# UCLA GRADUATE QUARTERLY



### GRADUATE QUARTERLY

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### **NEWS**

27 Graduate Student Accomplishments

**ON THE COVER:** (from left to right) Jesse Byock (Professor of Germanic Languages), Davide Zori, Marianna Betti (Archaeology graduate student), Ashley Byock (Northwestern Graduate Student), Asdis Hermonowiz (UCLA undergraduate student), in southwestern Iceland.





### of the viking age

or the last four years, Davide Zori has worked at the Hrísbrú site in the Mosfell Valley in southwestern Iceland, part of an international team led by his mentor, Jesse Byock, which is studying the Viking Age. Over time, they had mapped artifacts at the site using different computer programs, and as Davide approached his dissertation writing, he didn't know how to integrate the data.

"There are so many technologies that you need to know," Davide says. "It's virtually impossible for one person." However, he learned from a colleague that people at the Experiential Technologies Center had several computer programs and the knowledge to connect them. For Davide's project, that meant "pulling out the relevant mapping data from each program and making a better map in one program," he says. "That simplified matters and made good maps." The mapping program Davide settled on was ArcGIS, a system that

handles geographically referenced information

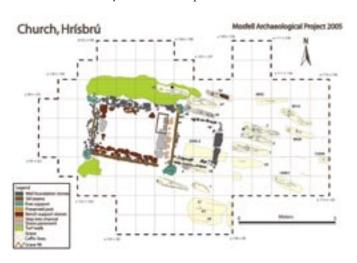
and makes it easier to record, store, update, edit,
analyze and display a large amount of
data. The maps produced by this system are no ordinary maps. If you click

clench bolts

Davide Zori , who was recently awarded a Fulbright Fellowship, with Guðmundur Ólafsson, Head of the Archaeological Department, National Museum of Iceland, at their site in Hrísbrú, Mosfell Valley.

on a particular object or feature, the program will bring up all the pertinent information researchers at the site discovered about it.

So far, the program has provided Davide and his mentor with maps to submit with articles for publication, but the possibilities are broader. For example, the program will help Davide plot the instasite distribution of particular artifacts found at the archaeological sites in the Mosfell Valley. Davide has a particular interest in a certain





the Hrísbrú site

kind of nail used in ship construction — a clench bolt, analogous to a modern screw-postulating that parts of ships might have been symbolically included in Christian burials as a reference to the old pagan Scandinavian beliefs. The program could help him test his theory. Moreover, ETC connected Davide and his mentor with Jennie Dillon, an MA student in the Architecture Department who is helping with additional projects, including a three-dimensional projection of what one church looked like. "It's opened up a brand new arm of our study of the Viking world," Davide says, as the reconstructions help researchers "visualize what the landscape and buildings looked like."

with getting the best visual effect, whereas the Center's first goal is the highest possible degree of historical accuracy.

To accomplish this means "finding every existing document" that describes a site, Guban says, and in some cases, working with scholars in different corners of the world. Last summer, he was part of an ETC crew based in Rome, discussing various reconstructions with Italian archaeologists and scholars, editing, fine-tuning, and "making sure that everybody can agree on what actually existed back then."

Besides supporting his studies and offering travel opportunities, his ETC assignments further Guban's architectural education. As a professional architect, Guban says, he will be called on "to simplify the visualization of a project and discuss it with clients," presenting proposals to people who may know little about design. This task is central to ETC assignments, and he has also enhanced his modeling skills.

For Deters, the contribution may end up being more direct. Sullivan's work was part of a tradition, dating back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, in which proportioning systems, based on geometric shapes and prescribed ratios, was a determining factor in architectural design. That tradition fell out of use in the 20<sup>th</sup> century but has seen something of a revival recently. For now, Deters isn't using that tradition directly, but "it has started to influence my way of thinking," he says.