Exercise 4: Encoding a Manuscript Description

Dot Porter

March 2009

In this exercise we'll practice encoding manuscript descriptions, at three levels of complexity.

1   Reading the manuscript description

This description is of Bodleian MS. Add. A. 61, as published in Madan et al. 1895-1953.[1]

28843. In Latin, on parchment: written in more than one hand of the 13th cent. in England: 7¼ × 5⅝ in., i + 55 leaves, in double columns: with a few coloured capitals.

'Hic incipit Bruitus Anglie,' the De origine et gestis Regum Angliae of Geoffrey of Monmouth (Galfridus Monumetensis): *beg.* 'Cum mecum multa & de multis.'

On fol. 54ᵛ very faint is 'Iste liber est fratris guillelmi de buria de . . . Roberti ordinis fratrum Pred[icatorum],' 14th cent. (?) : 'hanauilla' is written at the foot of the page (15th cent.). Bought from the rev. W. D. Macray on March 17, 1863, for £1 10s.
Now MS. Add. A. 61.

It begins with a catalogue number, followed by a physical description of the manuscript. The next paragraph gives us the contents of the manuscript, *De origine et gestis Regum Angliae* by Geoffrey of Monmouth, as well as providing a **rubric** ('Hic incipit. . . ') and the **incipit**, or the first few words of the text ('Cum mecum multa. . . '). The last paragraph tells us a bit about the history of the manuscript, including ownership marks and information about how the library obtained the manuscript.

Go to the *documents/xml* folder and open the file *msDescription.xml* in oXygen. This file contains a basic TEI manuscript description with a header and the description in the body of the document. The manuscript description has been transcribed in paragraphs.

2   Encdoing the TEI Header

A few items need to be added to the TEI Header. Put your name in as indicated at "Header creation by" and "Encoded by", and put today's date where indicated as well.

Save this file as "msDescription-simple.xml". Close it and reopen "msDescription.xml". This will ensure that at the end of the exercise you have in your possession both the most simple version of the manuscript description, and the more complex one.

3   Adding Complexity

In the next part of the exercise we shall replace the `<p>` tags with appropriate special-purpose elements, and add some of the phrase-level elements available when the manuscript description module is in use: `<msContents>`, `<physDesc>`, and `<history>`. The `<msIdentifier>` will remain unchanged.

We will have to re-arrange the text provided in the printed description somewhat. `<msDesc>` requires a specific order to its child elements. In this instance we will have `<msContents>` followed by `<physDesc>` followed by `<history>`. First, move the second paragraph ('Hic incipit...') to above the first paragraph (In Latin...).

```
66 ▽        <p>'Hic incipit Bruitus Anglie,' the De origine et gestis Regum Angliae of Geoffrey
67            of Monmouth (Galfridus Monumetensis: beg. 'Cum mecum multa &amp; de
68            multis.'</p>
69 ▽        <p>In Latin, on parchment: written in more than one hand of the 13th cent. in
70            England: 7 1/4x 5 3/8 in., i + 55 leaves, in double columns: with a few coloured
71            capitals.</p>
72 ▽        <p>On fol. 54v very faint is 'Iste liber est fratris guillelmi de buria de ...
73            Roberti ordinis fratrum Pred[icatorum],' 14th cent. (?): 'hanauilla' is written
74            at the foot of the page (15th cent.). Bought from the rev. W. D. Macray on March
75            17, 1863, for £1 10s.</p>
```

Put the relevant elements around each paragraph. Keep the `<p>` tags, as they are required for validation.

Next, we'll see that the information in the three paragraphs is not strictly organized according to the divisions described in TEI. The fact that the manuscript is in Latin is an issue of its textual contents, not of its physical construction, so move "In Latin" from `<physDesc>` to `<msContents>`. The fact that the manuscript was written in the 13th century in England is an issue of its history, not its physical description, so move that information into the `<history>` section. Your file should now look something like this:

```
66 ▽        <msContents>
67 ▽            <p>'Hic incipit Bruitus Anglie,' the De origine et gestis Regum Angliae of
68                Geoffrey of Monmouth (Galfridus Monumetensis: beg. 'Cum mecum multa
69                &amp; de multis.' In Latin.</p>
70            </msContents>
71 ▽        <physDesc>
72 ▽            <p>Parchment written in more than one hand: 7 1/4x 5 3/8 in., i + 55 leaves,
73                in double columns: with a few coloured capitals.</p>
74            </physDesc>
75 ▽        <history>
76 ▽            <p>Written in England in the 13th cent. On fol. 54v very faint is 'Iste liber
77                est fratris guillelmi de buria de ... Roberti ordinis fratrum
78                Pred[icatorum],' 14th cent. (?): 'hanauilla' is written at the foot of the
79                page (15th cent.). Bought from the rev. W. D. Macray on March 17, 1863, for
80                £1 10s.</p>
81            </history>
82        </msDesc>
```

Finally, let's fill in some basic phrase-level elements to specifically identify some of the information contained in the different sections.

