Digital Mitford: Coding Mitford Letters in TEI, Tips and Workflow

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Consult http://codebook.mitford.pitt.edu for the complete coding guidelines of the Digital Mitford Project

BASIC TIPS ON OXYGEN FILE WINDOWS:

- Use CTRL—SHIFT—Y to control text wrap (i.e., to fit text to window)—needed when re-opening files.
- UNDO and REDO buttons are found under EDIT drop-down list (there's no handy button on the main screen)
- Use the FIND box in the bottom left corner to find all &'s, etc. (other FIND options available in top drop-down box)
- Click on red buttons to find and correct coding errors (but you might have to work back from the point Oxygen indicates as the error to find the real source of the error).

STRUCTURAL CODING BASICS:

Begin by coding the structure of the letter: paragraphing, page breaks, etc.

- **p = paragraph**

  <p>…. </p> Use to mark beginning and ends of paragraphs

- **<pb/> = page break**; n=" [# of page starting] " To mark page breaks. This is a self-closing tag (doesn't surround anything).

  Sample: <pb n="2"/>

- **<lb/>** = Line break This is another self-closing tag

Do **not** mark *line breaks* inside Mitford's paragraphs in a letter. We only mark line breaks when they are important to the structure of the letter, as in openings and closings. Use the line-break when the break is meaningful and purposeful, usually in the close of a letter:

> I cannot tell you with how much gratitude I am always your's**<lb/>**

When adding tags, keep SPACING consistent (i.e., don't accidentally delete spaces before or after the tagged term).

Put plural or apostrophe forms*outside* tags: <persName ref="#Mitford_Geo">Papa</persName>'s [for "Papa's"]

COMMENTS TO SELF/ OTHER EDITORS: To leave comments for yourself or us for future reference!
<!-- note content: be sure to initial each note indicating who it's from. "Sign" using your xml:id! -- >

Sample: <! -- lmw: Close friend of MRM, possibly an educator. According to Coles from MRM diary, letters were addressed to her at Bellevue, Lower Road, Richmond (Coles 26). -->

Note: Because two hyphens are part of the tag for such comments, **you can't use any hyphens INSIDE the comment tag** (if you do, Oxygen will turn red.) Other types of "public" notes (formal annotations) are dealt with below. . . .

CODING TEXTUAL ANOMALIES:

- Symbols: XML rule: All ampersands (&) must be converted to unicode tags: **&**
- Superscripts: Use **<hi rend="superscript">..</hi>**
  You may need for MRM's numerical dates, as in:
  <date when="1822-08-13">August 13**<hi rend="superscript">**th**</hi></date>**

  MRM uses to write abbreviation for Esquire:
  Esq**<hi rend="superscript">**re**</hi>.**

- Underlining: Use "emph" tag (for emphasis); indicate what kind (@rend= how it is rendered):
  Perhaps we should call it <emph rend="underline">the</emph>Foscari

<u>Datelines:</u>

- Datelines indicate all the information given before the opening of the letter proper; for example, date and place written.
- Dates must be in **year-month-day** format: **<date when="1821-06-21">… </date>**
  (or, if you don't know/need the day, then year-month: 1821-10 for October 1821)
- (Note, if BC dates are mentioned (not in Mitford's datelines, but elsewhere), here's how to code them:
  Example: Julius Caesar was assassinated on **<date when="-0044-03-15>** 15 March 44 BC**</date>**

<u>Letter Openings:</u>

<div type="letter">	tags what type of document
<opener>	tags the opening or "heading" of a letter
<dateline>	tags the date/place
<date when="1821-06-21">June 21**<hi rend="superscript">**st**</hi>** 1821.**</date>**	tags the date in code & as written in the ms.
<name type="place">Three Mile Cross**</name>**	tags the place written (if given in ms.)
</dateline>	Closing dateline tag
<salute><persName ref="#Talfourd_Thos">My dear Sir**</persName></salute>**	Tags the salutation
</opener>	Closing opener section tag
</div>	Closing document tag (comes @ end of the entire letter)

