

Meeting of COST Action IS1310 ‘Reassembling the Republic of Letters, 1500-1800 Work Group 4 Documents and Collections. Sub-group meeting held in Dr Steevens’ Hospital, Dublin, on 4 March 2016.

Present:

1. Anastacio, Vanda, Prof. University of Lisbon. MCM member PORTUGAL.
2. Boran, Elizabethanne, Dr; MCM member and Leader of WG4. IRELAND.
3. Boserup, Ivan. CERL representative. MCM member. DENMARK.
4. Fingernagel, Andreas Dr., Austrian National Library (ANL). MCM member. AUSTRIA.
5. Hotson, Howard, Professor, EMLO and University of Oxford. MCM member and Chair of COST Action. UNITED KINGDOM.
6. Hunt, Arnold, Dr; University of Cambridge. MCM member. UNITED KINGDOM.
7. le Masne de Chermont, Isabelle, Dr; NON MCM. Directeur du département des Manuscrits. Bibliothèque nationale de France.
8. Leerintveld, Ad, Dr; NON MCM. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, Netherlands and CEN.
9. Lewis, Miranda, Ms. NON MCM: UNITED KINGDOM: EMLO.
10. Müller, Gerhard, Dr. NON MCM: GERMANY: Kalliope.
11. Olafsson, Bragi Mr; National and University Library of Iceland MCM member. ICELAND.
12. Van Miert, Dirk, Dr. MCM member. NETHERLANDS.
13. Wallnig, Thomas, Dr. University of Vienna (A); Austrian Institute of Historical Research, Vienna (A). MCM member and Vice Chair of COST Action. AUSTRIA.
14. Walter, Axel E. Prof; IKFN - Arbeitsstelle Königsberg. MCM member. LITHUANIA.

This meeting of a sub-group of WG4 was convened and chaired by Dr Elizabethanne Boran, Leader of WG4, to discuss and reach agreement on metadata standards for early modern manuscript letters. The members of the sub-group were delighted to be joined in their deliberations by Dr Ad Leerintveld (Koninklijke Bibliotheek), Dr

Isabelle le Masne de Chermont (BNF), Ms Miranda Lewis (EMLO) and Dr Gerhard Müller (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin). The format of the workshop followed the agenda which set out various elements of metadata and the following conclusions were reached:

1. Unique Identifier: Actions:

- It was agreed that the main point of reference should be the work (as opposed to the manifestation) and that relationship links should use the model of ISAD (G) and its American counterpart DACS.
- It was furthermore agreed that this was a matter that required further interaction between WG4 and WG5.

2. Date of Letter: Actions

- It was agreed that ISO 8601, which stipulates that the date be represented in the following manner [YYYY]-[MM]-[DD] should be adopted. ISO 8601 uses the Gregorian dating system.
- It was agreed that the date of the letter as given should be used in the first instance.
- It was agreed that any comments about the date should be included in the 'Notes' field.
- It was agreed that a STSM should be encouraged to write a position paper on the problems of different systems of dating (Julian calendar, Gregorian calendar, Revolutionary calendar etc).

3. Names (Sender/Recipient): Actions

- It was agreed that the name as given should be used.
- It was agreed that there should be links to the following databases which provided variant names: CERL thesaurus; RNA; GND.

4. Place Name: Actions

- It was agreed that the place name of origin should be as given in the document.

- It was agreed that the place of destination should be included and that a note should be placed in the 'Notes' field if the place of destination did not come from an address on the letter: it should be stated in the 'Notes' field what alternative source was used for the place of destination if the actual address was not given in the letter.
- It was agreed that a link should be to the CERL thesaurus, which includes Orbis Latinus.
- It was agreed that WG1 was the proper group to examine this issue in more detail.

5. Language: Actions

- It was agreed to use the ISO standards 639-2 and 639-3 for languages and ISO 15924 for scripts.
- It was agreed that there should be two levels of language description – a drop-down for the main language (which should be a core field) and a secondary level drop-down menu for subsidiary languages.

6. Document Type: Actions

- It was agreed that there should be a binary division between 'whole' and 'partial' (available in a drop-down menu).
- It was agreed that there should be a binary division between 'printed' and 'manuscript' (available in a drop-down menu).
- One level down from the 'manuscript' drop-down there should be a drop-down choice which includes the following:
 - a) Draft.
 - b) Letter as sent.
 - c) Copy.
- It was agreed that more information about the state of a letter should be included in the 'Notes' field.

7. Printed Copy Details: Actions

- It was agreed that ISO 690 should be followed in recording the details of a printed copy.

- In line with the decision of WG4 at Oxford (2015), it was agreed that the Zotero database, in the first instance, should be used to amass details of printed copies of early modern letters.

8. Online Link: Action

- It was agreed that any online versions should be linked to the record.

9. Summary: Actions

- It was agreed that free text should be used and that names and places referenced should be searchable under a keyword search.
- It was agreed that this might form a suitable topic for an STSM.

10. Level of Description: Actions

- It was agreed that, while both were required, collection level descriptions should not be included under item level but should form its own segment of the website.
- It was agreed that collection level descriptions should include information about the following:
 - a) Provenance
 - b) Extent.
 - c) Scope and content.
 - d) Link to the host archive.
- It was agreed that within an item level description that there should be a link to the collection level description (if available).
- It was agreed that an STSM might provide a paper on a case study outlining the key requirements.

11. Note: Actions:

- It was agreed that this should be free-text and searchable and should be used to elucidate additional information about a number of elements already discussed (for example 'date'). Other areas that might be expanded on in the 'Note' field are the following: enclosures, source of addresses, seals, watermarks.

12 Type of Entity: Actions

- It was agreed that the following terms should be used:
 - a) Individual.
 - b) Plurality.

13. Maintenance Note: Actions

- It was agreed that this should be automatically updated and information provided about who had initially created the record.
- It was agreed that a waiver note be inserted to cover legal restrictions.

14. AOB: Repository information: Action

- On the issue of the reference field it was agreed that this should include the country code, repository code and manuscript referencing of the institution.

To facilitate discussion, mid wa7 during the workshop three presentations were delivered: Dr Gerhard Müller (on Kalliope); Dr Ad Leerintveld (on CEN); and Dr Miranda Lewis (on EMLO).

Kalliope: Dr Gerhard Müller's presentation on Kalliope emphasised that that this database, which is the central registry for Germany, Switzerland and Austria, uses the following international standards: ISAD(G); RNA; RDA; and adhered to the following formats: EAD and EAC-CPF, as well as ISOs 3166, 639-2, 15511 and 8601. He drew attention to the fact that all records are linked with an identifier from ISO codes and emphasised the absolute importance of using an integrated authority file as the link.

CEN: Dr Ad Leerintveld outlined the history and scope of the CEN project: of the over two million letters in the system the vast majority were modern with just over 50,000 dated before 1800. The project, begun in the 1980s, is now owned by OCLC.

EMLO: Dr Miranda Lewis gave an extensive presentation on EMLO, providing a vital background to our discussions of various elements (and, in many cases, a method for solving issues). The inbuilt Gregorian converter pointed the way to a more comprehensive IT solution to various methods of dating.

The meeting ended at 4.00pm and was followed by a tour of the Edward Worth Library, given by Dr Elizabethanne Boran, Librarian of the Edward Worth Library.