

AUTHOR

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COUNTRY

United Kingdom

FIELD OF HUMANITIES

History

REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS ACTIVITY

1. Digital technology:

A dataset representing the contents of the casebooks, a web-based search interface and a viewer for high-resolution images of the manuscripts of the casebooks.

2. Pre-existing knowledge and skills:

Use of a database, casebook methodology for reading in detail the lives of early medics.

CASEBOOKS

The Casebooks Project has been studying the medical records of the astrologers Simon Forman and Richard Napier using 80,000 astrological records written in archaic handwriting for teaching and research.

GOALS

In the decades around 1600, the astrologers Simon Forman and Richard Napier produced one of the largest surviving sets of medical records in history. The Casebooks Project, a team of scholars at the University of Cambridge, has transformed this paper archive into a digital archive.

The Casebooks Project released the first batch of searchable cases in 2012. As the Casebooks Project released more cases and refined the search facilities, Forman's and Napier's records began to feature in new studies of the classic topics of melancholy, reproduction and gendered bodies etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

<http://www.magicandmedicine.hps.cam.ac.uk/>

<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/casebooks/1>

<https://github.com/CasebooksProject?tab=repositories>

KEY OUTCOMES

The project has five main outputs: a dataset representing the contents of the casebooks; a web-based search interface; a viewer for high-resolution images of the manuscripts of the casebooks; explanatory material about the casebooks, the history of astrology and medicine, the project and its editorial conventions and other supporting information; a programme of academic and public engagement to improve the project's research.

Casebooks engages with questions central to the histories of science and medicine and the social, cultural and intellectual histories of early modern England.

For example Kassell's 'Fruitful Bodies and Astrological Medicine' (2018) uses Forman's and Napier's casebooks to consider how queries about generation were expressed within and shaped by encounters between patients and doctors in early modern Europe.