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*The punctuation system of the West-Saxon version of the Gospel according to Saint John*¹

In questo articolo si discute il sistema di punteggiatura utilizzato in un manoscritto medievale, un tema praticamente ignorato dagli studiosi, soprattutto nel caso dell'Antico Inglese; la nostra bibliografia di partenza è dunque alquanto circoscritta (Harlow 1959; Mitchell 1980; Calle / Miranda Forth.). Tuttavia, negli ultimi dieci anni si è assistito ad un rinnovato interesse per questo tema. Sulla base di ciò, il nostro studio tratta il sistema di punteggiatura impiegato nella versione sassone occidentale del Vangelo secondo Giovanni, nell'intento di fornirne una descrizione dettagliata e verificarne la corrispondenza con la sua controparte moderna. I diversi esempi sono classificati secondo la metodologia dettata dalla linguistica dei corpora, il che ci permette altresì di verificare la coerenza dei vari simboli impiegati.

1. Introduction

Studies about medieval punctuation systems are characterised by both their scarcity and the lack of scholarly agreement. In this line, Gradon argues that “the punctuation of medieval manuscripts has long been a matter of contention, speculation or even despair” (1983: 39). In the case of Old English, there are only a few studies dealing with punctuation (Harlow 1959; Mitchell 1980; Calle / Miranda Forth.) and our knowledge about the use and function of particular marks of punctuation is somewhat limited inasmuch as it may vary from text to text, and from period to period. According to Parkes (1978: 132-133), different factors are likely to govern the use of punctuation at different periods within the Middle Ages, that is, the nature of the text to be pointed; the different ways in which the text was read and understood by different scribes, correctors and readers; or the way in which the text was used.

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Early punctuation, following Skeat, was mainly used to mark breath or rest points, and different lengths of pauses. Normally, oral requirements and syntactic sense coincided in the full pause at the end of sentences (Arakelian 1975: 615). Thus, before going any further, a distinction has to be made between grammatical and rhetorical punctuation; the former designates the structural relationships between sentence constituents, thus yielding syntactic sense, whereas the latter marks rest points for an oral performance. Nowadays, punctuation is considered to be mainly grammatical, but in a medieval manuscript the leading function of these marks of punctuation cannot be clearly ascertained.

A different question is that of the editorial principles when publishing the text, as sometimes editors are forced to modernise punctuation to make the text accessible to the reader (Calle 2004: 407-409). The problem arises when readers and scholars have to rely on the editor's interpretations, more often than not distorted because of an erroneous rendering of the original. In this line, Rodríguez-Álvarez (1999: 27) comments on the fact that "the editor only says that punctuation is editorial, making no reference to the original punctuation".

Thus, the present paper deals with the punctuation system found in the West-Saxon version of the *Gospel according to Saint John*. The object is twofold: a) to offer a detailed description of the use and function of the scribal marks of punctuation, and b) to find the possible correspondence with their modern counterparts. We approach punctuation marks to show how the scribe follows, in our view, a consistent punctuation system throughout his composition. With these objectives in mind, the paper has been organised as follows. Section 2 covers the description of the body of analysis, MS Corpus Christi 140, and a brief account of the punctuation marks found in the MS; section 3 describes the methodology; section 4 analyses the punctuation system of the MS; and, finally the conclusions are offered in section 5.

2. Description

The text under consideration is the Old English version of the *Gospel according to Saint John*, of which there are several extant manuscripts. Our study is based on MS Corpus 140 (before S. 4), housed in Corpus Christi College Library, in Cambridge. It contains the four

Gospels in West-Saxon, certain adaptations, several of which mention Aelfsige, and notes and documents at the end of each Gospel (Skeat 1871: 5). The manuscript dates from the eleventh century and it was written at Bath under West-Saxon influence.

To date, there are several editions of the West-Saxon Gospels, though those by Thorpe (1842), Skeat (1871, 1874, 1878, 1887), Bright (1904a-b, 1905, 1906) and Liuzza (1994, 2000) are, to a broad extent, the ones more recommended for scholarly use. After working with a microfilmed version of the text to have a faithful transcript of the use of marks and symbols in the original, we used two editions for further checking: the canonical edition of Skeat (1878), and the more recent one by Liuzza (1994, 2000). Both of them follow the Corpus MS, but the latter is closer to the punctuation system found in the aforesaid manuscript, so we took it as our model.

