Going deeper into the metadata: Manuscript and Object Description

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About Manuscript Descriptions

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'

Manuscript description in the TEI caters for two conflicting desires:
- preserve (or perpetuate) existing descriptive prose
- reliable search, retrieval, and analysis of data

The <msDesc> tries, wherever possible, to enable both of these approaches.

What Counts As a Manuscript?

- For the TEI manuscripts include all things written by hand, however large or small and using whatever hand held devices to make the marks
- While consciously coming out of the tradition of Western Medieval manuscripts, it has developed over time to also be used for Islamic, East Asian, and manuscripts of many other cultures, and especially modern handwritten documents
- Indeed, because manuscript descriptions are often about the means of production of the object, we actively encourage those cataloguing hand-pressed early printed books to use <msDesc> as well – hence the existence of elements like <typeDesc> to describe the forms of type used.
- Why Do We Catalogue MSS In More Detail Than Books?

<msDesc> Structure

<msDesc>
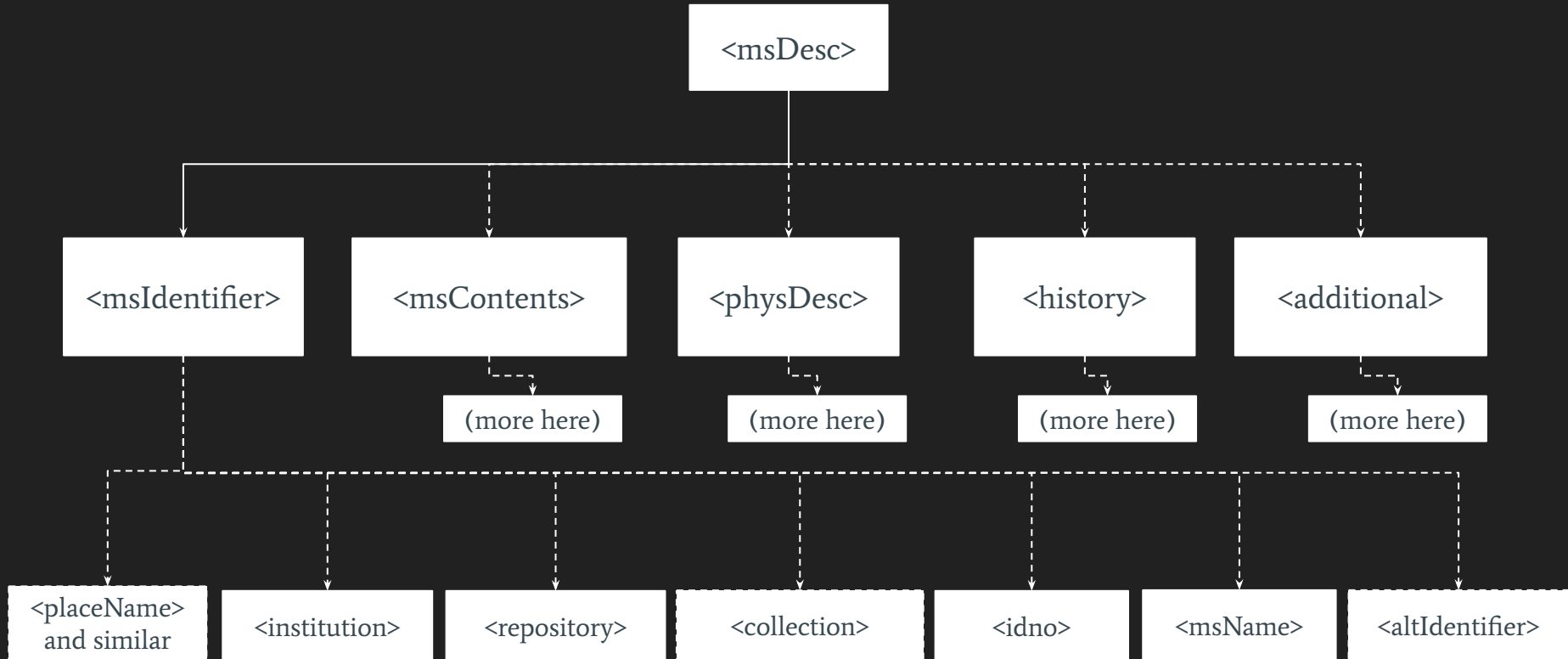
- <msIdentifier>: identifying information
- <msContents>: description of intellectual contents
- <physDesc>: information on physical aspects of the manuscript
- <history>: origin, provenance, and acquisition by current holders
  <additional>: other administrative metadata or related bibliography

```xml
<msDesc xml:id="myFavouriteMS" xml:lang="en">
   <msIdentifier>
      <!-- Manuscript Identification -->
   </msIdentifier>
   <msContents>
      <!-- Intellectual Structure -->
   </msContents>
   <physDesc>
      <!-- Physical Description -->
   </physDesc>
   <history>
      <!-- Origin, Provenance, Acquisition -->
   </history>
   <additional>
      <!-- Additional Administrative Metadata -->
   </additional>
</msDesc>
```

<msDesc> Structure

`<msDesc>`
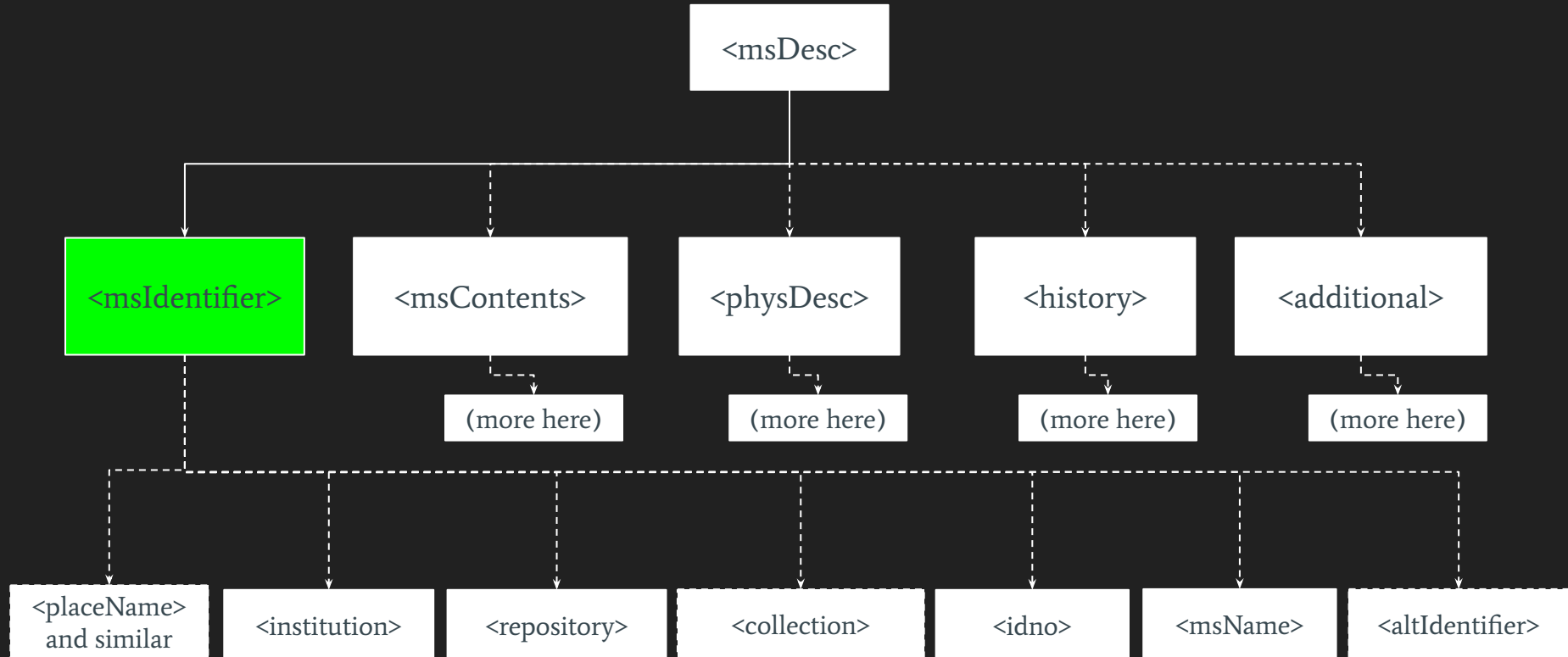
```
<msDesc>
    <msIdentifier>
        <repository>My House</repository>
        <idno>MS 1</idno>
    </msIdentifier>
    <p><!-- One or more paragraphs --></p>
</msDesc>
```

```
<msDesc>
    <msIdentifier>
        <repository>My House</repository>
        <idno>MS 1</idno>
    </msIdentifier>
    <msContents><p><!-- One or more paragraphs --></p></msContents>
    <physDesc><p><!-- One or more paragraphs --></p></physDesc>
    <history><p><!-- One or more paragraphs --></p></history>
</msDesc>
```

