

Talk 6: Manuscript Description

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Manuscript Description

Why are manuscripts special?

- Manuscripts are *unique objects*, sometimes of great cultural or political value.
- Books, by contrast, exist in multiple copies, and can be described adequately by well-established and formalised bibliographic conventions.
- For manuscripts, there are several traditions, often descriptive or *belle lettriste*, and little consensus.
- Manuscripts can be ancient or modern, and it benefits us to use the same forms of description for them.

Similar concerns apply to other text-bearing objects, and `<msDesc>` is often also used for incunabula.

Objectives of <msDesc>

The TEI <msDesc> element is intended for several different kinds of applications:

- standalone database of library records (*finding aid*)
- discursive text collecting many records (*catalogue raisonné*)
- metadata component within a digital surrogate (*electronic edition*)
- tool for 'quantitative codicology'

Catalogue Raisonné;

An `<msDesc>` can appear anywhere a `<p>` paragraph can

```
<div>
  <head>The Arnamagnæan Manuscript Collection</head>
  <p>The Arnamagnæan Collection is widely recognised as one
of the most significant collections of early Scandinavian
manuscripts in the world...</p>
  <p>Among its more important holdings are:
<msDesc xml:id="AM02-0101" xml:lang="en">
<!-- ...-->
  </msDesc>
</p>
  <p>In the following manuscript...
<msDesc xml:id="AM04-0595" xml:lang="en">
<!-- ...-->
  </msDesc>
</p>
</div>
```

Having one's cake and eating it

Two conflicting desires:

- preserve (or perpetuate) existing descriptive prose
- reliable search, retrieval, and analysis of data

The `<msDesc>` tries, wherever possible, to do both of these things.

Components of a manuscript description

Inside `<msDesc>` only `<msIdentifier>` is required. After this `<head>` is sometimes used for a brief summary. These are then followed either by one or more paragraphs (`<p>`), or one or more of the following specialised elements:

- `<msContents>`: a list of the intellectual content of the manuscript
- `<physDesc>`: groups information concerning all physical aspects of the manuscript
- `<history>`: provides information on the history of the manuscript, its origin, provenance and acquisition by current holding institution

Components of a manuscript description (cont.)

- `<additional>`: groups other information about the manuscript (e.g. administrative information relating to its availability, custodial history, surrogates)
- `<msPart>`: contains in essence a nested `<msDesc>`, in cases of composite manuscripts now regarded as constituting a single unit but made up of two or more parts which were originally physically distinct.

Inside the top level

Within each of these elements a number of sub-elements is available; `<msContents>`, for example, will normally consist of one or more `<msItem>` elements, each in turn containing specific elements for `<rubric>`, `<incipit>`, `<explicit>` and `<colophon>`, as well as the standard TEI elements `<author>`, `<title>` and `<bibl>` for bibliographic references. As with `<msDesc>` itself, however, the contents of these first-level and second-level elements need not be this structured, since there is also the option of just using paragraphs (`<p>`).

Identification (1)

The `<msIdentifier>`

Traditional three part specification:

- place (`<country>`, `<region>`, `<settlement>`)
- repository (`<institution>`, `<repository>`)
- identifier (`<collection>`, `<idno>`)

```
<msIdentifier>
  <country>United States of America</country>
  <region>Texas</region>
  <settlement>Austin</settlement>
  <institution> The University of Texas at Austin </institution>
  <repository>Harry Ransom Centre</repository>
  <collection>Wilfred Owen Collected Letters</collection>
  <idno type="folio">ff504</idno>
  <altIdentifier>
    <idno>Letter no. 535 Ed. 'Wilfred Owen Collected Letters'</idno>
  </altIdentifier>
  <msName>Letter to Leslie Gunston</msName>
</msIdentifier>
```

More <msIdentifier>s

```
<msIdentifier>  
  <country>Canada</country>  
  <settlement>Ottawa</settlement>  
  <repository>Library and Archives Canada</repository>  
  <collection>E.W.B. Morrison</collection>  
  <idno>MG 30 E 81 v. 16</idno>  
</msIdentifier>
```

```
<msIdentifier>  
  <country>France</country>  
  <settlement>Troyes</settlement>  
  <repository>Bibliothèque Municipale</repository>  
  <idno>50</idno>  
</msIdentifier>
```

Alternative Identifiers

Alternative or additional names can also be included:

```
<msIdentifier xml:lang="da">  
  <country>Danmark</country>  
  <settlement>København</settlement>  
  <repository> Det Arnamagnæanske Institut </repository>  
  <idno>AM 45 fol.</idno>  
  <msName xml:lang="la">Codex Frisianus</msName>  
  <msName xml:lang="is">Fríssbók</msName>  
</msIdentifier>
```

