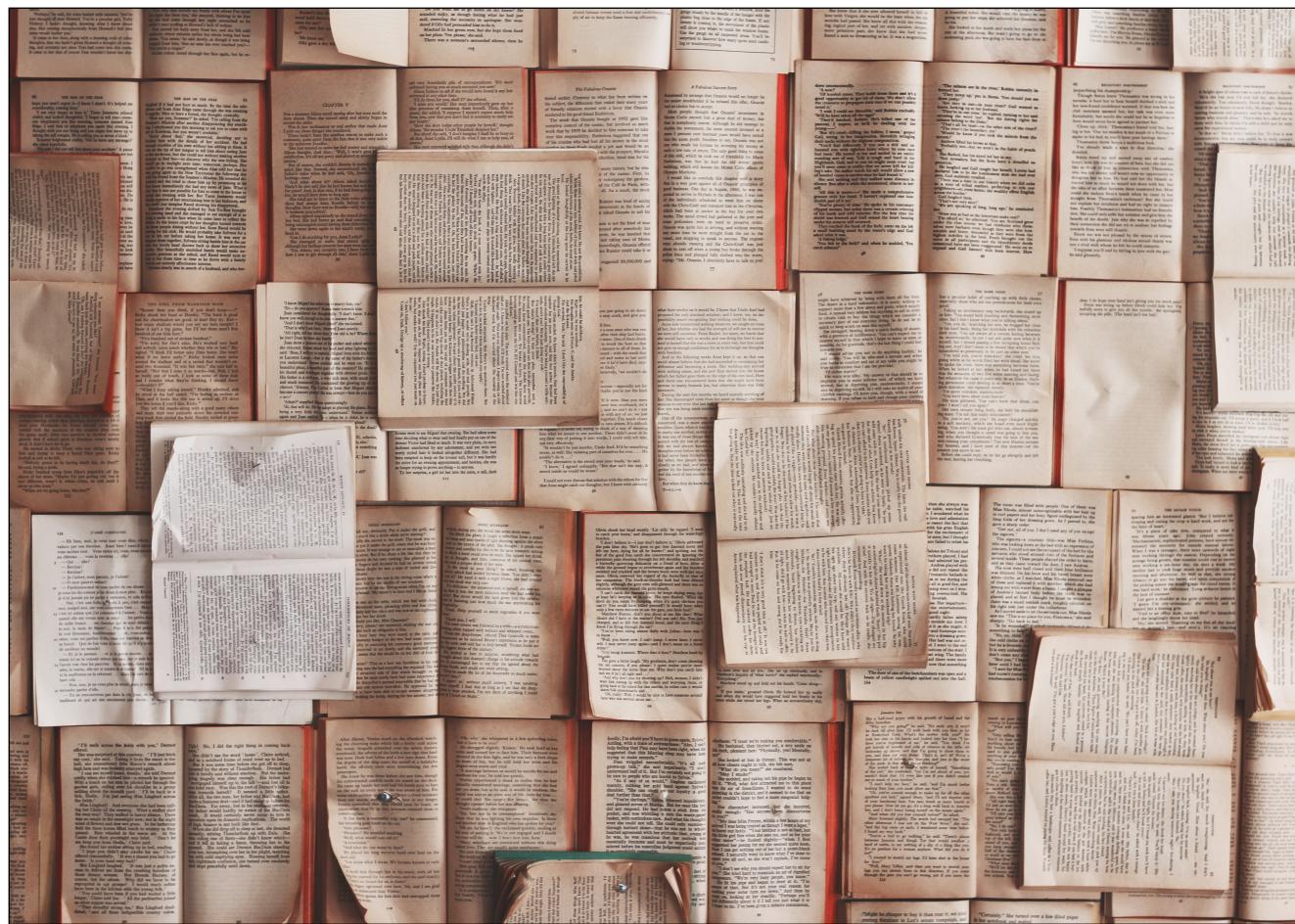


Focus Group Survey Results

Digitising the Bannatyne MS (c. 1568)

University of Saskatchewan, December 2019

Please note that this summary has been abbreviated to preserve anonymity.