<msDesc>

```xml
<msDesc>
    <msIdentifier>
        <!-- More detailed location information -->
        <repository>My House</repository>
        <idno>MS 1</idno>
    </msIdentifier>
    <msContents>
        <summary> <!-- summary description --></summary>
        <msItem>
            <bibl><!-- bibliographic description of item --></bibl>
        </msItem>
    </msContents>
    <physDesc>
        <!-- accMat additions bindingDesc decoDesc
            handDesc musicNotation objectDesc
            scriptDesc sealDesc typeDesc
        -->
    </physDesc>
    <history>
        <origin><!-- where it started --></origin>
        <provenance><!-- one or more provenance steps --></provenance>
        <acquisition><!-- how current institution got it --></acquisition>
    </history>
</msDesc>
```

<msIdentifier>

The <msIdentifier> element has a traditional manuscript location three part specification:

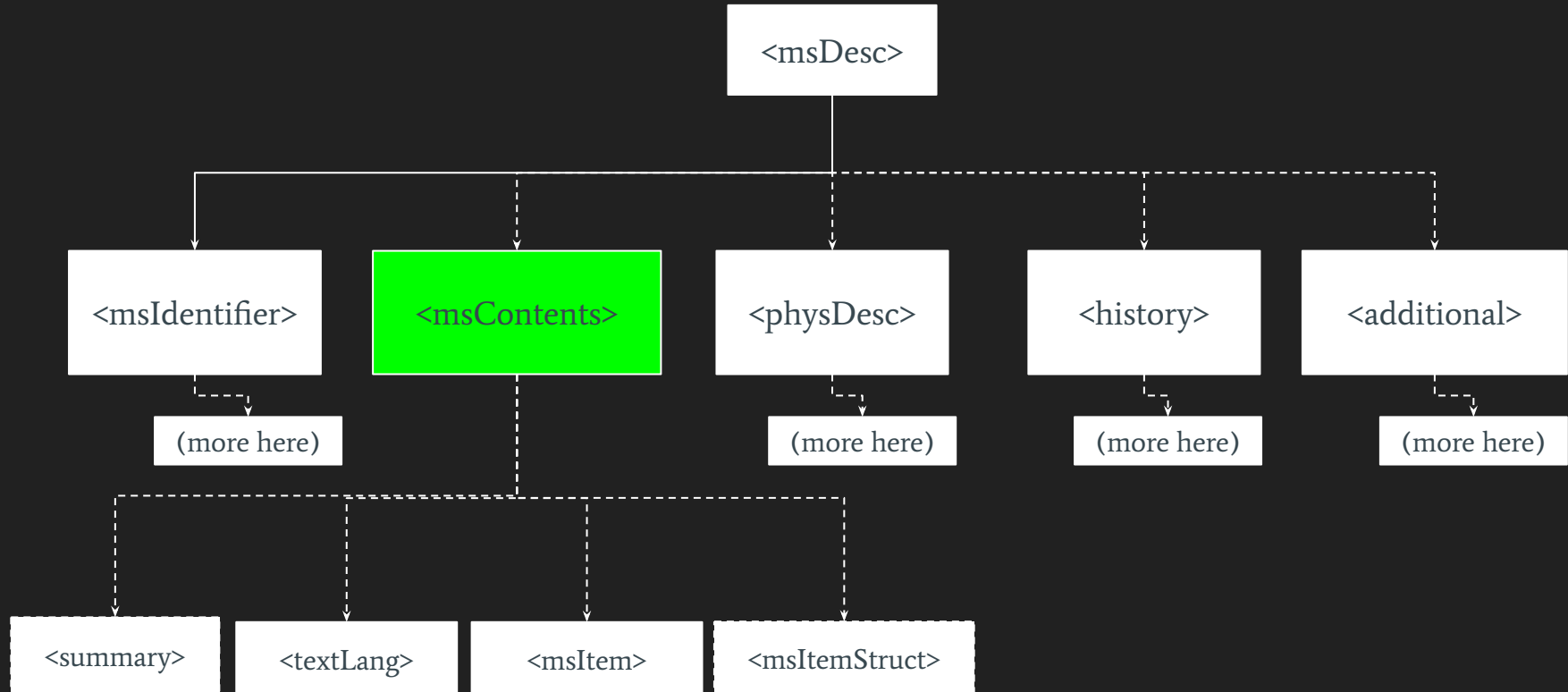- place: <country>, <region>, <settlement>, <placeName>, etc.
- repository: <institution>, <repository>
- identifier: <collection>, <idno>, <altIdentifier>

```
<msIdentifier>
    <country>United Kingdom</country>
    <region type="county">Oxfordshire</region>
    <settlement>Oxford</settlement>
    <institution>University of Oxford</institution>
    <repository>Bodleian Library</repository>
    <collection>Digby</collection>
    <idno type="shelfmark">MS. Digby 133</idno>
    <altIdentifier type="internal">
        <idno type="SCN">1734</idno>
    </altIdentifier>
</msIdentifier>
```

