

MIBIB \TeX : Beyond \LaTeX

Jean-Michel Hufflen

LIFC (FRE CNRS 2661)

University of Franche-Comté

16, route de Gray

25030 Besançon Cedex

France

hufflen@lifc.univ-fcomte.fr

<http://lifc.univ-fcomte.fr/~hufflen>

Abstract

This article sums up our experience with MIBIB \TeX , our multilingual implementation of BIB \TeX , and points out some possible improvements for better cooperation between \LaTeX and MIBIB \TeX . Also, MIBIB \TeX may be used to generate bibliographies written according to other formalisms, especially formalisms related to XML, and we give some ways to ease that.

KEYWORDS: Bibliographies, multilingual features, BIB \TeX , MIBIB \TeX , `bst`, `nbst`, XML, XSLT, XSL-FO, DocBook.

1 Introduction

MIBIB \TeX (for ‘MultiLingual BIB \TeX ’) is a reimplementaion of BIB \TeX [21], the bibliography processor associated with \LaTeX [19]. The project began in October 2000, and has resulted in two experimental versions [9, 11] and the present version (1.3), that will be available publicly by the time this article appears. As we explained in [15], a prototype using the Scheme programming language is working whilst we are developing a more robust program written in C. The prototype has allowed us to get some experience with real-sized bibliographies: this is the purpose of the first part of this article, after a short review of the *modus operandi* of MIBIB \TeX .

MIBIB \TeX ’s present version no longer uses the `bst` language of BIB \TeX for bibliography styles [20]. Such `.bst` files were used in MIBIB \TeX ’s first version, but since this old-fashioned language, based on simple stack manipulations, is not modular, we quickly realised that this choice would have led us to styles that were too complicated [12]. Thus, Version 1.3 uses the `nbst` (for ‘New Bibliography STyles’) language, described in [13] and similar to XSLT,¹ the language of transformations designed for XML texts [32]. More precisely, MIBIB \TeX 1.3 uses XML² as a central formalism in the sense that parsing files containing *bibliographical entries* (`.bib` files) results

in a DOM³ tree. Bibliography styles written using `nbst` are XML texts, too.

Of course, `nbst` can be used to generate bibliographies for documents other than those processed with \LaTeX .⁴ In particular, `nbst` eases the generation of bibliographies for documents written using XML-like syntax. Nevertheless, dealing with `.bib` files raises some problems: we go into them thoroughly in Section 4.

Reading this article requires only a basic knowledge of \LaTeX , BIB \TeX and XML. Some examples given in the next section will use the commands provided by the multilingual `babel` package of \LaTeX 2 ϵ [2]. Other examples given in Section 4 will use the Scheme programming language, but if need be, referring to an introductory book such as [28] is sufficient to understand them.

2 Architecture of MIBIB \TeX

2.1 How MIBIB \TeX Works

As a simple example of using MIBIB \TeX with \LaTeX , let us consider the `silke1988` bibliographical entry given in Figure 1. As we explain in [15], the sequence ‘[...] ! *idf*’ is one of the multilingual features

¹ EXtensible Stylesheet Language Transformations.

² EXtensible Markup Language. A good introduction to this formalism issued by the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) is [24].

³ Document Object Model. This is a W3C recommendation for a standard tree-based programming approach [24, p. 306–308], very often used to implement XML trees.

⁴ This is also the case with the `bst` language of BIB \TeX , but in practice, it seems that this feature has not been used, except for documents written in SCRIBE [25], a predecessor of \LaTeX .

```
@BOOK{silke1988,
  AUTHOR = {James~R. Silke},
  TITLE = {Prisoner of the Horned Helmet},
  PUBLISHER = {Grafton Books},
  YEAR = 1988,
  NUMBER = 1,
  SERIES = {Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer},
  NOTE = {[Pas de traduction fran\c{c}aise
          connue] ! french
          [Keine deutsche Übersetzung
          ! german]},
  LANGUAGE = english}
```

Figure 1: Example of a bibliographical entry in MIBIB \TeX .

provided by MIBIB \TeX , defining a string to be included when the language of a corresponding reference, appearing within a bibliography, is *idf*. So if this entry is cited throughout a document written in French and the ‘References’ section is also written in French, it will appear as:

- [1] James R. SILKE: *Prisoner of the Horned Helmet*. N° 1 in *Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer*. Grafton Books, 1988. Pas de traduction française connue.