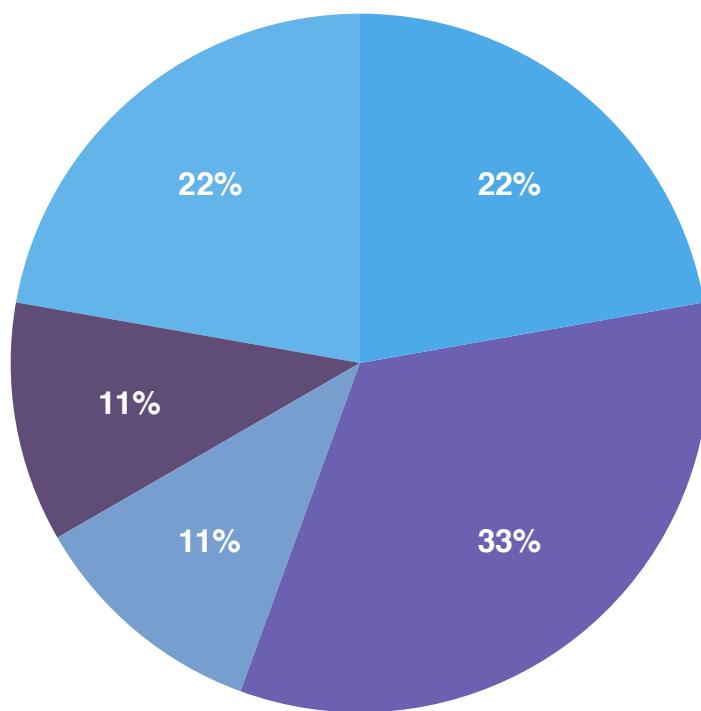


Outline

9 respondents completed a 16 question survey, conducted via Google Forms. Questions were composed based on data requirements outlined at DHSI 2019, specifically in the courses ‘Conceptualising A Digital Edition’ and ‘TEI Fundamentals’. The results are collected below. The survey can be found at <http://bit.ly/BannatyneFG1> for reference. Questions with drop-down and multiple choice answers will be listed first, followed by those with open text responses, each with a suggested conclusion for moving forward. Longer form text answers have been edited for brevity, and every attempt has been made to retain their meaning.

I believe that the purpose of a digitised Bannatyne Manuscript should primarily be (please select one):

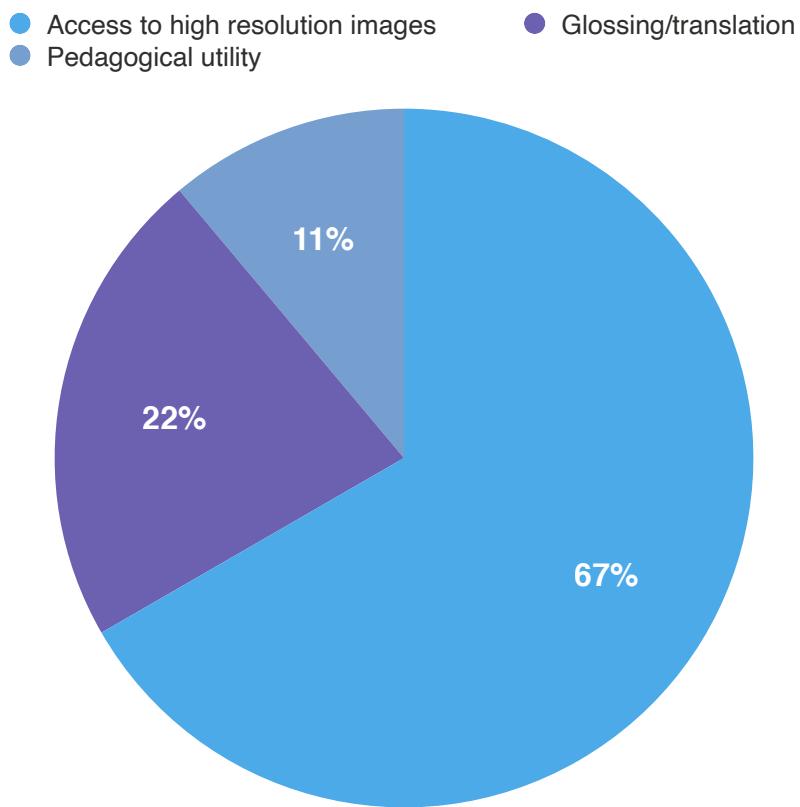
● pedagogical ● research ● public access ● paleographic
● historical ● other ● all of the above



Other: “purposes of research access and public access to a national treasure are equally important”

Suggest Conclusion: Purpose is a nebulous thing to capture, but research features most prominently, for all levels of higher education study.

