OLD ENGLISH PUNCTUATION REVISITED: THE CASE OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW[1]

Abstract

Punctuation has been traditionally neglected by scholars and editors of Old and Middle English texts due to the apparent ambiguity and lack of consistency of the system, to the extent that it is often silently modernized in contemporary editions. However, recent studies have shown that there exists certain regularity in the use of these punctuation marks. In the light of this, the aim of this paper is to offer an account of the use and function of such marks in the Old English version of *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (Cambridge University Library, MS Corpus Christi College 140). For this purpose, the analysis is organised into four levels: macrotextual, sentential, clausal and phrasal.

Keywords: function, modernization, Old English, punctuation, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*.

Resumen

Tradicionalmente, la puntuación ha recibido escasa atención por parte de académicos y editores de textos en inglés antiguo y medio debido a la aparente ambigüedad y falta de consistencia que muestra tal sistema, hasta el punto de que se moderniza en las ediciones contemporáneas. Sin embargo, estudios recientes han mostrado que existe una cierta regularidad en el uso de los signos de puntuación. De acuerdo con esto, el objetivo del presente artículo es ofrecer un análisis de los usos y funciones de dichos signos en la versión en inglés antiguo del *Evangelio según San Mateo* (Cambridge University Library, MS Corpus Christi College 140). Para ello, el análisis se organiza en cuatro planos: macrotextual, oracional, frasal y sintagmático.

Palabras clave: función, inglés antiguo, modernización, puntuación, *Evangelio según San Mateo*.

INTRODUCTION

Punctuation in Old and Middle English manuscripts has eluded detailed study, which could be put down to a number of attested facts, among them: a) the lack of systematization in punctuation, as practices may vary from *scriptorium* to *scriptorium*, from scribe to scribe and from text-type to text-type, so that, as Mitchell has pointed out, "each manuscript and / or text may demand individual treatment" (1980: 412), a view also shared by Heyworth when signalling the non-systematic introduction of these marks in many manuscripts (1981: 139); b) the overlapping functions of punctuation marks in

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Old and Middle English (Lucas 1971: 19); and c) the outstanding differences between the mediaeval and PDE punctuation systems (Zeeman 1956: 11).

However, this situation changed in the 1970s after the publication of two ground-breaking articles, by Lucas (1971) and Arakelian (1975), as both concluded that punctuation in these early periods was far from haphazard, even though the latter also hinted that 100% consistency should not be expected (1975: 616). More recently, other scholars have contributed to the study of Old and Middle English punctuation, evincing the existence of certain tendencies in the use of punctuation within the same hand, i.e. particular symbols are likely to feature sentential relations (e.g. nominal, adjectival and adverbial clauses). This is the case of Heyworth (1981) or Mitchell (1980), as well as Gradon (1983), Parkes (1978), Alonso-Almeida (2002), Rodríguez-Álvarez (1999), Calle-Martín (2004), Esteban-Segura (2005) and Calle-Martín and Miranda-García (2005).

Two recurrent issues in the literature on historical punctuation are invoked: its function and its modernization. As for its function, there has been a traditional opposition between the grammatical and the rhetorical ones. The first one refers to punctuation as a means to make grammatical structures explicit and, therefore, to convey the correct meaning. On the contrary, the rhetorical function implies that punctuation indicates the pauses that should be introduced when reading aloud. Lucas added a third function to this catalogue, the macro-textual one, according to which punctuation helps to clarify "the arrangement and lay-out of the text" (1971: 5).

This issue of function has been dealt with by several scholars, such as Arakelian, who attributes punctuation a grammatical function (1975: 615)[2], as opposed to Parkes (1992: 36) or Morgan (1952: 164), who opt for the rhetorical one. In general, the received view seems to veer towards the

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[2] In the 13th century, Bene of Florence argued against the possibility of punctuation being used to mark intonation or accent, although he was not against the rhetorical function of punctuation (Parkes 1992: 45).

rhetorical function, as Blake (1979: 67) or Strang (1994: 343-345) defend. Likewise, Grünberg, when analysing the West-Saxon version of the Gospels, concludes that the grammatical function should be excluded, asserting that "in considering these symbols it should be clearly borne in mind that they served to denote intonation: the Gospels were used for liturgical reading" (1967: 27)[3]. Nevertheless, this is not a clear-cut distinction, as some other scholars have highlighted. This is the case of Zeeman (1956: 18), Harlow (1959: 2) or Mitchell (1980: 393), who defend that it is a combination of both functions that we find in most texts.

