it is uncertain whether we here have a building or just a room within a larger building, the remains of which lie beyond the excavated area. Cultural layers registered in the southern and western sections, support the latter theory. The area to the west is unfortunately somewhat disturbed by machinework.

Contrary to the other buildings on the site, the walls indicate that here we have a wooden building resting on sills. An entrance faces west. The plan only shows the bottom wall courses, however we have registered several layers of stone within the walls, which indicate either an attempt to relieve water problems or several phases within the building. We also found covered drains within the floor structure.

The youngest building, not marked on the plan, lay just below the turf and some 75 cms. above House B. The groundplan was almost square. The 4x4 m large building was in all probability built of wood resting on a stonesill. The floor was of stone and along the inner side of the walls lay a drain, the stone covers forming part of the floor paving.

Drains are a characteristic feature within the buildings, but were also found outside between the various houses. During the excavation we became more and more aware of what problems the stream, running west of the settlement, had caused the erst-while inhabitants. The settlement lies on a lower level than the bottom of the stream, and water must have continously seeped across the Medieval settlement.

The Artefactual Assemblage

At present some 1810 finds are registered – an extensive number in a Faroese context. These cover a wide range of artefacts, however, here I will concentrate only on a few categories.

Locally produced artefacts are mainly of tuff and basalt, both local stone.

In fig. 4 are shown examples of both line- and netsinkers of basalt, A, B and C, and of steatite, D, each representing a certain type. C is the most common type to be found in the Faroes and is in use both in the Viking-Age and the Middle Ages. C varies in size but has a characteristic encircling groove along the broad side. Type A with an encircling groove along the narrow side has, as far as I know, only a single Faroese parallel found on a Viking-Age settlement at Fuglafjørður (Dahl, 1958, fig 9). Type B is some-

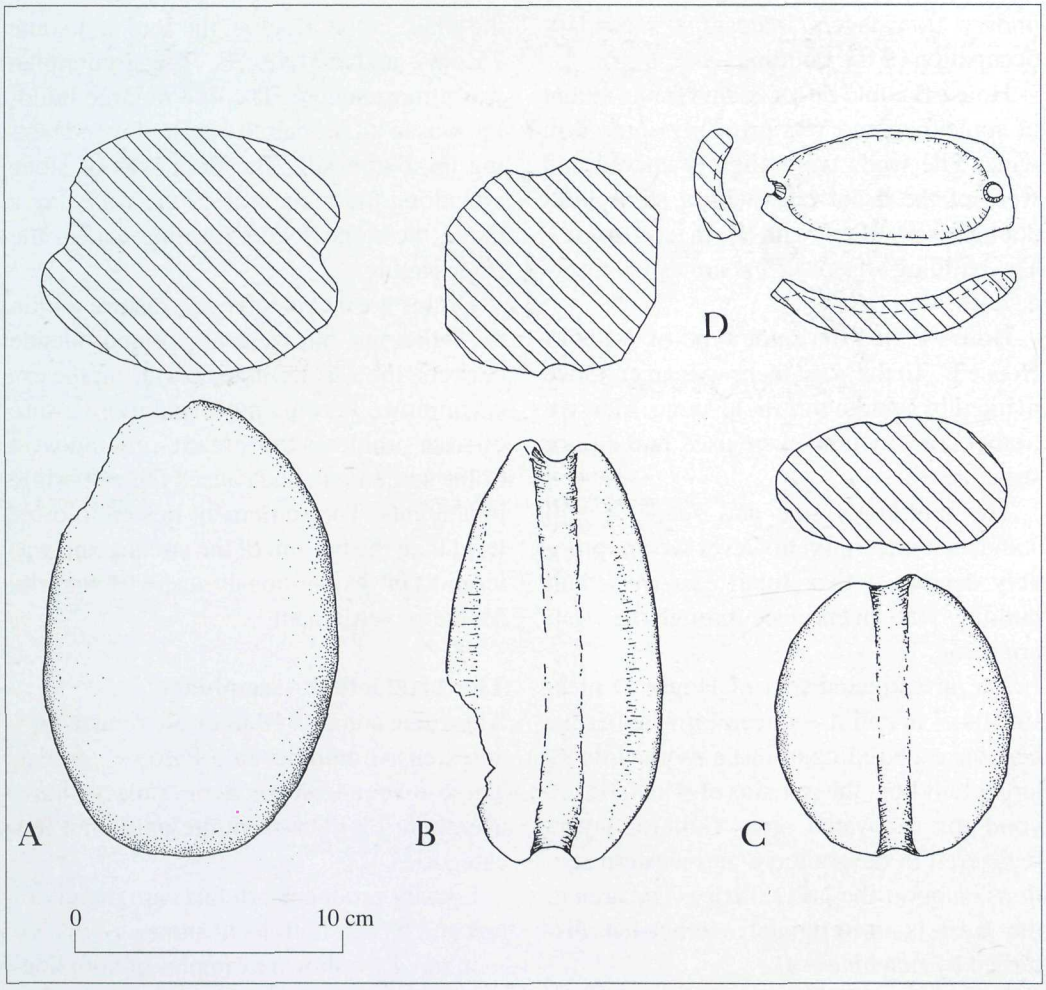

Fig. 4. Types of line and net sinkers of local basalt and tufa and of steatite
Ymisk sløg av vaðsteinum úr gróti og royði og eitt netsøkk úr fitisteini

what more elaborate, with bevelled corners – that is with 8 edged transverse sections – and seems to me to be a medieval or early medieval type. D was originally a steatite sherd reused as a netsinker.

Spindle-whorls, fig. 5, were produced from various materials: the two above are identical and made of lead; the two in the middle of steatite – the one to the right formed from a steatite sherd. The last two are of red tuff. As tuff is easy to work on, it allows for a freer moulding style which is clearly apparent in the material.