Here and in the bibliography of this article, we use a ‘plain’ style, that is, references are labelled with numbers. More precisely, the source processed by \LaTeX , included into the .bbl file generated by MIBIB \TeX , is:

```
\begin{thebibliography}{...}
...
\bibitem{silke1988}
\begin{otherlanguage*}{english}
James~R. \textsc{Silke}: \emph{Prisoner of the
Horned Helmet}.
\foreignlanguage{french}{\bblno~1 \bblof}
\emph{Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer}. Grafton
Books, 1988. \foreignlanguage{french}{Pas de
traduction fran\c{c}aise connue}.
\end{otherlanguage*}
...
\end{thebibliography}
```

Let us examine this source text. We can notice the use of additional \LaTeX commands to put some keywords (‘ \bblin ’ for ‘*in*’, ‘ \bblno ’ for ‘N°’, that is, ‘number’ in French). In [14], we explain how to put them into action within \LaTeX and how MIBIB \TeX uses them. This source also shows how English words, originating from an entry in English (see the value of the LANGUAGE field in Figure 1), are processed. If the document uses the `babel` package, and if the french option of this package is selected, we use the `\foreignlanguage` command of this pack-

```
<book id="silke1988" language="english">
  <author>
    <name>
      <personname>
        <first>James&#160;R.</first>
        <last>Silke</last>
      </personname>
    </name>
  </author>
  <title>Prisoner of the Horned Helmet</title>
  <publisher>Grafton Books</publisher>
  <year>1988</year>
  <number>1</number>
  <series>
    Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer
  </series>
  <note>
    <group language="french">
      Pas de traduction française connue
    </group>
    <group language="german">
      Keine deutsche Übersetzung
    </group>
  </note>
</book>
```

Figure 2: The XML tree corresponding to the entry of Figure 1.

age [2], as shown above. Users do not have to select its `english` option; if it is not active, the source text generated by MIBIB \TeX looks like:

```
\bibitem{silke1988}James~R. \textsc{Silke}:
\emph{Prisoner of the Horned Helmet}. \bblno~1
\bblof\ \emph{Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer}.
Grafton Books, 1988. Pas de traduction
fran\c{c}aise connue.
```

but the English words belonging to this reference will be taken as French by \LaTeX and thus may be processed or hyphenated incorrectly.

2.2 The Modules of MIBIB \TeX

As mentioned in the introduction, parsing a .bib file results in a DOM tree. In fact, .bib files are processed as if they were XML trees, but without whitespace nodes.⁵ Following this approach, the entry `silke1988` given in Figure 1 is viewed as the tree of Figure 2, except that the whitespace nodes that an XML parser would produce are excluded.

⁵ These are text nodes whose contents are only whitespace characters, originating from what has been typed between two tags [27, p. 25–26]. For example, if the XML text of Figure 2 is parsed, there is a whitespace node, containing a newline and four space characters between the opening tags `<author>` and `<name>`. XML parsers are bound by the ‘all text counts’ constraint included in the XML specification [33, § 2.10], and cannot ignore such whitespace characters.

We can see that some L_{ATEX} commands and special characters are converted according to the conventions of XML.

