Text encoding of manuscripts: 
private devotional literature in the 16th century

The subject of this paper is the encoding of Danish prayer books from the beginning of the 16th century. Private devotional literature in the 16th century: The digitisation of Danish prayer books in The Arnamagnæan Collection and in the Library of Karen Brahe is the working title of a pilot project funded by the Danish Research Council for the Humanities. The project aims to lay the methodological and practical groundwork for digital editions of Danish literature from before 1900 and to develop a standard for encoded transcriptions of manuscripts.

The text encoding is done from different points of view, literary, philological, paleographic and codicological. This paper presents the encoding on the source level, but first it gives an introduction to the encoded primary sources.

The prayer books: genre and structure
There are two types of book meant for private worship, the book of hours and the prayer book. The main textual differences between the two are that in a book of hours the various prayers are always preceded by a Calendar, The Hours of the Virgin, The Seven Penitential Psalms and a Litany, whereas the prayer book generally does not contain these items. The textual programme of a prayer book from the late Middle Ages goes like this: at the beginning of the book there are prayers to God the Father, the Holy Ghost and the Trinity. They are followed by prayers to the suffering of Jesus, his five wounds, his limbs, his resurrection and the prayers of the communion. The book continues with prayers to the Virgin, her sorrows and joys, to her mother S. Anne and, in the end, prayers to a variety of saints and angels. Although the structure of the prayer books has a somewhat standard form, they are informal in that the contents vary depending on the user for or by whom it was made; every extant Danish prayer book is unique.

It is quite common that the prayers are accompanied by a presentation, either preceding or following the prayer. These rubrics are the ‘user’s guide’ to the prayers. They state the purpose of the prayer and give instructions on how, when and how often the reader shall pray. They also inform the reader of the effects of the prayer, sometimes by providing an example, and very often they promise the reader an indulgence if these recommendations are followed.

While the prayer books are informal in their construction, the texts certainly are formal in a highly structured way comparable to an epistolary form, each block having its own place in the form and being constructed by variable formulas and collocations. The predominant stylistic figures are apostrophe and tautology, the frequent use of adjectives in the superlative, and in particular the texts have a vocabulary of their own, a mixture of sweetness and horror.

Marine Jespersdatter’s prayer book
The prayer book known as Marine Jespersdatters bønnebog, with the number AM 421 12mo in The Arnamagnæan Collection at the University of Copenhagen, is a piece of unique Danish
(and Scandinavian) cultural heritage. It is a parchment manuscript from around 1500 in the size of a very small pocket book, 103 x 68 x 47 mm and 120 leaves. The origin of the prayer book is unknown, but it was presumably produced for a Danish noble woman named Marine Jespersdatter as stated in a prayer for the owner. We are not entirely certain who she was, but it has been suggested that she was the daughter of the nobleman Jesper Friis of Lyndby and Hesselager on Fyn. If this uncertain identification with Mette Jespersdatter Friis is correct, she was married to Claus Urne of Hindemæ on Fyn in his first marriage, and died childless. (Claus Urne died in 1531.)

This case study provides a wonderful opportunity to integrate different scholarly fields in the research of one of the main religious genres of the Middle Ages. The prayer book contains the only known medieval Danish translation in verse of the Latin compassionate hymn Stabat mater dolorosa. This poem has given the book a place in the history of Danish literature, though it did not lead to any analysis of the whole textual complex. The book is also remarkable for its 48 fully coloured miniatures illustrating the prayers. No other Scandinavian prayer book containing a series of pictures illustrating the prayer texts has been preserved, and an iconographic examination of these pictures and the relationship between the pictures and the text is therefore essential.

