

IMEMS/Castle End of Fellowship Report 2024

I am extremely grateful to IMEMS and University College, Durham for awarding me the 2024 Slater Fellowship. I was in residence for a very productive time from the end of April until the end of June. Elizabeth Alpass and Ita Mac-Carthy (from IMEMS); Wendy Powers, and Ellen Crabtree (from Castle), in addition to the housekeeping and catering staff, and the porters were all welcoming and helpful without exception. Being in Castle was a wonderful experience.

Durham is well-situated as an important site for research on the Medieval and Early Modern sections of my book in progress: *Cooking Across the Canon: Money, Labor, and Trade in Literary Cuisine*. Due to my involvement in the Durham IMEMS/Blackfriars (in Newcastle) Eat Medieval collaboration, I knew that Durham offered excellent resources in culinary history, from Professor Giles E.M. Gaspar, the library and beyond. Given the centrality of Eat Medieval in my research, Durham's possession of an important copy of The Medieval *Forme of Cury* cookbook, and the enthusiastic support of Ellen Crabtree and Dan Nowell (then Head Chef at Castle), my scheduled Slater Lecture on 11 June transformed into a collaborative series of short talks by members of the Eat Medieval community accompanied by a series of tastings. Illness and other obstacles precluded the presence of some scheduled participants, but the presentations included the works of Professor Gaspar and Andy Hook, owner of Blackfriars; Durham doctoral students Florence Swan and Toby Doneghan-Cross; Medieval food researcher Jennie Hood; and myself. The evening appeared to be a great success.

The research period included a number of ancillary events at Durham, Blackfriars, and beyond, which shaped my thinking and added to my research perspective in important ways. Among these events was the Leeds Symposium on Food History and Traditions, the IMEMS sessions on "Asian Connections: Flows of People, Medicines, Ideas, and Practices," a Cambridge University conference (flagged by Rosi Song) "Global Recipes in the Early Modern World: Ingredients, Actors, Exotica," The 23rd Blackfriars, IMEMS Lecture on Medieval Food (Ivan Day, speaking on "The Appetite and the Eye: Understanding the Aesthetics of Food," and the Durham Medical Humanities showcase. Each of these opportunities was fruitful and I appreciate being able to partake of a range of new perspectives and knowledge that will be helpful in my book.

This convergence of events was particularly useful for the research undertaken during the Slater Fellowship, since I focused intently upon global influences on Medieval and Early Modern cookery, on herbal aspects of cookery and medicine, and on the close connections between receipts (recipes) for culinary and pharmaceutical purposes during these eras. Because these topics are so wide-reaching, I appreciated having the time and space to explore them in detail. In addition to the texts I already planned to investigate while on Fellowship, the people and events I encountered contributed unexpected paths to follow. At several events and conversations, for example, the focus turned to musk and mastic, which raised relevant questions I had not

previously planned to pursue. Such intriguing pathways appeared regularly during my Fellowship tenure.

In addition to the anticipated publications resulting from this research, I will be giving a keynote address at the Armenian Shakespeare Society conference in October as well as presenting related work at the 2025 Shakespeare Association of America conference. During the Fellowship, I applied for—and received-- Newberry Library Funding for a Medieval event this September in Chicago. The Newberry is an important site for work on early modern cooking. I will be applying for additional grants this Fall and will begin writing up the research results from my Fellowship.

In addition to a productive period of scholarship, I enjoyed visiting several local historical sites with SCR Fellow David Landes, meeting with many doctoral and undergraduate students, enjoying coffee hours and other IMEMS events, attending numerous student theatrical and musical performances, and meeting new colleagues, such as Matthew Daniel Eddy, Sukanya Miles-Watson, Rosi Song, Daniel Newman, Corinne Saunders, David Fuller, Axel Trujillo and Emily Rohrbach, in adjacent fields and beyond. Given the upheaval occurring at many universities connected with current events in the Middle East (my own university included), I was also grateful to witness Durham's calm and measured response to the encampment erected very close to my lodging.

I will be very pleased to acknowledge Durham's role in the publications and talks that will result from the Fellowship and look forward to continuing many of these new collaborations well into the future. The Eat Medieval Summer School, for example, always visits Durham University as part of its curriculum. Future treks here will be particularly welcome and poignant, given the many happy associations I will always have for the people and texts I encountered during this Slater Fellowship period.

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