- The commands used for accents and special letters are replaced by the letter itself. This poses no problem since DOM trees are encoded in Unicode [29]. As an example, the ‘\c{c}’ sequence in the value of the NOTE field in Figure 1 is replaced by ‘ç’ in Figure 2. (By the way, let us remark that MIBIB_{TEX} can handle the 8-bit latin1 encoding:⁶ notice the ‘Û’ character inside this value.)
- Likewise, the commands:
 - ‘_’ for a simple space character,
 - ‘\’ for an end-of-line character,

and the sequences of characters:

- ‘~’, for an unbreakable space character,
- ‘--’, and ‘---’ for dash characters,

are replaced by the corresponding Unicode values for these characters:⁷

```
&#32; &#10; &#160; &#8211; &#8212;
```

An example is given by the value of the AUTHOR field, see Figures 1 & 2.

- Some characters escaped in L_{ATEX} (for example, ‘\$’, ‘%’, ‘&’) lose the escape character:

```
\% ⇒ %
```

The escape is restored if MIBIB_{TEX} generates a .bbl file to be processed by L_{ATEX}. Other characters are replaced by a reference to a character entity:⁸

```
\& ⇒ &amp; < ⇒ &lt; > ⇒ &gt;
```

- Balanced delimiters for quotations (“ ” and “ ’ ” or “ ‘ ” and “ ’ ’) are replaced by an **emph** element:⁹

```
‘Tooth and Claw’ ⇒
<emph emf=’no’ quotedf=’yes’>
  Tooth and Claw
</emph>
```

If ‘ ’ ’ or “ ” characters are unbalanced, they are replaced by references to character entities used in XML documents:

```
’ ⇒ &apos; " ⇒ &quot;
```

⁶ See [7, Table C.4] for more details.

⁷ That was not the case in earlier versions; for instance, [12, Figure 3] improperly includes a tilde character in a text node. This bug was fixed at the end of 2003.

⁸ See [24, p. 48] for more details.

⁹ ‘**emph**’ is of course for ‘emphasise’: all the attributes (for example, ‘**quotedf**’ for ‘quoted-flag’, used for specifying a quotation) default to **no**, except **emf**, which defaults to **yes**. The complete specification is given in [10].

Such an XML tree, resulting from our parser, may be validated using a DTD;¹⁰ more precisely, by a revised version of the DTD sketched in [10].

Some examples of using **nbst** for bibliography styles are given in [12, 13, 14]. We give another example in Figure 3. We can see that this language is close to XSLT and it uses *path expressions* as in the XPath language [31]. Also, the example shows how multilingual features (for example, the sequence ‘[...] ! ...’) are processed: we use some external functions in order to determine which L_{ATEX} command can be used to switch to another language. These external functions are written using the language of MIBIB_{TEX}’s implementation: Scheme for the prototype, C for the final program.

3 MIBIB_{TEX} with L_{ATEX}

When BIB_{TEX} generates a .bbl file, it does not use the source file processed by L_{ATEX}, but only the auxiliary (.aux) file, in which the definition of all the labels provided by the commands **\label** and **\bibitem** is stored. This file also contains the name of the bibliography style to be used and the paths of bibliography data bases to be searched, so BIB_{TEX} need not look at any other file.

This is not true for MIBIB_{TEX}. It still uses the .aux file as far as possible, but it also has to determine which multilingual packages are used: first of all **babel**, but also some packages devoted to particular languages: **french** [6], **german** [23], ... So we have to do a *partial parsing* of the .tex file for that. For better co-operation between L_{ATEX} and MIBIB_{TEX}, this could be improved, in that information about multilingual packages used, and languages available, could be put in the .aux file. In fact, the external functions of our new bibliography styles are only used to manage information extracted from a .tex file. Expressing such operations using **nbst** would be tedious.

Another improvement regarding the natural languages known by L_{ATEX} would be a connection between:

- the language codes used in XML, specified by means of a two-letter language abbreviation, optionally followed by a two-letter country code [1] (for example, ‘**de**’ for ‘*deutsch*’ (‘German’), ‘**en-UK**’, ‘**en-US**, etc.’); and
- the *resources* usable to write texts in these languages.

