

The word cloud below has a little more information encoded into it than usual. These are the 150 most commonly used words in the titles of books sent to the BMCR. Their size maps to the raw number of times that they were used, and their colour indicates whether the proportion of titles in which they appear is decreasing, increasing, or holding steady.⁽²⁾



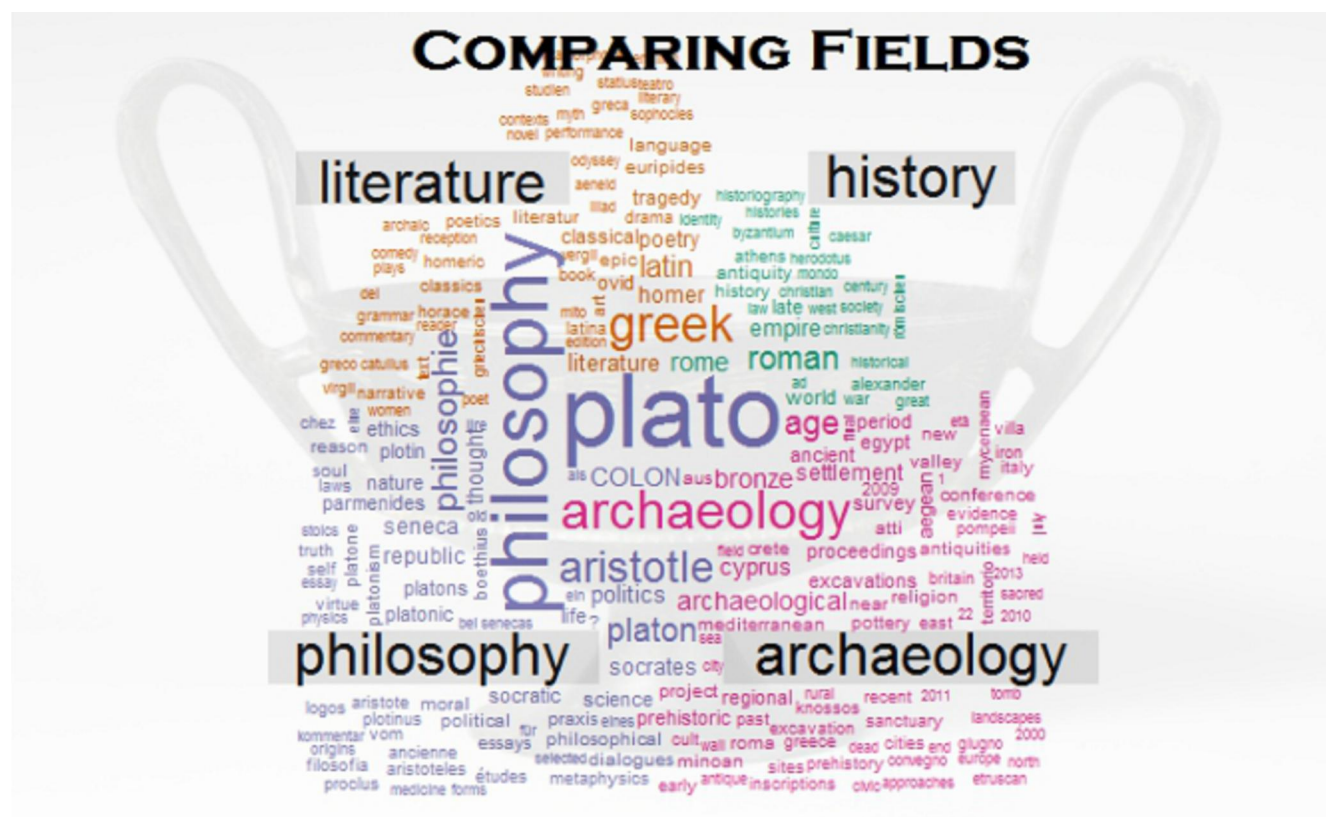
<https://libraryofantiquity.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/heatcloud.jpeg>

A quick glance at some of the words that saw the biggest jumps calls to mind the last instalment of this series (<https://libraryofantiquity.wordpress.com/2015/10/09/trends-in-classics-1990-2015/>), in which we saw that much of the explosion of books in classics over the course of this decade was driven by books in French, German and Italian. All three languages are represented in the ‘hot’ words. More significantly, among the hottest words of all—those that saw more than a fivefold increase in usage—we find ‘*international*’, ‘*conference*’ and ‘*actes*,’ suggesting that some of that growth was from an uptick in published conference proceedings.⁽³⁾ Could it be that the increase in publication was actually due to more senior faculty being pressured to show that they were productive? (I’m thinking of recent pushes (http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/the_shape_of_things_to_come_-_higher_education_global_trends_and_emerging_opportunities_to_2020.pdf) towards increasing

international ([http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU\(2015\)540370_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)) profiles (<http://www.recherche.umontreal.ca/en/research-at-udem/international/>.) Organizing and publishing conference proceedings is not *usually* done by people on the job market.

Before we move on, I want to offer one warning and point out one amusing thing—luckily, they are one in the same. It is easy to read too much into these colours. A fourfold increase sounds huge, but in absolute terms, it is often quite small. Among the ‘coldest’ words was ‘Greece’, which saw a 40% decline—but in raw terms, it slipped from appearing in 2.6% of titles to 1.5%. Whereas ‘volume’, which increased by 400%, went from appearing 0.6% of titles to 2.4%—i.e., **more than Greece**. Sequels are now more common than books about Greece!

The word cloud below is a little different. Here, the size of the words does not map directly to the number of times that they appear, but rather to how much more often one field uses the word than the others do. By way of warning, the titles were divided into these categories by linking these books to their WorldCat entries and then using WorldCat’s “topic” lists. The process is fast, but imperfect. Only ca. 9,000 of the 13,000 titles could be matched, and there is overlap between categories. A book about Lucretius, for example, would quite rightly list both ‘poetry’ and ‘philosophy’ among its topics, and as such would be included in both the ‘literature’ and ‘philosophy’ categories below.



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