

Waves of Colonization and the Sea of Moyle: Linking population history, resilience and landscape change of island communities.

A new AHRC Project Starting October 2018

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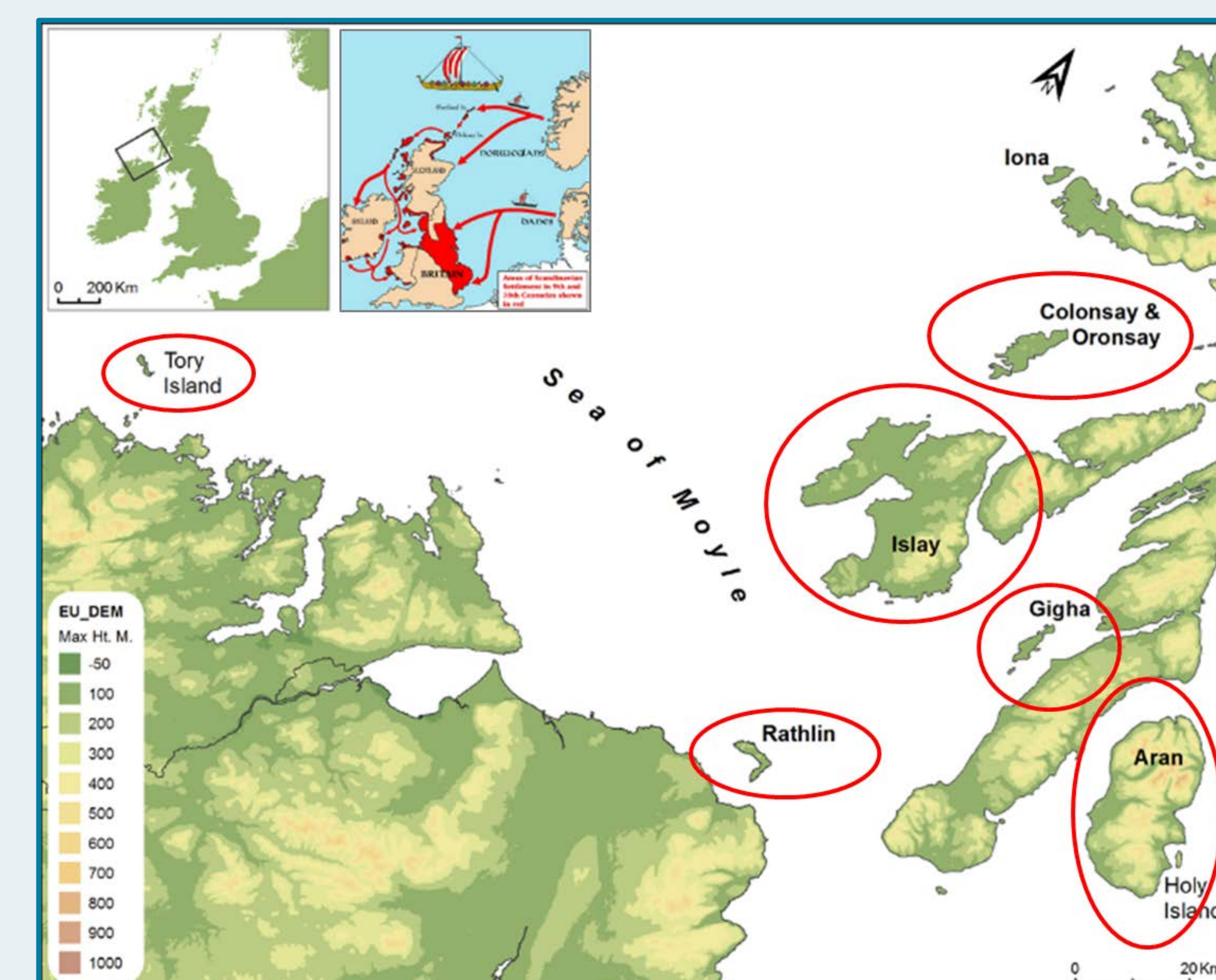
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/ SUMMARY