Local pottery was abundant. Local pottery was produced in the Faroes, at least, by the late Viking-Age – a tradition that existed up

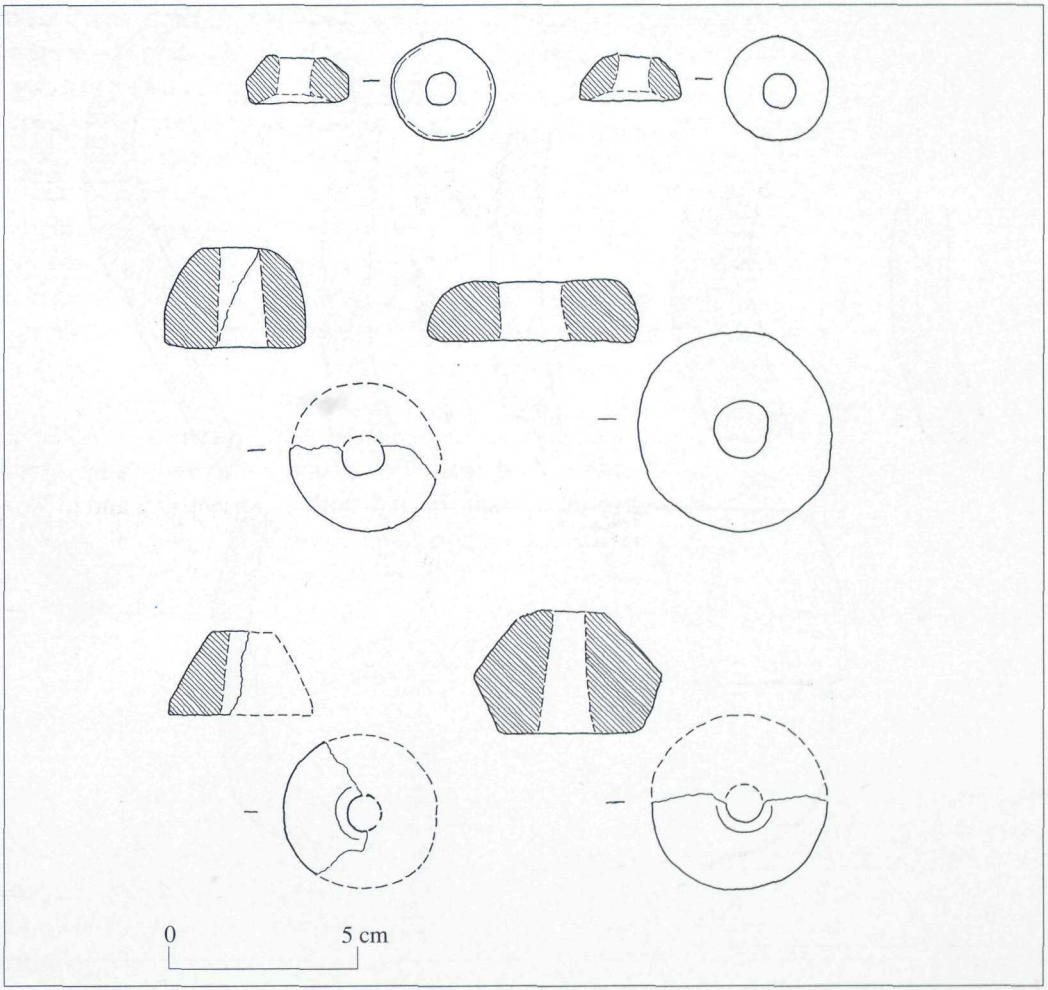

Fig. 5. *Types of spindle whorles of lead, steatite and local tufa*
Ymisk sløg av rennlum úr blýggj, fitisteini og royðu

to the 18th Century, although one could still find a few people during the 19th Century practicing this craft (Arge, 1990:43-46).

Although our knowledge of this exciting find category is as yet somewhat sporadic, as the material has not been studied as a whole, certain characteristica have been defined – also in the material from *í Uppistovubeitinum*, fig. 6. It is especially the side- and rimsherds that are characteristic in that they are thickest somewhat below the rim and then become very thin lower down. In my opinion we are dealing here with a certain type which is found on sev-

