

VSNR Funding – Summer School in Scandinavian Manuscript Studies

Advanced Level at the Summer School in Scandinavian Manuscript Studies (Reykjavík, 15th-25th June 2026)

From 15th-25th June 2026, I attended the Summer School in Scandinavian Manuscript Studies at the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík. The Summer School is a collaboration between the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, the University of Iceland, the University of Copenhagen and the National and University Library of Iceland. There are three levels to the course: Basic, Advanced, and Master Class. I previously attended the Basic level in 2024 and

returned this year for the Advanced level on ‘Theory and Practice of Scholarly Editing’ with the help of a Research Support Fund grant from the Viking Society.



The aim of the Advanced level is to focus on editorial technique and the theory and practice of textual criticism. Over the course of ten days, we engaged in a variety of topics, including medieval palaeography, advanced codicology, textual criticism, stemmatology, fragmentology, paper history, and more. As a literary scholar, this summer school is always a wonderful opportunity to expand my knowledge about manuscripts, textual criticism, and edition making.

This year was the first year to hold sessions on ‘Non-invasive analysis of medieval pigments’, where we saw how FORS and XRS systems are used to analyse the pigments and dyes found

in medieval illuminations. We had an opening lecture from Maurizio Aceto, who then demonstrated the techniques in the Edda Reading Room with a variety of pigments found in manuscript initials. The other highlight of the course was on Saturday, when Paola Peratello taught a full day on ‘Digital tools in manuscript studies.’ I have been keen to develop my skills with digital tools for manuscripts and edition-making, and this course provides a strong foundation in training. After a taster session in XML in 2024, this time around we dug deeper into the system, to both transcribe manuscripts and to catalogue materials at the National Library. On the Saturday we learned about programmes such as eScriptorium and Transkribus, both of which I hope will prove useful in future research.

There were also plenty opportunities for fun and creative learning as well. As this year was held in June, we had the day off for Iceland’s National Holiday on 17th June. I and several of my fellow summer school students, from both the Basic and Advanced course, were able to see the parade and enjoy the day. A highlight was going to the National Museum of Iceland, where I saw the Valbjófsstaður Door, which depicts a grateful lion episode and of which I am considering examining as part of postdoctoral research in the coming years.



On the Sunday, we took an excursion to the Snæfellsnes peninsula to visit places like Helgafell and the Berserkjagata. As I focused on *Eyrbyggja saga* in my MPhil, it was fantastic to actually see the area in-person and get a feel of what it would have

been like in the medieval period (and why it seems that the peninsula has so much undead activity)! We also had several workshops nearer the end of the course where we got to make our own paper, write with a quill on vellum, pour a paper seal, and sew our own quires together into a little notebook. It's sessions like these that add so much to the summer school, and that really help to exemplify how much work goes into producing the manuscripts that we see in the reading room or the archives.

Through this Advanced course, I have strengthened skills and developed new ones, and have taken with me a greater interest in the digital tools available in Old Norse studies and the importance of manuscripts even for saga scholars like me. It is always a wonderful time where I meet my fellow Old Norse scholars and learn so much. This year felt especially lovely, as I met many new friends and colleagues, and was both able to strengthen the skills I gained from the previous course and continue to develop new ones. I hope to continue next year into the Masters' course in Copenhagen and complete all three levels of the course. I would like to thank again the Viking Society for their generous grant, which allowed me to pay for the flights to the summer school this year.



I also kept a Cat Count during the Summer School and am happy to report that I saw twenty cats in ten days, including one that kept sneaking into my accommodation to pet! So please enjoy a lovely selection of some of the friendly felines I met!

