Chapter 9

View Information

View Description / View Type / View Subject / View Date

9.1 ABOUT VIEW INFORMATION

9.1.1 Discussion

The View Information elements include details about the view of the work as it appears in an image (surrogate) of the work. Elements addressed here include View Description, View Type, View Subject, and View Date, which are only a few of the fields needed to catalog images. For additional information regarding cataloging images, see Part 1: Works and Images and Database Design and Relationships. A more in-depth discussion is available in *Categories for the Description of Works of Art: Related Visual Documentation* and *VRA Core 4.0*.

It is important to record information about the view of an image regardless of its format (photograph, negative, slide, microfiche, videotape, streaming video, or digital image) or type of institution (visual resources collection, library, museum, or archival collection). Visual surrogates can provide access to works that would be otherwise unavailable due to their remote locations or other restrictions that would limit direct contact. When an image rather than the original work is the only visual access, a description of the view helps provide a more complete experience and understanding of the work as seen in the image; this is particularly true for three-dimensional works such as sculpture or architecture.

View Description

View Description is a free-text field that elaborates on the spatial, chronological, or contextual aspects of the work as captured in the image view (for example, *detail of the lower left-hand corner*, *view facing the northwest*, or *view of building at sunset*). Whereas the View Type element describes the vantage point using limited

and controlled vocabulary, the View Description element places the vantage point within a fuller context and elaborates on the perspective by describing details, parts, cardinal directions, and so forth. Together with View Type, View Description helps the end user evaluate the nature of the information within the image and differentiate among multiple images of the same work.

View Type

View Type records the specific vantage point or perspective, such as profile view, close-up view, or interior view. It helps the user differentiate among multiple images of the same work.

View Subject

View Subject may include terms or phrases that characterize the subject matter of the work as it is depicted in a specific image. Recording the subject matter of the view helps differentiate among multiple images of the same work and enables end users to identify specific images that illustrate a particular concept or detail. It is especially useful for details, complex works, and built works that may include many different views and details. For example, given subject access to an image with a view of a room that includes the term *skylights*, users who need examples of skylights can quickly locate an image that contains that detail.

Not every image will require that the View Subject element be completed. For example, if the image depicts a two-dimensional painting in full, the subject of the image will be adequately covered by the subject of the work itself. View Subject is required when the subject matter depicted in the image is specific to the image and distinct from that of the work in general. For further discussion of View Subject and related topics, see Chapter 6: Subject.

View Date

The View Date element includes any date or range of dates associated with the creation or production of the image. Although not required, it should be recorded when it is known. An image of Villa Savoy taken in 1935 will provide information about the villa that will be different from the information gleaned from a photograph of it taken in 1999. The visual document may also be the only record of a damaged or lost work, and can be vital to the work's restoration or recovery. Knowing the date of the view can aid in restoration of a work. For example, a view of the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi taken in 1996, just before the earthquake of 1997, would be a possibly significant visual record of the building's condition just before it was damaged.

It is important to distinguish between a view date and other collection administration dates. For example, consider an image showing the Taj Mahal taken in 1969 in a 35-mm slide format and copied to a digital format in 2003. The date of the digital image is 2003, but the date of the view is 1969. Such distinctions should be made clear in the Image Record. The Creation Date for the copy is generally recorded with other administrative data and should not be confused with the View Date.

Organization of Data

Ideally, both a View Description (display) and controlled fields for View Type, View Date, and View Subject will be used. View Type and View Subject should be repeatable fields. Using controlled vocabularies, authorities, and consistent formatting to ensure efficient end-user retrieval is recommended.

View Information fields are part of the Image Record, although they should be linked to the appropriate Work Record. How the Image Record and the Work Record are linked is a local database implementation issue. Note that an institution may require multiple Image Records to be linked to a single Work Record. For example, a painting (Work Record) may be linked to image records for slides of the full view of the painting and various details; a building (Work Record) might be linked to multiple records for digital images showing different views and details of the building. See Part 1: Works and Images. In database systems that link Work and Image Records, it should be possible to narrow searches to retrieve images of a particular detail or view of a given work, based on values in the View Type and View Subject elements.