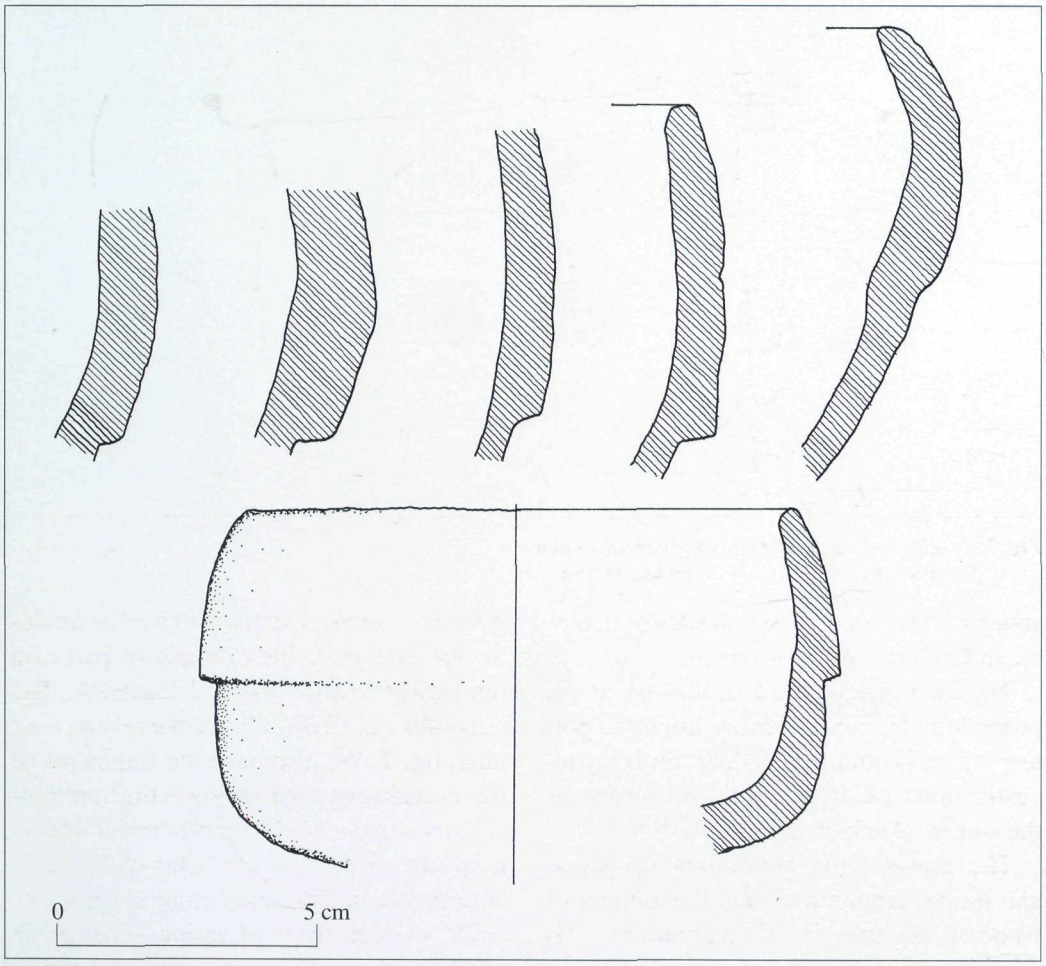

Fig. 6. *Examples of a special type of local pottery*
Dømi um ílatabrot av serligum slag úr føroyskum leir

eral sites on the islands. The type cannot as such be dated but occurs in a late Viking-Age/Early Medieval context, i.e. it is found on both investigated shieling sites – *í Ergidali*, Suðuroy, and *undir Argisbrekku*, Eysturoy – and shielings are a Viking-Age/Early Medieval phenomenon in the Faroes (Mahler, 1991). How long the type was in use is as yet not known.

Imported finds or artefacts of imported raw material were also abundant. As far as artefacts of steatite and schist are concerned, the material differs little from what is found on other sites, and consists mainly of steatite vessels or reused artefacts formed from steatite sherds, hones of dark fine grained schist and the lighter more coarse grained schist, some of these are

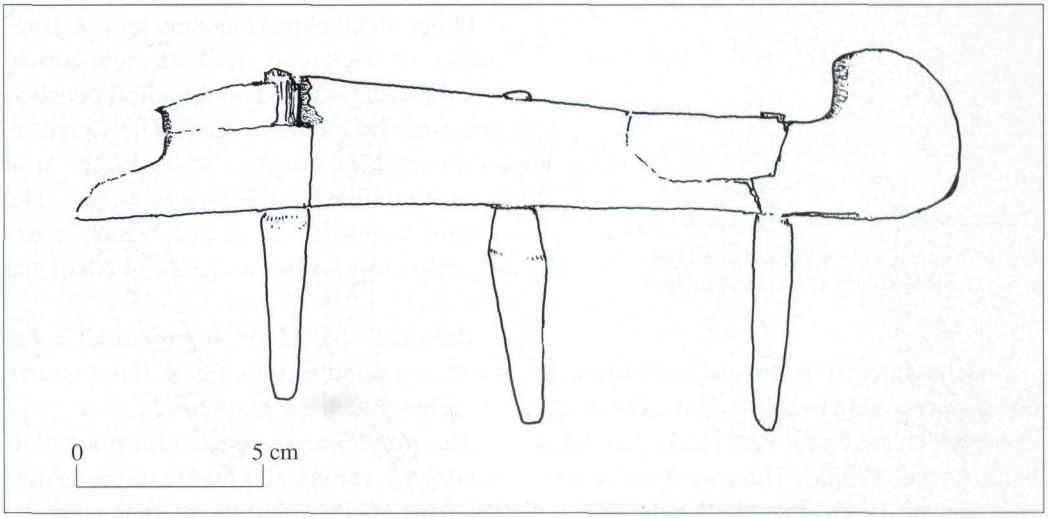

Fig. 7. *Wooden rake made of birch, the raketeeth of pine*
Partur av rívu úr bjørkaviði við tindum úr furu

small with perforations for suspension, others in the form of raw material.

The interesting aspect is, that we are in posession of a fair amount of imported pottery which is quite unusual. Preliminary investigations point to Northern Europe as the source: Andenne and Paffrath[3].

The preservation conditions for wood and timber are optimal, and the amount of wooden objects found numerous[4]. Although the islands themselves have been treeless in all the time they have been inhabited, the tradition of using timber for construction survived the Landnam. Thus a certain amount of building timber was found at *í Uppistovibeitinum*, timber often put to a secondary use – i.e. in floor constructions.

We have also found numerous wooden domestic utensils, such as a dish turned of alder, bowls of alder and oak, staves and bottoms of coopered vessels of various sizes, mostly made of pine, as well as implements, such as a fine example of part of a rake with attached wedged raketeeth. The cross piece is made of birch, the raketeeth of pine, fig. 7. We also have the fragments of two corner staves pertaining to the traditional Faroese *leypur* – a portable crate. Furthermore we have found counting sticks made both of hazel, pine and common spruce or larch; wooden rivets of various sizes made of pine, cords of twined juniper branches, and wooden sausage pegs as well as a number of as yet unindentified objects[5].

