



Seafaring: Early Medieval Studies on the Islands of the North Atlantic
transformative networks, skills, theories, and methods for the future of the field
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC, Canada
April 11-13, 2019

IONA: Seafaring is a three-day international conference on the islands of the North Atlantic that brings together scholars of early medieval Ireland, Britain, and Scandinavia to imagine cooperative, interdisciplinary futures for the study of North Atlantic archipelagos during the early medieval period. The conference will be held at Simon Fraser University at the downtown campus in Vancouver, BC, April 11-13, 2019.

Designed less around traditional conference presentations and more as a “workspace,” *IONA: Seafaring* is designed to provide time and space for nascent and developing work, intellectual risk-taking, collaboration and cooperation. In addition to workshops, seminars and labs, three plenary themes with speakers and workshops will shape the conference; our *tentatively* slated plenary speakers are indigenous studies/medieval studies with Abraham Anghik Ruben, an artist whose work fuses Inuit story and Old Norse myth; Nicola Griffiths, award-winning novelist of *Hild* (2013), set in seventh-century Britain; and Elaine Treharne, the Roberta Bowman Denning Professor of Humanities, Professor of English, and Director of Stanford's Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis whose work is in book history, text technologies and early English and Welsh literature. With its non-traditional formats and inclusive experimental approaches, *IONA: Seafaring* aims to forge reciprocal connections between artists and scholars in contemporary art and poetics, indigenous studies, and new media, broadening, complicating, and enriching those fields in counterpoint to academic work in early medieval North Atlantic studies. These kinds of networks between early medievalists, and between early medieval studies and other disciplines can give scholars foundations to build robust and productive new knowledge in the field and reshape its role in the contemporary academy, society, and politics.

We invite proposals for (at least) three kinds of sessions: seminars, labs, and workshops (not paper proposals at this stage). These sessions will meet for two days of the conference in order to foster extended discussion. These sessions will be designed to develop competencies and skills, enrich interdisciplinary and comparative methods, and widen geographic and temporal scope for early medievalists.

- Seminars will take up a specific focus on an issue, question, methodology, or problem and consist of a group of around 8 to 12 scholars, sharing work on the seminar's focus. Organizers will circulate their own CFP for their seminar (but we at IONA will help!), and choose their own participants.
- Labs will put scholars into conversation to test out new theoretical engagements, methods, or approaches. An organizer might want to assign an instrumental text beforehand or ask participants to take on a particular kind of methodological or

theoretical angle to produce a collaborative learning experience and opportunities for discovery. Organizer of a lab may want to select or solicit participants with a CFP of their own.

- Workshops will be run by an expert in a particular competency—e.g. early medieval palaeography or critical race theory or Old Norse—as a kind of bootcamp for scholars in the field. These could include active learning, a tutorial on a subject, or a masterclass in a particular skill.

For all three, organizers will have complete autonomy in organizing their session, from soliciting proposals to running the seminars. For all three of these kinds of sessions, organizers may wish to ask participants to pre-circulate materials. The conference is open to other types of session proposals as well.

To propose a seminar, workshop or lab, please send a 250-word proposal to Matt Hussey (mhussey@sfu.ca) by March 15, 2018.

The conference is subject to several grant applications, but the current plan is to make funding available to session organizers.