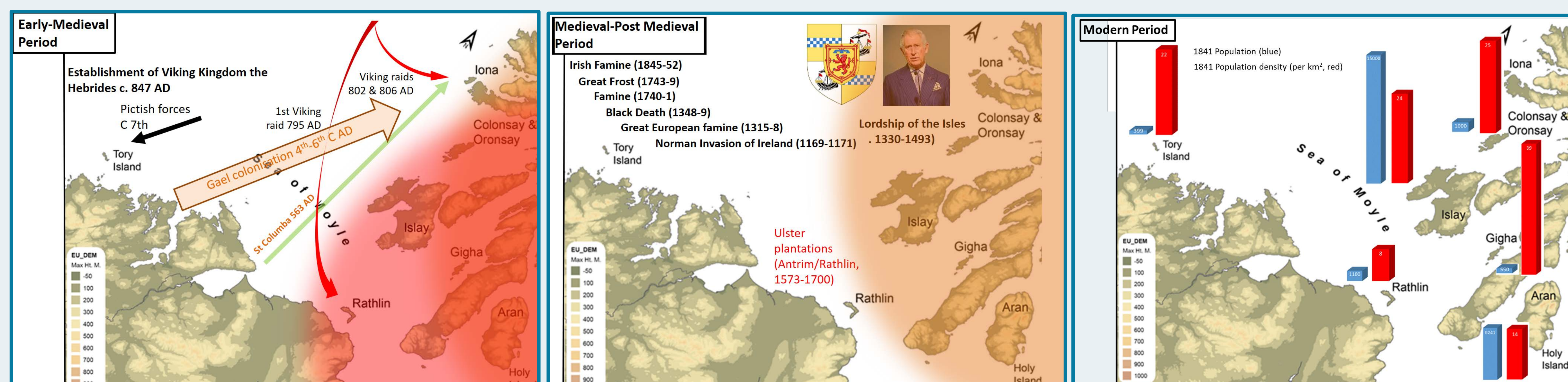
- Small islands present us with the opportunity to study the sustainability and resilience of complex socioecological systems over time. This project is investigating the changing landscapes, environment and population of 6 islands around the Sea of Moyle over the last three millennia.
- Today area is seen as a remote border zone between Scotland and Ireland. In the past this was not the case, and the Sea of Moyle was at times a coherent and central geographic region crossed by sea voyagers and linked by culture and kinship. The islands (Rathlin, Tory, Arran, Islay, Gigha & Colonsay) all saw the establishment of early Christian communities, were within the Dál Riata over-Kingdom in the 6th to early 7thC, were subject to early Viking Raids and then formed part of the Scandinavian Suðreyjar, or "Southern Isles".
- The later Medieval and post Medieval history of the islands is more complex and divergent but all six islands saw major, if not remarkable changes in population over the last 300 years.
- The project will be the first to explicitly compare archaeological proxies from islands in the same region with archaeological and historical data using new techniques (sedaDNA and lipid biomarkers) in a controlled archaeological setting.

/ SEA OF MOYLE: THE STUDY ISLANDS TODAY



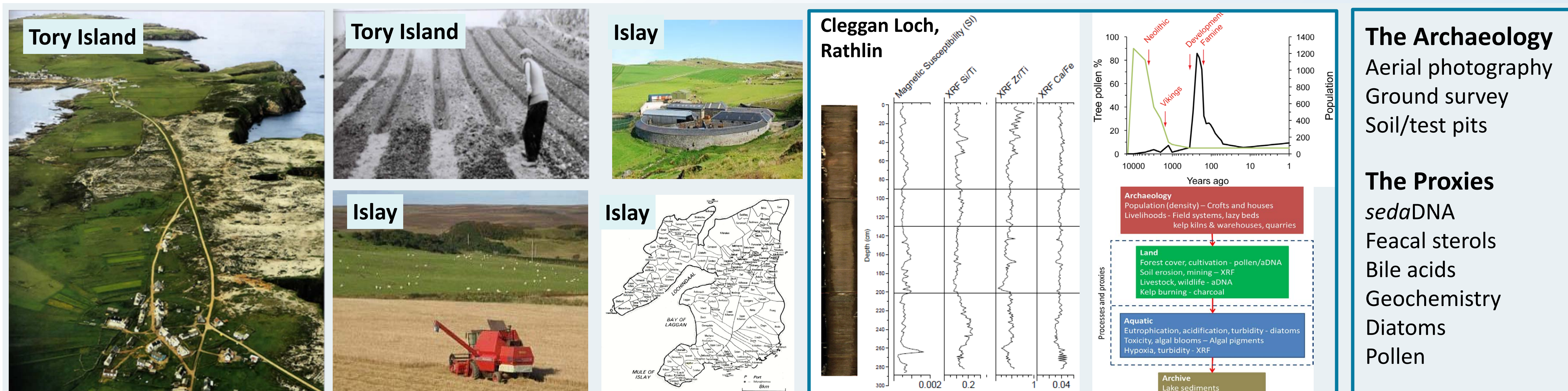
The six islands surrounding the Sea of Moyle included in the project. Now politically isolated (Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland).

/ WAVES OF COLONISATION



From the Early Medieval Period (c. 1600 BP) to the 19th Century the area has seen invasions, immigration (forced and unforced), emigration, famines – all resulting in large population fluctuations. The area shaded red in the Early-Medieval period is the Scandinavian Kingdom established in the Southern Hebrides-Isle of Man region in the 9th Century AD.

/ ENVIRONMENTAL TRAJECTORIES: ARCHAEOLOGY AND PROXIES



Tory Island has lost nearly 1/3rd of its soil – when and why? In contrast Islay has remained a prosperous agricultural island. What has caused these differing trajectories – what is the balance or geology, location, history-culture and their interaction with climate and disease?

/ THE MALT WHISKEY CONNECTION



Islay has 10 whiskey distilleries (e.g. Laphroaig, Lagavulin, Ardbeg.). The highest density in the world – partly due to the excellent land for cereal cultivation.