The Old English Holy Gospels are a translation of a previous Latin version. The translator's attempt to adapt the material to the new culture can be seen throughout. At a morpho-syntactic level, some Latin constructions are often replaced by vernacular ones – for instance, there is only one example of the typical ablative construction in Latin (dative absolute in Old English) in the *Gospel according to Saint John*: “belocenum duron” (XX, 26). At a lexical level, there are also adaptations which try to bring the text into line with the Anglo-Saxon culture (for Latin “palmes”, the equivalent in the West Saxon version is “twig” (XV, 4).

Regarding punctuation, there are basically two types (as mentioned in the introduction to this paper): grammatical, which separates sense-units to yield syntactic sense, and rhetorical, which provides the text with the necessary rest points for a meaningful oral reading (Horobin / Smith 2002: 20).

According to Liuzza (1998: 7-8), there were three possible uses for an Old English Gospel, regarding its readership, which can go from private to public. These include devotional reading, pastoral instruction and liturgical recitation. As the translator or scribe tries to avoid any artificiality, it can be inferred that this was a composition written to be read aloud, probably in public by someone at the monastery when all the others were doing everyday activities. In this way, it is likely that rhetorical punctuation is predominant over grammatical punctuation, although the latter is used when required by the context.

The marks of punctuation present in MS Corpus 140 are the punctus (.), the punctus elevatus (:), and the punctus versus (;). They may appear together with capitals, although minuscules are widely employed. Therefore, this follows the repertory of punctuation which had been established by the twelfth century (Parkes 1992: 41).

3. Methodology

The manuscript contains 1,100 instances of the punctus, 801 of the punctus versus, and 126 of the punctus elevatus. As a first step, the occurrences of the punctus versus and the punctus elevatus were retrieved automatically by means of the *Old English Concordancer* (Miranda *et al.* Forth.). This software application permits the retrieval of specific morpho-syntactic information from an annotated corpus (Esteban Segura 2004). Annotation includes lemmatisation and tagging, so the *OEC* is both word and lemma-based, with the ability to solve any kind of query, regardless of its complexity, by means of Boolean filters. To obtain all the instances with their context and references, we previously defined the search parameters so that the application could accordingly compute and generate the corresponding output. As for the punctus, on the other hand, we made use of *Wordsmith Tools* 3.0 (Scott 1999), a software application used to handle electronic text corpora. It allows to retrieve word-lists and concordances along with their level of occurrences, as the *OEC* could not retrieve the information of words after the punctus. This can be explained by the fact that, in this application, the context is defined from period to period.

The output automatically generated was saved in three different Excel spread-sheets. The columns of each one contained the previous-to-the-punctuation-mark context, the mark itself, the ensuing context as well as the reference according to Liuzza (chapter, page, and line). Then, the instances were manually classified one by one, a time-consuming task in the light of the different uses of the punctus, that is, sentential, clausal and phrasal. Once the uses of these marks of punctuation were taxonomised, the next step was the independent analysis of each type of punctuation symbol so as to determine their functions. The uses and functions of each mark of punctuation are accounted for below.

4. Analysis

In this section, the uses and functions of marks of punctuation in the text are analysed. Each mark will be treated separately so as to offer the most appropriate symbol in Present-Day English punctuation. The order of presentation depends on the leading function of each symbol. The punctus versus has been analysed first inasmuch as it is the symbol used to mark the longest type of pause, having therefore some macro-structural implications. The punctus and the punctus elevatus are then presented because, featuring a lighter pause than the former, their leading function was found to be mostly at a micro-structural level.

4.1. Punctus versus

The punctus versus is found in 801 instances. It can be used to indicate sentential and intra-clausal relationships. This will be explained in the following sub-sections.

