

Special Lectures

Iceland in the Viking Age

Professor Orri Vésteinsson
University of Iceland



Dates: Day1 October 8 Wed. 2025

Day2 November 5 Wed. 2025

Day 3 November 26 Wed. 2025

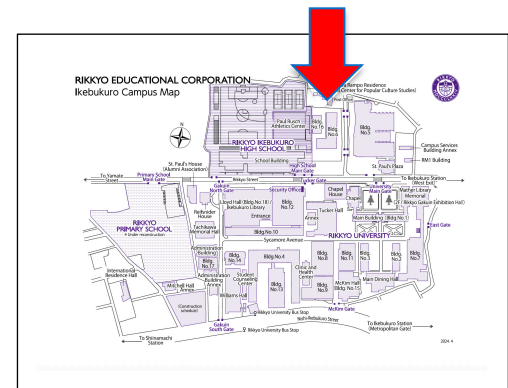
Time: 18:00–19:30 (JST) for each lecture

Venue: Room 6209, Building 6, Ikebukuro Campus, Rikkyo University

Address: Nishi-Ikebukuro 3-34-1 Toshima-ku Tokyo

Online: <https://rikkyo-ac-jp.zoom.us/j/89217079296> Pass: 250523

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In three successive lectures an introduction will be given to the colonisation and the subsequent development of a new society on the large North Atlantic island of Iceland in the 9th to 12th centuries AD. Until recently our understanding of this period has been based primarily on the Sagas and historical works of the 12th to 13th centuries, a remarkable set of texts evidencing a unique cultural flowering in this unlikely setting. The Sagas look back on the Viking Age and give a vivid portrayal of persons and events set in that period which have shaped our ideas about it, but recent archaeological discoveries are increasingly showing that while the Sagas' view of Icelandic Viking Age society is not necessarily wrong it is limited and skewed by later ideas and interests. The lectures will present an up-to-date outline of current knowledge about Iceland in the Viking Age.

Lecture Schedule

October 8 – Discovery and Colonisation (to 950)

Tracing the first settlement of Iceland by North European farmers and exploring the environmental and social consequences of this transformation.

November 5 – A New Society Takes Shape (950–1050)

Examining economic structures, political organisation, and religious change during a century of consolidation and identity formation.

November 26 – Medieval Institutions (from 1050)

Analysing the emergence of judicial and ecclesiastical systems, Iceland's ties to Norway and the Church, and the cultural foundations of the 13th-century flowering.

About the Lecturer

Orri Vésteinsson (Ph.D., University of London, 1996) is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Iceland (since 2010) and Guest Researcher, College of Arts, Rikkyo University (2025). His major works include:

- *The Christianization of Iceland: Priests, Power, and Social Change 1000–1300* (Oxford UP, 2000)
- *Polity and Neighbourhood in Early Medieval Europe* (with Julio Escalona & Stuart Brookes, Brepols, 2019)
- *Small Churches and Religious Landscapes in the North Atlantic c. 900–1300* (with Jette Arneborg, Brepols, 2025)



Pingvellir in 2018 (Photo by Minoru Ozawa)

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