For example, a default framework could be the use of the **babel** package, and ‘**de**’ would get access to

¹⁰ **Document Type Definition**. A DTD defines a document markup model [24, Ch.5].

```

<nbst:template match="group">
  <nbst:if test="@language=$language">
    <!-- The $language variable is set to the current language. -->
    <nbst:value-of select="call(language_open_change,@language)"/>
    <!-- If the babel package is used and a known option has been selected, this external function
         writes the \foreignlanguage command...
    -->
    <nbst:apply-templates use-language="@language"/>
    <nbst:value-of select="call(language_close_change,@language)"/>
    <!-- ... and this external function puts a closing brace. -->
  </nbst:if>
</nbst:template>

```

Figure 3: Example of calling an external function.

the german option of this package, although it could be redefined to use the *ad hoc* package name `german`. In the future, such a framework would allow us to homogenise all the notations for natural languages to those of XML. In addition, let us notice that ConTeXt¹¹ [8], already uses these two-letter codes in its `\selectlanguage` command.

And last but not least, auxiliary files should include information about the encoding used in the source text. As can be seen in the examples of Section 2.1, accented letters are replaced by the commands used to produce them in L^AT_EX, even though L^AT_EX can of course handle 8-bit encodings (provided that the `inputenc` package is loaded with the right option). This is to avoid encoding problems. In addition, such information would ease the processing of languages written using non-Latin alphabets.

4 Towards the XML World

Since a `.bib` file can be processed as an XML tree by a bibliography style written in `nbst`, MIBIB_TE_X opens a window on XML's world. A converter from `.bib` files to a file written using HTML,¹² the language of Web pages, becomes easy to write. So does a tool to write a bibliography as an XSL-FO¹³ document [34]. More precisely, we give in Figure 4 an example of using the root element of `nbst`. Possible values for the `method` of the `nbst:output` element are:

```

<nbst:bst version="1.3" id="plain" xmlns:nbst=
"http://lifc.univ-fcomte.fr/~hufflen/mlbibtex"
>
  <nbst:output method="LaTeX"/>
  ...
</nbst:bst>

```

Figure 4: Root element for a bibliography style written using `nbst`.

LaTeX xml html text

Nevertheless, this approach has an important limitation in practice. Since BIB_TE_X has traditionally been used to generate files suitable for L^AT_EX, users often put L^AT_EX commands inside values of BIB_TE_X fields.¹⁴ For example:

```
ORGANIZATION = {\textsc{tug}}
```

In such a case, we would have to write a mini-L^AT_EX program (or perhaps a new output mode for L^AT_EX) that would transform such a value into a string suitable for an XML parser.

The problem is more complicated when commands are defined by end-users. For instance:

```
ORGANIZATION = {\logo{tug}}
```

works with BIB_TE_X—or MIBIB_TE_X when we use it for generating L^AT_EX output—even though `\logo` has an arbitrary definition; for example,

```
\newcommand{\logo}[1]{\textsc{#1}}
```

according to L^AT_EX's conventions, or:

```
\def\logo#1{\textsc{#1}}
```

if a style close to plain T_EX is used. Likewise, such commands can be known when an output file from MIBIB_TE_X is processed by ConTeXt.

¹¹ T_EX, defined by Donald E. Knuth [18], provides a general framework to format texts. To be fit for use, the definitions of this framework need to be organised in a *format*. Two such formats are plain T_EX and L^AT_EX, and another is ConTeXt, created by Hans Hagen.

¹² HyperText Markup Language.

¹³ EXtensible Stylesheet Language—Formatting Objects: this language aims to describe high-quality print outputs. Such documents can be processed by the shell command `xmltex` (resp. the shell command `pdfxmltex`) from PassiveT_EX [22, p. 180] to get `.dvi` files (resp. `.pdf` files).