Recommendations for recording certain information about the view, particularly for the View Date and the View Subject, may duplicate recommendations already stated elsewhere in this guide; where appropriate, the reader is directed to additional relevant sections in the guide.

Recommended Elements

A list of the elements discussed in this chapter appears below. Required elements are noted. Display may be a free-text field or concatenated from controlled fields.

View Description (required)
View Type (required)
View Subject display
View Subject controlled (required)
View Display Date
View Earliest Date
View Latest Date

About the Examples

The examples throughout this chapter are for illustration only. Local practice may vary. The examples tend to show the fullest possible use of display and indexing fields, which may not be necessary for all institutions.

9.1.2 Terminology

9.1.2.1 *Sources of Terminology*

9.1.2.1.1 VIEW DESCRIPTION

View Description is a free-text field that describes the view in as much detail as necessary. Terminology should be as consistent as possible.

9.1.2.1.2 VIEW TYPE

Use of a controlled vocabulary linked to an authority file is recommended. Some examples include the following:

> Getty Vocabulary Program. *Art & Architecture Thesaurus* (AAT). Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 1988-. http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/aat/. (Especially Visual Works: Views).
>
> Library of Congress. *Thesaurus for Graphic Materials 2, Genre and Physical Characteristics*. Washington, DC: Library of Crongress. http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/print/tgm2/.

9.1.2.1.3 VIEW SUBJECT

Subject terminology should be controlled by using an authority file or controlled list. See suggestions for terminology in Chapter 6: Subject.

9.1.2.1.4 VIEW DATE

Date information must be formatted consistently to enable effective searching and retrieval on dates. Local rules should be in place. Suggested formats are available in the ISO standard and *W3C XML Schema Part 2.*[1] See additional guidance regarding dates in Chapter 4.

> ISO 8601:2004 Numeric representation of Dates and Time. *Data elements and interchange formats. Information interchange. Representation of dates and times*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Standardization, 2004.
>
> *XML Schema Part 2: Datatypes, 2001*. http://www.w3.org.

9.1.2.2 *Choice of Terminology*

9.1.2.2.1 CONSISTENCY

Using consistent terminology is especially important for controlled fields that are intended to provide access. Consistency is less important, but still desirable, in a free-text note than in a controlled field. Although uncontrolled terminology should be accommodated, terminology that is consistent with the terms in controlled fields is nonetheless recommended for the sake of clarity. Consistent style, grammar, and syntax are recommended.

9.1.2.2.2 USE OF AN AUTHORITY FILE

If possible, terms should be stored in an authority or controlled list, which is linked to the Image Record. To populate the authority file or list, use standard sources combined with local terminology as necessary.

9.2 CATALOGING RULES

9.2.1 Rules for View Description and View Type

9.2.1.1 *Brief Rules for View Description*

Describe the spatial, chronological, or contextual aspects of the work as captured in the image view. The View Type and Subject may be mentioned.

Capitalization and Abbreviations

Capitalize proper names. For other words, use lowercase. Do not capitalize cardinal directions (east, west, north, and south). Avoid abbreviations.

Examples

View Description: distant view from the east

View Description: detail of the signature in the lower right corner

View Description: detail of the face of the lamb and Jesus' hand

Syntax

Use natural word order.

Language

Write the description in the language of the catalog record (English in the United States).

9.2.1.2 *Brief Rules for View Type*

Choose terms to indicate the position, angle, range, orientation, extent, or portion of the work depicted in the image view.

Capitalization and Abbreviations

Use lowercase. Avoid abbreviations.

Examples

View Type: close-up view

View Type: exterior view

Language of the Terms

Use terms in the language of the catalog record (English in the United States).

Examples

View Type: oblique view

View Type: worm's-eye view

9.2.1.3 *Additional Recommendations for View Description and Type*

The descriptions and indexing of image views may vary depending on the view and content of the image, as outlined.

Portion or Extent

If a view includes a portion of the entire work, indicate this (for example, *partial view*). Describe the part that is captured in the view (see also Controlled Fields for View Subject below).