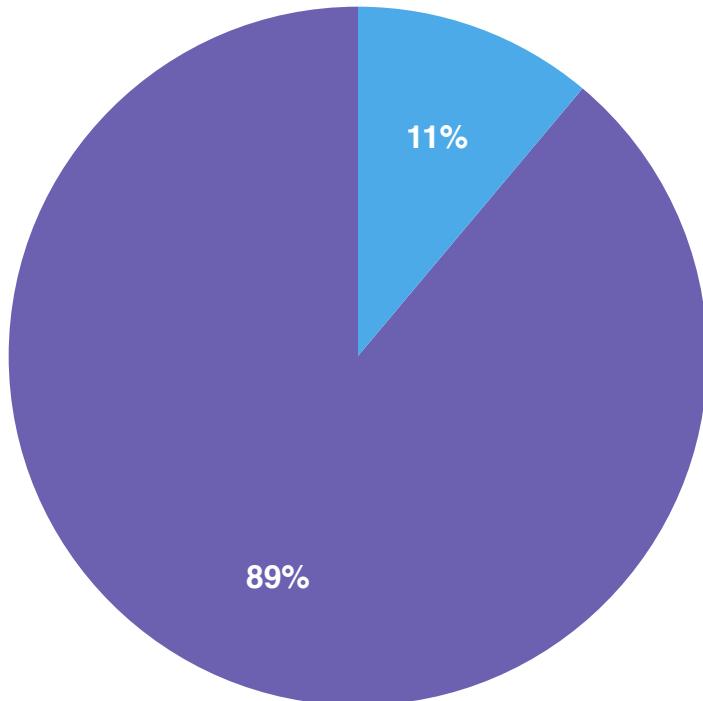
What do you view as the **MOST** important feature of a digital edition?



Suggest Conclusion: IIIF images should feature prominently in the final digitisation.

What do you view as the LEAST important feature of a digital edition?

● Access to high resolution images ● Geographical information



Suggest Conclusion: Geographical information and mapping will **not** be a focus.

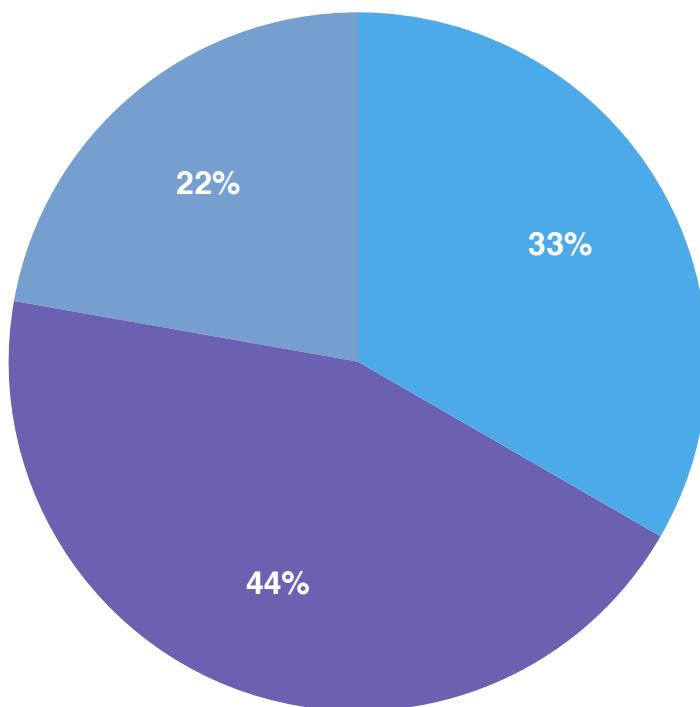
Please indicate any/all 'fields' that you would like to use within the edition.

Field Name	Number of Votes
other textual witnesses	8
author names	7
calendar dates (events)	6
intertextual references	6
metrical notation	6
poem types (i.e. lyric, sonnet etc.)	6
quire signatures	6
colophons	5
corrections (errors, deletions)	5
events (specific historical)	5
geographical location	5
hand descriptions	5
historical figures	5
manuscript description	5
author bibliographies (links to other texts)	4
events (generic, i.e. wedding, funeral etc)	4
metrical significance	4
rhyme scheme	4
shift in hand	4
author birth/death dates	3
critical work/references (to specific poems)	3
indication of voices for dialogue poems (i.e. 'said')	3
epigraph	2
first line name	1
language (Older Scots, Latin etc.)	1

Suggest conclusion: Thorough tagging is desirable, and these numbers can guide this.
Intertextuality is a priority for scholars, as are authorial attributions and dates of events.

In the email inviting you to this survey, three sample websites were given. Please indicate which was your favourite.

