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Mellon Foundation Area and International Studies Fellowships for Incoming Graduate Students

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The Mellon Foundation Fellowship allowed me to complete so many more projects than I thought possible, and I cannot communicate enough thanks or gratitude. None of the projects I completed or the skills I gained during my research trip this summer would have been possible without this fellowship from the Mellon Foundation. My research trip had three legs: first a few months in Iceland, then a week in Greenland, and finally two weeks in Copenhagen.

The majority of my time from May to August I spent in Reykjavík, Iceland, developing and maintaining my own Icelandic language skills in preparation for teaching Modern Icelandic language at UW-Madison for the 2017-2018 academic year. I developed a syllabus and a detailed course plan for beginner's Icelandic. Icelandic language materials are hard to come by outside of Iceland, so being there for three months gave me access to teaching materials like newspaper articles, travel advertisements, tourist brochures, side-by-side Icelandic-English booklets, Icelandic grammar workbooks, children's books and young adult novels, and even mundane objects like food labels that contribute so much to students' understandings of the material culture of a language and a place.

Also while in Iceland, I completed an extensive transcription project: over one thousand stanzas of an eighteenth century Icelandic *ríma*, The *Ríma* of Hrafnkell Freysgoði, discovered by a colleague in the archives in Egilsstaðir. *Rímur* are part of an oral saga tradition in Iceland that stretches back hundreds of years. There is, as of September 2017, no edition of this particular *ríma*, even though the saga from which it draws its source material, *Hrafnkels saga freysgoða*, is one of the most popular and widely-read Sagas of the Icelanders. This summer I completed a transcription of the entire manuscript and began work both on updating the orthography to reflect Modern Icelandic spelling and on translating the *ríma* into English to make it accessible to a wider audience. Working with this manuscript coincided nicely with my current research on Icelandic and Icelandic-American heritage in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries through the Icelandic manuscripts housed in the Department of Special Collections at UW-Madison's Memorial Library.

July saw me to Narsarsuaq, Greenland, where I visited and photographed several medieval Norse settlement sites as part of my research for my dissertation on sailing, settlement, and spirituality in the Old Norse-Icelandic sagas. Part of my dissertation will examine the economic, religious, and social realities of the medieval Norse settlements in the Greenland and compare those to the narrative presentation of these settlements in the Vinland sagas (*Eiríks saga rauða* and *Grænlendinga saga*). Visiting sites like Qassiarsuq (identified by scholars as Brattahlíð, Eirik the Red's estate in East Greenland), Igaliku (identified as Garðar, the medieval bishop's residence), and Hvalsey church gave me perspective on the scale and production capacity of large Norse farms in Greenland, as well as perspective on the importance of trade in maintaining the farms into the late middle ages. My photographs, monographs, and other research materials gathered during this leg of my trip will serve as a firm foundation for a section of my dissertation.

My time in Copenhagen, Denmark, was a return to my research in Icelandic-American heritage and to my *ríma* transcription. I completed the second level (the "Advanced" course) of the International Summer School in Manuscript Studies at the University of Copenhagen. There I worked with medieval and post-medieval Scandinavian manuscripts: I studied scripts, transcriptions, and critical editions of medieval and post-medieval works; I contributed to the online database for Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts, www.handrit.is; and I learned basic competency in XML, a markup language used to encode text and vital for preparing digital editions of manuscripts and works.