IS PUNCTUATION COMPARABLE?
THE CASE OF LONDON, WESTMINSTER SCHOOL MS 3 AND

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Abstract

The aim of the present article is to discuss the scribal punctuation practice in one of Richard Rolle's epistles, *Ego Dormio*, found in two manuscripts that are genetically related: London, Westminster School MS 3 and Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève MS 3390. The analysis of samples seeks both to reveal regular patterns of use concerning punctuation symbols in each text and to test the extent to which there is a correlation between one scribe's use of punctuation marks when compared to the use employed by the other scribe. Although there is a quantitative exploration of the data, the method of analysis also considers contextual information in the description of each punctuation symbol to identify their functions. In addition, earlier works on medieval punctuation in the identification and categorization of symbols along with their already attested functions (following mainly Lucas 1971; Parkes 1992 and Zeeman 1956) have been employed. The results of the study will be compared with these functions in order to contextualize each scribal use of punctuation symbols within the tradition of Middle English manuscripts.

Keywords: Medieval punctuation symbols, Richard Rolle, *Ego Dormio*, London Westminster School MS 3, Paris Sainte Geneviève MS 3390, Middle English manuscripts, parallel texts.

Resumen

El objetivo del presente trabajo es analizar las prácticas de los escribas en materia de puntuación en dos manuscritos que contienen una de las epístolas de Richard Rolle, *Ego Dormio*: Londres, Westminster School Ms 3 y París, Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève Ms 3390. El análisis de los ejemplos persigue revelar patrones regulares de uso en cada texto y comprobar hasta qué punto existe una correlación entre los signos de puntuación empleados por un escriba al compararlos con los usos del otro escriba. Aunque hay un estudio cuantitativo de los datos, el método de análisis tiene en cuenta la información que se encuentra en el contexto de aparición a la hora de describir la función de cada símbolo. Además, se han utilizado trabajos anteriores sobre la identificación y categorización de los símbolos, así como sus funciones, en la puntuación medieval (principalmente Lucas 1971; Parkes 1992 y Zeeman 1956). Los resultados del estudio se comparan con estas funciones para contextualizar, dentro de la tradición textual del inglés medio, el uso que cada escriba hace de los signos de puntuación.

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Palabras clave: signos de puntuación medievales, Richard Rolle, *Ego Dormio*, Londres, Westminster School Ms 3, París, Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève Ms 3390, manuscritos en inglés medio, textos paralelos.

1. INTRODUCTION

Much has been written on variance in the transmission of medieval texts, but little has been published concerning punctuation variants in different copies of the same text. In fact Ahvensalmi (2013) discusses thirteen manuscripts where the well-known medieval treatise *Trotula* can be found, but the examination of the copies is carried out one by one. At some point, she shows the function that each symbol covers in its manuscript, but she fails to provide a systematic correspondence with the symbol used in the other texts in the same spot; only some contrasting examples in different manuscripts are offered. In the case of Rolle's writings, Smedick (1979) is one of the few studies on the topic. The reasons that may account for scholars' reluctance to contrast differences in the use of punctuation symbols can be attributed to the widely acknowledged fact that each scribe makes use of a specific repertoire. This leads Gradon to remark that punctuation is "a matter of contention, speculation or even despair" (1983: 39). Nonetheless, some other scholars claim that it can be systematised by analysing the inventory of symbols and their uses and functions (see Lucas 1971; Arakelian 1975; Ahvensalmi 2013; Alonso-Almeida and Ortega-Barrera 2014, among others). Thus, this article provides a comparative analysis of the usage of punctuation marks in two manuscripts containing the same text, Rolle's *Ego Dormio*, to find a pattern in the practice of medieval punctuation marks.

Among the extant versions of *Ego Dormio*, which are housed in various libraries in Britain and abroad, several genetically related groups have been established, inasmuch as the texts in London, Westminster School MS 3 (henceforth W) and Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève MS 3390 (henceforth G), share some features that point to an undeniable relationship between these two manuscripts beyond the relations established with other manuscripts also associated with them: namely, Simeon and Vernon, and manuscript Rawlinson A 389, which contains two versions of the same text (see Allen 1927: 249; Cumming 1927: 863; Doyle 1974: 334 and Hanna 1988: 200).

Hanna (1988: 200) suggests that the erroneous readings of Rawlinson, Simeon, Vernon, and Sainte Geneviève (henceforth RSVG) are extremely frequent and cannot be considered a mere coincidence. The Simeon and Vernon manuscripts were derived from a common exemplar; both sharing a number of unique readings with Rawlinson. In addition, the relationship between Westminster School MS 3 and Sainte Geneviève MS 3390 is closer than that of

other manuscripts. According to Hanna, Sainte Geneviève may resemble the Westminster School copy because it "provides readings of a better version of the archetype than that available to RSV" (1988: 200) or because the Sainte Geneviève scribe may have had access to two different exemplars. One archetype may have provided the readings shared with RSV, and the second one, being a better copy, avoided some errors and provided some readings shared with Westminster. The scribes of W and G have not been identified, but Hanna (2010) locates the language of *Ego Dormio* in the Westminster School MS 3 manuscript in Lincolnshire and in the Sainte Geneviève MS 3390 manuscript in North Warwickshire.