4.1.1. Punctus versus at sentence level

There are different uses for this mark of punctuation which are reported below:

- To mark the end of a sentence: with 648 instances, this is by far the most consistent use of the punctus versus. It helps separate two different sense-units, so the function is grammatical. It can also be rhetorical as it marks rest points. In most cases, a majuscule is employed to indicate the beginning of the second unit. This could imply that the pause is longer than in the case of that signalled by the punctus elevatus, which is normally followed by a minuscule. This can be seen in the following examples:
 - (1) gýt mīn tīma ne cōm << ; >> Ðā cwæð þæs hælendes mōdor [...]
(II, 160, 4).
 - (2) [...] and his fæder ēac << ; >> Witodlice gē ne gelȳfað mē forþām [...]
(VIII, 176, 44).
 - (3) Arīs ađ uton gān heonon << ; >> Ic eom sōð wīneard (XIV, 189, 31).
- To introduce coordinate clauses: after the punctus versus, two conjunctions are mainly used, that is, *and* (54 instances) and *ac* (10 instances):

- (4) Ne eom ic nā crīst << ; >> And hig āxsodon hine [...] (I, 158, 20).
- (5) Hēr ys þīn mōdor << ; >> and of þære tīde se leorningcniht [...] (XIX, 198, 27).
- (6) hī dōð ēow of gesomnungum << ; >> Ac sēo tīd cymð þæt ælc [...] (XVI, 191, 2).

– To connect the main and the subordinate clause in the following types of subordination:

– Adverbial clauses: the *punctus versus* is used to introduce clauses of cause and comparison. This use is not very common, as there are only three instances of it. See the following examples:

- (7) mīn dōm is sōð << ; >> Forðām þe ic ne eom āna (VIII, 174, 16).
- (8) gē wuniað on mīnre lufe << ; >> Swā ic gehēold mīnes fæder bebodu (XV, 190, 10).

– To introduce direct speech (in 85 occurrences). The subordinate clause always follows the main one as can be seen below:

- (9) Ðā cwæð nichodemus tō him << ; >> Se þe cōm tō him [...] (VII, 173, 50).
- (10) Ðā cwædon hig tō hym << ; >> Cwyst þū synt wē blinde [...] (IX, 178, 40).
- (11) Ðā cwæð simon petrus tō him << ; >> Drihten [...] (XIII, 186, 9)

4.1.2. Punctus versus at clause level

– To indicate appositional phrases. There is just one instance of the *punctus versus* placed before an apposition. The function is rhetorical as it involves a slight pause:

- (12) and nān man ne āstihð tō heofenum būton se ðe nyþer cōm of heofonum << ; >> Mannes sunu (III, 161, 13).

4.2. Punctus

The *punctus* is the most widely used mark in MS Corpus 140 with 1,100 instances. The *punctus* can have two different positions, the raised and the low period, although the former prevails.

4.2.1. *Punctus at sentence level*

- To mark the end of a sentence. There are 294 punctuated instances where the punctus is used either to associate or to split two structurally independent sense-units, as was the case with the punctus versus, hence the main function here is grammatical. See the following examples:

(13) and se hælend cwæð tō him fylig mē << . >> Sōþlice Philippvs wæs fram bethzaida [...] (I, 159, 44).

(14) hū mæg þes his flæsc ūs syllan tō etene << . >> þā cwæþ se hælend tō him (VI, 170, 53).

(15) and ic ne spæc nān þing dīgelīce << . >> Hwī āxast ðū mē (XVI-II, 195, 20).

- To associate coordinate clauses: the punctus is used to mark paratactic clauses in 325 instances. The connectors used are *and* (272 instances), *ac* (49 instances), *ne* (2 instances), *þēahhwæþere* (1 instance) and *oððe* (1 instance).

(16) Ðā forlēt hē iudea land << . >> and fōr eft on galilea (IV, 163, 3).

(17) Ne underfō ic nāne beorhtnesse æt mannum << . >> Ac ic gecnēow ēow þæt gē nabbaþ godes lufe on ēow (V, 167, 41).

(18) Ne gē nāfre his stefne ne gehȳrdon << . >> ne gē his hīw ne gesāwon (V, 167, 37).

- To introduce subordinate clauses. The punctus is used to connect the main and the subordinate clause in the following types of subordination:

- Adjectival clauses: there are 22 instances of the punctus used to separate relative clauses from their main clauses. The order is the following: the main clause appears first, then the punctus, and finally, the relative clause. Some examples are shown below:

(19) Sōð lēoht wæs << . >> þæt onlȳht ælcne cumendne man on þisne middaneard (I, 157, 9).

(20) Sum undercȳning wæs << . >> þæs sunu wæs gesȳclod on capharnaum (IV, 165, 46).

There are also 45 instances of headless relatives. In this case, the relative clause appears first, and then the main clause:

(21) Se þe gelyfð on sunu << . >> se hæfð ēce lif (III, 162, 36).