Examples

[for a detail of a painting]

View Description (display):
detail of the artist's initials in lower left-hand corner

View Type (controlled):
detail view

[for a detail of a Scythian pectoral]

View Description (display):
detail of the lion in the lower center of the pectoral

View Type (controlled):
detail view

[for a partial view of a rock-cut temple]

View Description (display):
partial exterior view showing column and lintel of eastern entrance

View Types (controlled):
exterior view • partial view

[for an interior view of an art center]

View Description (display):
interior view with atrium and staircase

View Types (controlled):
interior view • partial view

Range or Position

If a view is taken from a particular range or position, indicate this.

Examples

[for a distant view of the Parthenon]

View Description (display):
distant view facing west

View Type (controlled):
distant view

[for a close-up view of a wall mosaic]

View Description (display):
close-up view of Justinian's eyes

View Type (controlled):
close-up view

Angle or Perspective

If a view is taken from a particular angle or perspective, indicate this.

Examples

[for an oblique view of a Roman arch]

View Description (display):
oblique view facing north

View Type (controlled):
oblique view

[for a view inside the Guggenheim Museum]

View Description (display):
interior overhead view from the top level down to the main gallery, taken from the ceiling

View Types (controlled):
overhead view • interior view

Interior or Exterior

For architecture and other works that contain interior space, indicate the view relative to the work's interior or exterior space where relevant.

Examples

[for an exterior view of a Mexican pyramid]

View Description (display):
exterior view facing southwest

View Type (controlled):
exterior view

[for an interior view of a Black-figure kylix]

View Description (display):
interior, detail view of the Chimaera

View Types (controlled):
interior view • detail view

Three-Dimensional Works

For three-dimensional works, use controlled terms that indicate positional attributes relative to the whole.

Examples

[for an African ancestral figure sculpture]

View Description (display):
profile view of the face and shoulders from the left

View Type (controlled):
profile view

[for a Renaissance sculpture of a horse]

View Description (display):
view of the hindquarters

View Type (controlled):
back view

Multiple Objects in One View

For views that include multiple objects, locate them within the context of the particular vantage point.

Example

[for a medieval church complex]

View Description (display):
bell tower in foreground with baptistery to the left

View Types (controlled):
exterior view • partial view

Environment and Lighting

For views that include the work within an environmental setting or under noteworthy lighting conditions, indicate the conditions.

Examples

[for a modern museum building]

View Description (display):
exterior view of the courtyard facing east at sunset

View Types (controlled):
exterior view • partial view

[for a monumental abstract sculpture]

View Description (display):
partial view in the fog

View Type (controlled):
partial view

If retrieval on the lighting (for example, raking light) or environmental conditions is required, this information should be indexed in View Type and View Subject.

Example

[for a drawing in pastels]

View Description (display):
detail of the surface in raking light

View Types (controlled):
raking light view • extreme close-up view

Cardinal Directions

For views of architecture and other site-specific works, use terms that indicate the direction of the view relative to the compass points.

Example

[for a skyscraper]

View Description (display):
oblique view facing northwest

View Type (controlled):
oblique view

If retrieval on the cardinal directions (for example, *north*, *south*, *east*, *west*, *southeast*) is required, this information should be indexed in View Type.

Example

[for a burial mound]

View Description (display):
partial view facing southeast

View Types (controlled):
partial view • southeast view

Time-Based Works

For images of performance art and other time-based works, describe the view and place it within the context of the whole, if possible.

Example

[for an image from a performance video]

View Description (display):
one still (frame) from the beginning of the performance video showing a woman, folding laundry

View Types (controlled):
partial view • frame

9.2.2 Rules for View Subject

9.2.2.1 *Brief Rules for View Subject*

Record the subject as depicted in the view distinct from general subject information recorded for the work.

Singular vs. Plural

Generally use the singular, including the proper names of iconographical themes, mythological events, persons, places, and so forth. When the singular is inappropriate, use the plural, as warranted by the subject being cataloged. See the discussion in Chapter 6: Subject.

Example

[for a detail of a still life]

View Subjects: bird's nest • urn • knife • apple • lilies

Capitalization and Abbreviations

Capitalize proper names; for other terms, use lowercase. Avoid abbreviations.

