**Durham IMEMS Library Fellow Report**

**Dr. Anna Reynolds**

**‘Binding Waste in Early Modern England’**

I was awarded a one month IMEMS library fellowship in order to survey the binding waste in Durham’s early modern book collections. The findings of this fellowship form part of a larger research project exploring the pervasiveness of wastepaper in early modern England, which will incorporate surveys of the binding waste in Thomas Plume’s Library, Maldon; Innerpeffray Library, Perthshire; and the early modern books at the Harry Ransom Center; Princeton; and the Henry E. Huntington Library. These surveys will enable me to overview the chronology and patterns of wastepaper use between 1500 and 1700, focussing primarily on British libraries but with attention to the transcontinental crossings of early modern books, waste, and readers. I have been able to trace shifts such as the materials in use (monastic fragments, contemporary documents, printed waste, and, by the late seventeenth century, damasked waste sheets); binding format (wrappers, flyleaves, pasteboard, guards); and geographical distribution.

During my fellowship I focussed primarily on the library of Bishop John Cosin (1594-1672). I did so because of the richness of the binding waste within his collection, but also because his biography provides a fascinating frame for the vagaries of early modern books. At least 234 of the volumes in the Cosin Library still contain binding waste, and a significant proportion not included in this figure has been removed and stored separately. I have been able to identify the majority of the printed waste in these volumes and will provide the library with these details to supplement the binding descriptions in the online catalogue.

I will now begin to analyse the data that I have collected during the course of my IMEMS fellowship and suspect that I will find a mirroring of Bishop Cosin’s transcontinental journeys in the transcontinental make-up of his library and its bindings. I will present this case study at the 2019 conference ‘The Paper Trade of Early Modern Europe: Practices, Materials, Networks’ and in the conference proceedings that will be published by Brill’s *Library of the Written Word* series, co-edited by Daniel Bellingradt and myself. These findings will also contribute to the forthcoming online database of printed waste that I am co-curating with Megan Heffernan (De Paul University), Adam Smyth (University of Oxford). Cosin’s waste will be situated alongside a constantly expanding range of early modern waste, and will form part of an open-access platform that will enable scholars to pursue their own research projects into the lives of individual books, binders, and book-buyers, or of broader collections and patterns of wasting.

The IMEMS community have been wonderfully supportive throughout the fellowship, and a particular highlight of my time in Durham was presenting my research to IMEMS and English MA students and library staff in a show and tell session. During this session we examined a selection of bindings and discussed the material and literary life cycles of early modern books. I am grateful to IMEMS for the opportunity to undertake this project, and to the library staff who have patiently and generously assisted my research throughout the fellowship. I know that I will continue to make use of their generosity and knowledge as I pursue my research into Bishop John Cosin and his books, and I hope to return to the library in the near future: I am particularly keen to examine the bindings at Ushaw College and in the Routh collection.