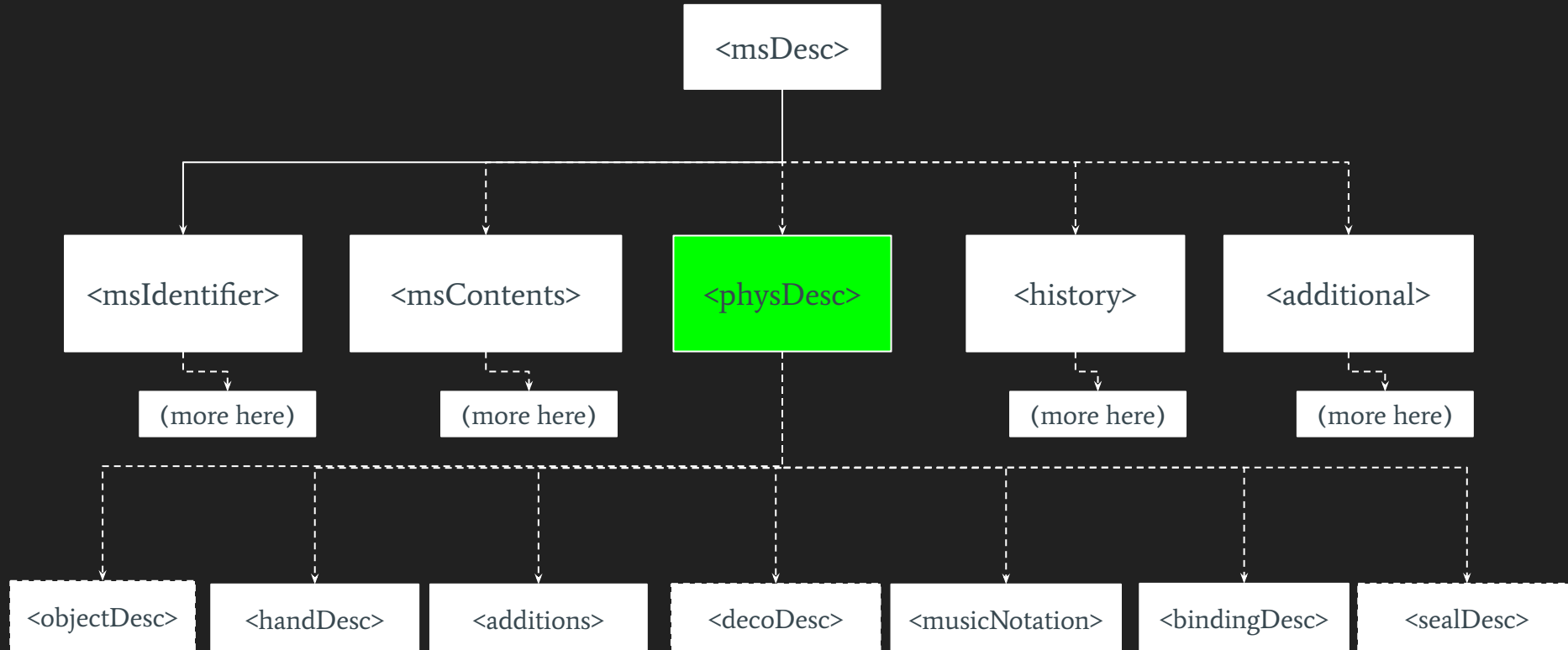# <msDesc> Structure

<msContents>

- The <msContents> element contains information about the intellectual content of the manuscript
- Multiple <msItem> elements provide a detailed table of contents
- You can use the <locus> element inside to document where that particular item appears

```xml
<msContents>
    <msItem n="1">
        <locus from="1r" to="4v">fol. 1r - fol. 4v</locus>
        <p>Description of this item</p>
    </msItem>
    <msItem n="2">
        <locus from="5r" to="55v">fol. 5r - fol. 55v</locus>
        <msItem n="2.1">
            <locus from="5r" to="15v">fol. 5r - fol. 15v</locus>
            <p>Description of this sub-item</p>
        </msItem>
        <msItem n="2.2">
            <locus from="16r" to="55v">fol. 16r - fol. 55v</locus>
            <p>Description of this sub-item</p>
        </msItem>
    </msItem>
    <msItem n="3">
        <locus from="56r" to="109r">fol. 56r - fol. 109r</locus>
        <p>Description of this item</p>
    </msItem>
</msContents>
```

\<msContents\>

```xml
<msContents>
    <summary><!-- Optional overview summary of contents --></summary>
    <textLang xml:lang="shn-shn">Written in shan script</textLang>
    <msItem n="W107">
        <author>
            <persName xml:lang="shn-Latn-x-lc">ca re" sūriya (mè hauṅ' saun')</persName>
        </author>
        <title xml:lang="shn-Latn-x-lc">
            lik' sa miṅ'" suñ' ca yan' muiṅ'" sa thuṅ' luṅ'
        </title>
        <title xml:lang="en-Latn">History of Swezayan Pagoda in Sathung
            (Thaton), Mon State, lower Burma.</title>
        <note>General remarks on work: With flora arts on the cover.</note>
        <note>Work ID: W107</note>
    </msItem>
</msContents>
```

<msDesc> Structure

<physDesc>

- Information concerning the physicality or materiality of the manuscript
- If using the structured form this might include:
  - The physical carrier: <objectDesc>
  - What it carries: <handDesc>, <scriptDesc>, <typeDesc>
  - Special features: <additions>, <decoDesc>, <musicNotation>
  - External things: <bindingDesc>, <sealDesc>, <accMat>

```
<physDesc>
    <objectDesc>
        <supportDesc>
            <p>...</p>
        </supportDesc>
        <layoutDesc>
            <p>...</p>
        </layoutDesc>
    </objectDesc>
    <handDesc>
        <handNote><p>...</p></handNote>
    </handDesc>
    <typeDesc>
        <typeNote><p>...</p></typeNote>
    </typeDesc>
    <scriptDesc>
        <scriptNote><p>...</p></scriptNote>
    </scriptDesc>
    <musicNotation><p>...</p></musicNotation>
    <decoDesc>
        <decoNote><p>...</p></decoNote>
    </decoDesc>
    <additions><p>...</p></additions>
    <bindingDesc>
        <binding>
            <p>...</p>
        </binding>
    </bindingDesc>
    <sealDesc>
        <seal>
            <p>...</p>
        </seal>
    </sealDesc>
    <accMat>
        <p>...</p>
    </accMat>
</physDesc>
```

<physDesc>

```xml
<physDesc>
    <objectDesc form="rolledBook">
        <supportDesc material="sa(mulberry)paper">
            <extent>
                <dimensions type="written" unit="cm">
                    <height extent="25"/>
                    <width extent="15"/>
                    <depth extent="2"/>
                </dimensions>
            </extent>
            <foliation><!-- description of foliation --></foliation>
            <condition><!-- condition --></condition>
        </supportDesc>
    </objectDesc>
    <handDesc>
        <handNote scope="major" medium="black ink">
            <desc>Appearance (paper): white</desc>
        </handNote>
    </handDesc>
    <decoDesc>
        <decoNote><!-- description of decoration --></decoNote>
    </decoDesc>
    <bindingDesc>
        <binding><p><!-- description of binding --></p></binding>
    </bindingDesc>
</physDesc>
```
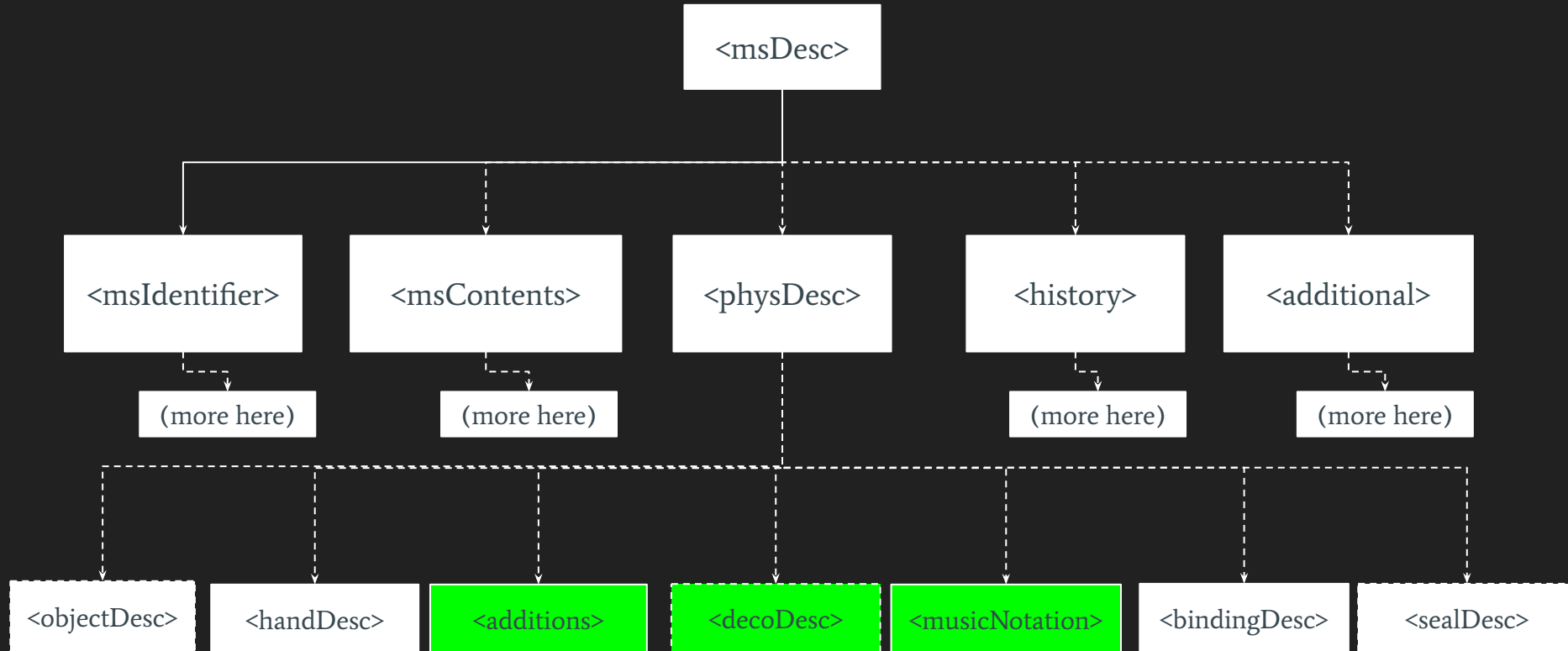
<msDesc> Structure

