

README for 'Big Names of Science' (created 06/01/16)

This file accompanies the csv file 'Big Names of Science' which lists information about 329 early modern scientific texts by 100 'Big Name' authors. The authors were selected on the basis of their reputation and prominence as early modern writers who address scientific subjects. The texts are drawn from the EEBO-TCP and ECCO-TCP, covering the period 1530 to 1724. 252 of the texts were released as EEBO-TCP Phase 1 texts and ECCO-TCP texts, and are, therefore, unrestricted.

The metadata was prepared by Alan Hogarth as part of the Mellon-funded Visualising English Print project at Strathclyde University, with supervision by Jonathan Hope. As part of the terms of our grant, we are happy to make this data freely available, though we ask that all use carry the above credit.

Although we have taken great care to check this data, there will inevitably be errors and information that is corrected by future research.

General

- Visualising English Print's datasets are built using the text files provided to the public by the Text Creation Partnership (TCP). The TCP's goal is to provide standardized, XML-encoded electronic text editions of early printed books. Files from the TCP were hand-keyed from digitized facsimiles.
- The process of selecting Big Name authors involved choosing the most well-known and influential figures of the period (Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, William Harvey etc.), followed by a search of key terms in the metadata of the TCP csv file (e.g. 'Science', 'Physics', 'Astronomy'). In order to verify their 'fame', writers selected in this way had to pass the 'Wikipedia test' – i.e. are they still well-known enough to have an article devoted to them?
- In creating a corpus of scientific texts a number of things had to be considered. For example, what types of texts constitute 'scientific texts'? The final list interprets this question broadly and encompasses a wide variety of disciplines. The csv file organises these disciplines into scientific sub-genres (see metadata below).
- There are several volumes of collected works in the corpus. Some collected works contain multiple authors, while others by single authors are expanded re-prints of work already gathered for the list, which may contain duplicate texts.
- There are some omissions from the list which are worthy of note. Translations of Aristotle's scientific works from classical sources are absent because there were no English translations of the works on 'Natural Philosophy' until the 18th century (see Charles Schmidt, *John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England* (McGill Queen's University Press, 1983)).
- Similarly, with continental authors and some domestic (Kepler, Newton etc.), Latin editions predominate in the 16th and 17th centuries. For those educated enough to take an interest in matters of natural philosophy, there would have been no urgent need of English translations.
- However, while full translations of certain authors/works are excluded from the corpus, they are frequently referenced and discussed. Aristotle, in particular, looms large as the point of departure for many new scientific developments.

- ‘Intelligencers’ – those who are not technically practitioners of natural philosophy, but disseminate ideas and writing amongst the scientific community – are also included in the list (e.g. Thomas Sprat, John Collins etc.).

Metadata

This metadata enables navigation and organisation of the corpus according to different categories (e.g. Author, Genre, Date). The generation of metadata is an ongoing process and we would encourage users to edit/modify/add to the data in the course of their research.

- **tcp** (TCPid number – this refers to the unique identifier that links the transcription to a specific text in EEBO or ECCO)
- **estc** (estc number – a unique identifier that links the text in EEBO or ECCO to the corresponding printed book)
- **Author** (as attributed in the TCP file)
- **Author 2**
- **Author 3**
- **Author 4**
- **Translator**
- **Date** (of publication as provided in the TCP file)
- **Title** (this is a shortened version of the title: in famous works this takes the popular form, in lesser known texts, generally, the initial words of the extended title)
- **Alternative Title** (the full title as originally printed)
- **Terms** (a list of key words from the TCP file which identify the subject matter of the texts)

Sub-Genres

Because of the fluidity of these genres and the ways in which they intersect, texts are assigned to sub-genres based on the prominence of a particular feature of the work. For example, there are generic crossovers with texts on Mathematics, Astronomy and Instruments – Astronomy relies on geometry, and there are a number of mathematical instruments. If the texts appear to foreground Astronomy or Instruments they are assigned to the relevant groupings. This approach is observed with every sub-genre.

- **Astronomy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Natural History** The Natural History group encompasses works on plants, animals, chemicals, minerals, metals, and other works that take the observation of the Earth/Natural environments as their subject.
- **Instruments**
- **Philosophy of Science** ‘Philosophy of Science’ includes works on methodology (i.e. Bacon, Descartes) and the wider philosophical implications of Science/the benefits of science for society, the economy, the

human condition.

- **Physics** In the 'Physics' sub-genre there are works on magnetism, motion, matter, atomic theory, vacuum, air experiments etc.
- **Science/Religion** 'Science/Religion' includes works which attempt to reconcile new developments in natural philosophy to theology, as well as works which take the cohabitation of science and religion as granted, or try to explain biblical questions (such as creation) in scientific terms.
- **Occultism** The 'Occultism' group includes work on Astrology, Alchemy and Medicine (e.g. Paracelsus). These texts are included because, at the time, they were serious disciplines. Such texts were also in conversation with other 'sciences' and used similar terminology.
- **Medicine-Anatomy** Works on Medicine have been sub-divided because of the diversity of medical texts. Again, with Disorders and Treatments, there is some crossover – texts on Disorders often offer advice on treatments. But, if the texts foreground a particular malady (e.g. scurvy) they are assigned to Disorders.
- **Medicine-Disorders**
- **Medicine-Treatments**

Modified: 08/09/16