PAUSE AND EFFECT

An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West

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SELECT GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS
AND PUNCTUATION SYMBOLS

\[ \text{see \textit{simplex ductus}} \]
\[ \text{see \textit{positura, simplex ductus}} \]
\[ \text{for this series see \textit{distinctiones}} \]
\[ \text{see \textit{virgula suspensiva} and for // also paraph} \]
\[ \text{see \textit{punctus flexus}} \]
\[ \text{see comma (mark)} \]
\[ \text{see \textit{punctus elevatus}} \]
\[ \text{see \textit{punctus interrogativus}} \]
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\[ \text{see \textit{distinctiones}} \]
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\[ \text{see \textit{guillemets, diple}} \]
\[ \text{see \textit{crotchets}} \]
\[ \text{see \textit{parentheses}} \]
Apices  
Short oblique strokes in the earliest Latin manuscripts, placed over certain long vowels to assist a reader to recognize them and hence pronounce them correctly.

apodosis  
The concluding element of a statement; in the liturgy, that part of a prayer which contains the petition.

apostrophe (apostrophus)  
A mark of elision signifying the omission of letters (see p.138, n.75).

asterisk  
* A nota (q.v.) originally used to mark omissions in the text; subsequently used also as a signe de renvoi (q.v.) with more general application.

Caesura  
In verse, a break between two words within a metrical foot, occurring in certain recognized positions within a verse, determined according to the measure (cf. diacresis).

capitulum (kapitulum)  
A division in a text containing a particular topic, or point of focus in an argument (for example, a proposition) or narrative. In early manuscripts the beginning of a new capitulum was often indicated by .K. (see plates 14, 57). See also paragraphus, paraph.

case  
In typography, a receptacle in which a compositor kept his type: the 'upper case' contained capitals, numerals and certain other characters; the 'lower case' contained the other, 'small' letters and the spaces.

chiasmus  
A rhetorical figure in which two opposing or parallel statements are balanced, but in the second the order of words in the first is reversed.

clausula (pl. clausulae)  
The concluding formula of a period or colon.

colon (pl. cola)  
A member (or membrum, q.v.), or major division of a period: in prose, where the sense is complete but the meaning is not (see also clausula, colon (mark), cursus, punctus elevatus); in verse, a prosodic component of a (verse) period.

colon (mark)  
: So-called because it was often used to indicate a major medial pause, or disjunction of sense, at the end of a colon (cf. plates 62, 69). See also double punctus for other uses of this mark.

colophon  
An inscription at the end of a work containing the title, and all or some of the following information: the name of the author; the name of the scribe or printer; the date when the copy was completed; the date and place of writing or printing.

comma (pl. commata)  
A division of a colon (q.v.), usually short and rhythmically incomplete, followed by a minor disjunction of the sense where it may be necessary to pause. In the fifteenth century it was also defined as a construction dependent upon a verb in a preceding or subsequent construction (see also comma (mark), double punctus, punctus flexus, virgula suspensiva).
comma (mark)  
? ,  
So-called because it was often used to indicate the disjunction of sense, or a minor medial pause at the end of a comma. It appears most frequently in the work of fourteenth-century Italian scribes; the low, short semicircular form, first appears with early type faces.

contrive marks
Symbols found in manuscripts from the 8th to 11th centuries (cf. plate 71). They were placed above or below words in a Latin sentence to indicate grammatical concord or regimen, and helped a reader to construe the syntax.

crotch
[ or ]  
A square bracket found in printed books; _ or _  
A half crocket.

cryptography
Secret writing, either by arbitrary characters, or by letters in other than their usual combinations.

cursus
Rhythmical patterns or cadences which characterize the clausulae (q.v.) in prose texts, thus helping the reader to identify the structure of periods. In Antiquity the rhythms were based on metrical patterns, in the Middle Ages on accentual patterns.

Diaeresis
In verse, a break between two words, which occurs at the end of a foot (cf. caesura).

diastole
A mark used to separate words or letters which have been falsely linked.

diectic
Term here applied to selective punctuation which prescribes a particular interpretation of a text by indicating certain emphases, hence attributing greater value to these than to other possible emphases.

diple
> >> "  
Originally a nota (q.v.), or critical sign placed in the margin to draw attention to something in the text; in the Middle Ages used primarily to indicate the testimony of holy scripture. For variant forms of the symbol see plates 5, 11, 67. It was represented in printed books by raised and inverted commas (cf. plates 36, 38, 40, 55–6) or guillemets. Subsequently these were placed within the page measure and became a punctuation symbol to indicate passages of direct speech as well as quotations.

display script
A script, or style of script, adopted to differentiate parts of a text: thus, 'primary' display for use in headings; 'secondary' display to distinguish the beginning of a text, chapter or paragraphs; 'tertiary' display to indicate the beginning of a sententia or period (qq.v.). The principal forms used for these purposes were Capitals (plate 13), Uncials (plate 14), 'Lombards' (plate 24) or decorated letters.

distinctiones
A system of punctuation developed in Antiquity, based on the division of a sententia (q.v.) by punctus placed at different heights in an ascending order of importance: subdistinctio a low point used to indicate a minor medial pause (after a comma, q.v.), or where the sense is incomplete; media distinctio a point placed at a midway height, used to indicate a major medial pause (after a colon,
double punctus

: The symbol used for the colon mark (a development from the punctus elevatus, q.v.), but also used by humanist scribes to indicate the pause after a comma.