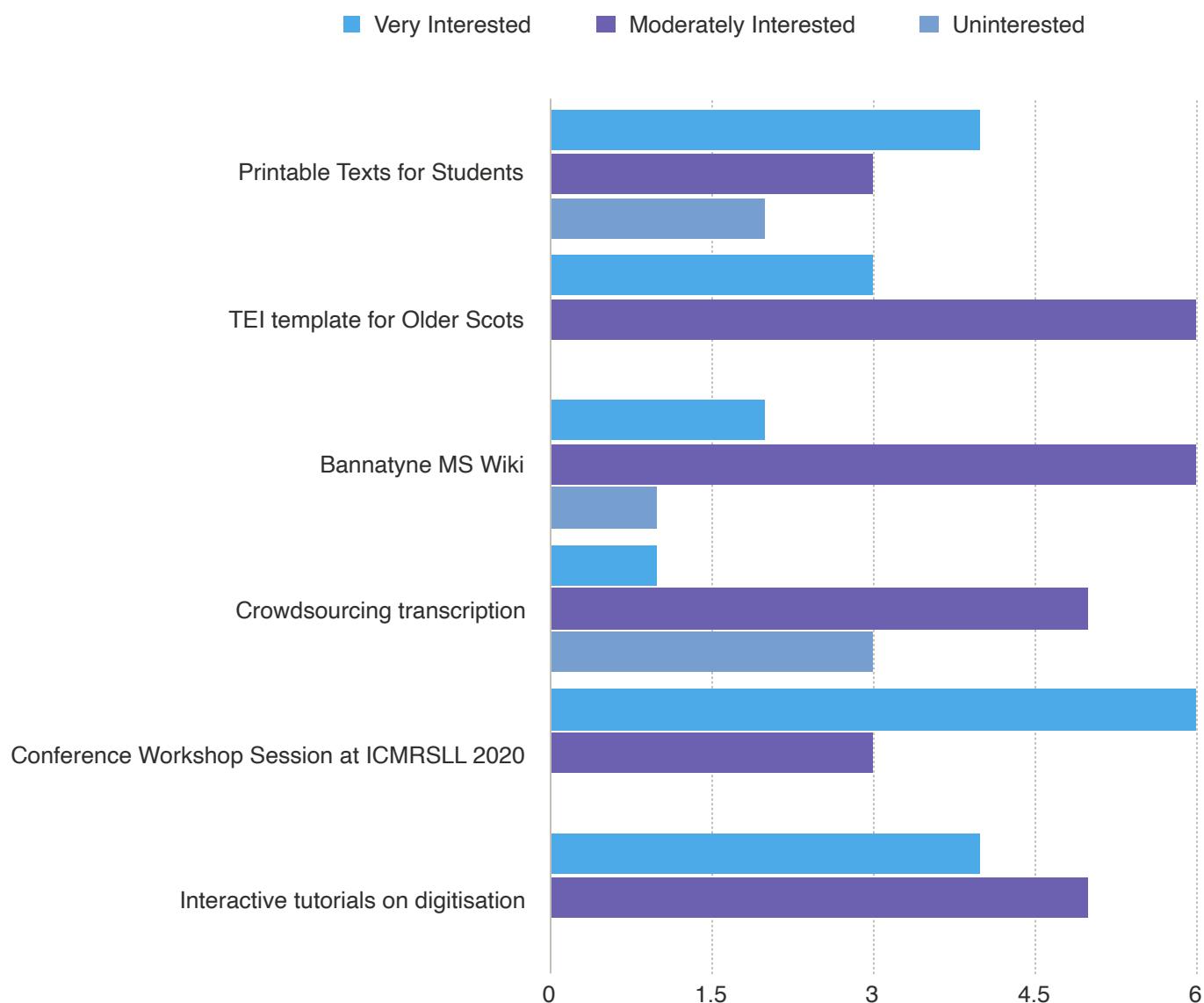
● The Aberdeen Bestiary ● The Auchinleck MS ● The Devonshire MS



Links to example editions:

1. [Aberdeen Bestiary](#)
2. [The Auchinleck MS](#)
3. [The Devonshire MS](#)

Listed below are potential outputs and/or avenues of investigation for this project. Please indicate your interest in each.



Suggest Conclusion: High interest in ICMRSLL, tutorials and printable texts. Moderate interest in TEI guidelines and Wiki. Crowdsourcing overall least popular, perhaps seen as less of an output and more of a means.

To me, the most important aspect of the Bannatyne Manuscript is...