<u>Letter closings:</u> Salutations and signature; indicate line breaks (lb):

<closer><lb/>Ever most sincerely **&amp;** gratefully your's	Tags the closing of a letter
<lb/><signed>M.R.M.**</signed><lb/>**	Tags signature
</closer>	Closing closer section tag

<u>Deletions and Insertions</u>: **<del rend="[type of deletion]">…</del>** Indicate how the word or words are deleted—lined out, squiggles, etc. Indicate the size of the gap (one letter, one word, # of words): < gap quantity="[#]" unit="word"/>

Samples:

Use when MRM has scribbled something out, but you can't read what was underneath:

<del rend="squiggles"><gap quantity="1" unit="word"/></del>

If MRM has lined something out and you **can** read what was beneath, as well as the word that replaced it:

You will find that I have conformed to **<del rend="strikethrough"><gap quantity="1" unit="word"/>**your**</del><add place="above">**the**</add>** representation of the Venetian government as we find it in the great Dramatists

For words added by MRM above or below the line of text, **using a caret mark: ˄   or ˅**

<add place="above"> <metamark place="below" function="insertion" rend="caret"/>me**</add>**

<u>Other gaps (caused by damage to the manuscript)</u>

Use for a torn spot in which you, the editor, have supplied the missing letters or word:

She sent me the most magni<gap reason='torn' quantity="3" unit="chars"/><unclear><supplied resp="#ebb">fic</supplied></unclear>ent description of…

between us <gap reason='torn' quantity="1" unit="word"/><unclear><supplied resp="#lmw">we</supplied></unclear>shall certainly

Other reasons can include **"smudged," "water, " "mildew,"** etc. [Usually it is a tear.] The gap indicates something impenetrable that we can't read--and often we'll see tears in the page interrupting a word as in the example above. If you can work out what's missing, use the <unclear><supplied>…</supplied></unclear> combination as above. Use the @resp attribute to identify yourself as the one responsible (literally) for this editorial interpretation of the missing material.

Tagging for context:

Workflow tip: you may want to put in simple tags first, then add the specific **"@ref"** attributes later. First check the SI to see whether context tags already exist. If not, then define them using the guidelines and add them to the 'backlist' of your letter. **REMEMBER to include hashtags (#) at the start of your @ref attributes!**

If you need to leave a note to yourself to go back to, use a comment tag: <!--- [your note here] -->

--**People (real and fictional):** (We tease out the distinction in our prosopography lists and entries for the Site Index. For more on this, see the [Digital Mitford Coding Guidelines](#).)

<persName>Mrs. Hofland</persName> ⬜ <persName ref="#Hofland_B">Mrs. Hofland</persName>

<persName ref="#Mitford_Geo">Papa</persName>

<persName ref="#Kemble_C">the Manager</persName>

<persName ref="#Doge_F">Doge Foscari</persName>

--**Places**

<placeName>Reading</placeName> ⬜ <placeName ref="#Reading_city">Reading</placeName>

<placeName ref="#Covent_Garden_Theatre">Covent Garden</placeName>

<placeName ref="#NewmanSt">Newman Street</placeName>

--**Titles of works:**

<title ref="#Critic_play">the Critic</title> [*The Critic*, play by Sheridan]

<title ref="Museum_per">Museum</title> [*The Museum*, weekly periodical published by John Valpy]

<rs type="title" ref="#Marino_Faliero">Lord Byron's Play</rs> [use when MRM text does not give specific reference but we know from other context or date that a particular work is referenced.]