Regarding modernization, the dilemma lies not only on whether punctuation should be modernized or not[4], but on how this process should be eventually carried out, given the unlikeness between the mediaeval and the PDE systems: whereas in mediaeval punctuation the rhetorical function plays an important role, in PDE punctuation is essentially syntactic (Quirk 1999: 1611; Blake 1979: 67). In this line, Mitchell offers three possibilities: "the manuscript punctuation, modern punctuation, or a compromise between the two" (1980: 388), clearly preferring the first one for scholarly audiences[5]. Contrary to his opinion, most modern editions have modernized punctuation without making explicit the criteria followed. A revealing example is Goolden's edition of the Old English *Apollonius of Tyre* (1954). As opposed to these methods, the uses of either critical apparatuses for punctuation variants (Heyworth 1981: 155) or of functional equivalents (Alonso-Almeida 2002: 227-228; Calle-Martín 2004: 421) have been recently proposed as transparent methods to modernize manuscript punctuation. In this vein, Calle-Martín suggests that "the modern equivalent, therefore, depends on the ultimate

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[3] Although the use of the rhetorical function is obvious, the grammatical one should not be excluded when analysing this text, as we argue in the conclusions.

[4] For instance, Blake opposes modernization (1979: 70).

[5] Ronberg also concluded that when editing Renaissance literary works, texts should be presented "in accordance with the original views of rhetorical syntax, suggested so powerfully by the original punctuation" (1995: 61).

function of each mark of punctuation" (2004: 421), so that the classification of uses will be useful to propose modern counterparts for mediaeval punctuation (Marqués-Aguado 2005: 333-339). These counterparts will be ultimately drawn from Quirk's description of the uses of PDE punctuation marks (1999: 1609-1639) and from Truss' account of PDE punctuation usage (2003).

In the light of this, the present study analyses the punctuation found in the West-Saxon version of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which is found in the Corpus manuscript (folios 2^r-45^v), housed in the Corpus Christi College Library (Cambridge) under the reference 140. The results obtained from the study of punctuation in context will help us to deal with the function it fulfils, as well as to offer a proposal for modernization, as suggested above.

METHODOLOGY

In order to describe the uses of punctuation marks in context, the complete set of examples must be first obtained. For this reason, we resorted to the annotated version of the Gospel, where each item of the text was provided with the vowel-length marker so as to prevent ambiguity, as in the case of minimal pairs, such as *þē* vs. *þe*. The annotations, in turn, comprised not only the lemma, but also the tag (which included information as regards class and accidence) and the translation into PDE (Marqués-Aguado 2005).

This version was taken as input for the *OEC* (*Old English Concordancer* Miranda-García *& al.* 2006), which is a software tool purposely designed to retrieve morphosyntactic information from properly annotated Old English corpora. In our case, all the instances of punctuation symbols were obtained from the application, together with a context of 5 words before and after each of them so as to determine their uses. These examples were pasted onto an Excel spreadsheet, separating the different marks to prevent confusion. Moreover, each example was split into three parts (the context before the mark, the mark itself and the five words following it) which were subsequently allocated to three cells of the same row. Finally, these examples were sorted

according to the first word after the mark so as to ease the subsequent task of classification.

INVENTORY OF PUNCTUATION MARKS

The symbols found in this version of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which was probably written in the 11th century[6], illustrate the system of *positurae* which was developed in the 8th century and was used until the 11th. With the term *positurae* we refer to the set of punctuation marks that progressively replaced the Latin system of *distinctiones*. The ultimate reason for this gradual substitution is to be associated with *positurae*'s univocal marking to distinguish a statement from a question and with their eye-catching value (Parkes 1992: 37). This system comprises four marks, which are found in the text under study with the exception of the *punctus interrogativus*:

> The *punctus versus* (;) (1,053 occurrences), which is the most common one.
>
> The *punctus elevatus* (:) (344 occurrences)[7].
>
> The *punctus* (.) (995 occurrences), which is sometimes placed slightly above the line of writing.

In addition to these three *positurae*, the use of the *section marker* (represented here by the *paraph* ⟨¶⟩) has to be noted. It may appear either in isolation, thus separating chapters, or in conjunction with the *tilde* (represented here by ⟨-⟩), which is placed in the margin of the folio to highlight the presence of the former.

USES AND FUNCTIONS OF PUNCTUATION MARKS

Once the examples of punctuation marks have been obtained, a classification of their uses becomes essential in order to fulfil our initial objectives. For

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[6] This date has been suggested by Skeat (1871: vi) and Liuzza (1994: xxvi).