The manuscripts under consideration, Westminster School MS 3 and Sainte Geneviève MS 3390, have some common physical features. Both are octavo volumes that were copied in the first half of the fifteenth century. Although there is no overlap in the previous material, the last two pieces of each manuscript are by Richard Rolle. They are *The Form of Living* and *Ego Dormio*, which appear in succession without a title or heading indicating where the former ends and *Ego Dormio* begins. The same arrangement of *The Form of Living* and *Ego Dormio* can be found in the other manuscripts mentioned above; namely, Simeon, Vernon, and one of the Rawlinson versions.

This article seeks to contribute to the analysis of the individual practices of the scribes responsible for *Ego Dormio* in the manuscripts Westminster School MS 3 and Sainte Geneviève MS 3390 by looking deeper at their use of punctuation. In order to do so, the methodology will be explained; then, the inventory of punctuation marks will be analysed; and, finally, the most relevant uses will be discussed, establishing a correlation between the repertoire of each scribe. The last section offers some possible conclusions drawn from the present study.

2. METHODOLOGY

Out of the thirteen extant copies of *Ego Dormio*, only a few have been used as base texts for edition. Hortsmann's edition (1895-96) used Cambridge Dd.v.64 and Rawlinson A 389, although Arundel is also presented, as well as one page from Vernon to supply the missing folio in one of Rawlinson copies; Allen (1931) also made use of manuscript Cambridge Dd.v.64. Ogilvie-Thomson (1988) concentrated on Longleat 29 for her edition, while the Vernon manuscript was the object of study and edition by Scase (2012). All the others remain unedited, including Westminster Schoool MS 3 and Sainte Geneviève MS 3390.

Thus, the texts were first transcribed from electronic copies provided by the Library of the Westminster School in London and the Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève in Paris. Afterwards, the manuscripts were consulted *in situ*, because some of the details could not be easily perceived in the electronic copies. Once the transcription of the texts was finished, the punctuation symbols were retrieved automatically using the ConcGram programme (Greaves 2009) and each scribal practice explored individually. Finally, they were observed manually by collating both texts in an attempt to find a pattern of similarities and differences or significant correlations between the uses of the punctuation marks.

For editorial and word-processing reasons, some adaptations were made. Thus, the Tyronian note is presented as the ampersand (&) in the transcription. The *punctus* is above the writing line in G and is displayed as (•), while in W resembles modern point or full stop (.). Likewise, the *punctus elevatus* appears as a semicolon (;); what I have interpreted as a *punctus* plus a virgule, which is distinctive in G, is displayed as (.,), while the traditional *punctus* plus virgule in W appears as (./). Additionally, the paragraph mark is depicted as (**¶**) and abbreviations have been expanded and signalled with italics. Finally, deletions in the texts have also been preserved and marked with ~~strikethrough~~, and omissions are embedded within square brackets [ ].

The analysis of punctuation symbols draws on previous studies by Lucas (1971), Parkes (1992) and Zeeman (1956). The functions of each punctuation mark were explored in the manuscripts under scrutiny and compared with the information provided by these scholars to check whether scribes in W and G were following the usual pattern of the period regarding punctuation.

3. THE SYSTEM OF PUNCTUATION

Although some other divergences are found in the transmission process, the biggest differences between both manuscripts are found in the punctuation system, as the repertoire of symbols used in each manuscript is not alike. Every scribe uses his own inventory. Nonetheless, some other scholars have already contended that the key to interpret the punctuation system is to take into account "that the function and value of each symbol must be assessed in relation to other symbols in the same immediate context, rather than in relation to a supposed absolute value and function for that symbol when perceived in isolation" (Parkes 1997: 47).

3.1 Description of the symbols

Following Parkes's terminology (1992: 42), these are the punctuation symbols exhibited in the two manuscripts of *Ego Dormio* compared in this paper:

a) The *punctus* is always raised, not directly above the line of writing; this is more evident in the case of G.

b) The *punctus elevatus* consists of a dot and tick-shaped stroke above it.

c) The paragraph mark shows two variants in G while just one in W. The most frequent one is represented as a majuscule letter <c>; this is the one present in W. While in W it always appears in red, in G it can be red or blue-hued. The one in blue can display a different form, similar to a capital <p> with the lobe at the left of the shank, which is only found in G, but no functional distinction can be perceived. The *paraph* is very likely to have been inserted after the writing of the text. In order to ease the limner's task, the place where the *paraph* must be introduced is usually marked with double virgules.

d) As to the *punctus* plus virgule, the two forms that are found in the manuscripts have been distinguished. In W it takes the usual form of *punctus* plus virgule. However, in G it is made up of a dot above and a hook descending to the right of the dot towards the line of writing. It could graphically be described as a kind of number 9. Smedick considers this symbol a variant form of the *punctus versus* and states that it "seems to be used semi-systematically in some manuscripts, to distinguish *punctus versus* from *punctus circumflexus*. See, e.g., MS G, there it is also in series by itself or with the 'wavy hyphen,' to mark a major division in the text" (1979: 466). Nonetheless, Clemens and Graham (2007: 85) assure us that the *punctus versus* largely disappeared from use in the late eleventh/early twelfth century, when its function was taken over by the simple *punctus*. In addition, I have argued (2014: 149) that it could be confused with a *pes positura*, but its frequency and function points to its consideration as a *punctus* plus a virgule.

e) Double virgules are used in both manuscripts as a guide for the insertion of a *paraph* mark. When having this function, they have not been marked in the transcription as they are not always clearly visible under the *paraph* mark. Finally, on one occasion, the double virgule has not been hidden by the *paraph* mark, as it must have been overseen by the Sainte Geneviève's limner (fol. 107r, 20). Sporadically, they are also employed for decoration purposes and are depicted as part of the chain string at the end of a line emulating a chain interwoven with bows or curved lines and double slanting marks rubricated in red. Unlike G, W shows virgules regularly to indicate a major final pause.

f) The single virgule is just found in W. No single instance of one virgule alone is found in G.

g) Colon is only found in W as well.