<objectDesc>
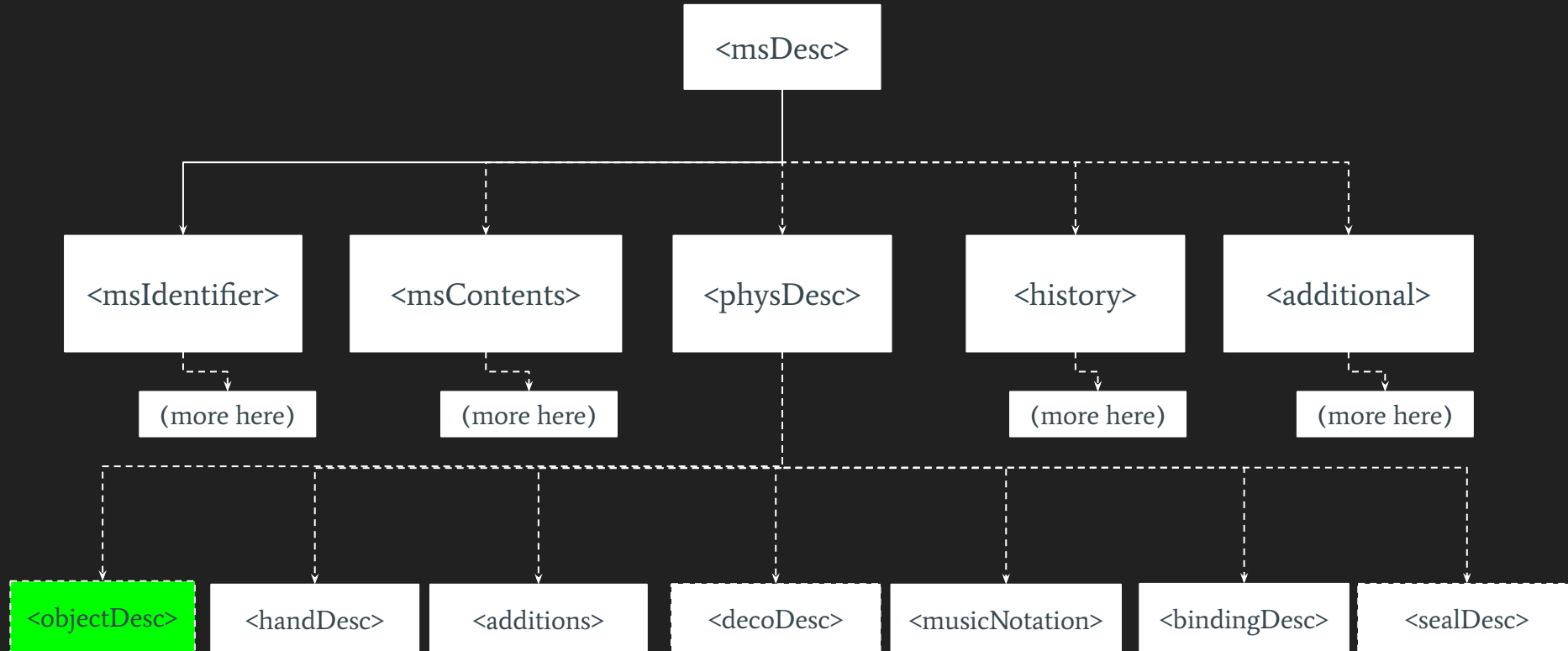
<objectDesc> gives a way to describe the support, foliation, collation, condition, layouts, and more.

```
<objectDesc>
    <supportDesc>
        <support><p>Description of the physical support, materials, etc.</p></support>
        <extent>The size of the manuscript using convenient dimensions</extent>
        <foliation><p>Description of the foliation or other numbering of
            surfaces</p></foliation>
        <collation><p>Description of the physical arrangement of folios, including
                collation formulas and discussion of catchwords</p></collation>
        <condition><p>Description of the physical condition</p></condition>
    </supportDesc>
    <layoutDesc>
        <summary><p>Summary description of the layout if desired</p></summary>
        <layout columns="1" ruledLines="20" writtenLines="20">
            <p>One or more descriptions of layout, including columns, ruling, pricking,
                written lines, etc.</p>
        </layout>
    </layoutDesc>
</objectDesc>
```

<msDesc> Structure

\<handDesc\>, \<typeDesc\>, \<scriptDesc\>
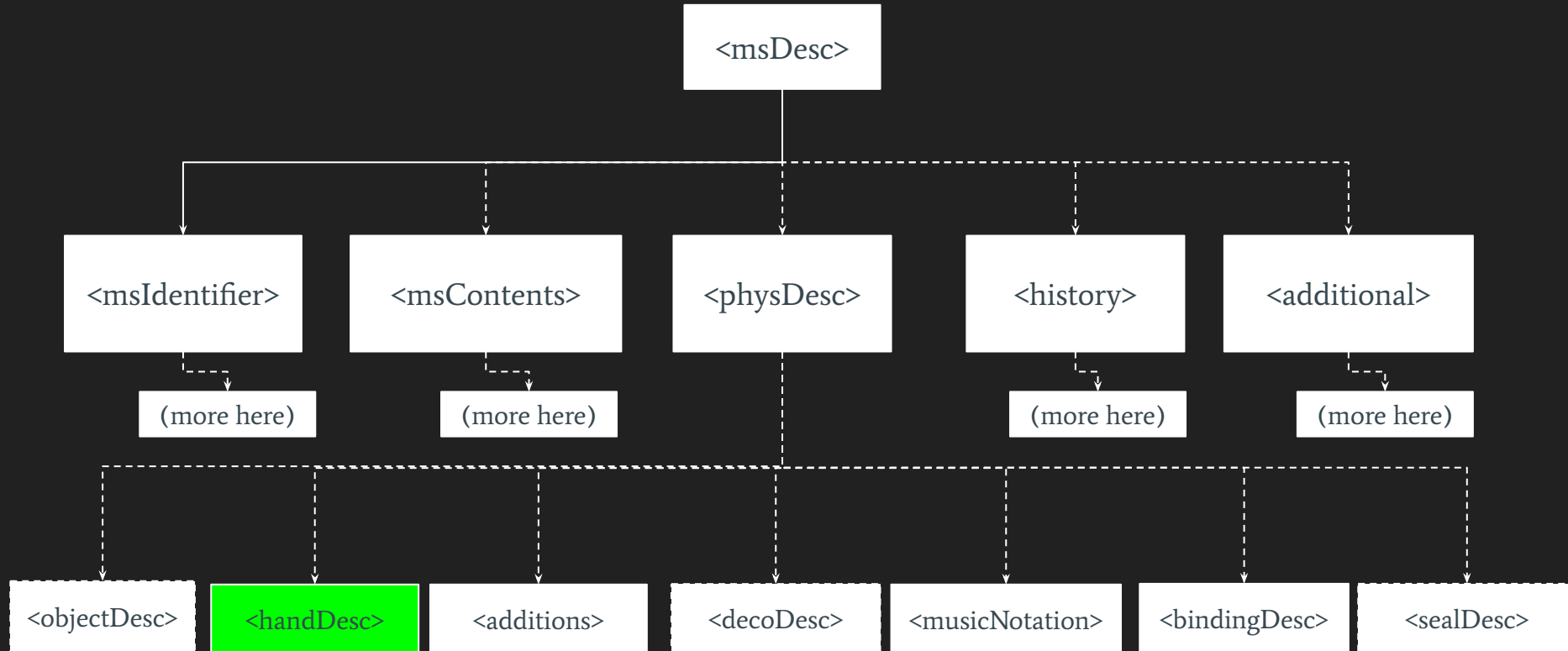
```xml
<handDesc>
   <handNote xml:id="handID" medium="inkType" scope="major" scribe="Scribe1"
      scribeRef="#scribeID" script="scriptName" scriptRef="#script1">
      <p>One hand note for each identified hand in the manuscript with optional
         attributes for a hand id number, the medium of the hand, the scope of its
         writing stint, a scribe or reference to more information about one, a script
         or reference to one</p>
   </handNote>
</handDesc>
<typeDesc>
   <typeNote>
      <p>If describing a source with printed aspects, an optional typeNote for each
         typographic feature</p>
   </typeNote>
</typeDesc>
<scriptDesc>
   <scriptNote xml:id="script1">
      <p>Discussion of a particular script in the manuscript, its scriptorium, or
         usual use</p>
   </scriptNote>
</scriptDesc>
```