[7] The use of the *punctus elevatus* might be taken as a stylistic feature in favour of the existence of two hands (or two different people inserting punctuation marks) in the text, since less than 40 examples are found from chapter 21 onwards (11.62%).

practical purposes, these will be grouped according to four levels (namely, macro-textual, sentential, clausal and phrasal). In each case, a commentary on the possible function of punctuation, as well as a proposal for modernization, will be offered. The numbers between brackets in front of the examples serve to identify them, the references of which include both the folio and the lines where they are found.

1) MACRO-TEXTUAL LEVEL

The macro-textual level is concerned with macro-textual units, i.e. chapters, paragraphs and sense-units. The prevailing marks at this level are the *punctus versus* and the *section marker*. The latter normally co-occurs with *positurae*, since it is chiefly intended as a visual marker. The main uses of punctuation at this level comprise:

A) TO SEPARATE CHAPTERS

The *punctus versus* is the commonest marker to separate chapters, as shown in (1), since 25 out of the 28 chapters of this Gospel are marked off in this way[8]. Chapter divisions are sometimes (11 instances) additionally indicated by means of the *section marker* without the *tilde*, as illustrated in example (2)[9]:

(1) Ðā gemiltsode hē him. and hyra ēagan æthrān. and hig sōna gesāwon. and fyligdon him; And þā hē genēalǣhte hierusalem. and cōm tō bethfage tō oliuetes dūne þā sende hē hys twēgen leorningcnihtas (f.29ᵛ, 20-25)

(2) tō his rīpe; ¶ And tōsomne gecīgydum (f.13ʳ, 27)

B) TO SEPARATE PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs in the Gospel must be understood as merely physical units, that is, they do not necessarily contain a complete thought, as in current usage

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[8] The end of the remaining 3 chapters is signalled by means of a *punctus elevatus* (f.21ᵛ, 8 – chapter 14), Ø (f..23ʳ, 20-21 – chapter 15) and a *punctus* (f.45ᵛ, 9-10 – chapter 28).

[9] The distribution of the *section marker* to separate chapters is an uneven one, as it appears in chapters 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 24, 26 and 27.

(Quirk 1999: 1624). Paragraphs in the text are usually indicated by the presence of the *punctus versus*, as seen in example (3). The exception is f.2^v, 12, where the *punctus* is found[10]:

> (3) and hī gegaderigað hys gecorenan. of fēower middaneardes endum of heofona hēahnyssum oð hyra gemǣru;
>
> Leornigeað bīgspell be þām fīctrēowwe þonne hys twig byþ hnesce and lēaf ācennede. gē witun þ sumor ys gehende (f.36^r, 14-20)

C) TO MARK SEMANTICALLY-INDEPENDENT SENSE-UNITS

Sense or topic changes are introduced in 6 occasions by means of the *section marker* accompanied by the *tilde*, along with either the *punctus* (1 example) or the *punctus versus* (5 instances), as observed in example (4) below:

> (4) ~ þǣr byþ wōp and tōþa grist|bitung; Witodlīce manega synt gelaþode and fēawa gecorene; ¶ Ðā ongunnon þā pharisei rǣdan þ hig woldon þone hǣlend on hys sprǣce befōn (ff.32^r, 27 - 32^v, 4)

However, the *section marker* is not compulsory, and in that case the *punctus versus* appears isolatedly (5):

> (5) Eornostlīce ealle cnēoressa fram abrahame oð dauid. synd fēowertyne cnēoressa. and fram dauide oð babilonis gelēorednysse fēowertyne cnēoressa. and fram babilonis gelēorednesse oð crīst. fēowertyne cnēoressa.
>
> Sōþlīce þus wæs crīstes cnēores; Ðā þæs hǣlendes mōdor maria wæs iosepe beweddod. ǣr hī tōsomne becōmun hēo wæs gemēt on innoðe hæbbende. of þām hālegan gāste; (f.2^v, 8-18)

Punctuation may also be used to call attention to what follows, i.e. a conclusion or explanation of the preceding fragment, which may highlight an important idea from the religious standpoint. More than half of the examples retrieved include the *punctus versus*, as in example (6). The *section marker*, along with the *punctus versus*, is also encountered on two occasions, as in (7):

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[10] In the first four chapters, all paragraphs end with a Latin inscription in a different hand. Given their probably late date of insertion, they have not been taken into consideration.

(6) Twēgen bēoþ on bedde. ān byð genumen and ōþer byð læfed; Wacigeað witodlīce forþām þe gē nyton on hwylcyre tīde ēower hlāford cuman wyle; (f.36ᵛ, 7-10)

(7) ~ ¶ ; Se þe nys mid mē hē is ongēn mē. and se þe ne gaderaþ mid mē hē tōwyrpð; (f.17ʳ, 23-25)

The analysis of punctuation at the macro-textual level indicates that the different markers help to clarify the general layout of the text in large units, thus fulfilling the macro-textual function referred to by Lucas (1971: 5).