¹⁴ The author personally confesses to using many `\foreignlanguage` commands within the values of BIB_TE_X fields, before deciding to develop MIBIB_TE_X.

```

<bibliography>
  <title>References</title>
  <biblioentry>
    <abbrev>silke1989</abbrev>
    <authorgroup>
      <author>
        <firstname>James R.</firstname>
        <surname>Silke</surname>
      </author>
    </authorgroup>
    <copyright><year>1989</year></copyright>
    <isbn>0-586-07018-4</isbn>
    <publisher>
      <publishername>
        Grafton Books
      </publishername>
    </publisher>
    <title>Lords of Destruction</title>
    <seriesinfo>
      <title>
        <othercredit>
          <firstname>Frank</firstname>
          <surname>Frazetta</surname>
        </othercredit>'s Death Dealer
      </title>
      <volumenum>2</volumenum>
    </seriesinfo>
  </biblioentry>
</bibliography>

```

Figure 5: The bibliographical reference from Figure 1 expressed in DocBook. Note the *ad hoc* tag `<othercredit>`.

Moreover, let us consider the bibliographical reference given in Figure 5, according to the conventions of DocBook, a system for writing structured documents [36] (we use the conventions of the XML version of DocBook, described in [26]). We can see that some information is more precise than that provided in Figure 1. But there are still complexities: the person name given in the value of the `SERIES` field is surrounded by an *ad hoc* element in the DocBook version.

If we want to take advantage of the expressive power of DocBook, we can:

- directly process an XML file for bibliographical entries. In this case, our DTD should be extended; that is possible, but we still need a solution to process the huge number of existing `.bib` files;
- introduce some new syntax inside `.bib` files, that might be complicated and thus perhaps unused in practice,

- introduce new L_{ATEX} commands, to process like the `\logo` example mentioned above.

We have experimentally gone quite far in the third direction, which also allows to us to deal with the L_{ATEX} commands already in `.bib` files. In Figure 6, we give some examples of such processing, as implemented in the prototype.¹⁵

As can be seen, we have defined a new function in Scheme, named `define-pattern`, with two formal arguments. The first is a string viewed as a *pattern*, following the conventions of T_EX for defining commands, that is, the arguments of a command are denoted by ‘#1’, ‘#2’, ... (cf. [18, Ch. 20]). The second argument may also be a string, in which case it specifies a replacement. The arguments of the corresponding command are processed recursively. In case of conflict among patterns, the longest is chosen. So, the pattern `"\\logo{#1}"`¹⁶ takes precedence over the pattern `"{#1}"`.

If the second argument of the `define-pattern` function is not a string, it must be a zero-argument function that results in a string. In this case, all the operations must be specified explicitly, using the following functions we wrote:

`pattern-matches?` returns a *true* value if its first argument matches the second, a *false* value otherwise;

`pattern-process` recursively processes its only argument, after replacing sub-patterns by corresponding values;¹⁷

`pattern-replace` replaces the sub-patterns of its argument by corresponding values; these value are not processed, just replaced *verbatim*.

Whether given directly as the second argument to `define-pattern` or resulting from applying a zero-argument function, the string must be well-formed w.r.t. XML’s conventions, that is, tags must be balanced, attributes must be well-formed, etc. In other words, such a string must be acceptable to an XML parser: in our case, the parser is SSAX¹⁸ [17].

The examples given in Figure 6 allow us to see that we can deal with simple commands, like:

```
\logo{...} ==> <emph ...>...</emph>
```

¹⁵ This feature has not yet been implemented in the final version.

¹⁶ Let us recall that in Scheme, the backslash character (`\`) is used to escape special characters in string constants. To include it within a string, it must itself be escaped.

¹⁷ In fact, using a string *s* as a second argument of `define-pattern` yields the evaluation of the expression `(lambda () (pattern-process s))`.

