Exercise 4: Making a Manuscript Description

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1 Exercise 4: Making a Manuscript Description

1.1 Learning Outcomes

When you successfully complete this exercise you should be able to:

- Modify a basic manuscript description to provide more structure

- Understand the general categories of manuscript description

- Have more experience editing a complex <teiHeader>

1.2 Summary

In this exercise you will add a manuscript description to the file you finished in the previous exercise. You'll modify an existing <msDesc> element with a basic structure to categorise manuscript description information into a more detailed structure.

1.3 Starting Up

Load up the completed file from the previous exercise. If you did not complete the exercise you can cheat by loading up 'spoilers/exercise-03.xml' and then saving it under a new name where you put your other files.

1.4 Inserting a basic <msDesc>

The information for our manuscript description will basically be taken from the document description found in the REED Volume. Compared with in-depth manuscript desciptions done by some special collections cataloguers these are pretty brief and to the point. But it gives us enough information to explore some of the categories in a <msDesc> element. Let's pretend that we already have typed in a basic manuscript description. There is no requirement with TEI <msDesc> to divide it into all the possible categories of information, instead all it requires is at least a <msIdentifier>, other information could be stored in a few accompanying paragraphs. This is useful for the retrospective conversion of catalogues in other legacy formats to TEI XML.

1. Delete the current <p> element inside <sourceDesc> and make sure the cursor is between the opening and closing <sourceDesc> tags. At this point either cut and paste or insert (with the 'Document' -> 'File' -> 'Insert File') the file 'msdesc.xml'.

2. As you'll notice, this contains a very basic <msDesc> with a minimal <msIdentifier>.

3. Your <sourceDesc> should now look something like:

```
<sourceDesc>
 <msDesc>
  <msIdentifier>
   <idno>STAC 8/20/8</idno>
  </msIdentifier>
```

<p>London, Public Record Office, STAC 8/20/8; 8 November 1614; English; parchment; 2 membranes (mbs 2 and 3 in bundle); 255mm x 160mm and 341mm x 520mm; modern pencil numbering at bottom right of each mb; mb 2 attached to mb 3 with a parchment loop at centre of each; mb 3 is endorsed: 'Aturnat R{egis} versus Batteley et <gap/> | M: 12o Ja{cobi},' and in another place 'Martis octavo die Nouembris | Anno duodecimo | Jacobis Regis | Harker.'</p>
  </msDesc>
</sourceDesc>

1.5   Filling out a <msIdentifier>

Let's expand the <msIdentifier>. As you have a lot more experience editing XML files in oXygen now, the steps will sometimes be given in less detail.

1. Notice that the first six words or so mostly contain information that tells us where the manuscript is or how to find it. This text identifies it and so this text could go in a <msIdentifier>. However we can also get additional information because since the REED volume was printed the PRO (now National Archives) have put their catalogues online.

2. Above the existing <idno> add a <country> (United Kingdom), a <settlement> (London), a <repository> (National Archives), a <collection> (Records of the Court of Star Chamber and of other courts). Note how elements are prescribed to appear in a particular order (from greatest level of granularity to more specific). Notice that most elements cannot be repeated (some like <collection> can be because a single document can end up in multiple collections).

3. After the existing <idno> add an <altIdentifier> with an <idno> inside that with a @type attribute of 'URL'. Inside this <idno> put the URL "http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C5568445". (You may wish to copy-and-paste this into your web browser to look at the record the National Archives has online, and to check you've typed it in right.

4. The National Archives gives a 'short title' for this document of 'Attorney General v Batley'. You may wish to add this to an <msName> element.

5. Your <msIdentifier> should now look something like:

```
<msIdentifier>
  <country>United Kingdom</country>
  <settlement>London</settlement>
  <repository>National Archives</repository>
  <collection>Records of the Court of Star Chamber and of other courts</collection>
  <idno>STAC 8/20/8</idno>
  <altIdentifier>
    <idno  type="URL">
       http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C5568445
    </idno>
  </altIdentifier>
  <msName>Attorney General v Batley</msName>
</msIdentifier>
```

6. When you've finished creating the <msIdentifier> delete the "London, Public Record Office, STAC 8/20/8;" from the paragraph below.

1.6   Providing some <msContents>

We want to provide an intellectual table of contents for this manuscript and the document description we have doesn't give us much information. The <msContents> acts as a place to store structured information concerning the intellectual contents of a manuscript. It gives a place for a summary of the contents of the manuscript and multiple <msItem> elements form something like a table of contents of works in the document.

1. After the <msIdentifier> add a <msContents> element. Inside this add a <textLang> of 'English' with a @mainLang attribute of 'en'. After this add two <msItem> elements as siblings to the <textLang>. To these add a <locus> and <title> element. The <locus> for the first is 'mb 3' and the second 'mb 2'. The <title>for the first is 'Attorney-General's Information about Libellous Songs' and the second 'Attached exhibit: text of libellous rhyme'.

2. Your <msContents> should now look something like:

```
<msContents>
 <textLang  mainLang="en">English</textLang>
 <msItem>
  <locus>mb 3</locus>
  <title>Attorney-General's Information about Libellous Songs</title>
 </msItem>
 <msItem>
  <locus>mb 2</locus>
  <title>Attached exhibit: text of libellous rhyme</title>
 </msItem>
</msContents>
```

This is an extremely brief <msContents> but at least stores that there are two intellectual items in this description. You could argue that we should have separate <msDesc> elements for each membrane, or indeed include the next membrane with the demurrer, but that would make this exercise too complicated.