Examples

[for a detail in a group portrait]

View Subjects: Allan Pinkerton (American Secret Service agent, detective, 1819-1884) • chair • table

[for a detail in a cityscape]

View Subject: Santa Maria del Fiore (Florence, Italy)

Language of the Terms

Use terms in the language of the catalog record (English in the United States), except in cases where no exact English-language equivalent exists. Use diacritics as appropriate.

Examples

[for a detail in a still life]

View Subjects: façon de Venise

[for a partial view of an office building]

View Subjects: outdoor café

9.2.2.2 *Additional Recommendations for View Subject*

9.2.2.2.1 VARIOUS TYPES OF IMAGES

The subjects recorded for the image views will vary depending upon the view and content of the image. The examples below illustrate one possible way that several view information fields for the image and subject fields for the work could display together.

Portion or Extent

If a view includes a portion of the entire work, describe the subject of the part that is captured in the view (for example, the west façade of a cathedral). Note the significant details captured by the image, particularly when the image contains subject matter prominent in the detail but not prominent in the work as a whole. It is not necessary to repeat subject information that is in the Work Record, unless it applies specifically to the image view at hand.

Examples

[for Reims Cathedral]

Work: Free-Text Subject field:
cathedral dedicated to Notre-Dame

Work: Controlled Subject fields:
cathedral • worship • Notre-Dame

Image: View Description (display):
west façade, partial view of the area from the rose window to the ground

Image: View Types (controlled):
partial view • east view

Image: Controlled View Subject fields:
west façade • rose window • portal • jamb statues

[for a painting]

Work: Free-Text Subject field:
Shah Jahan on horseback dressed for the hunt

Work: Controlled Subject fields (repeatable):
portrait • Shah Jahan • horse • hunt

Image: View Description (display):
detail of the face of the horse

Image: View Type (controlled):
detail view

Image: Controlled View Subject fields:
horse • face

Objects Not Part of the Work

If the image view contains persons or objects that are not a part of the work, such as lampposts in the example below, but are a significant part of the image, record this.

Examples

[for Tweed Courthouse, New York City]

Work: Description field:
formerly served as the New York County Courthouse, now houses Department of Education and an educational center

Work: Controlled Subject fields:
courthouse • office building • educational center

Image: View Description (display):
oblique view of the columned portico, facing south

Image: View Types (controlled):
partial view • oblique view • south view

Image: Controlled View Subject fields:
portico • Corinthian columns • lampposts

9.2.2.2.2 VIEW SUBJECT NOTE FIELD

If required by your institution, further describe the View Subject in a note, either in one reserved specifically for View Subject (see View Subject Note in the example below) or in a general note in the Image Record.

Example

[for Growth House]

Work: Free-Text Subject field:
experimental dwelling, temporary construction that changes with the seasons

Work: Controlled Subject fields:
dwelling • experimental building • temporary construction • seasons • change

Image: View Description (display):
exterior view of the façade in October 1975, vegetables sprouting from the wall

Image: View Types (controlled):
exterior view • partial view

Image: Controlled View Subject fields:
façade • vegetables

Image: View Subject Note: The work changes with the seasons. This view captures the house in the fall when the seed walls have sprouted, bloomed, and developed vegetables growing from the walls.

9.2.3 Rules for View Date

9.2.3.1 *Brief Rules for View Date*

Record the year, or the day, month, and year when the view depicted in the image was captured. For Display Date, use natural language. For Earliest and Latest Dates, use the format YYYY-MM-DD or another format prescribed in either ISO 8061 or *W3C XML Schema Part 2*.

Example

Display Date:
30 October 1953

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 1953-10-30; **Latest**: 1953-10-30

For general information about recording dates, follow the recommendations in Chapter 4.

9.2.3.2 *Additional Recommendations for View Date*

9.2.3.2.1 SPECIFICITY OF DATES

Record the day, month, and year of the image. If the day and month are unknown, record the year.

Examples

[for a Maya pot]

View Description (display):
detail of anthropomorphic jaguars

Display Date:
photographed 21 September 1985, following the earthquake of 19 September

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 1985-09-21; **Latest**: 1985-09-21

[for the Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, the Vatican]

View Description (display):
interior view, partial view, of the hands in the Creation of Adam

Display Date:
photographed in 1989, after restoration

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 1989; **Latest**: 1989

Record the hours and minutes, if significant and if known.

