

Digitization at the Bodleian Libraries

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Bodleian Libraries Staff Conference

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Background

- What do we mean by digitization?
 - The process of creating digital surrogates of physical collection items for publication online, primarily for research and teaching.
- Digitization at the Bodleian since mid-1990s
- Why digitize?
 - Widening access
 - Conservation
 - Changing user expectations
 - Global audiences (c80% of Digital Bodleian users are outside the UK)

Digitization is collaborative!

- Bodleian Exec
- Development
- Finance
- BDLSS Digital Collections
- BDLSS Digital Projects
- Special Collections Curators
- Stack staff
- Copyright specialist
- Conservation specialists
- Imaging Studio
- Cataloguers
- Public Engagement
- Communications

The idea

- Where does a digitization project start?
- Where does the initial idea come from?



Funding

- No core budget for digitization; rely on philanthropic and grant funding
- Large and small-scale projects; individual donors
- Managing funder expectations



The Tolkien Trust

The proposal and the budget

Proposal-writing, often led by Development colleagues, requires pulling together information from all the teams that will be involved and tailoring the proposal to a particular funder

- Need a clear metric for measuring progress (e.g. number of images or items to be included)
- Budgets need to cover staff costs involved (but often don't – a certain amount of work is absorbed by the library)
- Iterative process, often in collaboration with the prospective funder

Project management

- Larger projects need a dedicated project manager
- Smaller ones absorbed in BDLSS BAU work
- Ensure all elements of a project are aligned and making necessary progress

Bodleian Library Mus. 400 b.46 (20)

<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/bfaa4df7-a576-4b25-a659-23217eff7924/>



Selection

- Which collections are in scope?
- What is the nature of the material? Bound volumes, loose leaves, scrolls? (Affects costs)
- What proportion of the collections are in scope? Digitization of full shelfmarks preferred.
- Do we have exact page counts?
- Do we have reliable average page counts?

Armenian: Bodleian Library MS. Arm. D. 13

Illuminated Armenian Gospels with Eusebian canons. 17th century, dated 1609; 312ff

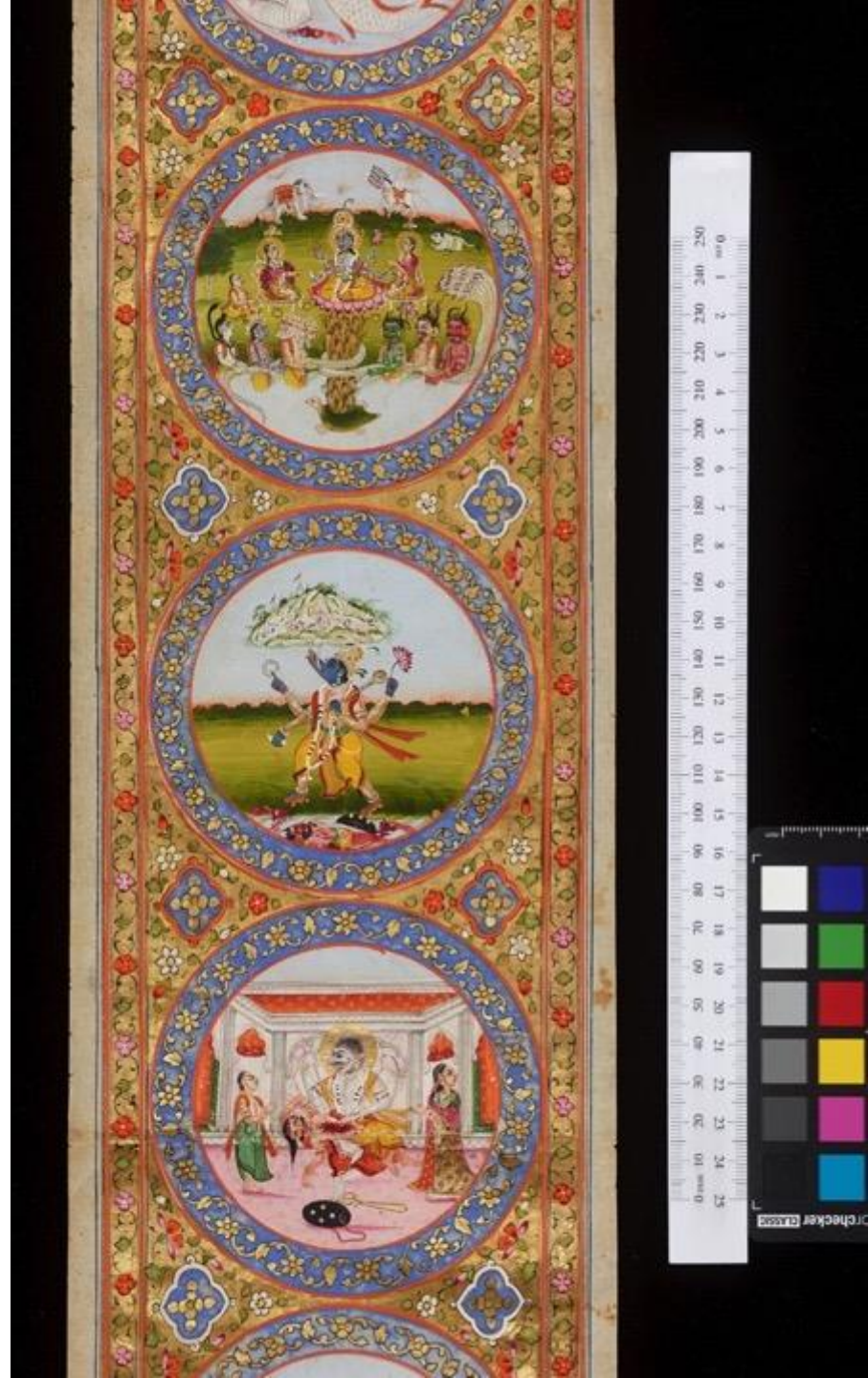
<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/487e5f8e-d32e-4487-a34f-5c259fe79185/surfaces/d8b89756-c863-4811-80ed-b3d1329e091f/>



