TEI BY EXAMPLE

MODULE 2: THE TEI HEADER

Ron Van den Branden

Edward Vanhoutte

Melissa Terras

Centre for Scholarly Editing and Document Studies (CTB) , Royal Academy of Dutch Language and Literature, Belgium, Gent, 9 July 2010

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As will be clear by now, a document is more than its text. The TEI addresses this reality by providing formal means (elements and attributes) that allow the encoder to explicate his theory of the text in a descriptive manner. For example, when a text fragment is italicised in an existing source text or should occur as such in an electronic text edited from scratch, TEI allows the encoder to express not just *that* this fragment is emphasised (by means of italics), but also *why* (because it is a title, foreign word, term, or whatever analysis the encoder wants to express).

This descriptive nature of TEI is not restricted to the actual textual contents of a document, but extends to the general meta-information one would like to associate with it. Therefore, the TEI Guidelines require that a TEI text instance be preceded by general meta-information. This "administrative" meta-section is called the TEI header. While the TEI header may be intimidatingly elaborated, this tutorial module will guide you through its different sections, and point out those sections you'll most plausibly need when you start to encode texts with TEI.[1]

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1 The TEI header has a less direct relationship to the text than the actual TEI text elements. After all, the TEI header is not intended to contain actual text contents, but rather *abstractions* from the information that is related to the document, much like a library catalogue record. Moreover, the TEI header differs from most other TEI structures in that it has a more rigid organisation, containing a number of mandatory elements and alternative options to encode information in a more or less formalised way. Therefore, this tutorial module will differ slightly from the others concerning the worked example, and ask a little more of your imagination.