Example

[for a scene from performance art]

View Description (display):
oblique view of the stage, opening of performance

Display Date:
photographed 30 May 1998, 6:15 am

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 1998-05-30 06:15:00; **Latest**: 1998-05-30 06:15:00

9.2.3.2.2 APPROXIMATE DATES

Indicate uncertainty or approximate dates in the Display Date. Estimate Earliest and Latest Dates to facilitate retrieval. See Chapter 4 for general recommendations regarding approximate dates.

Example

[for the Great Pyramids, Giza, Egypt]

View Description (display):
distant view, facing west

Display Date:
photographed in the 1930s

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 1930; **Latest**: 1939

9.2.3.2.3 VARIOUS TYPES OF IMAGES

Record dates appropriate for the image view, as outlined below.

Phase of the Work

If the image documents a phase or aspect of the production or creation of the work, include the date. If the image documents an event that altered the work (for example, before or after restoration, before or after damage occurred), include the date.

Examples

[for the East Building, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC]

View Description (display):
interior view, Mezzanine level facing east

Display Date:
during final construction, Spring 1977

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 1977-03-01; **Latest**: 1977-06-30

[for a panel painting after restoration]

View Description (display):
detail of Athena's face

Display Date:
after restoration, photograph taken on July 11, 2001

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 2001-07-11; **Latest**: 2001-07-01

Historic Views

Include the date for historic views.

Example

[for the Berlin Wall]

View Description (display):
oblique view facing east

Display Date:
photographed in 1969

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 1969; **Latest**: 1969

Conceptual Art

Include the date or range of dates for views of conceptual works, particularly when the concept involves impermanence.

Example

[for Christo's Surrounded Islands, Miami]

View Description (display):
aerial view, at sunset

Display Date:
photographed in 1981

Controlled Date fields:
Earliest: 1981; **Latest**: 1981

9.3 PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

9.3.1 Display and Indexing

9.3.1.1 *Free-Text vs. Controlled Fields*

For a discussion of when and why separate free-text and controlled fields are recommended, see Part 1: Database Design and Relationships: Display and Indexing.

9.3.1.2 *Fields in Authority File and Work Record*

Controlled Fields for View Description

Information in the free-text View Description should be indexed for retrieval in the controlled fields. If including a free-text View Description is not possible, a rudimentary display may be constructed by concatenating data from controlled fields.

The View Description may repeat the View Type, integrating it in the free-text field for easy comprehension by the end user. It may also omit View Type, in which case View Type may be concatenated with View Description in display.

Controlled Fields for View Type

View type should be a repeatable controlled field.

Controlled Fields for View Subject

View Subject should be displayed in a way that ensures that the end user can also see the subject of the work, which may have both free-text and controlled components. The subject of the image may be described in the free-text View Description. Any subject information in the View Description (display) that is required for retrieval of the image should be indexed in View Subject.

The View Subject element is a repeatable controlled field intended to allow retrieval and should ideally be linked to an authority file or controlled list. It may be linked to the same authority that controls terminology for the subject of the work. See Chapter 6: Subject for further discussion of how to record subject matter.

Controlled Fields for View Date

View Date is ideally a set of three fields: a display field to express nuances of the date to the end user, and two indexed fields representing the earliest and latest dates implied in the display date. The date fields for retrieval should contain dates formatted properly to allow retrieval. For general information about recording dates, follow the recommendations in Chapter 4.

9.3.2 Examples

Examples of Work and linked Image Records are included below. For additional examples, see the end of Part 1, the end of each chapter, and the CCO Web site. In the examples, *controlled* refers to values controlled by an authority file, controlled list, or other rules (for example, rules for recording dates). *Link* refers to a relationship between a Work Record and an Authority Record or between Work and Image Records. All links are controlled fields. In the examples that follow, Related Work Records are abbreviated for the sake of brevity. All Work Records should be as complete as possible. See the various chapters for discussions of individual metadata elements, whether they should be controlled, and the respective advantages of an authority file or a controlled list. In all examples in this manual, both within and at the end of each chapter, data values for repeatable fields are separated by bullet characters.