There are, however, some other symbols that are considered supra-textual devices by Ahvensalmi (2013) and contribute to the general layout of the manuscripts, but have been disregarded, as they do not add information on the punctuation system. For instance, a mark that resembles a double hyphen is used to link words divided across the end of one line and the beginning of the next in G. It is often written beyond the writing frame. Nevertheless, its use is not consistent, as it is not included in every instance of words that have been divided. Sporadically, the double marks are inserted at line ends to justify the right margin of prose. On other occasions, there is no sign to mark the division of words, or even when the syllable ends in <i>, that vowel has occasionally a tilde above it. The tilde is also used in some cases where the sequence of minims could be misinterpreted, as in the preposition *in*.

Finally, a note on the use of capital letters and carets is worth mentioning. Capital letters nearly always begin a new sentence and occur after the *paraph* mark, although every *paraph* symbol is not followed by a capital. Additionally, on other occasions, they are employed to highlight some relevant concepts, such as the seven deadly sins or the hierarchies of angels in G. In the case of the latter, when the hierarchies are introduced for the first time, capitals are used, while afterwards, small letters are employed. Contrary to this practice, the scribe in W does not usually capitalise the nouns in this same passage. Both scribes coincide in the treatment of the name of *Jesus*, which is usually found abbreviated and in small letters; whereas *Christ* can be found in both small and capital letters in G, while in W it is never capitalised. Likewise, God's name always appears in small letters as does *lord* when it refers to Jesus Christ.

The carets, which occur as two oblique strokes in G, are deployed on few occasions to show scribal omissions: for instance, in G *þou* in "but þat þo þat þou seyst for þe tyme" (fol. 101v, 10), where the carets are placed below and above the line, and the word to be inserted appears in the left margin. In W there are also several insertions, as on fol. 227r and 230r. Here the carets signal the need to place the words written in the right margin where they specify.

3.2 Analysis and discussion of punctuation marks

The differences in the use of symbols can be seen in Table 1. The idea behind the numbers is not to merely perform a count but rather to check what correlations can be established in the use of symbols across manuscripts. As Rissanen has observed regarding corpus linguistics, "research begins where counting ends" (2008: 67). The numbers are presented in an attempt to find a pattern of commonalities in the symbols deployed by each scribe. The important

issue is not whether a specific mark totals the same or a different figure, but whether every time it is used by the W scribe it has a corresponding use in the work of the G scribe, or vice versa. Thus, counts serve as an instrument through which linguistic intuitions can be tested against real data, not as the objective of the research itself.

Symbol	*Westminster 3*	*Ste. Geneviève*
punctus	472	289
 *punctus elevatus* (;)	25	139
paraph (¶)	19	60
 *punctus* plus virgule (.,)	0	61
punctus plus virgule (./)	37	0
double virgule (//)	24	1
virgule (/)	42	0
colon (:)	47	0

Table 1. Inventory of punctuation symbols

By looking at the table, it is clear that some of the punctuation marks available in late Middle English do not appear in any of the two manuscripts. Moreover, W shows a wider range of symbols than G and is more punctuated than G. This leads to the following question: How can the differences in punctuation be explained both in terms of frequency and use of the symbols?

This question can be answered if punctuation is understood in Parkes's terms (1997: 47) as "a form of hermeneutics." According to him, the primary function of punctuation is interpretative, which means scribes use punctuation to mark their own way of interpreting the text. Furthermore, Parkes (1997: 58) states that

> [m]edieval scribes and correctors acted as primary interpreters of a text for medieval readers, just as the editor of a text does for a modern reader. A scribe or corrector brought his own experience to the interpretation of a text, and encouraged readers to bring a corresponding range from their own experience to the comprehension of that text.

It follows from here that the use of symbols is going to differ from one scribe to the other, as punctuation is understood as a matter of interpretation. The scribe may have read the text in a specific way and is prompting his readers to interpret it in a similar fashion.

3.2.1 The punctus *and the* punctus elevatus

The *punctus* fulfills a wide variety of purposes, as it "may separate phrases from phrases, clause from clause, main statements from qualifying clause, or it may end a sentence," as supported by Zeeman (1956: 14). I have revealed (2014) that the *punctus* serves manifold purposes including signalling sentential, clausal, and phrasal relationships in the case of *Ego Dormio*. It often introduces new asyndetic sentences or coordinate clauses, but also marks the beginning of subordinate clauses. Many of these uses are observed in both manuscripts.

