



Climate change or human impact? Deciphering the record of environmental change in the Faroe Islands.

Raymond Bradley (1), William D'Andrea (2) (), Nicholas Balascio (3) (), and Gregory de Wet (4) ()

(1) Climate System Research Center, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, United States (rbradley@geo.umass.edu), (2) Lamont Earth Observatory, Columbia University, New York, United States (dandrea@ldeo.columbia.edu), (3) William and Mary College, Richmond, Virginia, United States (nbalascio@wm.edu), (4) University of Colorado, Boulder, United States (gdewet89@gmail.com)

Archeological evidence from the Faroe Islands is primarily a record of Norse (or perhaps Celtic) settlement in Medieval time (post- AD 650). Settlers arrived with farm animals (pigs, sheep, goats and cows), and began to grow barley and oats. Grazing animals (especially sheep) had a major influence on vegetation; today the islands are devoid of trees, and shrubs are rare. But there is evidence for an earlier period of environmental disturbance in several lake sediment records. Was this the result of climatic change, or did people and their animals arrive in the Faroes before the 7th century? We explore this interesting question using multi-proxy geochemical data and sedimentary DNA in lake sediment cores from the Faroe Islands.