As far as the equivalence with PDE punctuation marks is concerned, the OE *positurae* can be rendered by a full stop or by a colon when dealing with conclusions or explanations (Quirk 1999: 1621-1624).

2) Sᴇɴᴛᴇɴᴛɪᴀʟ ʟᴇᴠᴇʟ

At sentential level, independent sentences as well as the relationships established between clauses are included. In this case, the function of punctuation will be dealt with at the end of the section, unlike the proposal for modernization, which is individually suggested for each use. The main uses at this level comprise:

A) Tᴏ ᴍᴀʀᴋ ɪɴᴅᴇᴘᴇɴᴅᴇɴᴛ sᴇɴᴛᴇɴᴄᴇs

Punctuation may be used at sentential level to mark independent sentences, both simple and complex ones, as in examples (8) and (9), respectively, where the *punctus versus* accomplishes this function. Notice that in example (8) the subordinate clause precedes the main one, and between them a *punctus elevatus* has been inserted. The other two *positurae* are used sometimes: for instance, the *punctus* may appear to signal the end of interrogative sentences (10):

(8) Eornustlīce þonne ðū þīne ælmessan sylle˸ ne blāwe man bȳman beforan þē swā līceteras dōð on gesomnunegum and on wīcum þ hī sīn geārwurþode fram mannum; Sōð ic secge ēow hī onfēngon hyra mēde; **Sōþlīce** þonne þū þīne ælmessan dō˸ nyte þīn wynstre hwæt dō þīn swȳþre þ þīn ælmesse sȳ on dīglum and þīn fæder hit āgylt þē se þe gesyhþ on dīglum; (f.8ʳ, 1-7)

(9) Sōþlīce ic secge ēow būton ēower rihtwīsnyss māre sȳ þonne þǣra wrītera and sundorhālgena. ne gā gē on heofonan rīce**; Gē gehȳrdon þ gecweden wæs on ealdum tīdum;** Ne ofslēh þū⁏ se þe ofslīhð se byþ dōme scyldig; (f.6ᵛ, 15-19)

(10) þā embe þā endlyftan tīde hē ūtēode⁏ and funde ōþre standende. and þā sǣde hē**; Hwȳ stande gē hēr eallne dæg īdele. þā cwǣdon hig** forþām þe ūs nān mann ne hȳrode; (f.28ᵛ, 4-7)

In cases such as the ones described above, the stop is to be taken as the most appropriate modern counterpart (Quirk 1999: 1623). Question marks should be used for questions (Truss 2003: 141).

B) To mark juxtaposed sentences

Though syntactically independent, juxtaposed sentences retain semantic links between them. For this purpose, the three *positurae* overlap and we may encounter not only statements —see example (11)—, but also commands or questions:

(11) Ealle heora worc **hig dōð þ menn hī gesēon; Hig tōbrǣdaþ** hyra healsbæc and mǣrsiað heora rēafa fnadu; (f.33ᵛ, 12-14)

Special attention should be devoted to the connection established between the sentences constituting the genealogy of Jesus Christ, which are signalled by means of any of the three *positurae*—there are 40 instances—, as in (12). Similarly, there is an enumeration of miracles marked with *puncti elevati* (13). The beginnings of the 9 Beatitudes are highlighted with *puncti versi*, as observed in (14). In this example the *punctus elevatus* is used to mark the beginning of a subordinate clause, as we will discuss in sub-heading d):

(12) ābia gestrȳnde Asa⁏ Asa gestrȳnde iosaphath; Iosaphath gestrȳnde ioram. Ioras gestrȳnde oziam**;** (f.2ʳ, 14-16)

(13) blinde **gesēoþ⁏** healte **gāð⁏** hrēofe **synt āclǣnsude⁏** dēafe **gehȳraþ⁏** (f.15ʳ, 17-19)

(14) **ēadige** synt þā gāstlīcan þearfan⁏ forþām hyra ys heofena rīce**; Ēadige** synt þā līðan⁏ forþām þe hī eorðan āgun; (f.6ʳ, 10-12)

In any case the likeliest PDE equivalents are either the stop or the semicolon, which relates semantically-linked sentences lacking connectors (Quirk 1999: 1623). Question marks should be inserted at the end of questions.