<msDesc> Structure

<musicNotation>, <decoDesc>, <additions>

```xml
<musicNotation>
    <p>Description of the type of musical notation in the manuscript</p>
</musicNotation>
<decoDesc>
    <decoNote type="intials">
        <p>Description of the decoration of the manuscript or one homogenous class of
            decoration in it</p>
    </decoNote>
</decoDesc>
<additions>
    <p>Description of any additions, marginalia, or annotations on the manuscript</p>
</additions>
```

\<msDesc> Structure

<bindingDesc>, <sealDesc>, <accMat>
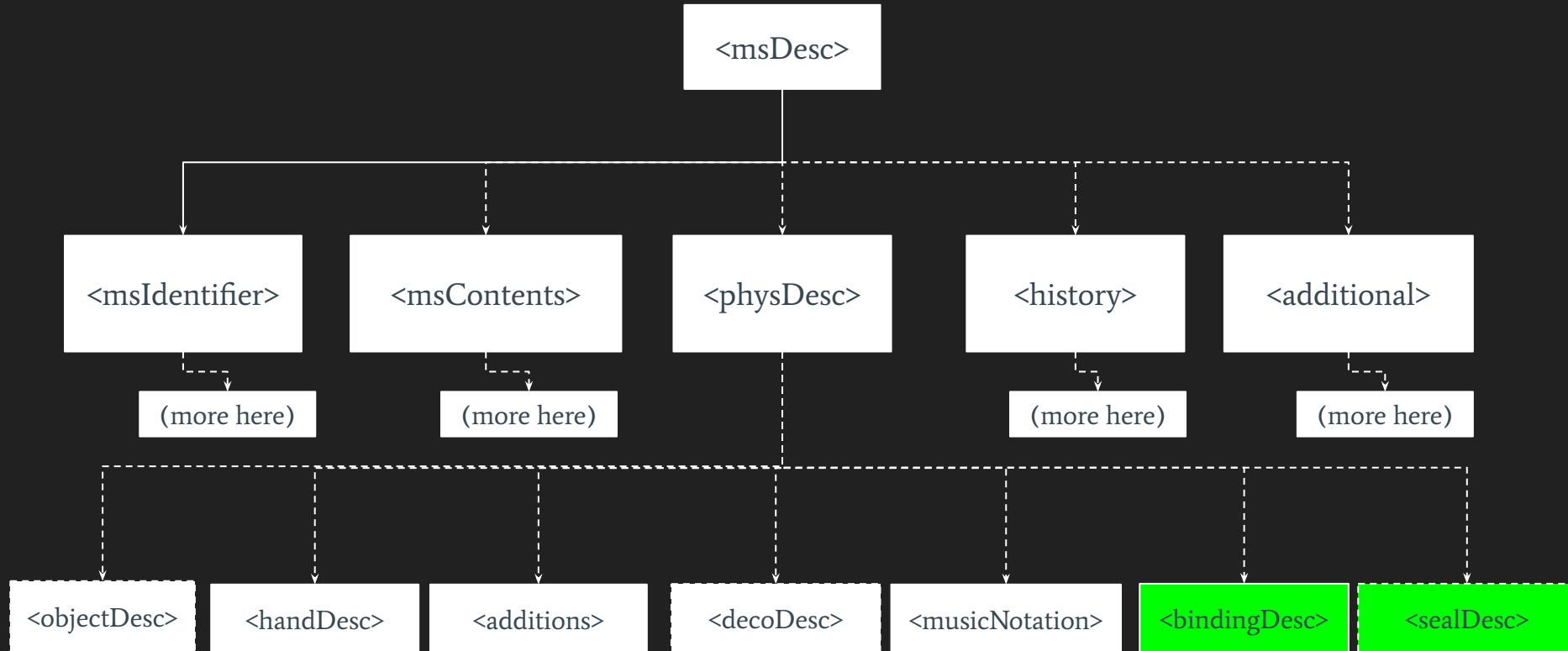
```xml
<bindingDesc>
    <binding notBefore="1700" contemporary="false">
        <p>Description of the binding, including boards and coverings, with optional
            dating attributes and indication of whether the binding is contemporary</p>
        <condition>
            <p>Optional description of the condition of the binding</p>
        </condition>
        <decoNote>
            <p>Optional description of the decoration on the binding</p>
        </decoNote>
    </binding>
</bindingDesc>
<sealDesc>
    <seal when="1518" contemporary="true">
        <p>Description one or more seals, with optional dating attributes and
            indication of whether the seal is contemporary</p>
    </seal>
</sealDesc>
<accMat>
    <p>Description of any significant additional material closely associated with the
        manuscript being described (e.g. papers not catalogued separately)</p>
</accMat>
```