It is interesting to note that, according to the preliminary results of the wood analysis, the many implements made of pine seem to have been imported either in the form of raw timber or as artefacts together with the artefacts of deciduous wood. Only 1 out of 90 studied wooden implements, bore traces of boreholes from shipworms, pointing to the use of driftwood.

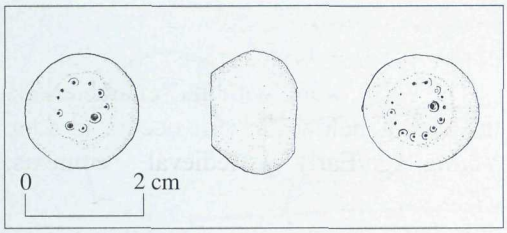

Fig. 8. *Bronze weight of Viking Period type*
Lodd úr bronsu av víkingaaldarslag

Special interest is focused on wooden objects pertaining to ship- or boat constructions, which are found very rarely on the islands (Arge, 1995a). Thus we have recovered a spant – a rib – of oak, the closest parallel is to be found on the Lynæssboat from Roskildefjord, Denmark, dated to ca. 1140 A.D. (Crumlin-Pedersen, 1979). We have also found a *keip*, made of hazel – which during the Viking-Age seems to have been a common cultural element in Scandinavia, and still is along the Norwegian coast, but which was, however, replaced in the Faroe Islands by a locally evolved tholepin. Both the spant and the keip appear here for the first time in the Faroese material. Also toggles of various sizes, made of pine and common spruce or larch, may be related to nautical activity.

Metal objects are seldom found so well preserved as on this site. To continue in a nautical vein, plenty of iron nails and rivets were found that in all probability have been used within boat or ship building. The find situation indicates a craftsmanslike industry on the site, as many of the iron fragments are parts of sheared nails[6]. Furthermore we have recovered several fishhooks – another rare find category.

Other metal objects include knives, fragments of locks, as well as a spherical weight with flattened »poles« and punched circle-ornamentation, fig. 8. The weight is exclusively of bronze – it lacks the iron core often found in this type of weight. The weight weighs 26,23 grams, which is extremely close to the weight of a Medieval *øre*.

Personal objects are represented in the form of a doublecomb, fig. 9, three bronze brooches and a few glass beads.

The prescence of runic inscriptions enhances the variety and bredth of the material. One of the inscriptions is that of the name OLAFR found written on a stone (Stoklund, 1991). The other pertains to an 11 cm. long stave or stick, square in form and with inscriptions on three of the four sides. The runes are medieval, however a translation has made no sense of the inscriptions (Stoklund, 1996).

Animal bones and teeth are rarely found so well preserved in the islands as here. The material contains the remains of large mammals, as well as the bones of birds and fish awaiting closer study and analysis. A preliminary analysis of the teeth material has revealed the prescence not only of sheep and cattle, but also such species as pigs, pilot whale, grey seal and wolffish[7].

The bone material, has for the first time ever, revealed the habit of sucking marrow from sheep's feet in the Faroes, in accordance with recent similar discoveries in Iceland and the Shetland Islands.

The publication of this observation led to the relevation that not only had this practice occured up to recent times in some places

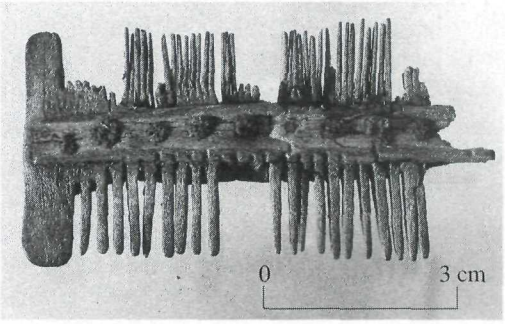

Fig. 9. *The doublecomb. Photo: Føroya Fornminnissavn; Ó. H. Øster*
Dupultkambur av miðaldaligum slag

in the Faroes, but that it is still practiced, although as far as I have been able to ascertain, by only one family. This was somewhat of a surprise as the practice has never been described or illustrated before in professional or other litterature (Arge, 1995b).

Dating

It naturally follows that a dating of the investigated settlement remains, is as of yet a preliminary one.

A typology based on the buildings is somewhat difficult due to the fragmentary state of the material. However, House A seems to contain elements that point towards the Early Middle Ages. The buildings are as yet only partially investigated and both House A and B await a final investigation of their respective floor layers.

The pottery provides us, however, with certain indications. The imported pottery from Andenne and Paffrath is usually dated to the 12th-13th Century. In Bergen, the main port to the Norwegian colonies in the North Atlantic, the Andenne and Paffrath Ware occur in the 12th Century and both cease about the same time – in the first half of the 13th Century (Lüdtke, 1989:32)

The local ware with the characteristic thickening below the rim occurs in Late Viking-Age/Early Medieval contexts. However as we do not know how far in time the type is to be found, it's presence does not contradict the evidence provided by the imported ware.

Even though the weight is of a Nordic Viking-Period shape, the type is found in the succeeding centuries in Scandinavia – i.e. in Oslo the type is found in town-layers dated to 1175-1225 (Færden, 1990:241). On the other hand the doublecomb, usually dated to post 1200, seems to point to a somewhat later date.

In this context it is remarkable that we have no indication of the presence of Norwegian baking plates, so typical of the period in question (Arge, 1988:289-290; 1990:48 and note 46). However the negative presence of this find category cannot, I find, be used as a dating element.