- **preservation** of Older Scots poetry
- value as a **repository** of a large part of the Older Scots canon.
- insight it gives into how **one individual** in sixteenth-century Edinburgh uses poetry and song to mediate his relationship to his **social environment**.
- [**preservation** of work] from the late medieval / early modern period that otherwise would be unknown.
- the **texts** contained in it and the **circumstances** of its production
- the way in which its '**architexture**' (not a typo [...]) provides a 3D view of an entire (**textual**) **culture**, in a way that no comparable MS does
- the wealth of **anonymous** material
- the **diversity, depth, arrangement**, and sheer commitment of its presentation of Older Scots poems
- **wide range** of Older Scots poetry, including works of the most important poets of its time.

Suggest Conclusion: Preservation is a key point of the Bannatyne's popularity, and should be maintained in a digital edition. Streamlining or condensing contents is not desirable. There is an interest in Bannatyne's personal and social circumstances.

Summary Conclusion

As detailed in the suggested section conclusions above, many of the outcomes are to be expected: there is little to no interest in a geographical element to the edition. In terms of what respondents desire from an edition, accessibility and availability remain a priority, with a clear focus on clarity of meaning and preservation of the original manuscript in its entirety. There will be no abridgement of the text, and the idea of preservation aligns this digital edition with Bannatyne's own methodology in a unique manner: he is perhaps one of the earliest intentional preservers of literature (arguably) and this text was used in one of the earliest instances of digital corporuses in the Oxford Text Archive. The need for high quality images was well expressed, however there is a tension between the idea of the image as superior to the text and the desired focus on content: though people value the images, it seems that usable transcription is of more immediate use. In this sense the IIIF is a blessing as the images are there, and it is merely a matter of parsing them in the most useful way for readers.

There is a keen interest in deceptively simple attributes, such as an introductory essay, glossing and linking out to criticism. This fits well with the original envisaging of the project. In many cases, the desired features are easily wrought with TEI: thinking specifically about the enthusiasm for a 'compile your own' or the capacity to collate specific authors, tagging could prove invaluable in allowing this function. There is interest in Bannatyne's life and times, and this can be incorporated well into the broader project aims of contextualising the editors over the centuries, as well as offering an immediate context for the manuscript itself. Intertextuality, namely the linking of witnesses and variations, featured as a key concern for respondents, alongside the authorial attributions and historical dates that run alongside the manuscript. The Auchinleck example was preferred in the majority of cases but it is evident that a Bannatyne adaptation of this format would require a cleaner UI and better image rendering. In terms of outputs, the ICMRSLL is a key focus point (which is currently in hand), while printable texts are pedagogically very desirable.

From longer answers that were condensed for brevity, some interesting points were made. In relation to the printable texts, the question of the relationship between students and their perception of the text came into focus: as instructors we are often expected to offer

translation, and when we do this ourselves, we naturally need to offer these to students in a basic Word/printout format, which can aesthetically devalue the importance of the poems we give them. In the case of the edition, perhaps we should look at a hierarchy of priority for which texts are ‘completed’ first - in particular texts for which few to no other witnesses exist, such as the *Wyf of Auchtermuchty* or the *Flyting*. Linking out to further criticism was a recurring theme, in keeping with the original project concept, while some relevant questions were raised as to the value of the more generic outputs (tutorials, TEI guidelines) unless it were possible to quantify their value as specifically ‘Scottish’ or unique. Another resource, the MPESE project was suggested as a potential source of inspiration. It is very user-friendly but has also had a lot of financial investment, so requires further examination to live within the parameters of the existing project funding. Smooth interfaces came up time and time again in relation to images, and the ways in which pages render on older technology.

It was pleasing to see that a need for ‘old-fashioned’ apparatus (rightfully) endures in our desired criteria: these are something that has been missing from the Bannatyne as an entity, and will be a useful and proud output for this project. One idea that bears further consideration came in the form of a suggested bid for network funding, in order to establish the longer-term output of the project (see page 11). This is very important and will be considered as a possibility somewhere after the first two years/initial funding period, as it pertains more readily to the idea of the manuscript as a whole, rather than solely the fourth section. In general, responses were positive, engaged and generous in their sharing of ideas and perspectives.

- **Immediate action (1-3 months)**

- Look at a project launch and further publicity
- Parse the MPSE format for what can be done with minimal expense
- Formatting and tagging COCOA files
- Circulate Focus Group findings to participants

- **Mid-term action (3-12 months)**

- Work on a primer of TEI to enable useful discussion around tagging and collating
- Begin notes on poems, and structuring of overall introductory essay

-
- Monthly/bi-weekly blog posts
 - Preparation for ICMRSLL Workshop session
-
- **Long-term action (1 year+)**
- Funding for continuation of project
 - Funding for network to enable continuation of entire manuscript
 - Finalising the look and format of the website

LH, 30th July 2019