<msDesc> Structure

<history>
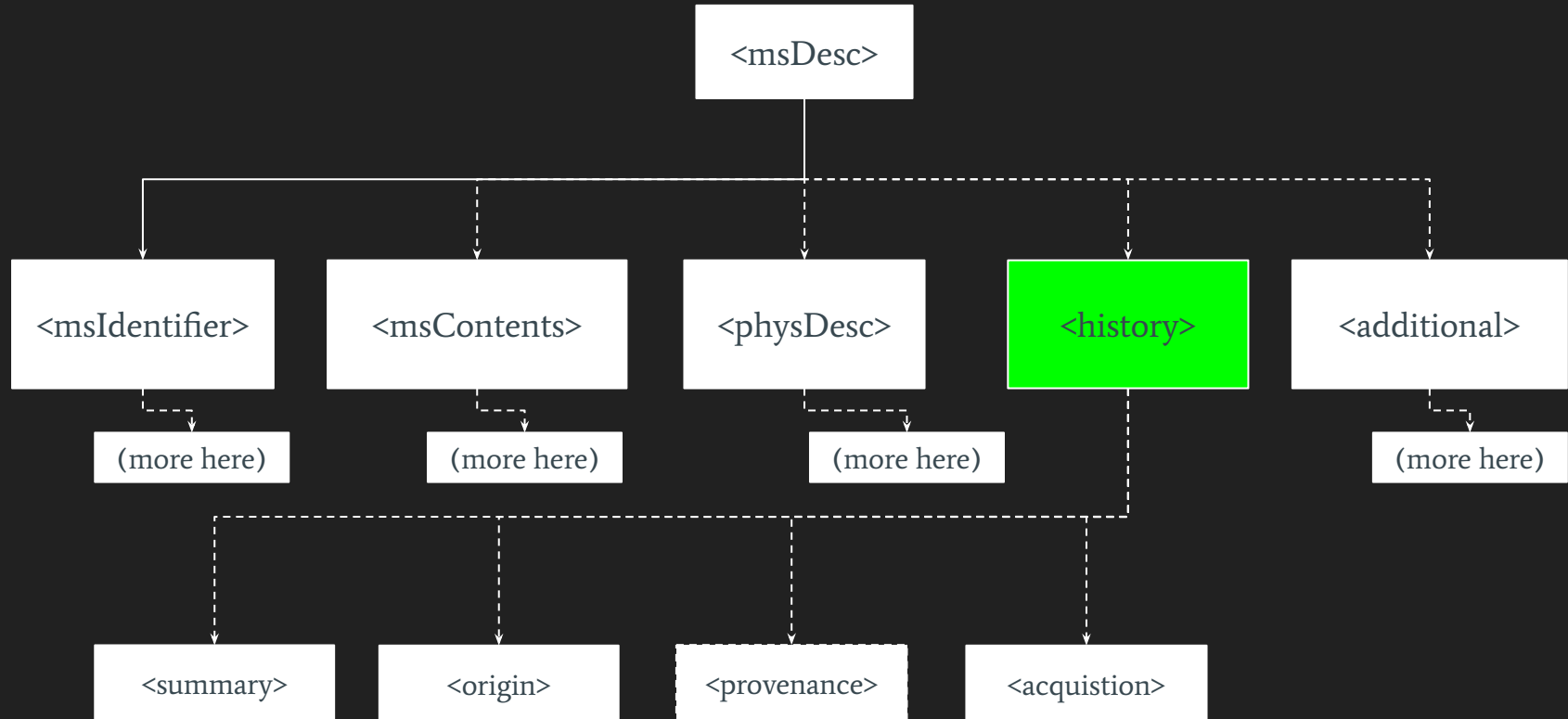
 <history> groups elements describing the full history of a manuscript or manuscript part

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

Although <origin> is a member of att.datable, so has all the usual dating attributes, it also has special purpose elements <origDate> and <origPlace> to record the manuscript's origin date and place in prose.

\<history>

```
<history>
   <summary>
      <!-- Summary entry of history of the manuscript -->
   </summary>
   <origin>
      <!-- Information concerning the origin and creation of the manuscript -->
   </origin>
   <provenance>
      <!-- Information concerning any single identifiable episode during the history
         of the manuscript after its creation but before its acquisition
      -->
   </provenance>
   <acquisition>
      <!-- Information concerning the acquisition of the manuscript
         by the current resource-holding institution
      -->
   </acquisition>
 </history>
```

\<history\>

```xml
<history>
   <origin>
      Written in the
      <origDate calendar="Gregorian" notAfter="1500" notBefore="1400">15th century</origDate>
      in <origPlace><country>England</country></origPlace>
   </origin>
   <provenance>
      Previously owned by
      <persName type="person" role="formerOwner" ref="http://viaf.org/viaf/73979081">
      Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872)</persName>, MS. 13443* and 13446
   </provenance>
   <provenance>
      Previously owned by
      <persName type="person" role="formerOwner" ref="http://viaf.org/viaf/11255508">
         Sir Robert Leicester Harmsworth</persName>
   </provenance>
   <acquisition>
      Harmsworth Trust sale at Sotheby's, <date when="1945-10-16">16 Oct. 1945</date>,
      lot 2051, bought by Quaritch for £38.
   </acquisition>
</history>
```

```
<history>
    <origin calendar="Hijri-qamari" period="Gregorian" notBefore="1750"
            notAfter="1775">
        <origPlace>India</origPlace>
        <date calendar="Gregorian">18th cent.</date>
    </origin>
</history>
```

```
<history>
    <origin>
        <origDate when="1550-01-02">
            <!-- suspected date of origin -->
        </origDate>
        <origPlace><!-- location of origin --></origPlace>
    </origin>
    <provenance>Former owner: Wat Pang Mu</provenance>
    <provenance><!-- optional other provenance steps --></provenance>
    <acquisition>
        <p>Original donor: naṅ‘” mun‘”</p>
        <p>Present copy's donor: naṅ‘” kham‘” mun‘” pā caṅ‘” ne </p>
        <p>Place name for present copy: Pang Mu village.</p>
    </acquisition>
</history>
```

<msDesc> Structure

```
                                    <msDesc>

     <msIdentifier>    <msContents>    <physDesc>    <history>    <additional>

      (more here)      (more here)     (more here)   (more here)

                    <adminInfo>    <surrogates>    <listBibl>
```

<additional>
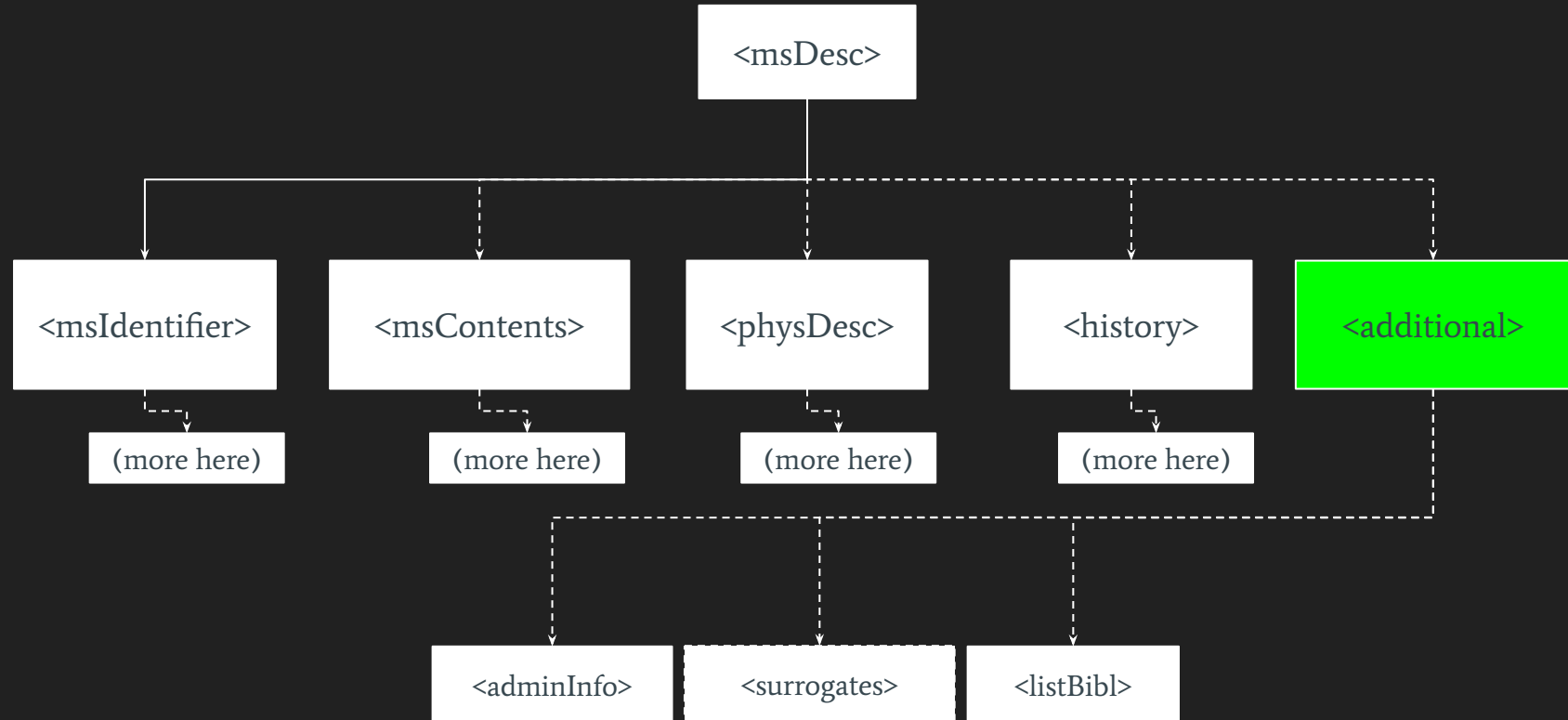
```xml
<additional>
    <adminInfo>
        <recordHist>
            <source>
                <!-- Information about the source of the manuscript description -->
            </source>
            <change>
                <!-- Descriptions of changes to the manuscript description -->
            </change>
        </recordHist>
        <custodialHist>
            <custEvent>
                <p> <!-- Custodial event history here --> </p>
            </custEvent>
        </custodialHist>
    </adminInfo>
    <surrogates>
        <p> <!-- Description of surrogates --></p>
        <listBibl>
            <bibl>
                <!-- Bibliographic entries of surrogates -->
            </bibl>
        </listBibl>
    </surrogates>
    <listBibl>
        <bibl>
            <!-- Bibliographic entries to works concerning the manuscript -->
        </bibl>
    </listBibl>
</additional>
```