We have consistently collected samples for scientific dating. Four samples have been accepted by the Carbon-14 Laboratory in Copenhagen. Two of these have been dated so far: K-6629, consisting of juniper branches, from a layer located between the youngest building and House B, was dated to AD 1285 (calibrated acc. to Stuiver and Pearson, 1993), and with ± 1 standarddivision to AD 1260-1295. K-6630, consisting of the shells of common limpets, from a layer located below the pavement to the north of House C and D, just above the bedrock, was dated to AD 1420 (calibrated acc. to Stuiver and Pearson, 1993), and

with ± 1 standarddivision to AD 1400-1440[8]. Furthermore two small samples, respectively of hazelnut shells and birch bark, have been accepted for accelerator dating.

On the basis of the archaeological material it would seem reasonable to date the earliest settlement activity on the site to the 12th-13th century with a period of use extending into the 14th Century. This broad provisional frame is mainly based on the imported ware and the double comb, but concurs with the general impression given by the material as a whole.

The two carbon-14 datings are in good correlation with the broad archaeological dating, though the younger dating indicates further extension of the settlement activity. This dating is for the period of activity as a whole. A more precise dating of the individual buildings and settlement phases awaits a closer study of the material as well as further excavations with following results.

Í Uppistovibeitinum seen in the context of settlement development.

In order to evaluate *í Uppistovubeitinum* in a settlement development context, I will in the following pages take a short look at the settlement pattern in Leirvik.

Right up to the early part of this century, the village of Leirvík consisted of the three old settlements of: *um Á*, *við Garð* and *á Toftanesi*. Settlements such as these are in Faroese called *býlingar* or *fyrndarbýlingar*, and reflect primary settlements registered in the oldest surviving cadastre dating from 1584 AD. Several of these, have been archaeologically dated to the Viking-Age. A village could consist of several of these settlements, each again consisting of a single or several farming units. Often the village's old churchsite lay on one of these settlements, which in a historical context is important, in that it is here, where the original church was built, that one would expect to find the remains of the main village farm – the primary landnamfarm (Arge, 1997; Thorsteinsson, 1981).

It is generally accepted, as a result of recent research into the history of settlement development, that the Faroese settlement pattern is characterized by long settlement continuity. In other words, one would expect that a settlement established in the Viking or Early Middle Ages would be found again in a so called *býling*. However the saying: no rule without an exception, is naturally valid here too.

The Faroese village is divided into a series of physical areas, each with their specific function. Of primary importance were the enclosed cultivated infield and the uncultivated outfield.

However, here it is the actual settlement site which is important and which again was a special defined area, in Faroese called either a *heimrust*, *rustari* or *skattagrundir* depending on whichever part of the Faroes one is in. It was here the buildings, farmhouses, outhouses, hay enclosures, angelica gardens and middens were established.

Parts of the same heimrust were also used as a grazing area – in Faroese a *beiti*. The settlement area was usually sharply divided from the outlying infield by a stone-built fence, and a similarily boundered *geil*

– a cattle passage – which connected the settlement with the outfields through the surrounding infield.

If we take into account our present knowledge of settlement continuity, these settlement areas or heimrust are exceedingly important to archaeologists and historians alike, as they conceal settlement remains from over a long period of time – remains which are the basic source of our knowledge of early Faroese history, unless they of course have been disturbed by later activity.

In Leirvík all three settlements or býlingar, are located on the oldest map of Leirvík dating from 1793, where the extent of the infield extant at the time is also indicated.

It is still possible to register the extent of the heimrust of each of the three býlingar, and – as mentioned in the beginning – we have archaeological evidence that the heimrust at Toftanes was allready settled during the Viking-Age, although the Medieval settlement as yet eludes us.

The heimrusts of the two other settlements – *við Garð* and *um Á*, have not been subjected to archaeological excavations and we do not therefore, know how far back in time previous to 1584 AD they date.

The place-name *við Garð* indicates though, that the settlement was established alongside the then existing infield wall – when though not known. Remains of the old infield wall can still be seen east and west of the settlement, fig. 10.

Any attempt to view the settlement remains at *í Uppistovibeitinum* in the context of settlement development must take another ruin into consideration. Some 70 m beyond the excavation, lies the so-called *Bønhústoft* – ruin of one of the many churches or chapels abolished under the Reformation around 1540 AD. The church ruin has never been investigated and it's age is therefore unknown. The ruin measuring some 9X5,5 m is encircled by a dyke built of stone and turf with a total cross section of some 25 m

The site of the ruin, placed as it is within the old infield, has always aroused astonishment. Traditionally the site has been connected with the settlement of *við Garð*, which is the closest existing settlement. Although *við Garð* and *Bønhústoft* lie close, I am of the opinion that the stream of *Brúsá* acts as a distinctive and natural division between the two. The question is, on the basis of the aforementioned, whether it is not far more likely to see the remains of *í Uppistovubeitinum* and the church ruin as an entity, allthough there are indications that other settlement remains lie hidden in the area.

The question of whether *í Uppistovubeitinum* could be the original settlement of *við Garð* must also be considered. Tradition has it, that the settlement of *í Uppistovubeitinum* had to move to *við Garð* as a result of problems with water seepage and flooding from the stream. This remains at the present a theory, however the fact is that *í Uppistovubeitinum* is entered in the land register as a *beiti* – that is as an area where cattle belonging to the farm of *Uppistova*, of the settlement of *við Garð*, grazed.