Intellectual Content

May simply use paragraphs of text or a set of `<msItem>` elements, optionally preceded by a prose summary. Unstructured:

```
<msContents>
  <p>An extraordinary charivari of heroic deeds and improving tales,
    including an early version of <title>Guy of Warwick</title> and
    several hymns.</p>
</msContents>
```

or structured:

```
<msContents>
  <summary>An extraordinary charivari of heroic deeds, improving
    tales, and hymns.</summary>
  <msItem>
<!-- details of Guy of Warwick here -->
  </msItem>
  <msItem>
<!-- other msItems for hymns here -->
  </msItem>
</msContents>
```

The <msItem> element

Manuscripts contain identifiable items, usually physically tied to a *locus*.

- <locus>, if present, must be given first
- then any of the following, in a specified order:
 - <author>, <respStmt>
 - <title>, <rubric>, <incipit>, <explicit>, <colophon>, <finalRubric>
 - <quote>, <textLang>, <decoNote>, <bibl>, <listBibl>, <note> ...
 - ... or indeed nested <msItem>s

<msContents> with multiple <msItem>s

```
<msContents>
<!-- first item -->
  <msItem n="1">
    <locus from="5r" to="7v">fols. 5r-7v</locus>
    <title type="supplied">An ABC</title>
  </msItem>
<!-- second item -->
  <msItem n="2">
    <locus from="7v" to="8v">fols. 7v-8v</locus>
    <title type="uniform" xml:lang="fr">L'envoy de Chaucer a Scogan</title>
  </msItem>
<!-- ...further items here... -->
  <msItem n="6">
    <locus from="14r" to="126v">fols. 14r-126v</locus>
    <title type="uniform">Troilus and Criseyde</title>
    <note>Bk. 1:71-Bk. 5:1701, with additional losses due to mutilation
throughout</note>
  </msItem>
</msContents>
```

Physical Description

An artificial (but helpful) grouping of many distinct items.

You can simply supply paragraphs of prose, covering such topics as

- `<objectDesc>`: the physical carrier
- `<handDesc>`: what is carried on it
- `<musicNotation>`, `<decoDesc>`, `<additions>`
- `<bindingDesc>` and `<sealDesc>`
- `<accMat>`: accompanying material

Or, group your discussion within the specific elements mentioned above.

Similarly, within the specific elements, you can supply paragraphs of prose, or further specific elements.

The carrier (1)

The `<objectDesc>` can contain just paragraphs, or `<supportDesc>` and `<layoutDesc>`

```
<objectDesc form="codex">
  <supportDesc material="mixed">
    <p>Early modern <material>parchment</material> and
    <material>paper</material>.</p>
  </supportDesc>
  <layoutDesc>
    <layout columns="1" ruledLines="25 32"/>
  </layoutDesc>
</objectDesc>
```


The carrier (2)

A more complex substructure with specific elements for `<support>`, `<extent>`, `<foliation>`, `<collation>`, `<condition>`. Multiple layouts may also be specified:

```
<layoutDesc>
  <layout ruledLines="25 32" columns="1">
    <p>
      <locus from="1r" to="202v"/>
      <locus from="210r" to="212v"/> Between 25 and 32 ruled
lines.</p>
    </layout>
  <layout ruledLines="34 50" columns="1">
    <p>
      <locus from="203r" to="209v"/>Between 34 and 50 ruled
lines.</p>
    </layout>
  </layoutDesc>
```

<handDesc> and <decoDesc>

- <handNote> (note on hand) describes a particular style or hand distinguished within a manuscript.
- <decoNote> contains a note describing either a decorative component of a manuscript or a fairly homogenous class of such components.

<handDesc> example (1)

```
<handDesc hands="2">
```

```
<p>The manuscript is written in two contemporary hands,  
otherwise unknown, but clearly those of practised scribes.  
Hand 1 writes ff.1r-22v and hand 2 ff. 23 and 24. Some  
scholars, notably Verner Dahlerup and Hreinn Benediktsson,  
have argued for a third hand on f. 24, but the evidence for  
this is insubstantial.</p>
```

```
</handDesc>
```