Figure 42
Image Record Linked to Work and Authority Records: Modern Building
Required and recommended elements are marked with an asterisk.

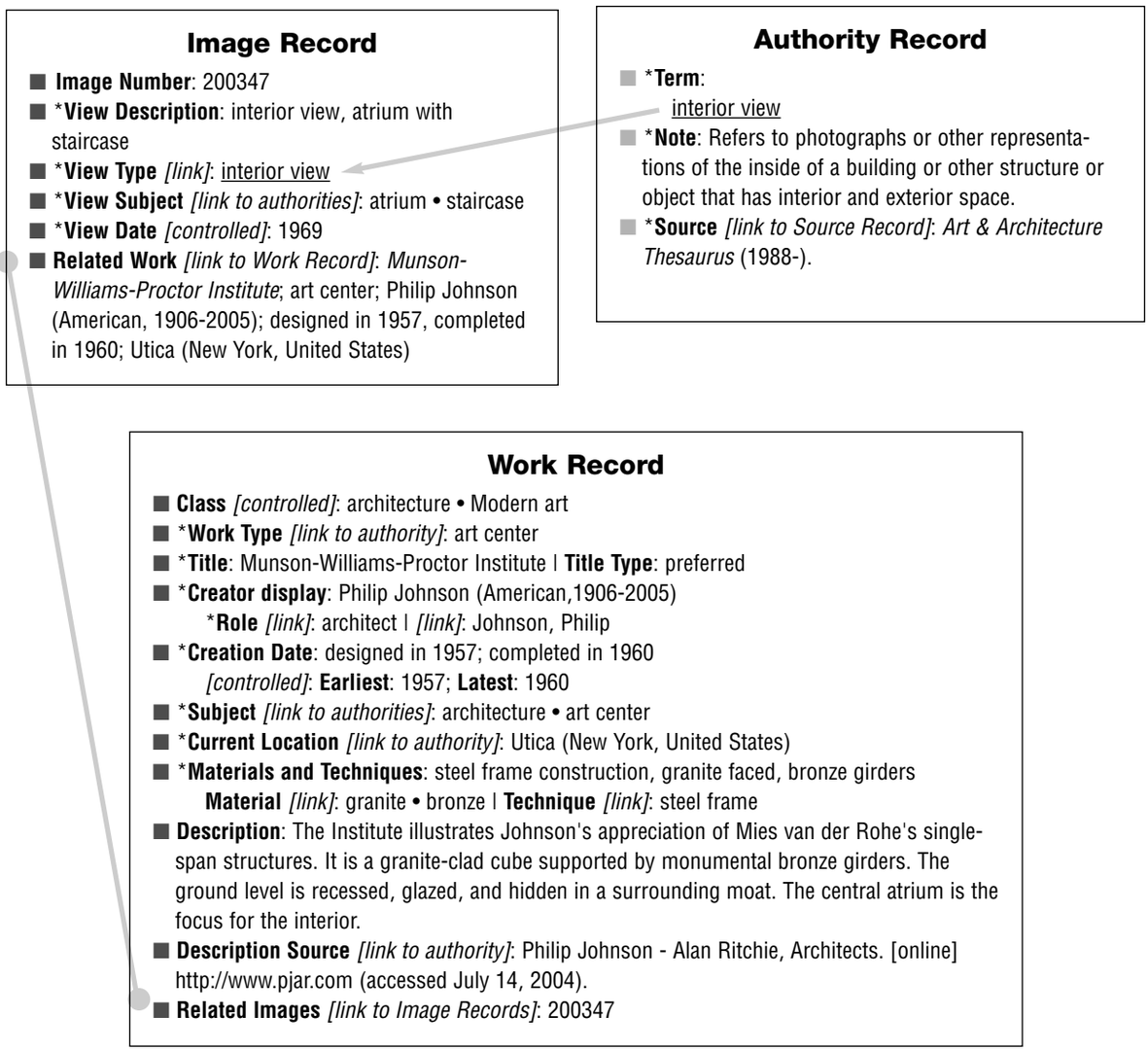


Figure 43
Image Record Linked to Work and Authority Records: Egyptian Monument

Required and recommended elements are marked with an asterisk.