As mentioned above heimrusts were not only settlement areas reserved for building, but also included grazing areas. A logical supposition would thus be that the settlement of *í Uppistovubeitinum* lies on the site

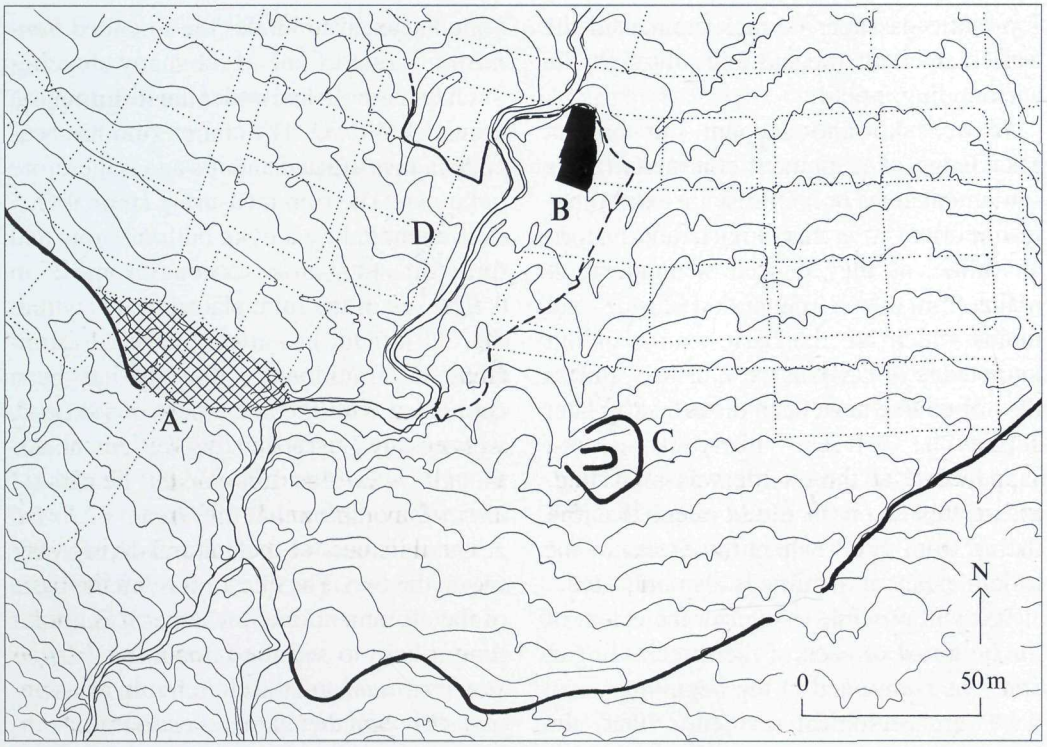

Fig. 10. *Map of the area of við Garð - the modern settlement is marked with dots. A: The heimrust of við Garð. B: The area of í Uppistovubeitinum is marked with the dotted line and the actual excavation is marked in black. C: Bønhústoft. D: Garðsbeitið. The stone boundaries are marked by black lines: the old stone boundary by a thick black line; the stone-turf fence dividing Miðbøur from Garðsbeitið by the thin black line. There is a meter between each contour line - from Arge 1997*

Lendið uppi við Garð - nútímans byggilendið er merkt við puntum. A: Heimrustin við Garð; B: Uppistovubeitið, avmarkað við brotastriku og har fornfrøðiliga rannsóknarøkið er merkt við svørtum; C: Bønhústoft. D: Garðsbeitið. Garðløg eru víst við striku - við grovari striku bøgarðurin um gamla bøin; við klænari striku: garðlag, ið avmarkar Miðbø niðan móti Garðsbeitinum. 1 m er millum hæddarkurvarnar - sí Arge 1997

of what once was a heimrust, and that the settlement later moved on whilst the site remained in use as a *beiti* – that is as a grazing area. This would, as such, explain the placename element of *beiti*. If this supposition holds water, we now have a new range of sites whose placenames indicate historical settlements.

It is interesting in this context, to note that the area on the opposite bank of *Brúsá*, above *Miðbø* – and between *Miðbø* and *við Garð* – is called *Garðsbeitið*. Thus this area, although it has undergone modern development, is of archaeological interest, fig. 10.

Finally it is worth noting, that the site of

Toftanes, where the Viking-Age settlement was uncovered, is locally known, as far back as can be remembered, as the *Beitið*.

We must therefore imagine that much has changed since the settlement of *í Uppistovubeitinum* was established. The infield was not as wide as it is today and the settlement was originally established uppermost within the infield, possibly close to the stone built boundary of that time. Once the settlement was moved, the area was gradually taken in use as infield land, including the church site. It seems likely that this first happened after the church was abolished, and if this is so, it would seem that the church was not built on cultivated land, but on land pertaining to the settlement, that is the heimrust which then included *í Uppistovubeitinum* and the area lying along the eastern bank of *Brusá*[9], fig. 11.

In my opinion, the site of *í Uppistovubeitinum* must be interpreted as part of a larger and more comprehensive settlement, including the presence of the church.

As previously emphasized, church sites were placed in conjunction with settlements – or farms, pertaining to the higher social strata.

The composite character of the archaeological material, it's clear indication of the site's close contact with the outside world – as can be deduced from the pottery, metal and stone artefacts, all point to the importance of the site in this context.

These theories are exciting, however they require further investigation, and happily the area in question contains several traces of probable human activity.

On farm-mounds

Finally I would like to take the opportunity to accentuate yet another problem complex, thrown into relief by the the excavations at *í Uppistovubeitinum*.

As mentioned above, the heimrust was a clearly defined area, containing the settlement. An area settled to such an extent as the heimrust, must accumulate a certain amount of cultural deposits, which together create a farm-mound effect, well known and discussed within northern Norwegian archaeology (Bertelsen, 1989), but actual as well in various areas of the North Atlantic (Davidson *et al.,* 1983).

