

PRACTICAL EXERCISE 5: MANUSCRIPT DESCRIPTION

By the end of this session you should be able to:

- create a TEI description based on an existing published description of a primary source
- reflect on the decisions involved in the encoding process and their ramifications
- reflect on the strengths and limitations of the <msDesc> module for describing different types of primary source material

In this exercise you will use an existing printed description to create an encoded <msDesc> of a medieval manuscript from Cambridge University Library's collections.

We will have already gone through this process with the **example_1** documents, which you can use as a reference.

Open the Word document **exercise_1**. You will see a prose description of li.6.32 (The Book of Deer) derived from *Western illuminated manuscripts: a catalogue of the collection in Cambridge University Library*. Open the document **tei_template**, which contains a blank outline of a manuscript description.

Look at the prose description in relation to the TEI msDesc elements available, and consider which bits of text should go where. You may have to break single paragraphs into multiple sections.

Copy and paste sections from the prose description into the appropriate elements of the **xml_template** file. Use the TEI <hi> element to make sure any rendering (italics, superscript etc.) is preserved. Make any adjustments to ensure that the document is valid against the TEI schema (Oxygen green light!)

Now look at the blocks of text and see if there are ways to encode them with more detail – by breaking them down into component parts, or adding phrase-level elements such as locus, name, place, date etc.

NB. In the source document, references to folio locations are in **bold** – replace your <hi rend="bold" elements with <locus> elements. The same might apply to italicised titles in the text.

If you have time, look at the attributes available on the msDesc elements you have used – such as xml:lang to record the language of titles.

If you have more time, look at how you might use the ref attribute to embed external identifiers e.g. VIAF for names, Getty Thesaurus of Geographical Names for places.

What remains to be encoded? How would you encode a source relevant to your own work?