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Rights and reuse triage

- Are the materials out of copyright?
- Are there third-party rights to negotiate?
- Are we delivering content on behalf of others (e.g. Colleges)?
- Is this part of a commercial partnership?





Section 40



Section 41



Section 42



Section 43



Section 44



Section 45



Rolled



Wooden case



Wooden cas...



Conservation

- Do the collections in scope include fragile material?
- What level of conservation assessment is required?
- Does actual conservation work need to be costed into the proposal?

Sabina Pugh removing glue from folio 1 of MS. Laud. Lat.102, from Nicole Gilroy, "Conserving a manuscript for digitization at the Bodleian" <https://hab.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/en/blog/blog-post-1>



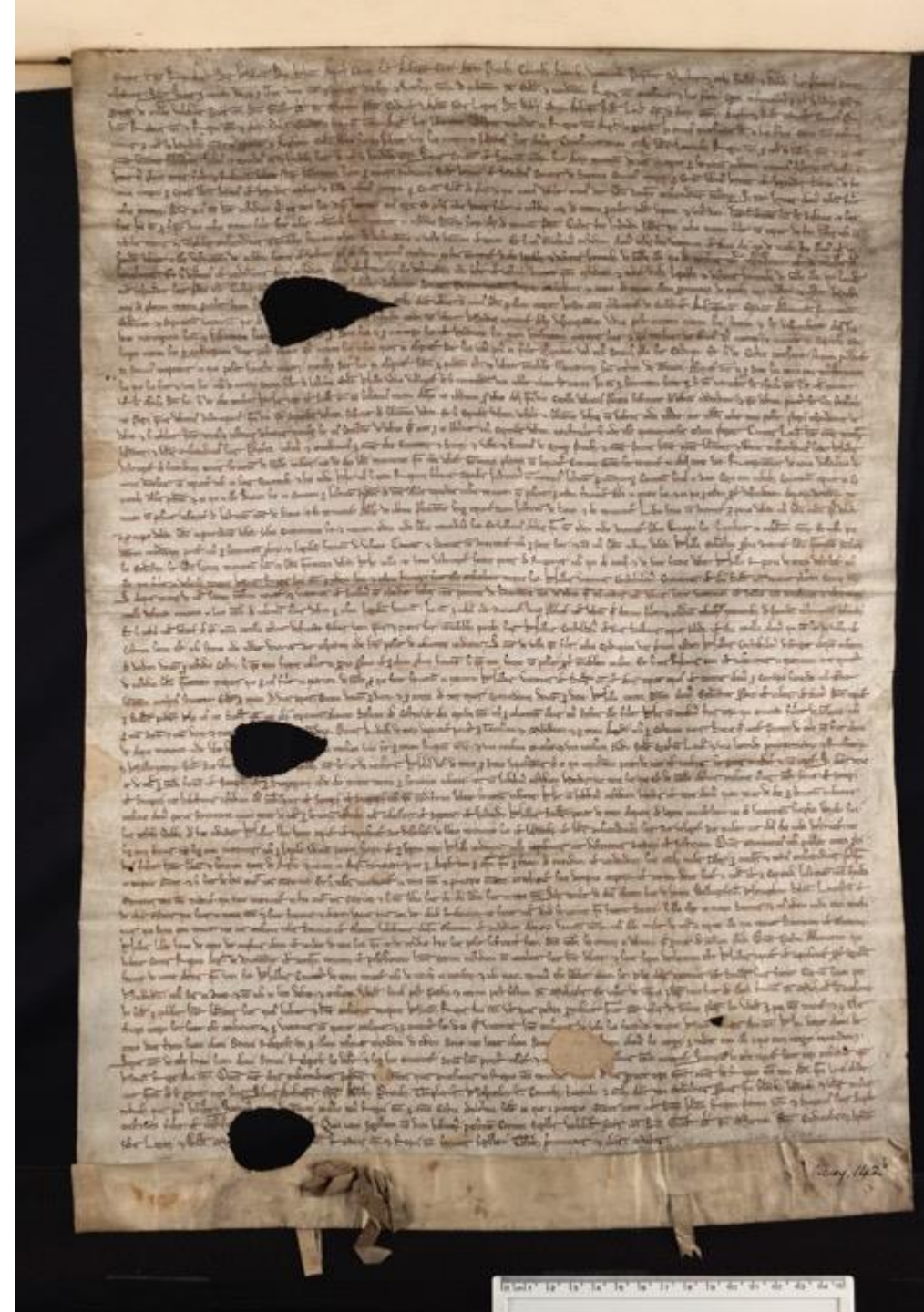
Photography

- Will all the photography be done in house?
- Does the Studio have capacity for the work?
- Will we outsource some of the photography?
- Which equipment will be used in the Studio (affects pricing)?



Cataloguing and metadata enhancement

- Are the collections in scope fully or partially described and if so, where?
- Is further cataloguing and metadata work required?
- Does the necessary infrastructure exist to deliver that metadata?
- Is a sensitivity review required?



Ingest into Digital Bodleian

- Are all items digitised in full?
- How many volumes will be ingested?
- Are there materials suitable for bulk ingest?
- Will all the necessary metadata be available for ingest together with the images?
- Has a buffer been included in the timeline for ingest of final Studio outputs?
- Are there additional preservation or storage considerations?



Literary Manuscripts: A Tolkien Trust Digitization Project