The majority of the miniatures in AM 421 12mo follows the programme found in the European book of hours: 30 scenes from the life of Mary and Jesus beginning with the Annunciation and ending with the Coronation of the Virgin and Christ Enthroned (Last Judgement), illustrate the prayers in the central part of the book. This central part, folios 41 to 76, is a psalter to the Virgin and the Holy Spirit, containing 34 prayers to Jesus and Mary in all, placed on the facing pages with the prayer text on the right-hand side and an accompanying illustration on the left-hand side. There is always a close relation between the text and the depiction, the rubric literally refers to the subject of the image which depicts a
central theme in the prayer text. Thus each prayer is reproduced both in a painted and in a written version. In addition to this narrative image cycle which combines the pictures traditionally illustrating the Hours of the Virgin (Infancy and Passion cycle), the Hours of the Cross, the Hours of the Holy Spirit and the Seven Penitential Psalms there are a number of devotional images of the Trinity and the Virgin.

There are other good reasons to choose this manuscript as an object of study. The textual history of prayer books needs to be told, among other things because prayers are the largest group of extant Danish texts from the Middle Ages. They have been studied from a linguistic point of view. But an examination of the texts as they have been put together in each book, focusing on the visual and physical aspects of the artefacts as well as the intellectual contents, will define the style and the language of the prayers, and in the case of the private prayer books it may throw light on the religious practice and mentalité of the 16th-century devoted laywoman. Most of the prayer books are connected with women. Owned by women, written for women, and sometimes also written by women.

Most of the Danish medieval prayer books and books of hours have been edited from a textual point of view, an insufficient method of editing according to the material philological approach. An electronic edition will satisfy two needs. The need for a modern (new philological) interactive and complex reproduction of the texts, and the need for a more extensive analysis of the manuscript material based on the markup of a variety of information categories supplied by the encoder.

The TEI / XML encoding
The markup of a primary source preserves the visual information given on the manuscript page, it offers the possibility to show how the encoder has interpreted a text and its intellectual content and it lays the groundwork for processing the documents for display (the editions). And it certainly opens the eyes to the sources, the variance and the visuality, and questions the traditional concept of text.

Further, complex manuscript material and historical texts, such as medieval prayer books, are a challenge to standard XML markup, because an encoding of each hierarchy the encoder observes in the text may result in the overlapping of the hierarchies in the documents. I should like to record the physical structure along with the intellectual structure, the rhetorical devices and the vocabulary in one encoded document. And, if you want to publish an edition of the book as a whole, extensions of the existing standards will be necessary to cover the many different aspects of the manuscripts.

A TEI-based XML markup describes structured documents in a way that makes them interchangeable, and combines transcribed text with documentation and metadata about the source, the transcription and the edition. In the TEI Header of an XML document the encoder describes the principles of the encoding along with a description of the manuscript. The MASTER (Manuscript Access through STandards for Electronics Records) standard is an extension to the TEI in the encoding of manuscript descriptions and catalogues, and it is a most suitable way to encode a description in a highly structured way. It is furthermore a new philological way of describing the ‘whole book’ which takes into account both the physical aspects and the intellectual content of a manuscript.
The principles of the encoding

1. The basic and formal markup

The formal encoding on the source level combines an encoded diplomatic transcription of the text, a codicological markup concerning the layout, and a markup of the intellectual content as regards the structure of the book as a whole and the structure of the individual prayers.

The type of transcription

Since digital facsimiles of the manuscript pages form the base reproduction of the text, a fully diplomatic transcription (a facsimile print) which reproduces all the different characters and signs of abbreviation is not necessary. The level of transcription, however, is diplomatic in the sense that it reproduces the text of the source closely.

Abbreviations are expanded and information about the sign in question is given in form of an entity: `<expan abbr="&bar;">`, according to the recommendations of *Encoding Old Norse-Icelandic primary sources using TEI-conformant SGML/XML: A handbook*, edited by Matthew Driscoll.

The transcription is graphemic which means that variants such as ‘i’ and ‘j’ (‘long i’ / ‘i’ with a descender), ‘r-rotunda’ and ‘r’, ‘low s’ and ‘long s’, ‘y’ and ‘ÿ’ are transcribed as ‘i’, ‘r’, ‘s’ and ‘y’. A graphemic transcription facilitates an examination of the vocabulary, and if any reader wishes to know which form was used in the manuscript, he or she can consult the image.