(22) Se þe ingæþ æt þām geate << . >> hē is scēapa hyrde (X, 179, 2).

- Nominal clauses. The data analysed contain 27 instances of the punctus used to link the main and the nominal clause. The nominal clause is a *that*-clause in the majority of cases, although *wh*-interrogatives and zero *that*-clauses are also found. If modernised, the editing of these types of clauses should be carried out with no mark of punctuation at all.

(23) Ðā se hælend wyste << . >> þæt þā pharisei gehyrdon þæt hē hæfde mā leorningnihta þonne iohannes (IV, 163, 1).

(24) Sōþ ic ēow secge << . >> ic eom scēapa geat (X, 179, 7).

- Adverbial clauses: the punctus is also a frequent device to introduce all types of adverbial subordination: clauses of time, condition, cause, purpose, and comparison. They amount to 132 instances. The basic function of this mark is grammatical, to link the main and the subordinate clause.

(25) Hē wunede on galilea << . >> þā hē þās þing sæde (VII, 171, 9).

(26) and iohannes fullode on enon wið salim << . >> forðām þe þær wæron manega wætro (III, 162, 23).

(27) Ðis is se hlāf þe of heofonum cōm << . >> þæt ne swelte se ðe of him ytt (VI, 170, 50).

The adverbial clause may be fronted to stress the information in the subordinate clause. In these cases, the punctus serves a dual purpose, a linking mark to show the grammatical relation between the main and the subordinate clause, and a visual aid to show the end of the adverbial clause and to read it with an appropriate pause and a suitable intonation. See the following instances:

(28) Ðā martha gehyrde þæt se hælend cōm << . >> þā arn hēo ongēan hyne (XI, 181, 20).

(29) Swā mīn fæder can mē << . >> ic can mīnne fæder (X, 179, 15).

(30) Gif gē mē lufiað << . >> healdað mīne beboda (XIV, 188, 15).

- To introduce direct speech. The text shows a high occurrence of this use with 187 instances, in all of which the main clause precedes the reporting clause. Some examples are proposed below.

(31) Ðā cwædon hig tō him << . >> hwār is hē (IX, 177, 12).

(32) Ðā andswarodon hī hym and cwædon << . >> wē synt abrahames cynnes (IX, 177, 12).

- To call attention to what follows. This use is found in nine instances. The function can be both grammatical and rhetorical. Some examples are:

(33) On ðære wītegena bōcum is āwriten << . >> ealle ēaðlære bēoð godes (VI, 170, 45).

(34) [...] þær wæs ongewriten << . >> þis ys se nazarenisca hælend iudea cyning (XIX, 197, 19).

4.2.2. *Punctus at clause level*

The punctus is used at clause level for different purposes, either to connect the phrases of a clause, to mark vocatives or to separate the clause constituents. The function would be grammatical in order to signal the different relationships between the clause constituents. Each of these uses is accounted for below:

- To separate the clause constituents: there are 17 instances. The punctus has a varied set of uses, such as to separate the subject and the verb, two or more noun phrases, the verb and (prepositional/noun) phrases, predicative complements, etc. See the following examples:

(35) hwī fullast þū; gif þū ne art << . >> ne heligas ne wītega (I, 158, 25).

(36) Syððan manega his leorningnihta cyrdon << . >> onbæc and ne eodun mid him (VI, 171, 67).

In several instances, the punctus is used to avoid the confusion which may arise from similar words when reading the text aloud. In (38), the punctus indicates a pause when reading so that ‘hī ne’ may not be confused with ‘hyne’:

- (37) Ne wundra þū forðām << . >> þe ic sǣde þē [...] (III, 161, 7).
(38) Ðā hē swā mycele tǣcn dyde beforan him << . >> hī. ne gelȳfdon
on hyne (XII, 185, 37).

- To indicate the coordination of phrases. There are 10 instances of the punctus used to separate two or more coordinate phrases. Some examples are:

- (39) ðā ne synt ācennede of blōdum << . >> ne of flǣsces willan << . >>
>> ne of weres willan (I, 157, 13).
(40) and cōm þyder mid lēohtfatum << . >> and mid blasum << . >>
and mid wǣpnum (XVIII, 194, 3).