`<msContents>` contains two quotes (`<quote>`), one title (`<title>`), and one author (`<author>`). Mark them accordingly. In those cases where there are formatting characters setting particular text apart (for example, the single quotation marks around quotes), remove them. Formatting characters will be provided by the stylesheet.

`<physDesc>` contains a term that indicates what material (`<material>`) the manuscript is made of. Mark the term accordingly.

`<history>` contains information about the place and date of the origin of the manuscript (`<origPlace>` and `<origDate>`). It also contains two quotes (`<quote>`) from the manuscript. Mark all of these accordingly.

When complete, your file will look something like this:

```
93  ▽          <msContents>
94  ▽            <p>
95                <quote>Hic incipit Bruitus Anglie,</quote> the <title>De origine et gestis
96                  Regum Angliae</title> of Geoffrey of Monmouth (Galfridus Monumetensis);
97                beg. <quote>Cum mecum multa &amp; de multis.</quote> In Latin.</p>
98            </msContents>
99  ▽        <physDesc>
.00 ▽          <p>
.01              <material>Parchment</material>; written in more than one hand: 7 1/4 x 5 3/8
.02              in., i + 55 leaves, in double columns: with a few coloured capitals.</p>
.03          </physDesc>
.04 ▽        <history>
.05 ▽          <p>Written in <origPlace>England</origPlace> in the <origDate>13th
.06              cent.</origDate> On fol. 54v very faint is <quote>Iste liber est fratris
.07              guillelmi de buria de ... Roberti ordinis fratrum
.08              Pred[icatorum].</quote> 14th cent. (?): <quote>hanauilla</quote> is
.09              written at the foot of the page (15th cent.). Bought from the rev. W. D.
.10              Macray on March 17, 1863, for £1 10s.</p>
.11          </history>
```

Save your file, then save it again as msDescription-medium.xml. Close that file and reopen msDescription.xml.

4   Display your manuscript description

At the top of your document msDescription.xml, you will see a line beginning <!–<?xml-stylesheet... This points to a CSS stylesheet that will enable you to display your manuscript description in a browser. Make sure that you have saved your file. Open it in Firefox or Safari (it will not display correctly in IE. You'll see that the information from the header displays at the top of the page, and is followed by the manuscript identifier (in large red letters) and the description itself. The description is presented simply as a number of paragraphs, with nothing differentiating them aside from their contents. Keep this file open in your browser and return to msDescription.xml in oXygen.

Challenge: Restructure your code to take full advantage of msDesc.

The manuscript description element has many tags available to it that provide very specific description.

<msContents> may contain one or more **<msItem>** elements, describing each item in the manuscript. These items may be identified by author, title, *rubric*, *incipit*, and by the language in which it is written (**<textLang>**). Terms provided in multiple languages may be provided in both (for example, an author in both Latin and English may be identified both as <author xml:lang="en">English name</author> and as <author xml:lang="la">Latin name</author>).

The **<objectDesc>** child of <physDesc> may describe the support (**<supportDesc>**) of the manuscript. What is it made out of (**<support>**)? How many leaves does it contain (**<extent>**)? What size is it (**<dimensions>**)? It may also describe the layout (**<layoutDesc>**) of the writing on the surface of the manuscript (How many lines? How many columns?).

The physical description may also contain information about the scribal hands (**<handDesc>**) and decorations in the manuscript, either illuminations or decorated initials or capitals (**<decoDesc>**).

The history of the manuscript may be divided into different sections describing where and when the manuscript was made (**<origin>**), where it was between the time it was made and the time it was acquired by the current owner (**<provenance>**), usually known through marks in the manuscript, and the circumstances under which is was acquired by the current owner (**<acquisition>**).

Your challenge is to restructure your existing TEI manuscript description to take full advantage of the elements available in the TEI Guidelines.

The easiest way to find out how individual elements are used is to go to the Elements section of the *Guidelines* at http://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/REF-ELEMENTS.html. This link takes you to an alphabetical list of all TEI elements. Clicking on any element will take you to a description of how the element is to be used. Use this documentation to aid your decisions about how to encode your description.

At any point during the encoding process, you may return to the browser and refresh the view of msDescription.xml, to see how your modifications are interacting with the stylesheet.

When you are done, save the completed complex description as msDescription-complex.xml. You now have examples of three descriptions of various complexity, and a stylesheet that will display all of them.