

Durham University IMEMS Library Fellow Report

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The Durham University IMEMS Library Fellowship gave me the opportunity to spend one month in Durham and explore the Palace Green collections. The project for which this Fellowship was used is entitled 'Printing and Marketing the Greek Classics in Sixteenth-Century Europe'. This project aims at examining the rationale behind the publication of classical texts in the original Greek in Western Europe, the uses that these were put in, their distribution and popularity and intends to chart the development of these trends throughout the sixteenth century.

For the Fellowship, I had proposed to look at books printed in the Holy Roman Empire and Italy. As in the meantime, however, the focus of my research shifted to France, my time at Durham was spent focusing on Greek printing in France. This I pursued in three ways.

First, I worked on the completion of an article that discussed the printing activities of the Adrien de Turnèbe, Royal Professor of Greek and Royal Printer of Greek in Paris (1512-65).

Second, it was spent on inspecting 16th century Greek editions published in France. During my time in Durham I was very helpfully provided by the Library staff a list of the Library holdings in Greek editions of the 16th century (about 350 items), out of which I was able to inspect about 80 editions (about 20-22%). This was a very useful exercise, as it increased the number of editions I have inspected so far from about 220 items to about 300 items. During the inspection, and in accordance with my previous work on the topic, this research helped establish the networks of printers – publishers – editors – and patrons. It also helped clarify issues of size, format and type of these books. Finally, by observing the existence (or not) of annotations on these editions, I gained a greater deal of insight into the usage of these books. Furthermore, it identified that most of the books I was interested in (16th century Greek books published in France) belonged to one specific collection of the Palace Green/Barker Research Library, that of the library of Martin Joseph Routh (1755-1854), a patristics scholar and President of Magdalen College, Oxford. Routh had bequeathed his rich collection of printed books to the University of Durham, a scholarly collection which contains approximately 16,500 titles. Among its holdings, the inspection helped identify about 8-9 editions, for which (as far as I am aware) no other known copy survives. This of course has been communicated to the librarians of the Palace Green Library, as it is difficult to know which ones are the rarest books in any given collection.

Finally, I was able to undertake some background reading on the history of the book more generally and the history of French printing more in particular from the library rich reference collection shelved at the Palace Green. After assessing my data, this research will help me write one or two articles on the subject, which will later be included in a monograph on the same topic.