On comparing the use of symbols in each manuscript, one finds that on occasion the functions marked by the same symbol in each manuscript do coincide. Thus, we find that the *punctus* is deployed to separate noun clauses within a sentence in "þi desyre. all*e* þi delytte. al þi ioye; al þi solace." as in (1)

> (1) þa*n*ne ih*es*u crist. schal be all*e* þi desyre. all*e* þi delytte. al þi ioye; al þi solace. all*e* þi comforth so þat on hym will*e* eu*er* mor be þi songe. & in hy*m* all*e* þi rest. þa*n*ne may þow say. (W)
>
> ¶ þan ih*es*u schal be al þi desyr• al þi deliȝt• al þi ioye• al þi ioye• al þi solace• al þi confort• so þat in hym wole be euere more þi song & in hym al þi reste., þanne miȝt þou synge• (G)

All in all, it is also apparent that other uses of the *punctus* do not coincide in both texts. For example, the *punctus* is found after the name of *Jesus Christ* and the word *song* in W, but is missing in G. Contrarily, the *punctus* preceding the subordinate manner clause beginning with *so that* in G is not present in W. The same absence is observed in (2) and (3), where W uses *punctus* after *loue* and *wryten* in (2) and after *syttynge*, *stondynge* and *goynge* in (3), but no symbol is attested in G, with the exception of final sentential *punctus* after *writing* in (2).

> (2) In þe song of loue. i fynd wryten. þ*a*t I set at þe bygynnynge of my wrytynge. (W)
>
> In þe song of loue I finde writen þat I sette at my bigynning of my writing• (G)

(3) but ay syttynge. stondynge. goynge. or any oþer deed doynge. (W)
But eiþer sittande standande goande or any oþer dede doande; (G)

Other coincidental uses have to do with the introduction of coordinate clauses mostly by means of the conjunctions *and* (after *flesch* in example 4) or *but* (after *synne* in example 5) preceded by the *punctus*:

(4) Perfyt lyif and gostely [i]s for to dispysse þe world w*ith* hys desyres & for to cowayte þe ioys of heue*n* and distroye. thorow goddis g*ra*ce all*e* wykednes & lustes of flesch. & for get þe solace & þe lykynge of þi kynred. (W)
Parfiȝt lyf and gostli is for to despise þe world wiþ his desires & to coueite þe ioye of heuene & destroye þorow godes grace al wikkednesse and lust of flesch• and to forȝete þe solace & þe likyng of al þi kynrede• (G)

(5) owr lord ȝyueþ noȝt to me*n* and wome*n*. fayrhed. ryches & delytes. for to sette her herte hooly on hem & spend hem on sy*n*ne. but for þai schuld know hy*m*. and luf hym (W)
¶ Oure lord ȝiueþ not to me*n* & wymen fairhede ryches and delites• for to sette hor hertes holliche on hem & dispende hem in synne• but for þei shold know hym and loue hym (G)

It is also documented preceding subordinate clauses, either relative clauses or adverbial clauses of diverse kinds in both manuscripts whether adjectival clauses (6), adverbial clauses of condition (7) or adverbial concessive clauses (8).

(6) þe fewere folwars it has her*e* /ffor many þinges drawiþ me*n* fro goddis loue. þ*a*t þow may heere & see þ*a*t co*m*forten goddes luffars mor þan þai wene. (W)
þe fewer foloweres hit haþ here• for many þinges drawen men fro godes loue• þ*a*t þou mayst here and see• þat conforteþ godes loueres more þan þei wene; (G)

(7) als þow mai wel witte. if þow loue al þinge þat þe liste flesly.lytel is þi luff. þat þ*o*u haste or felyst in ih*es*u crist// (W)

> As þou maist wel wete• ȝif þou loue al þing þat þe luste to loue fleschli; litel is þi loue þat þou hast or felest in ih*es*ucrist• (G)

> (8) & looc how clene þ*o*u [mity] make þi saule i*n* vertus & hatte all*e* vice. so þ*a*t þi lyif be gostely. (W)
>
> & loke how clene þou mayst make þi sowle in vertues and hate vices• so þat þi lyf be gostly (G)

From this moment onward the reader is to assume that each scribe not only has his own inventory of symbols, but that he also uses them in an idiosyncratic way. Each scribe decides on the frequency as well; in fact, the use of *punctus* in W (472 in total) surpasses the uses in G (289 instances).

Regarding the *punctus elevatus*, this appears more frequently in G (139 instances) than in W, where fewer instances are found (25 cases). Consequently, one may deduce that some instances of *punctus elevatus* will appear as *punctus* in W, which is the case on some occasions, as shown in the following instance:

> (9) þow þat lyst loue. helde þi eeren & heer of loue. (W)
>
> þou þat listest for to loue; holde heder þin eres & here of loue; (G)

However, this is not always the case. Thus, out of the twenty-five instances of *punctus elevatus* in W, the following correspondences are found in G: (a) thirteen times it corresponds to *punctus elevatus* in G; (b) eleven times it corresponds to *punctus*; and (c) it corresponds once to *punctus* plus virgule.

Variation in the use of punctuation marks is due to the fact that each scribe had his own repertoire of symbols and used them in a distinctive way. Nevertheless, Smedick notes (1979: 411) that "despite variation among the manuscripts both in the placement of points and in their form, there is observable an underlying consistency." Therefore, the *punctus*, for instance, may have manifold purposes, including signalling sentential, clausal, and phrasal relationships, and, though the places where it is used do not always coincide in both manuscripts, the scribes can still be considered to make a consistent use of it. Likewise, the *punctus elevatus* shows different frequency and use in each text, some of which are coincidental in both versions.