In 2021-22, the Bodleian Libraries are undertaking a project to digitize selections from its far-reaching literary manuscripts by [The Tolkien Trust](#).

In keeping with Professor J.R.R. Tolkien's academic interests, the project has had a particular focus on literary manuscripts from authors such as Chaucer, Hoccleve, and Boccaccio. Highlights include King Alfred's Old English translation [verses by the seventeenth-century poet James Shirley](#), and [MS Tanner 346](#), an anthology of courtly poetry.

The manuscripts digitised as part of this project, however, do not solely concentrate on medieval and early modern European manuscripts. Examples include a manuscript of E.F. Benson's [The Queen of Tilling](#) [Mapp and Lucia], the manuscripts of Kenneth Grahame's [The Wind in the Willows](#), including a draft of her best-known poem 'Warning'. Manuscripts have also been selected from a range of global manuscripts, from a manuscript of the [Book of the City of Dives](#) of the [seventeenth century](#) to a fourteenth-century Arabic copy of the [Maqāmāt by Ḥarīrī](#).

Publication online

- Will Digital Bodleian be the sole publication mechanism?
- Is a separate website required, and if so who will build and maintain it?
- What guarantees will be given to the funder about longevity of project websites?

GERMAN MANUSCRIPTS DEUTSCHE HANDSCHRIFTEN

Home Digitized items Blog Collections Religious houses About

English ▾

SCD MIOHNE

Manuscripts from German-Speaking Lands – A Polonsky Foundation Digitization Project
A collaboration between the Bodleian Libraries and the Herzog August Bibliothek

Explore the digitized manuscripts

Latest blog articles

Singing together with Medingen Abbey, apart
Nick Swarbrick | 31 Jan 2022

Candlemas (2 February) arrives again: the end of the medieval winter festivals, when English Heritage advises that we should finally take down our Christmas decorations.