¹⁸ Scheme implementation of SAX. ‘SAX’ is for ‘Simple API (Application Programming Interface) for XML’: this name denotes a kind of parser, see [24, p. 290–292].

```

(define-pattern "{#1}"
  ;; The asitis element is used for words that should never be uncapitalised, that is, proper names. In BIBTEX,
  ;; we specify such behaviour by surrounding words by additional braces.
  "<asitis>#1</asitis>")

(define-pattern "\\logo{#1}" "<emph emf='no' scf='yes'>#1</emph>")

(define-pattern "\\foreignlanguage{#1}{#2}"
  "<foreigngroup language='#1'>#2</foreigngroup>")

(define-pattern "\\iflanguage{#1}{#2}{#3}"
  (lambda () ; Zero-argument function.
    (string-append ; Concatenation of strings.
      "<nonemptyinformation>"
      "<group language='" (pattern-replace "#1") "'>" (pattern-process "#2")
      "</group>"
      (let loop ((pattern (pattern-replace "#3")))
        ;; This form—named let (cf. [28, Exercise 14.8])—defines an internal function loop and
        ;; launches its first call:
        (if (pattern-matches? "\\iflanguage{#4}{#5}{#6}" pattern)
            (string-append "<group language='" (pattern-replace "#4") "'>"
                          (pattern-process "#5")
                          "</group>"
                          ;; The internal function loop is recursively called with a new value:
                          (loop (pattern-replace "#6")))
            (string-append "<group>" (pattern-process pattern) "</group>")))
      "</nonemptyinformation>")))

```

Figure 6: Patterns for some L^AT_EX commands in Scheme.

as well as more complicated cases, like a cascade of `\iflanguage` commands [2]:

```

\iflanguage{...}{...}{%
  \iflanguage{...}{...}{ ... }}

```

which becomes:

```

<nonemptyinformation>
  <group language='...'>...</group>
  <group language='...'>...</group>
  ...
</nonemptyinformation>

```

The `nonemptyinformation` element is used for information that must be output, possibly in a default language if no translation into the current language is available.

What we do by means of our `define-pattern` function is like the additional procedures in Perl¹⁹ that the converter `LaTeX2HTML` [4] can use to translate additional commands.

5 Conclusion

Managing several formalisms can be tedious. This fact was one of main elements in XML's design: giving a central formalism, able to be used for representing trees, and allowing many tools using different formalisms to communicate.

¹⁹ Practical Extraction and Report Language.

BIB_TE_X deals with three formalisms: `.aux` files, `.bib` files and `.bst` files. As Jonathan Fine notes in [5], the applications devoted to a particular formalism cannot be shared with other applications. MIBIB_TE_X attempts to use XML as far as possible, although there is still much to do. For example, defining a syntax for the entries for which we are looking, when using MIBIB_TE_X to generate XSL-FO or DocBook documents. (For our tests, this list of entry names is simply given on the command line).

The next step will probably be a more intensive use of XML, that is, the direct writing of bibliographical entries using XML conventions. For this, we need something more powerful than DTDs, with a richer type structure, namely, *schemas*.²⁰ In addition, we should be able to easily add new fields to bibliographical entries: the example given using DocBook shows that additional information must be able to be supplied to take advantage of the expressive power of this system. But such additions are

²⁰ Schemas have more expressive power than DTDs, because they allow users to define types precisely, which in turn makes for a better validation of an XML text. In addition, this approach is more homogeneous since schemas are XML texts, whereas DTDs are not.

There are currently four ways to specify schemas: Relax NG [3], Schematron [16], Examplotron [30], XML Schema [35]. At present, it seems to us that XML Schema is the most suitable for describing bibliographical entries.

difficult to model with DTDs.²¹ We are presently going thoroughly into replacing our DTD by a schema; when this work reaches maturity, bibliographical entries using XML syntax could be directly validated using schemas.

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²¹ Whereas that is easy with ‘old’ BIB \TeX , provided that you use a bibliography style able to deal with additional fields.

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