C) TO MARK COORDINATE CLAUSES

Coordinate clauses can be signalled by means of whichever *positurae*. In (15) the copulative coordinator *and* is preceded by a *punctus versus*, whereas the clauses introduced by the correlative coordinators *ne… ne* (16) and *oþþe… oþþe* (17) are marked by either a *punctus* or a *punctus elevatus*:

> (15) manega wītegan and rihtwīse gewilnudon þā þing tō gesēonne þe gē gesēoþ and hig ne gesāwon; **and** gehȳran þā þing þe gē | gehȳrað. and hig ne gehȳrdon; (f.18ᵛ, 25 – 19ʳ, 1)

> (16) Witodlīce **ne** wīfiað hig. **ne** hig ne ceorliaþ on þām ǣryste (fol.33ʳ, 4-5)

> (17) Ne mæg nān man twām hlāfordum þēowian **oððe** hē sōðlīce ǣnne hatað and ōðerne lufaþ⁊ **oððe** hē bið ānum gehȳrsum. and ōðrum ungehyrsum; (fol.8ᵛ, 22-24)

and may introduce main (18) and subordinate (19) clauses when followed by an adverb or a subordinator, and it may also appear in anastrophes[11] (20):

> (18) Ðā herodes þ̄ gehȳrde ðā wearð hē gedrēfed and eal hierosolimwaru mid him⁊ **and þā** gegaderode herodes ealle ealdras þǣra sācerda and folces wrīteras⁊ (f.3ʳ, 12-15)

> (19) **Gyf** þīn hand oððe þīn fōt þē swīcað. āceorf hyne of and āwurp fram þē; Betere þē ys þ̄ þū gā wanhāl oþþe healt tō līfe. þonne þū hæbbe twā handa and twēgen fēt. and sȳ on ēce fȳr āsend; **And gyf** þīn ēage þē swīcað āhola hyt ūt

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[11] *Anastrophe* is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "inversion, or unusual arrangement, of the words or clauses of a sentence" and in the *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua* as "inversión en el orden de las palabras de una oración". According to its Greek etymology, *anastrophe* refers to the practice of changing the standard element order for the sake of emphasis. Here we refer exclusively to prepositional anastrophes wherein the preposition follows the object. In this case, the preposition is termed *postposition* (Fakundiny 1970: 31; Mitchell 1985: 448).

and āwurp hyt fram þē; Betere þē ys mid ānum ēage on līfe tō gānne | þonne þū sī mid twām āsend on helle fȳr; (ff.25ᵛ, 22 – 26ʳ, 1)

(20) Hē genēalǣhte þā and hig æthrān. **and him tō cwǣþ.** Ārīsað and ne ondrǣdaþ ēow (f.24ᵛ, 10-12)

From these instances we may conclude that the most suitable PDE counterparts are either the comma (Quirk 1999: 1615) or no punctuation symbol at all.

D) To mark subordinate clauses

The different types of subordinate clauses are associated with different punctuation marks. Thus, for instance, the *punctus versus* is almost exclusively used in direct speech[12], although other marks are also possible in this context, as pointed out in (20). In (21), for instance, direct speech begins after a *punctus versus*, and it finishes with the same mark:

(21) and **hē sǣde him;** Cumað æfter mē and ic dō þ gyt bēoð manna fisceras**;** And hī þǣrrihte forlēton hyra net and him fyligdon; (f.5ᵛ, 17-19)

The same pointing is observed with vocative expressions which are included within direct speech and introduced by the interjections *ēalā*, *wā* or *lā*. In this case, the *punctus versus* appears in 33 examples —as in (22)—, whereas the remaining 7 are preceded by either a *punctus elevatus* or a *punctus*. Nevertheless, there are also examples where punctuation is missing (18% of the instances), as shown in (23):

(22) **Ðā andswarode hē him;** **Ēalā** gē ungelēafulle and þwȳre cnēores hū lange bēo ic mid ēow (f.25ʳ, 5-6)

(23) þā se hǣlend hyra fācn gehȳrde **þā cwæð hē lā līcceteras hwȳ** fandige gē mīn ætgȳwað mē þæs gafoles mynyt. (f.32ᵛ, 10-12)

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[12] As for direct speech, Warner (1982: 158) places it outside the boundaries of subordination. However, Quirk includes it in the chapter on complex sentences and examines several arguments to consider it subordinate (1999: 1020-1024).