Continue reading

Communications and publicity

- How should we communicate to our audience about our digitization activities?
- What audiences are we trying to reach?
- How can we demonstrate impact to our funders?

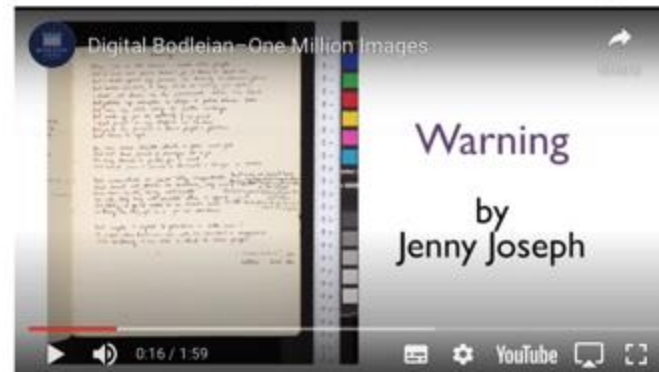
Bodleian Libraries reach the milestone of 1 millionth image online for public access

18 August 2021

The Bodleian Libraries has reached a significant milestone in its online digital library allowing over 1 million images from its collections to be seen and freely used anywhere in the world.

Launched in 2015, the [Digital Bodleian website](#) is a free resource for everyone that covers everything from beautifully illuminated manuscripts from medieval Europe and centuries-old maps to Victorian board games and British political election posters from the last 100 years. Over the past six years it has grown and grown, offering a wide range of access to the Bodleian's stunning collections.

The one millionth image to be digitized is from an original notebook of poet Jenny Joseph, who studied at St Hilda's College and maintained a connection with Oxford all her life. It shows the first draft of her poem, 'Warning', which was [voted the 'nation's favourite poem' in a BBC poll in 2006](#). To commemorate this milestone, the libraries have commissioned Oxford graduate Róisín McCallion, do a reading of the poem set to images from Digital Bodleian.



Public engagement

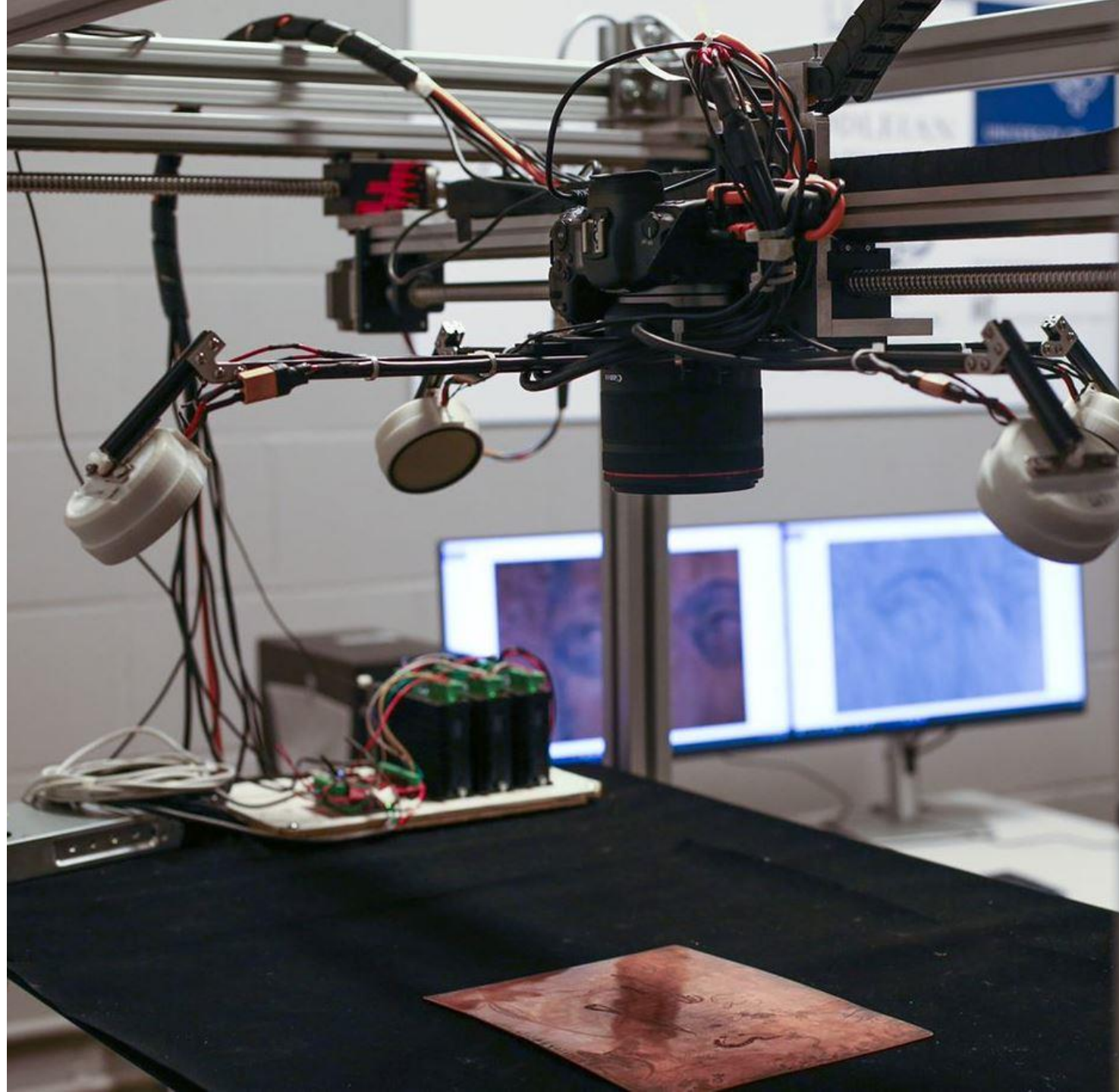
- What activities are envisaged? Is digital public engagement included?
- What are funder expectations?
- How will we monitor and evaluate success?