<handDesc> example (2)

```
<handDesc hands="2">
  <handNote xml:id="Eirsp-1" scope="minor" script="other">
    <p>The first part of the manuscript,
  <locus from="1v" to="72v:4">fols 1v-72v:4</locus>, is
  written in a practised Icelandic Gothic bookhand. This hand
  is not found elsewhere.</p>
  </handNote>
  <handNote xml:id="Eirsp-2" scope="major" script="other">
    <p>The second part of the manuscript,
  <locus from="72v:4" to="194v">fols 72v:4-194</locus>, is
  written in a hand contemporary with the first; it can also
  be found in a fragment of <title>Knýtlinga saga</title>,
  <ref>AM 20b II fol.</ref>.</p>
  </handNote>
</handDesc>
```

Another <physDesc> example

```
<physDesc>
  <objectDesc form="folio">
    <supportDesc material="paper">
      <support>A single folio of <material>paper</material> in
the collection as ff504 recto and verso</support>
    </supportDesc>
    <layoutDesc>
      <layout columns="1" writtenLines="20">Written full width
as a single column, with approximately 20 lines per
page</layout>
    </layoutDesc>
  </objectDesc>
  <handDesc hands="1">
    <handNote>Written in <persName ref="#W0">Wilfred
Owen's</persName> hand.</handNote>
  </handDesc>
</physDesc>
```

<additions>

The `<additions>` element can be used to list or describe any additions to the manuscript, such as marginalia, scribblings, doodles, etc., which are considered to be of interest or importance.

`<additions>`

`<p>`The text of this manuscript is not interpolated with sentences from Royal decrees promulgated in 1294, 1305 and 1314. In the margins, however, another somewhat later scribe has added the relevant paragraphs of these decrees, see pp. 8, 24, 44, 47 etc.`</p>`

`<p>`As a humorous gesture the scribe in one opening of the manuscript, pp. 36 and 37, has prolonged the lower stems of one letter f and five letters p and has them drizzle down the margin.`</p>`

`</additions>`

<history>

- <origin>: where it all began
- <provenance>: everything in between
- <acquisition>: how you acquired it

<origin> is *datable* element and thus has attributes *@notBefore* and *@notAfter*, *@when* etc.

<history> Example

```
<history>
  <origin>
    <p>Written in <origPlace>England</origPlace> in the
    <origDate notAfter="1300" notBefore="1200">13th cent. </origDate>
  </p>
  </origin>
  <provenance>
    <p>On fol. 54v very faint is <q>Iste liber est fratris guillelmi de buria
    de <gap reason="illegible"/> Roberti ordinis fratrum Pred<ex>icatorum</ex>
    </q>, 14th cent. (?): <q>hanauilla</q> is written at the foot of the page
    (15th cent.).</p>
  </provenance>
  <acquisition>
    <p>Bought from the Rev. <name type="person">W. D. Macray</name> on
    <date when="1863-03-17">March 17, 1863</date>, for 1 pound 10s.</p>
  </acquisition>
</history>
```


<additional> information

- <adminInfo> : administrative information
- <surrogates> : information about other surrogates, i.e. photographs, digital images etc.
- <accMat> : accompanying material
- <listBibl> : bibliography

Administrative information

- record history
- availability
- custodial history
- miscellaneous remarks

```
<adminInfo>
  <custodialHist>
    <custEvent type="conservation" notBefore="1961-03" notAfter="1963-02">
      <p>Conserved between March 1961 and February 1963 at Birgitte Dalls
      Konserveringsværksted.</p>
    </custEvent>
    <custEvent type="photography" notBefore="1988-05-01" notAfter="1988-05-
    30">
      <p>Photographed in May 1988 by AMI/FA.</p>
    </custEvent>
  </custodialHist>
</adminInfo>
```

<accMat>

<accMat> (accompanying material) contains details of any significant additional material which may be closely associated with the manuscript being described, such as non-contemporaneous documents or fragments bound in with the manuscript at some earlier historical period.

<accMat> A copy of a tax form from 1947 is included in the envelope with the letter. It is not catalogued separately.
</accMat>

And finally

A `<msDesc>` can contain `<msPart>`, essentially a nested `<msDesc>`, where originally distinct manuscripts or parts of a manuscripts have been brought together to form a composite manuscript.

```
<msDesc>
  <msIdentifier>
    <settlement>Amiens</settlement>
    <repository>Bibliothèque Municipale</repository>
    <idno>MS 3</idno>
    <msName>Maurdrannus Bible</msName>
  </msIdentifier>
  <!-- other elements here -->
  <msPart>
    <altIdentifier>
      <idno>MS 6</idno>
    </altIdentifier>
  <!-- other information specific to this part here -->
</msPart>
<!-- other msParts here -->
</msDesc>
```

Next

Any Questions? Next, the timetable says we're going to have lunch and then come back and do an exercise!