Parables are also included in speeches. Of the 10 instances found, 4 begin after the verb *cweþan* followed by a *punctus* (24), whereas the other 6 are independent sentences inserted within a longer speech, wherein a *punctus versus* appears, as in (25). Notice that in this example, a *punctus* is found after *gelīc*, although this is the only instance:

> (24) Hē rehte him þā gȳt ōþer bīgspel þus **cweþende. heofena rīce is geworden gelīc** senepes corne (f.19ᵛ, 3-5)

> (25) þā hē funde þ ān dēorwyrðe meregrot þā ēode hē and sealde eall þ hē āhte and bohte þ **meregrot; Eft is heofena rīce gelīc.** āsendum nette on þā sǣ and of ǣlcum fisccynne gadrigendum (f.20ʳ, 11-13)

In turn, most relative clauses introduced by invariable *þe* or by the demonstrative *se, sēo, þæt* lack punctuation (26), and only some examples are preceded by the *punctus* (27). In (28) the end of the relative clause is marked with a *punctus*, maybe in an attempt to prevent confusion, owing to the repetition of the verb *gǣþ*. Likewise, punctuation is also absent between headless clauses (introduced by *se þe* and usually placed in front of the main clause) and main ones, although, again, the *punctus* may appear. Both possibilities are illustrated in (29):

> (26) Sōðlīce þā hyt ǣfen wæs cōm **sum welī mann of arimathia þæs nama wæs** iosep. se sylfa wæs þæs hǣlyndes leorningcniht: (f.44ʳ, 14-16)

> (27) Sōþlīce se þe beswīcð **ǣnne of ðyssum lȳtlingum. þe** on mē gelȳfað. betere him ys þ ān cwyrnstān sī tō hys swȳran gecnytt. and sī besenced on sǣs grund; (f.25ᵛ, 16-19)

> (28) ne ongyte gē þ eall þ on þonne mūþ **gǣþ. gǣð** on þā wāmbe and byþ on forþgang āsend (f.22ʳ, 19-20)

> (29) Sōþlīce **se þe sēgð hys brēðer þū āwordena. hē byð** geþeahte scyldig; **Se þe sēgð þū stunta se byþ** scyldig helle fȳres; (f.6ᵛ, 20-22)

Regarding adverbial clauses, the *punctus* is by far the most widely used mark (30), as it more than triples the instances of the *punctus elevatus* (31), as well as (8) above. No punctuation is also possible, as in (6):

> (30) **Geblissa** þū gōda þēowa and getrȳwa. **forþām ðe** þū wǣre getrȳwe. ofer fēawa (f.37ᵛ, 14-15)

(31) **Gyf** þū wylt bēon fullfremed: **gā** and becȳp eall þ̄ þū āhst and syle hyt
þearfum and þonne hæfst þū goldhord on heofone. (f.27ᵛ, 22-24)

In most cases, the PDE equivalent is the comma —especially where the
subordinate precedes the main clause—, or Ø. Inverted commas (Quirk 1999:
1630-1631) are also required for direct speech.

As for the specific function of punctuation at this level, we can find cases
in which the grammatical function prevails, as in uses a), b) and c), and others
where the rhetorical function plays an important role, as in anastrophes or the
Beatitudes. Nevertheless, in subordination both functions meet.

3) CLAUSAL LEVEL

At this level, punctuation is employed to signal the relations established
within the clause domain, where the *punctus* clearly prevails over the *punctus
elevatus*. In this case, the PDE counterpart will be offered at the end of this
section, together with the discussion about the function of punctuation. The
main uses listed here are the following:

A) TO DISTINGUISH THE VOCATIVE EXPRESSION FROM THE REST OF THE CLAUSE

Vocative expressions are distinguished from the rest of the clause by means of
puncti elevati and, mostly, by *puncti* (32), although 6 of the 22 examples found
lack punctuation, as in (22) and (23) above, and (33) here:

(32) and þonne hē gewordyn byð gē gedōð hyne helle bearn. twȳfealdlīcor þonne
ēow; **Wā ēow blindan lāttēowas. gē** secgeað swānmn hwylc swā swereþ on
temple þ̄ hē ys nāht (f.34ʳ, 5-8)

(33) Wā ēow bōcyras and pharisei līccetteras forþām. gē befarað sǣ and eorþan
(f.34ʳ, 2-4)

In (33), *forþām* should be taken as an adverb of result and not as a
conjunction of cause, because, if the latter (either *forþām* or *forþām þe*),
punctuation comes first most of the times, as commented in relation to
subordinate clauses.