<additional>

```xml
<additional>
   <adminInfo>
      <recordHist>
         <source>Summary description by Elizabeth Solopova based on the Summary
            and Quarto Catalogues and supplementary sources.
            <listBibl>
               <bibl type="QUARTO" facs="abw0019.gif">Quarto Catalogue, cols. 19-20</bibl>
               <bibl type="QUARTO" facs="abw0192.gif">Quarto Catalogue (addenda), p. 15</bibl>
               <bibl type="QUARTO" facs="abw0193.gif">Quarto Catalogue (addenda), p. 16</bibl>
               <bibl type="SC" facs="aap0091.gif">Summary Catalogue, vol. 2, part 1, p. 70</bibl>
            </listBibl>
         </source>
      </recordHist>
   </adminInfo>
   <surrogates>
      <bibl facs="http://image.ox.ac.uk/list?collection=bodleian">
         Timaeus and Chanson de Roland: full digital facsimiles
      </bibl>
   </surrogates>
</additional>
```

<msDesc> Structure – That's Everything? Right?
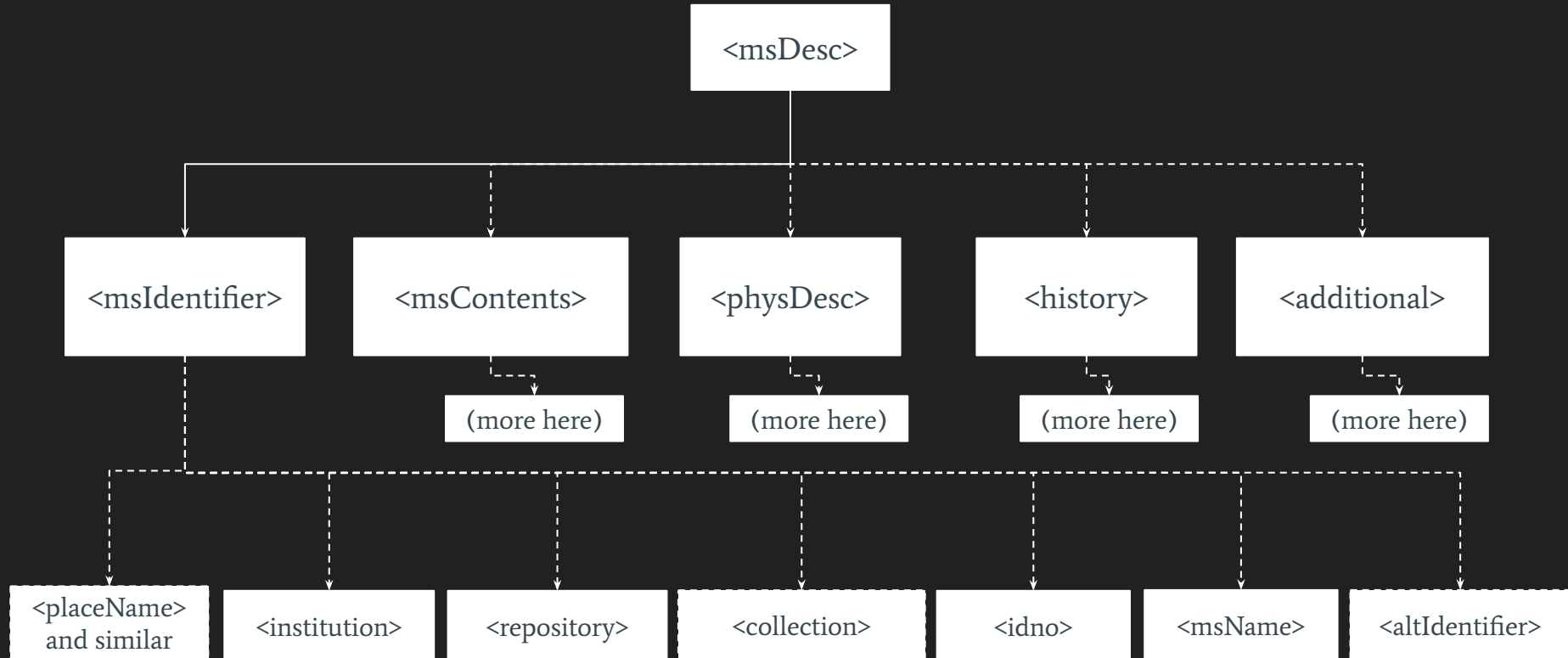
<msDesc> Structure – Nope! I lied.