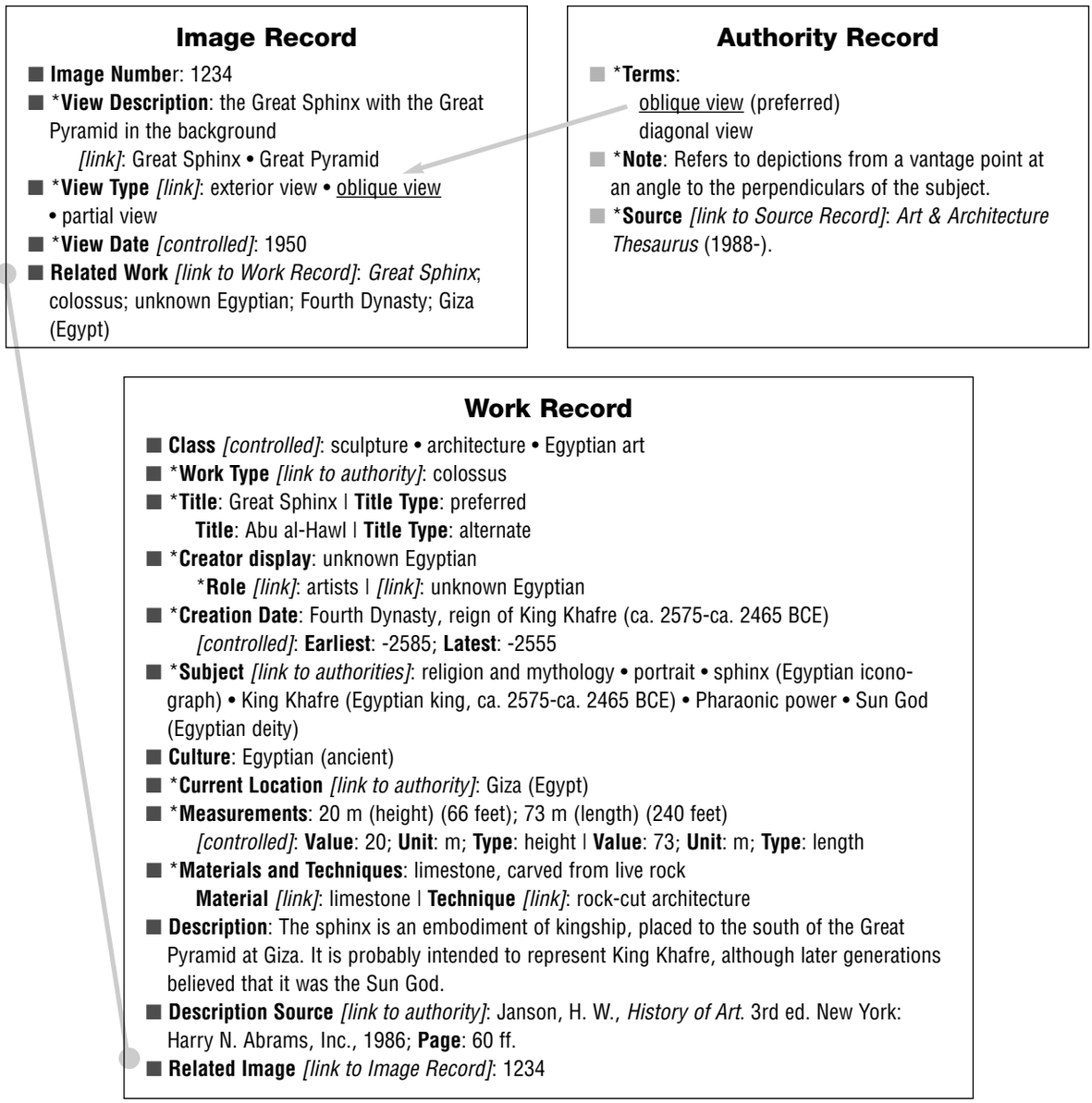
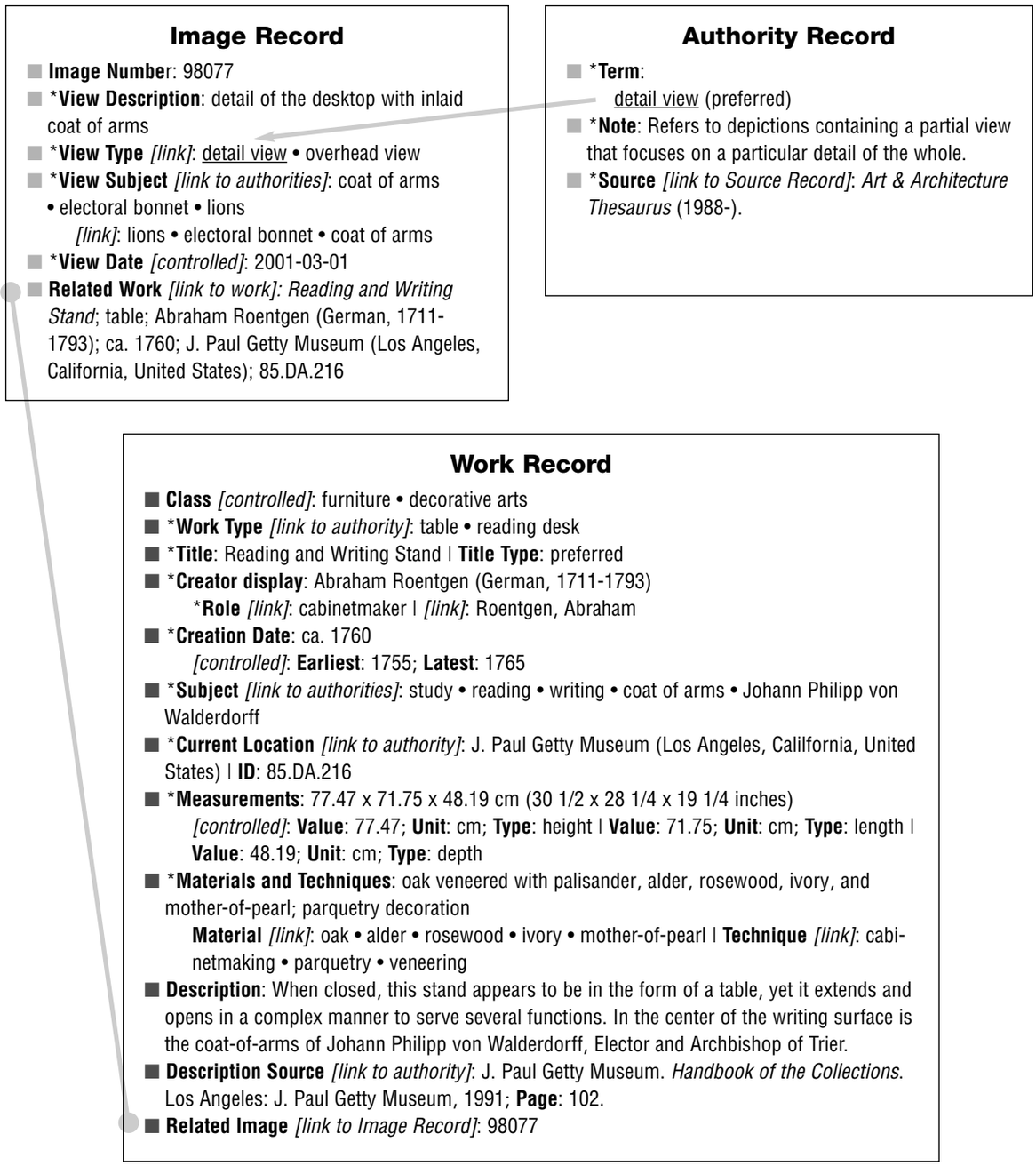


Figure 44
Image Record Linked to Work and Authority Records: German Desk

Required and recommended elements are marked with an asterisk.



Note

1. The ISO standard recognizes year zero. Humanities databases, however, will generally disregard it in calculations of earliest and latest dates.