B) To mark elements belonging to the same clause

The *punctus* (and, occasionally, the *punctus elevatus*) fulfils this function in the following contexts:

1. To separate different elements. For instance, in (34) and (35) it separates the VP from the NP.

(34) Sōþlīce þā se hǣlend inēode on capharnaum. þā genēalǣhte **hym. ān hundredes ealdor**. hyne biddende and þus cweðende (f.10ᵛ, 14-17)

(35) **þ̄ wǣre gefylled. þæs wītegan cwyde** ic ātȳne mīnne mūþ mid bīgspellum (f.19ᵛ, 14-15)

(36) nū þīn cyning þē cymð **tō: gedæfte.** and rīt uppan tamre assene and hyre folan. (f.30ʳ, 6-7)

The last example included under this sub-heading, (36), is an instance of anastrophe (type C according to Mitchell 1985: 447) which has passed unnoticed to Bosworth, who even rearranges the word-order, rewriting it as *Ðín cyning cymþ to ðé* (1991: 383). We assume that punctuation here averts the reading *þe cymð to gedæfte* where *þe* is a relative particle rather than a 2nd person pronoun. Actually, it clearly indicates that preposition *tō* does not govern adjective *gedæfte*, thus highlighting the preposition stranding, as well as the rhetorical and grammatical values.

2. To distinguish a long element from the subsequent one. A clear example is (37), where the *punctus* marks the NP:

(37) Eornostlīce **ealle cnēoressa fram abrahame oð dauid. synd** fēowertyne cnēoressa (f.2ᵛ, 8-9)

3.- To relate the two particles in correlative constructions such as *fram... oþ / tō, þe... þe, and... and, ne... ne, ān... ōþer*, and *ān... ān*

In spite of not being fully systematic throughout the Gospel, these constructions are rendered by means of *puncti* (38), excepting *ān... ān*, which entails the use of the *punctus elevatus* followed by *and* (39):

(38) þ ofer ēow cume ǣlc rihtwīs blōd þe wæs āgoten ofer eorþan. **fram** abelys blōde þæs rihtwīsan. **oð** zacharias blōd barachias suna (f.34ᵛ, 21-24)

(39) sēge þ þās mīne twēgen suna sittan **ān** on þīne swīþran healfeː **and ān** on þīne wynstran on þīnum rīce; (f.29ʳ, 10-12)

All in all, the function of punctuation at clausal level is the grammatical one, excepting vocative structures, where punctuation also signals the end of their rising tone, and could therefore be also interpreted as a rhetorical marker. As for the PDE counterparts, Ø is the most common one, though commas may be encountered with vocatives and when marking long elements (Quirk 1999: 1627-1628).

4) Phrasal level

At this level, the scope of punctuation marks comprises the different elements of a given phrase. The inventory used at this level comprises both the *punctus elevatus* and the *punctus*. Once again, both the proposal for modernization and the function will be discussed at the end of this section. The most important uses are the following ones:

A) To relate the elements belonging to a noun phrase

Punctuation is used to mark the relations established within one NP. For instance, the *punctus elevatus* is used twice in order to highlight the connection either between a determiner and the head (40), or between a noun and its noun complement. As for the *punctus*, it enhances the connection between the noun and either a genitive or, mostly, an apposition (41):

(40) and þonne sōna finde gyt **āneː assene** getīggede and hyre folan mid | hyreː (ff.29ᵛ, 26 – 30ʳ, 1)

(41) and hī nemnað **his naman. emanuhel** (f.3ʳ, 1)

B) To enumerate phrases

There is a clear example of enumeration, which is a list of evil actions (hence, all of them NP's), joined by means of *puncti elevati* and, especially *puncti*, as shown in (42):

> (42) Of þǣre heortan cumaþ **yfle geþancas: mannslyhtas. unrihthǣmedu. forligru. stale. lēase gewitnyssa. tāllīce word** þis synt þā ðing þe þone mann besmītað; Ne besmīt þone mann þēah hē unþwogenum handum ete. (f.22ʳ, 22-26)

C) To mark coordinate phrases

Under this heading we include phrases coordinated by inserting both punctuation and a coordinator. These coordinators are copulative for the most part, although adversative and disjunctive ones are also present. We may refer to, for instance, the full list of the twelve apostles, whose names are connected by inserting *puncti* and the coordinator *and* (43), where enumeration is also present. Although the *punctus* clearly prevails, the *punctus elevatus* may also be found, as in (44). This tendency clearly contrasts the results rendered for copulative clauses, where any of the three *positurae* may appear:

> (43) Ðis synt sōðlīce þǣra twelf apostola naman; Se forma is simon þe ys genemned pētrus. And Andreas hys brōðor**. Iacobus** zebedei. and Iohannes hys brōður**. Philippus**. and Bartholomeus**. Thomas**. and Matheus. Puplicanus and Iacobus alphei and Taddeus**. Simon** chananeus. and Iudas scarioth þe hyne belǣwde; (f.13ᵛ, 3-9)

