Encoding Correspondence

Aims of Exercise

- Learn the basic encoding structure of correspondence.
- What elements might be useful but are not allowed?
- Learn how to use <corresp Desc> in your header.

A 1928 letter from George Bernard Shaw

Access a facsimile of the manuscript letter and the xml skeleton.

1. Download the facsimile image of the letter at https://raw.githubusercontent.com/atnu-ies/digital-editing-2019/master/shaw_letter_23_09_1928%20copy.jpeg
2. Download the xml skeleton of the letter at https://raw.githubusercontent.com/atnu-ies/digital-editing-2019/master/shaw_letter_23.09.1928_exercise.xml (right click and “Save as” and make sure the xml file and the jpeg are in the same location on your filing system)

Encoding the document

Now we will add the appropriate elements to structure the letter.

3. Thankfully the letter is already transcribed, so we just need to apply the right tags.
4. Start by linking the letter to the facsimile image of it. (If you are confused by this, have a look at https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-pb.html)
5. Most letters contain openers (Dear Sir) and closers (Yours) with other information such as addresses and dates and names. Start by surrounding the appropriate bits of text with <opener> and <closer>.
6. Let’s focus on the <opener> now. What kinds of information is contained within that element? See https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-opener.html
7. Now let’s focus on the <closer>. What kinds of information is contained within that element? See https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/ref-closer.html
8. This letter has a pre-printed letterhead. How would handle the encoding of this information? Is it properly a <head> element, and where should it go?

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<head type="letterhead" rend="smallcap">
<lb/>ayot st lawrence, welwyn, herts.
<lb/>station: wheathampstead, l &amp;amp; n.e.r. 2 1/4 miles.
<lb/>telegrams: bernard shaw, codicote.
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<lb/>4, whitehall court, london, s.w.1.
</head>

9. What is lost (or limiting) by encoding it this way? How else could you distinguish the pre-printed letterhead from the inscribed letter text? Try to change your encoding to separate the letterhead from the letter text.
10. Are there any other non-correspondence-related elements you could add?
11. If you get stuck: Here is one way you could do it that better represents the structure.
12. Put the letter information within <teiHeader> using <correspDesc>.
13. Now imagine that Prof. Butt responded with a brief letter.

My dear Hero
Not to worry; the author is dead.
Yours
Butt
5th March

Encode this letter with basic letter encoding (which should not take long), then include a full <correspDesc> (that is, <correspAction> and <correspContext>) that accounts for the names, dates, place (assume it's from Dublin), and a fictional response to this letter from Hero.

Bonus: Bloodgood Cutter letter-poem

1. How would you encode the Bloodgood Cutter letter-poem? And the envelope material? See http://scholarlyediting.org/2017/editions/aprilfools/UCLC41834.html
2. To see how we did it (which is bespoke), see https://raw.githubusercontent.com/atnu-ies/digital-editing-2019/master/UCLC41834.xml

What Next or Further Reading

- Peter Stadler, Marcel Illetschko, and Sabine Seifert, "Towards a Model for Encoding Correspondence in the TEI: Developing and Implementing <correspDesc>". https://journals.openedition.org/jtei/1433
- Edward Vanhoutte and Ron Van den Branden, "Describing, Transcribing, Encoding, and Editing Modern Correspondence Material: A Textbase Approach". http://www.edwardvanhoutte.org/pub/2004/comedvanvanfig.pdf