

Linked Data in the Source Description – Requirements of the Detmold Court Theatre Project

It is part of scholarly correctness and a prerequisite for the scholarly reuse of data that all cataloguing of historical materials needs clear references to the sources of information. Using the <sourceDesc> of MEI for cataloguing the historical performance material of the Detmold Court Theatre led us to some interesting examples and questions of how to encode information about dates, scribes, events etc. In most cases, this information cannot directly be drawn from inscriptions in the performance material itself but is only to be found in contextual materials (which in our case have been encoded in TEI). Whereas in work catalogues this information comes from sources outside the scope of the catalogued material, in our project this contextual stuff is part of the cataloguing work. So, much of the information, e.g. dates of composition, of copying or of dispatch of a manuscript, are part of the catalogued material.

The talk will give examples for different types of such information which have to be documented by references to their sources and will show und discuss the possibilities of encoding these phenomena.

Mostly discussed in source descriptions are various datings and any information on the scribe of a manuscript source.

For the dates we have to examine

- different forms and meanings of dates: creation, distribution, use (rehearsal, performance) of a manuscript
- different validity of the dates e. g. for the whole or only a part of the manuscript
- dates found in a single manuscript but valid for several manuscripts
- external information for dating a manuscript

For the scribes it is not the norm that there is any information given in the source itself.

Here we have therefore to reference in the most cases

- to external documents
- sometimes to already existing scholarly discussions
- to expert's assessment

Where necessary we will have a short look on the necessities of other projects.

In all cases we will explore the current possibilities of referencing with URIs or TOKENs as attributes of the relevant elements and show the corresponding requirements in the markup of the context material. (We will not discuss problems in displaying this information.)

Certainly some of these questions are philological ones which are not the topic of this conference. In these cases the discussion will focus on the encoding of the solution found but with the known uncertainties. The main goal of the discussion is the encoding for machine readable purposes. Annotations in full text should be the exception.

The discussion on this topic started at the metadata workshop in Mainz in November 2017 and has been continued at the ESS 2018 in Paderborn in September 2018. Some proposals of these discussions have been integrated in MEI 4.0, but others are yet open (see, e. g., github issue #550 according the <hand> element).

The paper will also give arguments for the discussion whether the <sourceDesc> should be positioned at the same level as the <workDesc> in the MEI Header (see on this topic – issue #546 – the mail of Johannes Kepper on the MEI-List on 23rd September 2018).

The Detmold Court Theatre Project (www.hoftheater-detmold.de) which is located at the Musicological Institute of Detmold/Paderborn has the special goal to explore the suitability of the MEI Header for cataloguing and for exchange data with other catalogues like RISM and the large library catalogues at Berlin, München and Dresden. As a research project it has also the obligation not only to publicly present the data but also to reflect on the modelling process and to make this process visible.