- To mark off a vocative phrase. There are 18 instances. The modern rendering would be a comma because a slight pause is also involved:

- (41) Ðā cwæð þæt wīf tō him << . >> hlāford << . >> syle mē þæt
wæter (IV, 163, 15).
(42) Ðā cwæð se undercing tō him; drihten << . >> fār ær mīn sunu
swelte (IV, 165, 49).

The punctus is used at phrase level to circumscribe the word *ǣ*, a shortening meaning *law*, in 14 instances. The function would be grammatical. Some examples are shown below:

- (43) And ēowre << . >> ǣ << . >> is āwriten þæt twēgera manna [...] (VIII, 174, 17).
(44) þæt moyses << . >> ǣ << . >> ne sȳ tōworpen (VII, 172, 23).

4.3. Punctus elevatus

The punctus elevatus is the least frequently used mark of punctuation in MS Corpus Christi College 140, as it is found in 126 instances when compared to the punctus (1,100 instances) and the punctus versus (801 instances). While it appears under certain grammatical conditions, it is

frequently used as a direction for reading aloud. Thus it may mark the point at which sense and rhythm demand the raising of the voice and a substantial pause. There is a strong likelihood that the sign can meet both grammatical and rhetorical needs (Zeeman 1956: 15). In our study, this particular mark of punctuation functions at sentence and clause level.

4.3.1. *Punctus elevatus at sentence level*

The punctus elevatus is used either to associate or to split two structurally independent sense-units. This use may be divided into a set of sub-uses:

- To mark the end of a sentence. There are 45 instances of the punctus elevatus with this use. Its function is mainly grammatical as it separates two different units of sense, but it can also be seen as rhetorical because it serves to mark off the end of the sentence, thus conveying that it has to be read with the appropriate intonation. See the following examples:

(45) [...] þā hwīle þe hit dæg is << ∴ >> niht cymþ þonne nān man wyr-
can ne mæg (IX, 177, 4).

(46) [...] forþām þe hē wæs þæs hǣlendes leorningniht << ∴ >> þis hē
dyde dearnunga for þære iudea ege (XIX, 198, 38).

- To associate coordinate clauses: this mark of punctuation is also used to mark paratactic clauses, especially those introduced by the conjunctions *and* and *ac*. There are 34 instances of the punctus elevatus with this use. The function would be grammatical, especially because no significant pause is implied therein. See some instances below:

(47) [...] hē wæs ær ðonne ic << ∴ >> and ic hyne nyste (I, 158, 30).

(48) ac hē sprycð þā þing þe hē gehyrð << ∴ >> and cȳð ēow ðā þing
þe tōwearde synt (XVI, 191, 13).

(49) and ne cwæð se hǣlend tō him ne swylt hē << ∴ >> ac ðus ic wylle
þæt hē [...] (XXI, 202, 23).

- To associate subordinate clauses: it is employed to connect the main and the subordinate clause, being the latter either adjectival, nominal or adverbial.

- Adjectival clauses. There are only three punctuated instances of this type of subordination. Considering the limited number of occurrences, it is clear that the scribe only uses them to mark a relationship. Obviously, the distinction between defining and non-defining relative clauses does not exist. The function is grammatical as it links the relativiser with its antecedent. In two cases, the *punctus elevatus* appears after its main clause and before the relative one, and in one, in the opposite position :

(50) Ic cōm on þysne middaneard tō dēmenne þæt þā sceolon gesēon << ∴ >> þe ne gesēoð (IX, 178, 39).

(51) Ðā petrus hine bewende þā geseah hē þæt se leorningcniht him fylide þe se hāelend lufode << ∴ >> se þe hlinode on gebēorscype ofer [...] (XXI, 202, 20).

In (51), the *punctus elevatus* indicates that the antecedent of *se þe* is not *hāelend*, but *se leorningcniht*.

(52) Ac sēo tīd cymð þæt ælc þe ēow ofslyhð << ∴ >> wēnþ þæt hē þēnige gode (XVI, 191, 2).

- Nominal clauses. There are three instances of the *punctus elevatus* as a linking device between the main and the nominal clause. As seen in the text, the nominal clause can be a *that*-clause and a zero *that*-clause. Here the function would be grammatical. In (53), the subordinate clause follows its main clause, the latter being at the same time an adverbial subordinate clause.