The thickness of the cultural layers vary according to the nature of the layers, their contents and so on. The nature of the composition of the soil is of major importance too. This is well illustrated by an example from the settlement of *á Sondum* in the village of Sandur on the island of Sandoy. As indicated by the name, the area is characterised by it's content of sand dominated soil. The settlement, mentioned in a diploma from 1412 AD, lies right on the coast. Due to a general subsidence of the earth, the area has been exposed to erosion for centuries, resulting in a clearly exposed section of the settlement. The section with it's varying cultural layers, was investigated under the Nordic Amateur Archaeological Excavation Meeting, held at Sandur in July 1994. The cultural layers consist of four different levels, which, including layers of shifting sand, reach a thickness of some four meters – and as yet, the bottom layers have not been reached! The dating of the bottom layers is as yet unsure, but they

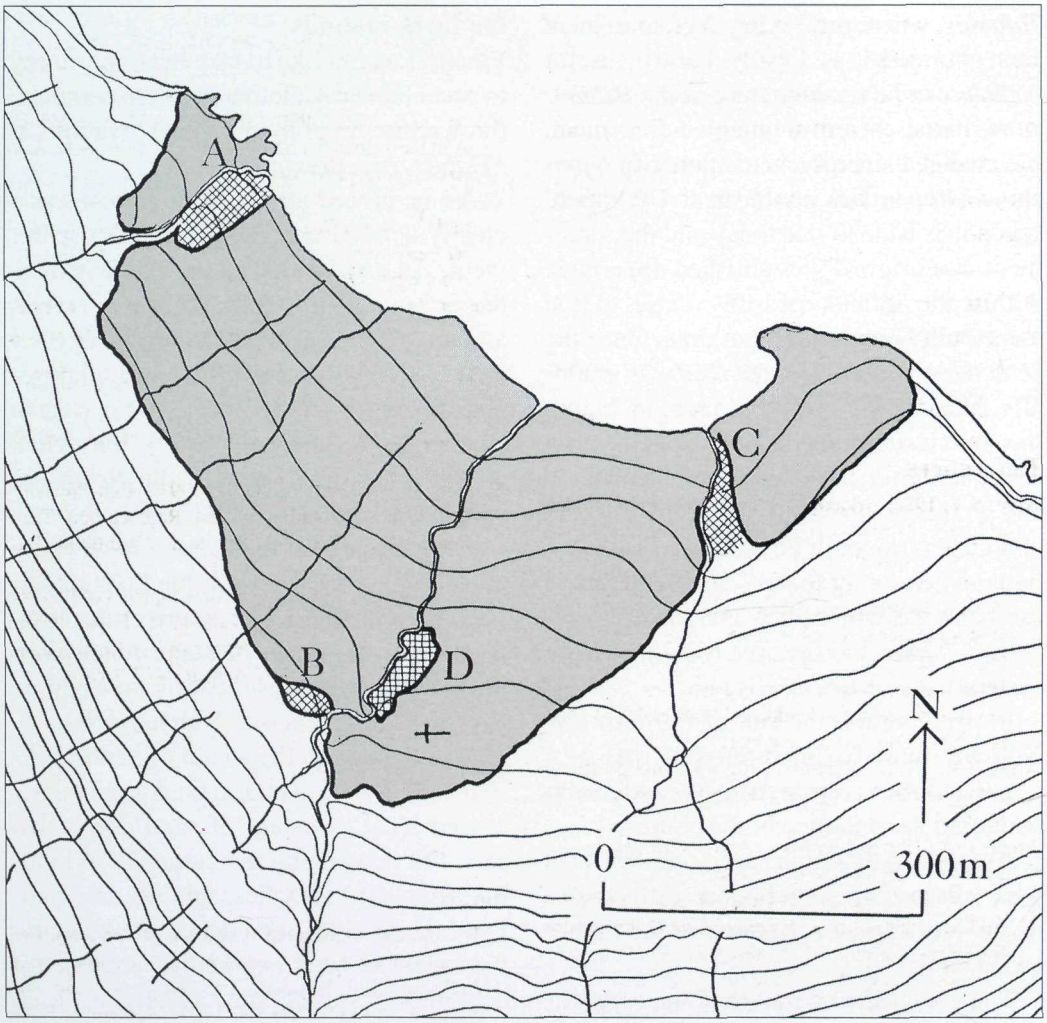

Fig. 11. Leirvík. Map showing the settlements and the extension of the old infield in ca. 1800 AD. The primary settlements with their heimrusts: A: á Toftanesi, B: við Garð and C: um Á. D: the site of í Uppistovubeitinum. The Bønhústoft is marked by a cross. There are 5 meters between each contour line - from Arge 1997

Leirvík. Yvirlitskort yvir bústaðir og gamla bøin, sum hann var um aldaskiftið 1800. Fyrndarbýlingarnir við avmerktum heimrustum: A: á Toftanesi, B: við Garð og C: um Á. D: í Uppistovubeitinum. Bønhústoft er merkt við krossi. 5 m eru millum hæddarkurvarnar - sí Arge 1997

could easily be Early Medieval or older. The same phenomenon was registered in August 1996 at the settlement of *við Neyst*, in the village of Hvalbøur on the island of

Suðuroy, and several other examples could be mentioned.

Í Uppistovubeitinum is a perfect example of a Faroese farm-mound, and it seems clear, that the problem complex of farm-mounds is highly actual in the Faroe Islands.

Acknowledgements.

Thanks to Ditlev L. D. Mahler for reading the manuscript and to Susan Dall Mahler who kindly translated the manuscript into English.

References

Arge, S.V. 1988. Arkæologisk undersøgelse af middelalderlige bopladslevn i bygden Sandavágur på Færøerne. *Hikuin* 14: 285-296.