3.2.2 The paraph

The *paraph* mark is found sixty times in G and only nineteen in W. One would reasonably expect the nineteen instances in W to coincide with those in G. However, apart from the use of the *paraph* to indicate that a particular segment is to be read with the previous line, which occurs once in W, there are seven other instances where the *paraph* mark can be found in W, but it is absent in G. So the coincidence in the use of the symbol is limited to eleven times. Here are the seven cases where *paraph* is found in W but not in G.

> (10) ¶ And whe*n* a wrechid man or woma*n* ben departid fro god. þorow dedly synne; we sayn þat he is ded. for he is slayne fro god. w*i*toute*n* whom no creat*ur* may lyf (W)
>
> And whan wrecched man or wo*m*man ben departed from god þorow dedly synne; we seyn þat he is ded• for he is slayn fro god; wiþoute whom no creature may lyue., (G)

> (11) ¶ as a man poysend i*n* a sweet morsel takys venom. þat sleth þe body; so dos a synful wreche in lykynge & lust. distroys his soule. & brynges it to þe deeþ wyth outen ende (W)
>
> As a man poysonde in a swete morsel takeþ venym þat sleep þe body; so doþ a synful wrecche in likyng and lust destroyeþ his soule & bryngeþ hit to deþ wiþ outen ende., (G)

> (12) ¶ And whe*n* þo*u* art be þi noon. ȝyue þe moch. to say þe salmes of þe sauter./and pat*er* noster & aue maria./ ofte tymes; (W)
>
> & whanne þou art bi þiself; ȝiue þe miche to seye þe psalmes of þe psauter & þe P*at*er n*oste*r & Aue maria ofte tymes• (G)

> (13) ¶ ffor no þinge so moch plesys god. as v*er*rey þouȝt of his name ih*es*u. (W)
>
> for no þing payeþ so miche ih*es*u god; as uerrey loue of his name ih*es*u• (G)

> (14) ¶ In þi luf þow wynne my þouȝt. & lyst myne herte to þe. þe soule þat þ*o*u has bouth. be for þee. mak it to bee./ (W)
>
> In loue þou wynde my þouȝt; and lyste myn herte to þe• þe soule þat hast dere bouȝt; bifore þe make it be• (G)

> (15) ¶ And þa*n*ne for hiȝnes of þine herte. þi prayers schal turne i*n* to ioyful songe. and þi þouȝt to melodi./(W)
>
> and þanne for heiȝnesse of þin herte; þi prayeres schal turne in to ioyful song & þi þouȝt to melodie• (G)

> (16) ¶ All*e* þ*a*t loueþ vanites & speciali of þis world. and setten her hertis i*n* any oþer þinges. þan i*n* god; i*n* to þis degre. þa*n*ne may þai noȝt come// ne i*n* þat oþer degre bifore nenend/ (W)
>
> Alle þat loueþ uanitees & specials of þis world & setten hor hertes on any oþer þinges þan on god; in to þis degre may þei not come• ne in to þat oþer degre bifore nemed• (G)

Although it does not occur always, in G we often find an initial capital letter marking a change in topic, as in examples 10, 11, 14 and 16. Additionally, paragraph breaks may be indicated by the use of blank space or by line-fillers at the end of lines.

3.2.3 Punctus *plus virgule*

As mentioned above, this symbol shows a distinctive allophorm in G. The function is always clear: to mark off a major or final pause. In fact, in W this mark does not appear within the *Ego Dormio* text, but precedes and finishes off the treatise. In G its use is apparent: it marks a stronger division than that established by the *punctus*. However, Clemens and Graham (2007: 85) claim that at the end of the eleventh century or beginning of the twelfth the *punctus* took over some functions previously expressed by other marks. Thus, according to them, the *punctus*

> [f]rom that time forward had two different values, representing both the most minor and the most major pause; its two different values would not have been confused, for when it came at sentence endings, it was followed by a capital letter.

In G the *punctus* plus virgule overlaps in its functions with those of the *punctus* inasmuch as the equivalences in W are varied. Thus, example (17) illustrates its multifunctionality and equivalence to double virgule after *virtutes* in W, single virgule after *dominaciones*, *punctus* plus virgule in *next to god,* or a simple *punctus* after *seraphin* in the final line. Even if the lines follow one

another in the manuscript, they have been split in this way, so that the reader can follow the differences in punctuation more easily.

(17a) þe lowest ierarchie co*n*teyneþ aung*e*ls archang*e*ls & virtutes// (W)

þe lowest ierarchie; conteneþ angeleles archaungeles & uirtutes., (G)

(17b) þe midel ierarchi. co*n*teynes potestates. p*ri*ncipates & d*omi*nac*i*ones/ (W)

þe myddel ierarchie conteneþ• Potestates• Principat*us* & Dominaciones., (G)

(17c) þe hiest ierarchi *con*teynes. trones. ierubyn & seraphin/ and þ*a*t ierarchi is next to god./ (W)

þe þride Ierarchie conteneþ• Tronos• Cherubyn• & Seraphyn., & þat ierarchie is next god., (G)

(17d) þe loweste is aungels. & þe hiest is saraphin. (W)

¶ þe lowest ordre is aungeles & þe hiȝest seraphyn., (G)