--**Dates**

<date when="1821-10-31">October 31<hi rend="superscript">st</hi> 1821.</date>

<date when="1822-10">October</date> [you can code just the date/year or just the year; use the same order format]

<date when="1717">1717</date>
<date when="-0100">100 BC</date>

<date when="1821-07-31">Tuesday.</date><note resp="#ebb">Dated based on <persName ref="#coles">Coles</persName>'s attribution details…</note>

EDITORIAL NOTES:

Use <note resp="#lmw"></note> tags for any editorial notes. Indicate the person responsible for the note with **"resp"** and your xml:id (in the sample above, LMW for me—L.M. Wilson)

Sample: I have now gotten "the real Simon Pure" <note resp="#lmw">Not a quote but a colloquial reference to anything that is genuine, authentic. From <bibl><author>Centlivre's</author> <title>A Bold Stroke for a Wife</title> (<date>1717</date>)</bibl>, in which the character Simon Pure appears, impersonated during part of the play by another character.</note>

<u>LETTER PROOFING GUIDELINES AND WORKFLOW:</u>

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Getting set up:

- Download the HTML file of the editor whose letter you are proofreading, as well as the XML file of the letter. Save both files
- in the same folder, along with the ==mitfordletter.css== and ==MRMLetters.js== files. **All files must be saved in the same folder!**
- Open the HTML file in your internet browser (preferably Chrome, not Safari, if you're using a Mac).
- Open the XML file of the letter you're proofing in <oXygen/>.
- Pull up the photos of the manuscript letter you're working on because you will be checking the transcription against the original manuscript (it will be VERY helpful if you can view the manuscript pages on a second screen so you don't have to keep flipping back and forth between different screens on the same computer).

Workflow:

- You must enter your **name** and the **date** you are proofreading in the appropriate places in the TEI Header of the letter you are proofing.

- If you find errors/things to fix while you are proofreading, you must go into the letter's
  XML file in <oXygen/> and correct them. You will usually be doing this silently
  (meaning that you *don't* need to use a resp statement to take credit for them).

- HOWEVER, if you disagree with the original editor on a word choice (especially when it
  comes down to messy handwriting or other issues that makes the word or words hard to decipher), you may
  need to create a comment that indicates that there is disagreement or confusion over a word choice. Remember
  that comments look like this: <!--   --> Please also remember to put your xml id in the comment so we know
  whose it is, like this:
  <!-- err: I can't make out this word either! It could be "hat," but I'm not feeling confident enough to code it.
  -->

Proofreading checklist:

- Did you check the TEI Header?
- Is it the most recent version?
- Is it describing the proper letter?
- Are the dates consistent and correct? If the manuscript dates are not clear, has that been recorded?
- Is the archive name correct?
- Are the manuscript numbers/identifiers correct? If the manuscript numbers haven't been
  noted yet, is there a comment indicating that this information still needs to be filled in?
- Did you proofread the letter against the manuscript using the HTML transformation?

  You MUST check the transcription against the manuscript!

- Did you watch for spacing around names, dashes, ampersands, and other punctuation
  marks?
- Did you watch for particular issues with Mitford's handwriting? (such as merged words ("I am" written "Iam"),
  words broken across lines of the letter, compound words in modern usage written as two words by MRM (every body
  for everybody), superscripts (for Esq re, 4th, etc.)
- Did you watch for present and correct line breaks in opener, closer, address lines, and postmarks?
- Did you watch for how the <handShift> element is used and how alternate hands are coded (red crayon, pencil, etc.)?
- Do <add> and <del> tags open and close in the right places?
- Did you watch for how <gap> is used, and <unclear> / <supplied>? Is a resp given for supplied words and letters? If you
  disagree with the original transcriber, check with him/her, see if you can work your differences out together. Ping each
  other with the @ in Box, naming the original transcriber. Other editors might jump in as well with assistance; If needed,
  ping @Elisa for resolution
- Do a Find for <!-- (the comment tag) in order to check the transcriber's "breadcrumbs" (notes to self for later work).
  Was that later work done? For example, did s/he change the TEI Header from Rylands Collection to Reading Central
  Library? Did s/he answer coding questions? Did s/he turn informal context notes into formal ones or Site Index entries?
  Are there additional backlist Site Index entries that need to be made.