Arge, S.V. 1990. *Landnamet på Færøerne*. En diskussion og vurdering af teorierne om, hvornår det fandt sted, med særlig vægt på teorier baseret på arkæologisk materiale. Hovedfagsspeciale i Middelalderarkæologi, Aarhus Universitet 1986. Udg. af Føroya Fornminnissavn og Middelalder-arkæologisk Nyhedsbrev. Tórshavn og Højbjerg.

Arge, S.V. 1995a. Keipurin – og aðrir nýliga funnir fornir lutir av báti og við tilknýti til sjógvin. *Varðin* 62: 62-72.

Arge, S. V. 1995b. Mergsogin bein – ein aldargamal matsiður. *Fróðskaparrit* 43: 59-65.

Arge, S.V. 1997. Føroysk búsetingarsøga – tær fornfrøðiligu heimildirnar. *Frændafundur* 2. Fyrilestrar fra føroyskari-íslendskari ráðstevnu í Tórshavn 28.-29. juni 1995. *In:* Sigurðardóttir, T. and Snædal, M. (eds.). Annales Scientiarum Færoensis – Supplementum XXIV. Føroya Fróðskaparfelag: 41-58.

Bertelsen, R. 1989. Gårdshaugene i Nord-Norge. på nordatlantiske teller. *Hikuin* 15: 171-182.

Crumlin-Pedersen, O. 1979. Lynæsskibet og Roskilde Søvej. *13 bidrag til Roskilde by og egn's historie.* Udgivet i anledning af Roskilde Museum's 50 års jubileum. F.A. Birkebæk (ed.) Roskilde Muesum: 65-77.

Dahl, S. 1958. Toftarannsóknir í Fuglafirði. *Fróðskaparrit* 7: 118-146.

Davidson, D.A., Lamb, R. and Simpson, I. 1983. Farm Mounds in North Orkney: A Preliminary Report. *Norwegian Archaeological Review*. 16: 39-44.

Færden, G. 1990: Metallgjenstander. *De arkeologiske utgravninger i Gamlebyen, Oslo*. Bind 7. Dagliglivets gjenstander – del I. Schia, E. and Molaug, P.B. (eds.) Øvre Ervik: 181-292.

Hansen, S.S. 1991 (1990). Toftanes: A Faroese Viking Age Farmstead from the 9-10th Centuries A.D. *Acta Archaeologica* 61: 44-53.

Lüdtke, H. 1989. The Bryggen Pottery I. Introduction and Pingsdorf Ware. *The Bryggen Papers. Supplemantary Series. No. 4.* University of Bergen. Norwegian University Press.

Mahler, D.L.D. 1991 (1990). Argisbrekka: New evidence of shielings in the Faroe Islands. *Acta Archaeologica* Vol. 61: 60-72.

Stoklund, M. 1991. Nyfund fra Færøerne. *Nytt om runer* 6: 4.

Stoklund, M. 1996 (1995). Et færøsk runefund. *Nytt om runer* 10: 6-8.

Stuiver, M. and Pearson, G.W. 1993: High-Precision Bidecadal Calibration of the Radiocarbon Time Scale, AD 1950-500 BC and 2500-6000 BC. *Radiocarbon* 35, No. 1: 1-24.

Thorsteinsson, A. 1981. On the development of Faroese Settlements. *In:* Bekker-Nielsen, H., Foote, P. and Olsen, O. (eds.): *Proceedings of the Eigth Viking Congress, Aarhus 24-31 August 1977*: 189-202.

Notes

1. This article is an updated and somewhat amplified version of a paper presented at the: »Tromsø Arctic Archaeological Seminar. The North Atlantic and North-West Russia AD 800-1400«, September 7-9th 1996.
2. The excavations were carried out by the museum's archaeological staff in co-operation with various teams af archaeology students from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the USA, as well as with local help. The investigations were led, under the author's supervision, firstly by Kirstin Eliasen, then Gudny Vang, Henriette Rendsbro, and finally by Kirstin Eliasen. I wish to thank all of my associates for their help throughout the years.
3. Thanks to Per Kristian Madsen, Vejle Museum, Denmark, for having determined a smaller selection of both types.

4. Securing the preservation of the numerous wooden finds was a financial headache, however thanks to a subsidy from *Føroya Fornminnagrunnur*, Tórshavn, a great number of selected wooden implements could be preserved by the Danish National Museum's Department for Woodpreservation in Brede. The remainder of wooden implements will be preserved by the Faroese National Museum's own conservator Súsanna Joensen.
5. Thanks to financial support from *Vísindagrunnur Føroya Sparikassa*, Tórshavn, Claus Malmros of the National Museum's Department of Natural Science, Copenhagen, has kindly agreed to analyse the botanical – that is timber – remains from the site. Currently 90 find numbers have been wood-analysed in: »Woodanalysis of wooden implements from í Uppistovubeitinum, Leirvík, the Faroe Islands. Fmnr. 6705/SNR:4815 – NNU A.7709. Claus Malmros The National Museum's Department of Natural Sciences June 17th 1997.« The data presented in this article stems herefrom.
6. Jan Bill, The National Museum's Marinarchaeological Reasearch Department, Roskilde, has kindly agreed to identify a selection of the metal finds.
7. Dorete Bloch, Føroya Náttúrugripasavn (The Faroese Museum of Natural History), Tórshavn, has kindly analysed the teeth material in order to determine the species present. She has also agreed to analyse the collection of animal bones.
8. The dating was kindly performed by Kåre Lund Rasmussen, Carbon-14 Laboratory, The National Museum – Denmark and Greenland's Geological Department.
   K-6629: (Juniperus) 745 ± 45 14C-years pre – 1950
   K-6630: (Patella vulgata) 520 ± 50 14C-years pre – 1950
9. I have presented these thougths before, the last time in 1995, see Arge, 1997.