\<msPart>
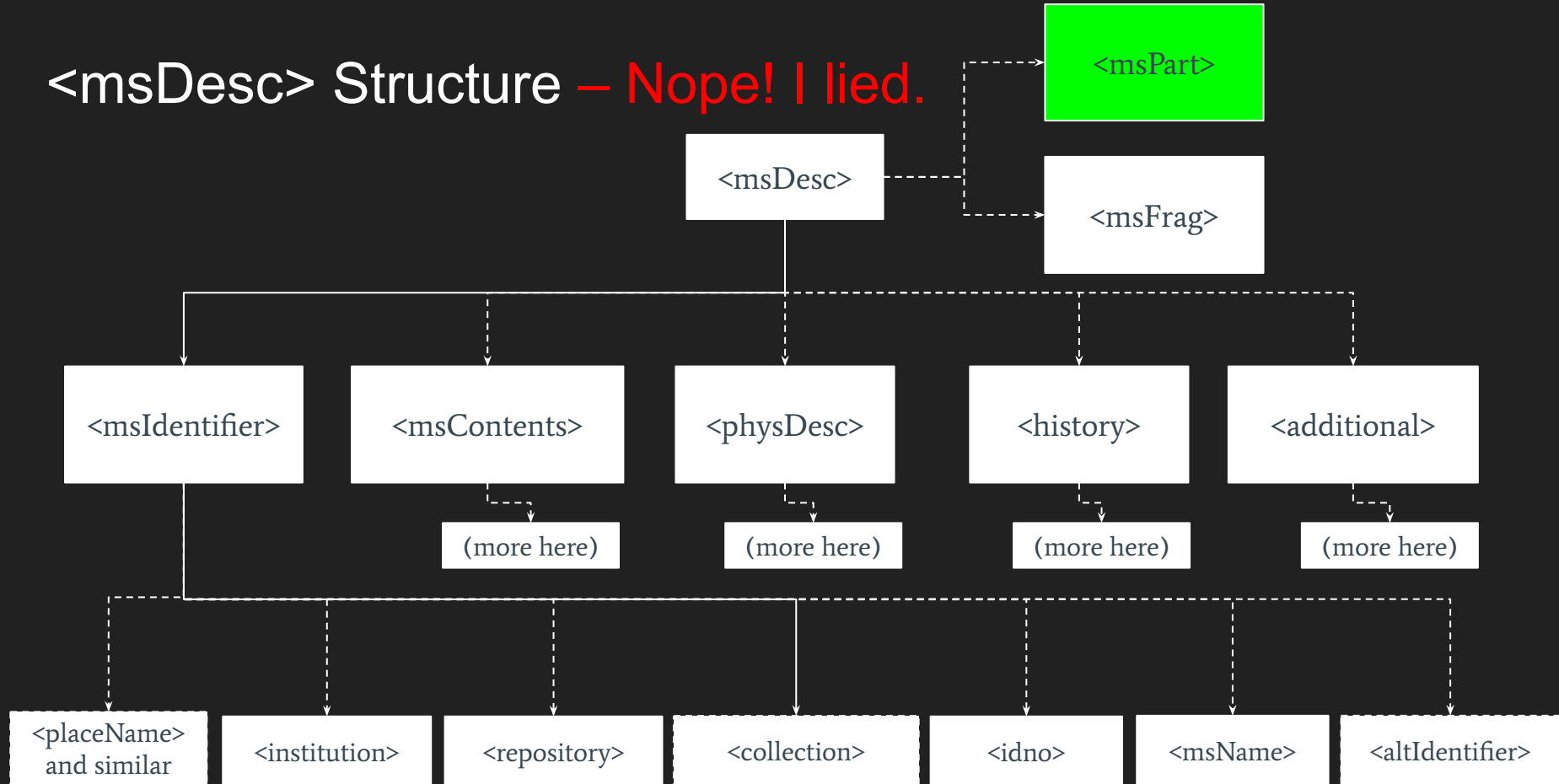
```xml
<msDesc xml:id="MyCompositeMS">
    <msIdentifier>
        <!-- MS Identification for composite object  -->
        <msName>My Composite Manuscript</msName>
    </msIdentifier>


    <!-- MS Part elements for each manuscript in the composite -->
    <msPart xml:id="msPartA">
        <msIdentifier>
            <!-- Identification for this manuscript part -->
        </msIdentifier>
        <msContents>
            <!-- Intellectual contents of this part -->
        </msContents>
        <physDesc>
            <!-- Physical description of this part -->
        </physDesc>
        <history>
            <!-- History of this part -->
        </history>
        <additional>
            <!-- Additional metadata for this part -->
        </additional>
    </msPart>

    <!-- Additional parts -->
    <msPart xml:id="msPartB">
        <msIdentifier></msIdentifier>
    </msPart>

    <!-- Additional parts -->
    <msPart xml:id="msPartC">
        <msIdentifier></msIdentifier>
    </msPart>
</msDesc>
```

<msPart>

```xml
<msPart xml:id="bod-MS._Digby_133-1">
    <msIdentifier>
        <idno type="part">MS. Digby 133 - Part 1</idno>
    </msIdentifier>
    <msContents>
        <msItem n="1" xml:id="a1_1">
            <author ref="http://viaf.org/viaf/2470550"> Galileo Galilei </author>
            <title>Discorso del flusso e reflusso del mare</title>
            <textLang mainLang="ita">Italian</textLang>
        </msItem>
    </msContents>
    <physDesc>
        <objectDesc form="codex">
            <supportDesc material="chart">
                <support>paper</support>
            </supportDesc>
        </objectDesc>
    </physDesc>
    <history>
        <origin>
            <date calendar="Gregorian" notBefore="1600" notAfter="1700">17th century</date>
            <origPlace>Italian</origPlace>
        </origin>
    </history>
</msPart>
```

<msDesc> Structure

<msFrag>

<msFrag>
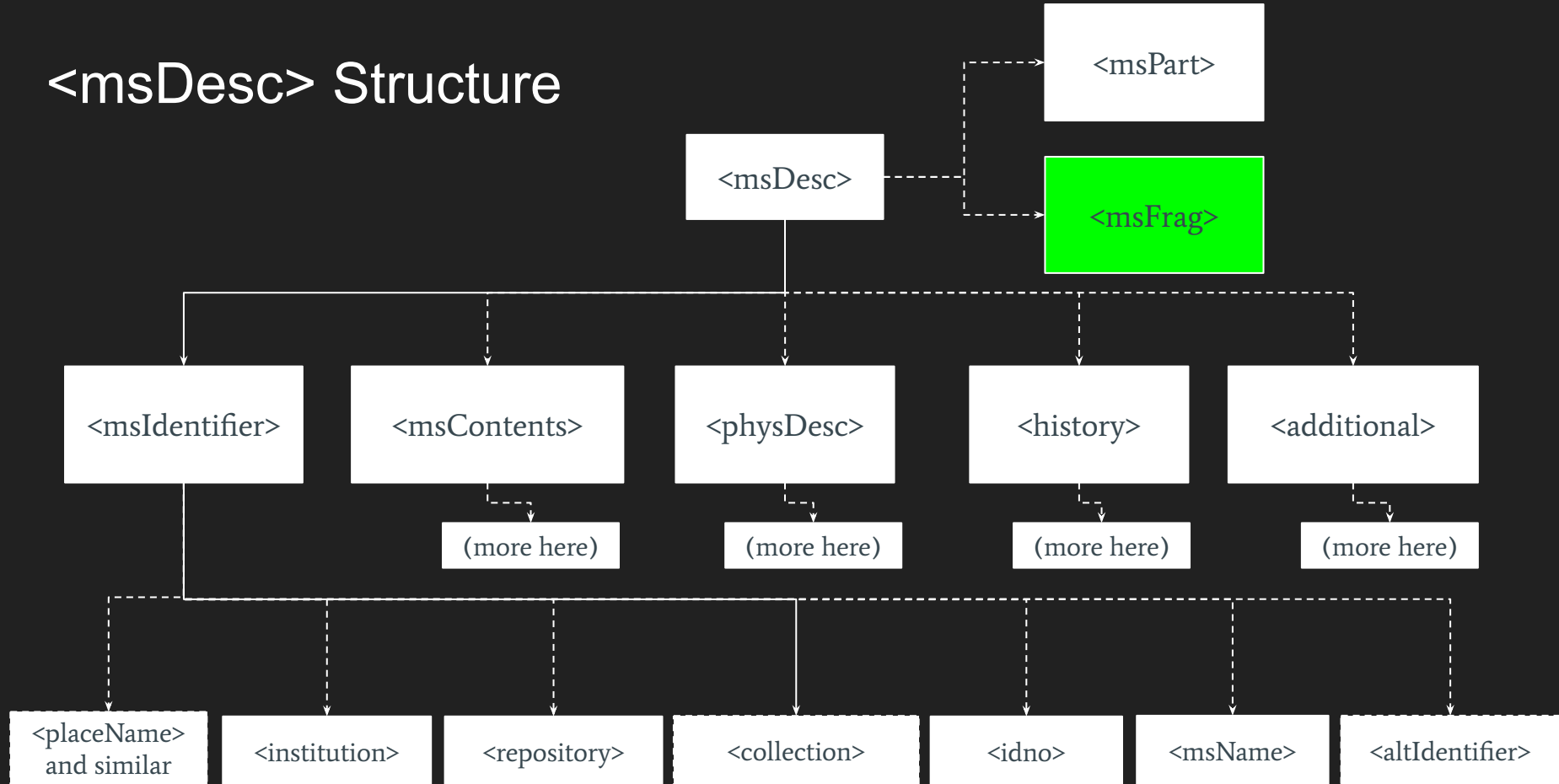
```xml
<msFrag xml:id="MS_Example-frag1">
    <msIdentifier>
        <!-- Manuscript identification of this fragment -->
    </msIdentifier>
    <msContents>
        <!-- Manuscript contents of this fragment -->
    </msContents>
    <physDesc>
        <!-- Physical description of this fragment -->
    </physDesc>
    <history>
        <!-- History of this fragment -->
    </history>
    <additional>
        <!-- Additional metadata of this fragment -->
    </additional>
</msFrag>
```

I want to know more!

- Chapter 10: [Manuscript Description](link)