Using the P5 Chapter on Manuscript Description for Detailed Physical Description: A Potential Approach

The Plan

Use <msDescription> to build a complete model of a single manuscript.

The Problem

- Both Claudius B iv and Venetus A contain several different types of discrete elements (text and illustration) which are distributed through folios and gatherings.
- These elements are logically connected to one another (for example, a figure illustrates a line of Genesis; a marginal scholion comments on a line of the Iliad)
- These elements influence the layout of individual folios and, by extension, the collation of the entire manuscript.

The Approach

- Quantitative rather than Narrative approach
- Describe the individual elements (see left and right)
- Link them together (see below)
- Build a virtual model to answer the following questions
  - How do the contents of the manuscript relate to one another?
  - How do the pieces interact with one another within the folio boundaries?
  - How do the folios fit together to form the entire manuscript?

Building the Layout and Collation

The layout of a manuscript can be described in various ways, depending on the context and the information required. Here are some examples:

1. **Layout, narrative description**
   - Describe the layout of the entire manuscript, including the organization of text and illustration, and any annotations or marginalia.
   - Include details about the foliation, punctuation, and any significant marks or symbols.

2. **Layout, organized as a list**
   - Present the layout in a tabular format, listing the folios and their contents in a standardized manner.
   - Use links or references to other sections of the manuscript to show relationships between different elements.

Conclusions

- Both intellectually and technically intensive – identify and describe all elements, catalog images and coordinates
- Useful? That depends on the manuscript, and the needs of the editors
  - CBiv – physical organization is central to the editor’s thesis – potentially a useful approach
  - Venetus – focus on textual, not physical connections between elements – not necessarily the best approach
- For manuscripts such as Venetus, it would be more useful to build a system of textual links to show which scholia comment on which poetic lines, for example using <linkGrp> within the TEI <body>
- Need for Visualization – tools for the deployment of the model, calling on the image files and their coordinates
- Future questions: How can this model take advantage of other metadata (e.g. TEI text encoding, METS) to avoid redundancy?
Elements found in B include (but are not limited to):

- **Main textual sections** (Genesis-Joshua, in Old English)
- **12th century textual annotations**
- **Rubricated initials**
- **Black ink initials**
- **Lettres d’attente**
- **Illustrations in various states of completeness**
- **12th century annotations to illustrations**
- **Various other additions**

- **Textual and illustrative pieces; most reside on one folio only.**
- **Each piece has a unique xml:id, and the targets attribute of <locus> points to the coordinates of the piece(s) on the image**

**physDesc**

- **<msContents>
  - <msItem xml:id="text2">
    <locus from="1v:32" to="72v:30" targets="images/BLCBiv_1v.jpg images/BLCBiv_2r.jpg … images/BLCBiv_72v.jpg">1v:32-72v:30</locus>
  - <msItem xml:id="#illus">
    <note>Illustrations</note>
    <msItem xml:id="illus1_69v">
      <locus targets="images/BLCBiv_69v.jpg::coords=114,88,978,570">69v</locus>
      <decoNote type="illustration"> [detailed description of the illustration] </decoNote>
    </msItem>
    - <msItem xml:id="#annot1_69v">
      <locus targets="images/BLCBiv_69v.jpg::coords=42,6,968,128">69v, top margin</locus>
    </msItem>…
  </msContents>

- **<decoDesc>
  - <decoNote xml:id="deco1" corresp="#illus">
    <p>[general description of manuscript illustrations]</p>
  </decoNote>
  - <decoNote xml:id="initials">
    <p>[general description of manuscript initials]
      <list>
        <item xml:id="initial1_69v">
          <locus targets="images/BLCBiv_69v.jpg::coords=88,526,166,662">69v</locus> Wynn
        </item>
        …
      </list>
    </decoNote>
  </decoDesc>

- **<additions>
  - <additions to illustrations> <list>
    <item xml:id="illus_add_69v">
      <locus targets="images/BLCBiv_69v.jpg::coords=445,850,828,1202">69v: original scraped, new figures added in ink and paint</locus>
    </item>
    …
  </list></additions>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Thanks to the co-Directors of RCH, Ross Scaife and Jerzy Jaromczyk, Harvard’s Center for Hellenic Studies, and all individuals associated with the Homer Multitext Project
Elements found in Venetus A include:

- **Text** of the poem
- **Marginal Scholia**
- **Interior Marginal Scholia**
- **Interlinear Scholia**
- **Intermarginal Scholia**
- **Subscription**
- **Metrical Summary**

Marchiana Library, Venice, Venetus A: The Iliad

- Tenth-century Byzantine manuscript
- Oldest extant copy of the *Iliad*
- In addition to the text of the poem, contains 7,214 marginal and interlinear comments (scholia), many of which attest alternate words, verses, or passages known to Alexandrian scholars

Textual pieces only; interrelated; most reside on one folio only.

Each piece has a unique `xml:id`, and the `targets` attribute of `<locus>` points to the coordinates of the piece on the image.

Also described as manuscript items: Subscription and Metrical Summary