Editorial emendations of obvious scribal errors in the primary source such as misspellings and omissions are tagged, and in each case information on the original reading is supplied: `<corr sic=""/></corr>  `<supplied reason="omitted"></supplied>`. In cases where the transcriber wishes to indicate a suspicious reading without correcting it the `<sic>` element is used: `<sic corr=""/></sic>`.

The codicological markup

Manuscript quire, page and line boundaries are marked up using the empty elements for quire, page and line breaks `<qb/>`, `<pb/>`, `<lb/>`. It is possible to align the transcription and the facsimiles by assigning an ID value to the `<pb/>` element `<pb n="56r" id="AM421-56r"/>`.

The highlighting of the text has a decorative and mnemonic function. Thus the rubrication, decorated or coloured initials, initial letters filled or stroked in red, underlining and line-endings are marked up using the element for highlighted text with the rendition attribute: `<hi rend="">`. Shifts of the scribal hands are marked up with references to the description of the writing in the header of the document `<handShift new="hand2" old="hand1"/>`.

The encoding of these categories registers the visual programme of the prayer book and different scribal habits.

The markup of the intellectual content

Different categories belonging to the intellectual content are marked up, such as the division of the text and the structure of the prayer. The text as a whole is divided into textual items `<div>` with an ‘id’ attribute, and the ‘type’ attribute gives the information of the type of prayer `<div type="psalter" id="MJ20">`, `<div type="prayer" id="MJ20-2-14">`. Each item is supplied with a title in which the identity of the worshipped figure of each item is supplied by the encoder in the element `<head type="supplied">`. This encoding makes it possible to search for and locate types of prayers and titles, both supplied and uniform.
The body of a single prayer contains the prayer itself `<div type="prayer">`, which is often preceded by a rubric `<div type="rubric">` and/or followed by a final rubric `<div type="final rubric">`. Sometimes a collect, an antiphon or a verse finishes the textual unity `<div type="collect">`, `<div type="antiphon">`, `<div type="verse">`.

Quotations `<q>` and titles of works `<title>` occurring in the source text are tagged, and to specify the language of the title or quotation the `lang` attribute is used `<q lang ="LAT">`, `<title lang="LAT">`. Personal names are identified and given a ‘key’ attribute with a code value referring to a separate bibliographic file of names where the persons in question are described `<name type="person" reg="Maren Jespersdatter" key="MarJes01">`

An example of the basic and formal markup

The prayer text

```
1 O Alsom sødeste herre
2 ihesu criste legh bedher teg
3 ffor then fængxel som thw
4 wasth ffanghen aff thyne wuen-
5 ner Och fforrodh aff iuda O
6 werdighe herre ihesu firels meg
7 ffra alle myne wuenner Och
8 aff alth fængxel bodhe tyl [siel] och
9 lyff Och myskwndelige frelss
10 the ffatthe siele aff then swa-
11 re skeerssild pyne Amen
12 Item her skal læsses iii Aue
13 Maria wor herre tyl loff
14 och hedher ffor ther ath hand
15 wylle ladhe seg fforradhe aff iuda och ladhe seg gri-
16 be ffor wor salighed
```

English translation

O, sweetest of all, Lord
Jesus Christ, I beg you
for the imprisonment that you
were imprisoned in by your enemies
and betrayed by Judas. O,
worthy Lord Jesus, save me
from all my enemies and
from every imprisonment, both for [soul] and
body. And merciful save
the poor souls from the
torment of the purgatory. Amen.
Item, here shall be read three
Ave Maria in praise and honour of the Lord, because he would allow himself to be betrayed by Judas and to be imprisoned for our salvation.
2. The rhetorical and stylistic markup
The ‘rhetorica divina’ of the prayer text is encoded by the use of the subdivision element 
<div>, which may include other <div> elements, the ‘type’ attribute provides the rhetorical
term of the subdivision

The rhetorical devices, tropes and figures, are marked by the use of the element for textual
units <seg>. The notion of ‘segment’ is broad: rhetoric and stylistic figures as well as the
user guiding content in the rubrics. The attributes ‘type’ and ‘subtype’ provide the category of
the segment <seg type="figure" subtype="apostrophe">, <seg type="instruction">.