Although there are sixty-one occurrences of *punctus* plus virgule in G, it appears on one occasion three times consecutively, and it is again found twice in a row to mark the end of a sentence, arguably, as a kind of line filling. Thus, if these repetitions are discarded, it is possible to claim that there are just fifty-eight cases of this symbol. As shown in example (17) and in the next table, the corresponding symbols in W are varied:

punctus	22
virgule	12
double virgule	8
no symbol	7
punctus plus virgule	7
punctus plus double virgule	1
punctus elevatus	1
TOTAL	58

Table 2. *Punctus* plus virgule correspondences in W

On the other hand, in W we find thirty-seven instances of *punctus* plus virgule. The correspondences in G are also varied:

punctus	22
punctus plus virgule	7
punctus elevatus	5
no symbol	3
TOTAL	37

Table 3. Punctus plus virgule correspondences in G

Since the *punctus* is the most widely used symbol found in both manuscripts, this explains why the most frequent correlation for the *punctus* plus virgule in both manuscripts is the *punctus*.

3.2.4 Double virgules

In W, twenty-four instances of double virgules are found, while in G we find none. Although one was spotted, it was a mark for the limner to insert a *paraph* mark, yet he failed to do so. Thus, there is not a single instance of double virgules with a punctuation function. The main correspondence in G is the *punctus*, which appears fifteen times. It pins upon the *punctus* plus virgule in G on another four occasions and no symbol is included four other times.

The double virgule may appear combined with the *punctus*; there are three instances of this. In this case it is used to signal clausal and sentential relationships, primarily to signal the end of a section or a unit. In fact, in example (19) in G, it corresponds to the use of *paraph* to mark the end of the section.

> (18) Al mi couetynge þan war come*n*. if I miȝte to þe faar; I wil no þinge. bot oonly þe: þat al mi welnes ware.// ih*es*u mi sauyo*ur*. ih*es*u mi comforth. of all*e* fairhed þe floure. mi help & mi socour. when mai i see þee i*n* þi tour // (W)
>
> Al my couetyng were come; if I myȝte to þe fare• I wolde noþing but onliche þe• þou alle my willes ware ¶ Ih*es*u my saueour• Ih*es*u my confortour• Of al fairhede þe flour• Myn helpe & my socour• whanne may I se þe in þi tour• (G)

In other instances, it just corresponds to *punctus* in G, as shown below:

(19) to þee is þat I morne. to þe my lif & my lykynge. whe*n*ne myȝt I heþen turne.// (W)

to þe is þat I morne; To þe my loue & my likyng., Whan may I hennes turne• (G)

(20) ih*es*u mi ioye fully w*ith* þe i lyge. & belde. leu*er* me war to dye. þan al þis warld to weld. & haue it i*n* maistri. þouȝ I schulde noȝt elde.// (W)

¶ Ih*es*u my ioye fulliche; wiþ þe I bigge & belde• & euer me were to diȝe; þan al þis world to welde• And haue hit in mastrye; þouȝ I scholde not elde• (G)

3.2.5 Single virgule

Single virgule appears forty-seven times in W and none in G. The results of the correspondences of the virgule in G are the following:

punctus	30
punctus plus virgule	7
punctus elevatus	5
no symbol	4
paraph	1
TOTAL	47

Table 4. Single virgule correspondences in G

As observable in Table 4, the single virgule was overwhelmingly replaced by *punctus*. So the Westminster scribe used it as a light pause in contrast to other heavier pauses, marked by double virgules or *paraphs*.

3.2.6 The colon

This symbol only appears in W, where there are seven instances. In G it corresponds to a *punctus elevatus* on three occasions:

(21) þee þinke now p*er*aunt*er* harde to [ȝi]ue þi*n* hert fro all*e* erþely þinge and from ydel speche & vayn fro all*e* fleschli loue: (W)

> þe þinkeþ now p*er* auenture hard to ȝiue þin herte fro alle erþeli þinges• fro ydill speche & veyn• fro al fleschli loue; (G)

> (22) for þis vice slen þe soule: & maken it part fro god. þat is lyif of þe soule. (W)
> ¶ ffor þese synnes sleen þe soule; & maken hit parte fro god• þat is lyf of þe soule• (G)

> (23) & blysse hy*m* in all*e* his warkes for hys domes be so p*ri*ue: þ*a*t no creat*ur* may co*mpre*hend hem// (W)
> & blesse hym in alle his werkes• for his domes are so priue; þat no creature may comprehende hem• (G)

It is rendered as *punctus* twice, as shown in (24) and (25) below:

> (24) forþi ȝif we couete to fle þe payne of helle & purgatory vs be howeþ rest vs in perfytte loue. and wisely [fle] fro þe loue: (W)
> ¶ ffor þi ȝif we coueite to fle þe peyne of hell & purgatori; us bihoueþ to rest us in perfitȝ loue p*er*fiȝtly• (G)

> (25) Al mi couetynge þan war come*n*. if I miȝte to þe faar; I wil no þinge. bot oonly þe: þat al mi welnes ware.// (W)
> Al my couetyng were come; if I myȝte to þe fare• I wolde noþing but onliche þe• þou alle my willes ware (G)

And, finally, there is no punctuation mark on two occasions:

> (26) if þow luf it. lastandly: & neu*er* lettiþ for no þinge. þ*a*t man may say or do/ (W)
> ȝif þou hit loue riȝt & lastyngly & neuere leue to loue hit• for no þing þat man may sey or doo• in erþe (G)