Other types of digitization

- Research-focused imaging e.g. ARCHiOx
- Higher volume scanning
- Mediated scanning
- Commercial partnerships
- DIY digitization

The Selene Photometric Scanner capturing one of the Lister copper printing plates in the Bodleian Library. See John Barrett, "ARCHiOx: Research & Development in Imaging", The Conveyor: <https://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/theconveyor/archiox-research-and-development-in-imaging/>



What's in Digital Bodleian and what isn't?

Object Type		Language		Origin	
<input type="checkbox"/> Archives and Manuscripts	7428	<input type="checkbox"/> English	4518	<input type="checkbox"/> Western	13713
<input type="checkbox"/> Music	4175	<input type="checkbox"/> Latin	2929	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	1847
<input type="checkbox"/> Printed Books	2549	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	1844	<input type="checkbox"/> Hebrew	820
<input type="checkbox"/> Portraits, Prints and Drawings	1971	<input type="checkbox"/> Greek	772	<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic	112
<input type="checkbox"/> Ephemera	877	<input type="checkbox"/> No linguistic content	686	<input type="checkbox"/> Armenian	79
<input type="checkbox"/> Maps	496	<input type="checkbox"/> French	456	<input type="checkbox"/> Persian	70
<input type="checkbox"/> Bindings	291	<input type="checkbox"/> Hebrew	333	<input type="checkbox"/> South Asian	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Photographs	83	<input type="checkbox"/> English, Middle (1100-1500)	249	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	14
<input type="checkbox"/> Periodicals	53	<input type="checkbox"/> Italian	227	<input type="checkbox"/> Georgian	9
		<input type="checkbox"/> German	208	<input type="checkbox"/> Southeast Asian	8
		<input type="checkbox"/> French, Middle (ca. 1400-1600)	165	<input type="checkbox"/> Turkish	7
		<input type="checkbox"/> Arabic	119	<input type="checkbox"/> Mesoamerican	6
		<input type="checkbox"/> Classical Armenian	78	<input type="checkbox"/> Southern African	6
		<input type="checkbox"/> Judaeo-Arabic	72	<input type="checkbox"/> Ethiopian and Eritrean	4
		<input type="checkbox"/> Dutch	71	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	4
		<input type="checkbox"/> French, Old (842-ca. 1400)	56	<input type="checkbox"/> Avestan	3
		<input type="checkbox"/> Aramaic	50		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Persian	50		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Spanish	47		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Russian	46		
		<input type="checkbox"/> English, Old (ca. 450-1100)	41		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Anglo-Norman	24		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Welsh	21		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese	19		
		<input type="checkbox"/> German, Middle High	14		

Current stats

Objects = 17, 655
Images = 1, 160, 763

Questions?

- What would you like to see in Digital Bodleian?