3. You may notice that the file has become invalid. That is because since adding the <msContents> we're now mixing structured and unstructured content (the <p> below) which is not allowed. Don't worry about it until the end of the exercise.

1.7   Giving a <physDesc>

The next bit of our description has some information about the physical aspects of the manuscript. Let's turn it into a <physDesc>

1. Add a <physDesc> element.

2. Immediately inside this create an <objectDesc> with a @form attribute of 'membranes'. Inside that create a <supportDesc> with a @material attribute of 'parch'.

3. Inside that <supportDesc> add a <support>, and inside this put the text "2 parchment membranes (mbs 2 and 3 in bundle)".

4. You could wrap the element <material> around the word 'parchment', but we're already stored this information by adding the @material attribute to <supportDesc>.

5. After the closing </supportDesc> tag add an <extent> element with 'mb 2:' followed by a <dimensions> element (of @type 'membrane') with <height> and <width> elements (with @unit of 'mm') inside. Add the measurements for the membrane 2 here (255 x 160). Follow this 'mb 3:' and a similar <dimensions> element for its measurements (341 x 530).

6. After the <extent> element add a <foliation> element describing the numbering used: 'modern pencil numbering at bottom right of each mb'.

7. After this element add a <collation> element describing its physical arrangement: 'mb 2 attached to mb 3 with a parchment loop at centre of each'.

8. Your <physDesc> now might look something like:

```
<physDesc>
  <objectDesc form="membranes">
    <supportDesc material="parch">
      <support> 2 parchment membranes (mbs 2 and 3 in bundle) </support>
      <extent>mb 2: <dimensions type="membrane">
         <height unit="mm">255</height>
         <width unit="mm">160</width>
       </dimensions>, mb 3: <dimensions type="membrane">
         <height unit="mm">341</height>
         <width unit="mm">520</width>
       </dimensions>
      </extent>
      <foliation>modern pencil numbering at bottom right of each mb</foliation>
      <collation>mb 2 attached to mb 3 with a parchment loop at centre of each</collation>
    </supportDesc>
  </objectDesc>
</physDesc>
```

We could potentially have provided a <layoutDesc> to give information about the layout (single-column etc.) but since that wasn't in our original document description, let's not add it unless we've gone back to check the original. You could delete the information we've used from the paragraph below.

1.8 Detailing a <history>

The <history> element gives a place to detail the <origin>, <provenance>, and <acquisition> of the manuscript if available. In this case we have some minimal information about the origin of the manuscript

1. After the closing <physDesc> tag create a <history> element.

2. Inside this create an <origin> element. Copy and paste the contents inside the <creation> element we made before down in <profileDesc>. This is a much better place for that information. (But leave a copy of it in <profileDesc> if you like.)

3. Following this bit of text, but still inside the <origin> element, copy the text from our description where it says: "mb 3 is endorsed: 'Aturnat R{egis} versus Batteley et <gap/> | M: 12o Ja{cobi},' and in another place 'Martis octavo die Nouembris | Anno duodecimo | Jacobis Regis | Harker.'".

4. You can improve this slightly by replacing the single quotation marks with opening and closing <q> tags. Also the '|' here are standing for line breaks so you could replace these with a <lb> element.

5. Your <history> element should look something like:

```
<history>
  <origin>Written in <origPlace>England</origPlace> in <origDate when="1614-11-08">8 November
1614</origDate>. Mb 3 is endorsed: <q>Aturnat R{egis} versus Batteley et <gap/>
    <lb/> M: 12o Ja{cobi},</q> and in another place <q>Martis octavo die Nouembris <lb/> Anno
duodecimo <lb/> Jacobis Regis <lb/> Harker.</q>
  </origin>
</history>
```

We could probably guess some information about how and when the Public Record Office then National Archives came into possession of this (as state papers) and use this in an <acquisition> element, but since we don't have this information to hand and this exercise is long enough, let's stop here!

6. The final thing to do is to get rid of the original paragraph we had, in order to make our document valid. If it isn't showing you a happy green square, then find out what the problem is and fix it.

1.9 Saving Your Work

Let's save our work:

- Is your work well-formed? Do you have a happy green square or an angry red one?

- Have you formatted and indented your work automatically?

- From the 'File' menu select 'Save' or click on the Save icon (looks like a old-style 3.5" disk).

- Or if you prefer use the 'File' then 'Save As' menu item to save the file using the name 'exercise04.xml' or another name of your choice.

1.10 Self-Assessment

Check if you understand some of the core principles of this exercise by answering the following questions:

- What is the only required aspect of a TEI manuscript description?

- How does one record the separate works of intellectual content present in the manuscript?

- Where does one describe the support which forms the object, or its layout?

- How does one record the origin, provenance, and acquisition of the object?

- Where might you record the content?

1.11   Further Reading

There is a lot more information one could provide in a detailed manuscript description. If you have time you may wish to:

- Look up the reference pages for each of the new elements you've used.

- Read some of the chapter on Manuscript Description: http://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/MS.html.