> (44) Ðū sōðlīce þonne ðū fæste smyra þīn hēafod. and þwēah þīne ansȳne þ þū ne sȳ gesewen **fram mannum fæstende: Ac þīnum fæder** þe ys on dīglum: and þīn fæder þe gesyhð on dȳglum hit āgylt þē; (f.8ᵛ, 17-18)

D) To mark off the word *Æ*

Given its shortness, the word *ǣ* is graphically separated from the immediate text to prevent confusion in 3 out of 10 occurrences. It is enclosed by *puncti*, which are a visual device employed to separate them from the surrounding

context (45), although Grünberg also suggested that these instances "possibly mark a more solemn intonation" (1967: 27-28):

(45) ne gewīt fram þǣre. ꝥ. ǣrþām ealle þing gewurðan (f.6ᵛ, 9-10)

With the exception of d), whose function has already been described, it is the grammatical function that prevails at this level, excepting enumerations, which may also belong to the field of rhetoric. According to this description, only enumerations imply the insertion of commas (Quirk 1999: 1619).

CONCLUSIONS

In the previous section, the uses of punctuation marks in the Gospel according to St. Matthew have been classified into four levels and discussed accordingly, specifying the role of each mark. Taking into consideration the information offered here, some conclusions may be drawn from the study of the punctuation system:

FIRST. Particular and consistent uses have been identified, thus revealing that the use of mediaeval punctuation is far from haphazard. In this vein, punctuation symbols can be allocated to particular levels: the *section marker* is an exclusively macro-textual indicator and the *punctus versus* is virtually restricted to the macro-textual and sentential levels, whereas the *punctus elevatus* and the *punctus* frequently overlap, although the latter is more common, especially at clausal level. Therefore, symbols might be ranked according to the level where they are found.

SECOND. Notwithstanding this classification of symbols and their clear consistency at macro-textual level, for instance, overlapping is still to be noted at some points, as in the above-mentioned genealogy of Jesus Christ or the examples of juxtaposition and coordination. This phenomenon reveals that consistency relates to the function and uses of punctuation symbols, and not necessarily to a particular mark, as Rodríguez-Álvarez has noted in relation to

15th-century legal documents (1999: 29). Nonetheless, the uses and functions outlined here for the different marks are not fully consistent in all the contexts identified, as Arakelian suggested (1975: 616).

THIRD. In view of this analysis, the prevailing function of punctuation in the Gospel should be determined. On the one hand, the high number of vocative structures, instances of direct speech, etc., feature a text to be orally transmitted, and would thus indicate a prevalence of the rhetorical function. So does the use of discourse markers or the punctuation inserted in central religious tenets such the Beatitudes. On the other hand, punctuation in juxtaposition is eminently grammatical, as well as that found at phrasal level. However, the general tendency for punctuation is to mark both syntactic relations and pauses. This is the case of subordination, as discussed above. This mixture of functions suits to the main aim of the Gospel: this is a religious text aimed at Christening people, whose main access to culture was via oral transmission (rhetorical function), so that the message had to be properly organised in order to convey the orthodox doctrine of the Church (grammatical function).

FOURTH. As regards modernization, functional equivalents have been sought. There is not a one-to-one relationship between an 11th-century punctuation symbol and a PDE equivalent, owing to the limited repertory of punctuation marks, which gives way to overlapping.

Table 1, divided into the four levels dealt with here, summarizes the proposal for modernization. The punctuation marks for each use have been ranked according to their frequency.

Table 1. Proposal for modernization

PUNCTUATION MARKS	USES AND FUNCTIONS	PDE COUNTERPART
; / ¶	To separate chapters	.
; / .	To separate paragraphs	.
¶ / ; /.	To mark semantically-independent sense-units	. / :
; / : / .	To mark independent sentences	. / ?
; / : / .	To mark juxtaposed sentences	. / ;
; / : / .	To mark coordinate clauses	, / Ø
; / : / .	To mark subordinate clauses	, / ""/ Ø
. / :	To distinguish the vocative expression from the rest of the clause	,
. / :	To mark elements belonging to the same clause	, / Ø
. / :	To relate the two particles in correlative constructions	Ø
: / .	To relate the elements belonging to an NP	Ø
: / .	To enumerate phrases	,
. / :	To mark coordinate phrases	Ø / ,
.	To mark off the word *ǽ*	Ø

In the light of this analysis, as well as of those carried out by other scholars, more texts belonging to the Old and Middle English periods should be revised, bearing in mind that modernization, though complex, is possible, and that punctuation is not haphazardly used, but follows a relatively systematic set of principles.

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