> (27) Whe*n*ne wilt þ*o*u com ih*es*u my ioye. & cou*er* me of care; and gyue me þee: þ*a*t I may see. & haue for eu*er* mar// (W)
> ¶ Wh*a*n schalt þou come ih*es*u my ioye; & couere me of care., And ȝeue me þe þat I may se; & haue for euere mare• (G)

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the previous pages, I have described and analysed the punctuation system in Rolle's *Ego Dormio* in two parallel texts: the London Westminster School MS 3 and Paris Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviéve MS 3390 manuscripts. From the analysis of the data, it may be difficult to determine precisely why the scribes punctuated a particular segment the way they did, since punctuation had an interpretative function, and, is, therefore, idiosyncratic. It seems that scribes used punctuation to mark their own interpretation of a text. Thus, it follows from here that a one-to-one correspondence in the use of symbols between two or more scribes is hardly feasible, here or elsewhere, as each scribe guided readers to interpret and read the treatise in a specific way. When assessing the values, I agree with Parkes (1997: 7) on the idea that punctuation symbols cannot be evaluated in isolation but must be assessed taking into account the context in which they are inserted. Thus, even if the inventory of symbols used by each scribe is quite idiosyncratic, taken as a whole, there is an observable consistency in their deployment. It is true that there seems to be no one-to-one correspondence between the specific habits, or practices, of the two scribes in their use of the symbols on many occasions. Nevertheless, a number of general conclusions can be drawn. In fact, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods utilized here has demonstrated that, despite the lack of standardised punctuation practices, each manuscript text reveals a consistent system of punctuation, inasmuch as the use of punctuation marks is clear and systematic in each text and for each scribe.

Apart from Smedick's own research (1979), no comparative parallel studies of the punctuation in Rolle's texts have been systematically undertaken until now, marking the value of the study at hand. It is apparent that there are differences in the inventory of marks, their frequency, and their assigned functions, but there are also some similarities. Accordingly, the *punctus* is the most usual and versatile mark in both manuscripts and has a great range of significance. Although the uses of *punctus* in W and G do not coincide in their exact location and placement, their main functions do overlap. Both scribes use the *punctus* at the phrasal level to separate noun phrases, at the clausal level to precede both coordinate and subordinate clauses, as well as at the sentential level to mark the end of a sentence. However, W is more punctuated than G, which explains why the frequency of *punctus* in the former is higher than in the latter. Contrariwise, the *punctus elevatus* accounts for approximately a quarter of the uses in G while in W its presence is minimal, which makes it understandable that it can cover more functions in G than in W. Evidence from the texts shows that the *punctus* plus virgule in G is used to mark a significant pause. Similarly, double virgules have been found just once in G as an attention

mark for the limner, while in W they are more profusely used to signal a significant pause. Other symbols that are exclusively used by the W scribe are single virgules and colon.

To conclude, arguably, the study of medieval punctuation practices also offers insights into how scribes understood and interpreted the text to be read, its syntactical structures, and the use of punctuation marks to organize texts into units of various types and length. Therefore, the study of punctuation has implications for literacy and reading practices as well, since focusing on the manuscripts can uncover clues on how they were intended to be read and used. This final idea has the potential to be of great interest to a whole range of scholars considering medieval texts and will surely require further research in the future.