(53) Ne wundra þū forðām. þe ic sāde þē << ∴ >> ēow gebyrað þæt gē bēon ācennede ednīwan (III, 161, 7).

(54) [...] hæfst þū lifes wæter cwyst ðū << ∴ >> þæt þū sī māerra þonne ūre fæder iacob (IV, 163, 12).

- Adverbial clauses. There are 13 instances of punctuated adverbial subordination present in the text. We find clauses of time, condition, cause, purpose, and comparison. There are some instances in which the adverbial clause is fronted, thus emphasizing the meaning of the subordinate over the main clause. The leading function is grammati-

cal, as the scribe is clearly separating/linking units of sense. However, depending on the type of subordinate clause, a pause may also be implied. See the following examples:

- (55) Ðā wæs petrus sārīg << ∴ >> forþām þe hē cwæð þriddan sīðe [...] (XXI, 202, 17).
- (56) Gif hē nāere yfeldæde << ∴ >> ne sealde wē hine ðē (XVIII, 196, 30).
- (57) þā þū gingra wære << ∴ >> þū gyrdest þē and ēodest þær þū woldyst (XXI, 202, 18).

- To introduce direct speech. There are 26 instances, in all of which the main clause always precedes the reporting clause. The functions here are grammatical and rhetorical. Some examples are proposed below:

- (58) Se hælend him andswarode and cwæþ << ∴ >> mī lār nis nā mīn (VII, 172, 16).
- (59) Hē cwæð þriddan sīðe tō him << ∴ >> simon iohannis lufast ðū mē (XXI, 202, 17).

4.3.2. *Punctus elevatus at clause level*

There are just two instances of the *punctus elevatus* with this use: in (60) it indicates the coordination of phrases, while in (61) the *punctus elevatus* separates the clause constituents:

- (60) [...] hē þȳwþ þysne middaneard be synne << ∴ >> and be rihtwīsnysses [...] (XVI, 191, 8).
- (61) and ic wyrce << ∴ >> þæs þe mā (V, 166, 17).

5. *Conclusions*

Punctuation marks are helpful in order to understand a text, as they show the relationship between phrases, clauses, and sentences. There is also a need to take into consideration their study in order to fully understand the message of the text (Alonso-Almeida 2002: 209). In the case of Old English, punctuation also contributes to a better reading of it. In

our study, we have classified the uses of the different marks to find out if they follow a defined pattern, and we have established, when possible, the functions, whether grammatical or rhetorical. The main conclusion that can be drawn from our analysis is that the punctuation used in this manuscript is not haphazard at all (*pace* Jenkinson 1926: 154), as the scribe generally seems to follow a more or less consistent punctuating pattern, even though there are cases where uses overlap (e.g., direct speech is introduced by the punctus, the punctus versus, and the punctus elevatus). As for functions, the marks typically signal structural relations. Therefore, the leading function of punctuation marks in the *Gospel according to Saint John* is mostly grammatical (1,958 instances), although there are also many instances in which a rhetorical sense was found (1,429), or both functions co-occur.

As for the question of modernising, this has been treated independently with some uses. In Table 1 we show the punctuation marks in MS CCC 140, their different uses, and their possible modern counterparts.

Manuscript	Uses	Modern equivalent
; . ʹ	To mark the end of a sentence	.
; . ʹ	To associate coordinate clauses	, ; .
. ʹ	To introduce adjectival clauses	, ∅
. ʹ	To introduce nominal clauses	∅
; . ʹ	To introduce adverbial clauses	It depends on type of clause
; . ʹ	To introduce direct speech	,
; . ʹ	To signal the coordination of phrases	,
. ʹ	To separate clause constituents	∅
;	To introduce appositional phrases	,
.	To call attention to what follows	:
. ʹ	To indicate coordination of phrases	,
.	To mark off a vocative phrase	,
.	To circumscribe words	∅

Table 1. Punctuation marks in MS CCC 140, their different uses, and their possible modern counterparts.

As a matter of fact, we propose diplomatic editions to offer a clear-cut picture of the original. But, in the need to modernise, the above correspondences can be used so that the edition is more consistent. A critical apparatus should also be included showing the original punctuation of the manuscript for the sake of scholarly research. In fact, more studies of this kind are required, in order to gain a deeper insight into not only punctuation itself but also scribal practices in the Middle Ages, and a better understanding of medieval texts.

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