An example of the rhetorical and stylistic markup of the prose

A prayer to Jesus Christ for the betrayal</head>

</div type="exordium">

</div type="invocatio">

</div type="narratio">

</div type="petitio">

</div type="final rubric">

3. Tagging the verse

The Danish translation of the hymn Stabat Mater has been an object of great interest to scholars in the field of verse and style history. There are other prayers in verse in the prayer
books, and a metric markup identifies the poetic tradition in the prayers and the relation to the subsequent psalms and ballads.

The metre of Hos Korsens Træ is a standard medieval metre, the iambic dimeter, consisting of four metric accents, the fifth line consisting of three iambics:

- + | - + and - - + | - + | - + -.

The stanzas belong together in pairs and the rhyme scheme is aaBBC ddeeC.

An example of the markup of the verse:

The verse text

HOss korssens tree
meth sorg oc wee
stood cristi moder
med graadzens floder
hennes søn paa korsyt hengde

Aff sywck oc graad
som ffør war spaad
meth stor wfryd
stack drøwelzens spyd
hennes hierthe thet tha trengdhe

English translation

At the cross tree
with sorrow and woe
stood Christ’s mother
in floods of tears
her son was hanging on the cross

From sighs and tears
as previously predicted
in great distress
stuck sorrow’s spear
her heart it tormented
The encoded text

<fileDesc><titleStmt><title>AM 421 12mo: A diplomatic transcription of 30r:1-8, the two first stanzas of the versified prayer Hos korsens træ (the Danish version of Stabat mater dolorosa) with metric markup</title><respStmt><resp>Transcribed from the manuscript and marked up by</resp><editor>Anne Mette Hansen</editor></respStmt></titleStmt></fileDesc>

...<body><div type="prayer of contemplation in verse" n="15" id="MJ15">Hos korsens træ (Stabat Mater)</div>

<div type="rubric">
<p><hi rend="red">Item her effther skrif</hi><lb n="13"/>wes een b&#248;n aff Iomfrw<lb n="14"/>maria I hwilken b&#248;n<lb n="15"/>wor herres ih<expan abbr="&bar;">es</expan><expan abbr="&xp;">crist</expan><expan abbr="&nbar;">n</expan>hwffkommess<lb n="17"/>och he<expan abbr="&nbar;">n</expan>nes<expan abbr="&nbar;">s</expan>hwffswale<expan abbr="&nbar;">s</expan>hwffslale<expan abbr="&nbar;">s</expan>Hos korsens træ (#230); (Stabat Mater)</p></div>

<div type="prayer text">
<p><hi rend="red">Item her effther skrif</hi><lb n="13"/>wes een b&#248;n aff Iomfrw<lb n="14"/>maria I hwilken b&#248;n<lb n="15"/>wor herres ih<expan abbr="&bar;">es</expan><expan abbr="&xp;">crist</expan><expan abbr="&nbar;">n</expan>hwffkommess<lb n="17"/>och he<expan abbr="&nbar;">n</expan>nes<expan abbr="&nbar;">s</expan>hwffswale<expan abbr="&nbar;">s</expan>hwffslale<expan abbr="&nbar;">s</expan>Hos korsens træ (#230); (Stabat Mater)</p></div>

</body>
Conclusion
This is as far as I have reached for the moment. The next year will show how the concurrent markup of the normalized level and the lemma level may interact. I want the encoding to become much more complex always describing new features in the books. The markup which I have outlined in this paper, is, along with a lemmatization and a normalization of the original reading in the texts, the markup that is necessary in order to investigate, both as single objects and as a corpus, the style and language of the prayers, the structure and textual programme of the texts, the iconographic programme of the painted prayers, the relations between the decorative features and the written text, and finally the use and the transmission of the books.