APPENDIX

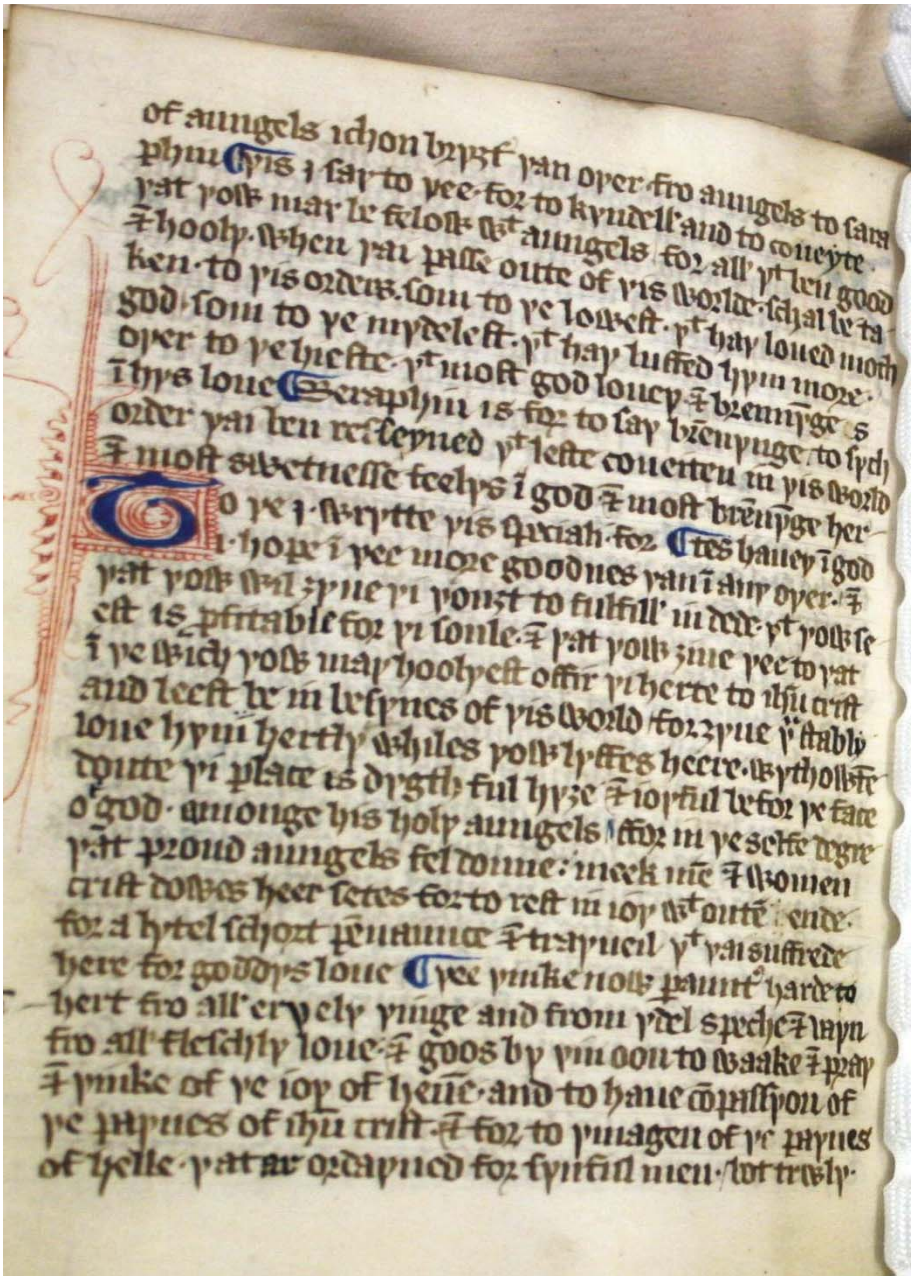

Plate 1. Fol. 225v. London, Westminster School MS 3.
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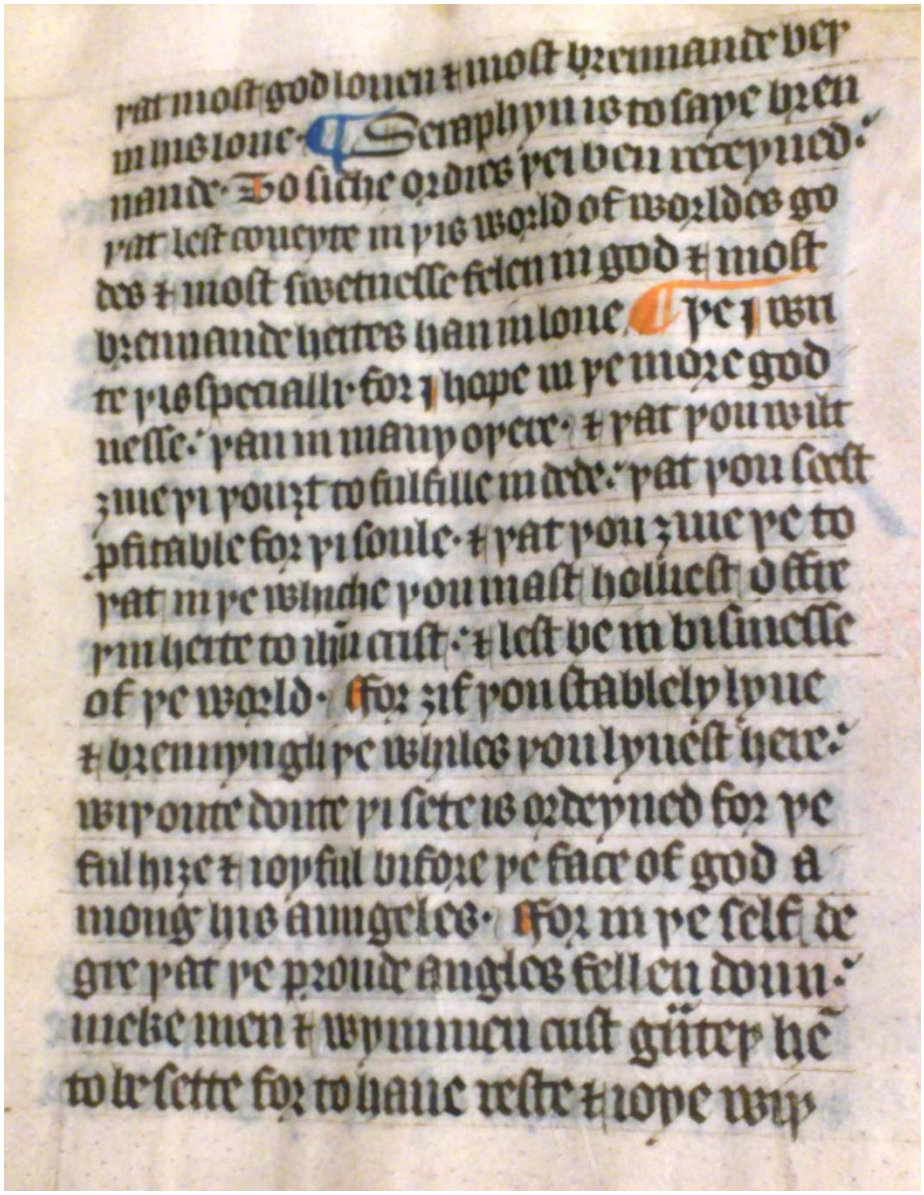

Plate 2. Fol. 97r. Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève MS 3390.
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