Ecphonesis

The recitation, or intoning of a prayer or lesson with melodic formulae applied before those pauses which were required by the sense of the text.

ἐκθεσις 

In the layout of a poetic text, where a verse is aligned against the left margin (cf. plates 41, 74).

εἰσθεσις

In the layout of a poetic text, where a verse is indented from the left margin (cf. plates 41, 74).

em-rule

In printing, the dash (equivalent to the width of the letter m).

en-rule

In printing, the hyphen (equivalent to the width of the letter n).

enjambement

In a poetic text, where the sense runs beyond the end of a verse.

equiparative

The term here applied to punctuation where extensive pointing (or the absence of points) produces a neutral interpretation of a text, which attributes equal value to all the possible emphases.

Flexa

In the liturgy, the inflexion of the voice at a minor medial pause (incisum, q.v.), which deviates to a pitch below that adopted as the recitation tone.

fount (font)

In typography, a complete set or assortment of type of a particular design ('face') and size ('body').

forme

In printing, pages of type set up and secured in a 'chase' for printing at one impression.

Guillemets

» « A pair of symbols cast in the centre of a piece of type, employed by French and Italian printers to represent the diple (q.v.), and hence to indicate quotations or direct speech.

Hedera

\[\text{ bày symbol resembling an ivy-leaf used as an interpunct (q.v.) in Antiquity, but subsequently as a punctuation symbol (cf. plate 11), and a printer's ornament.}\

hemistich

In poetic texts, a half-verse.

hyphen

- A stroke or strokes linking syllables of the same word, which have become separated, especially at the end of a line; subsequently used to link compound words.

Incisum

In rhetoric, an alternative term for a comma (q.v.); in psalmody, the briefest pause or hesitation at an appropriate point in the sense, especially within the first member of a verse.

interpunct

A point or symbol placed between words, especially in the earliest Latin manuscripts (see plate 57).

intonatio

In the liturgy, the opening phrase or melodic formula
<table>
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<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lemma (pl. lemmata)</td>
<td>which precedes the recitation tone; also the opening formula of any chant if sung by the priest or precentor. Here, a passage from the text embedded in a commentary as a point of departure for the discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leonine rhyme</td>
<td>In a poetic text, where the final word or syllable in a verse rhymes with that immediately preceding the caesura.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>litterae notabiliiores</td>
<td>More noticeable letters from a display script (q.v.), used to indicate the beginnings of sententiae or periods (qq.v.) in prose and verse, as in the modern use of capital letters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matrix (pl. matrices)</td>
<td>In typography, a piece of metal, usually copper, on which a letter has been stamped with a punch (q.v.), so that it can form the mould for the face of the type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mediatio</td>
<td>In the liturgy, the inflexion of the voice before a major medial pause, which deviates according to a melodic formula from the pitch adopted for the recitation tone. (member). In prose, an alternative term for colon (q.v.); in psalmody, the principal division of a psalm verse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>membrum (pl. membra)</td>
<td>In prosody, a metrical foot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neume</td>
<td>An element (or combination of elements) in the earliest system of notation in the West to represent a melody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nota (pl. notae)</td>
<td>A written character or symbol, not being a letter or numeral, here referring primarily to those used for annotation (see notae sententiarum).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notae invidicae</td>
<td>System of marks found in ancient legal texts, used for abbreviating or simplifying words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notae librariorum</td>
<td>Term used by Cicero (De oratore, iii, 173) of marks inserted by scribes to assist readers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>notae sententiarum</td>
<td>Ancient system of critical signs, used as annotations to draw attention to particular features of interest or difficulty in a text: see asterisk, diple, obelus, peragraphus, simplex ductus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obelus</td>
<td>— † Originally a critical sign placed in the margin to indicate corruption in the adjacent text. Subsequently it came to be used as a signe de renvoi (q.v.), or to draw attention to information in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraphus</td>
<td>η η η η η η η</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parentheses</td>
<td>( ) A pair of symbols developed in the late fourteenth century to enclose a parenthesis or interpolated matter. For variants see plates 30, 31. Ć is found as the first of these symbols in early printed books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paraph</td>
<td>☄ ☄ ☄ ☄ ☄ ☄ ☄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per cola et commata</td>
<td>The method of copying a text whereby each constituent element of a period begins on a new line; see plates 10, 43.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A question employed not to elicit information, but instead of a positive statement for purposes of rhetorical effect (see plates 34 and 35).

In prose, an utterance or complete rhetorical structure which expresses a single idea, or sententia (q.v.); its constituent parts are commata (or incisa) and cola (or membrana) (q.q.v.). In verse it is characterized by prosodic continuity, and determined by different forms and measures. Here, used to refer to the base of a ‘tick’-shaped stroke. Originally a critical sign (or nota, q.v.), subsequently a punctuation symbol which indicated the end of a section of text; the opposite of a paragraphus. For variants see plates 25, 47. : - was employed by insular scribes at the end of a paragraph in a series of paragraphs or texts (e.g. annals) to imply that some continuation was to be expected to complete this series.

Term used in the Middle Ages to refer to the symbols employed for the punctuation of liturgical texts, namely the punctus flexus, punctus elevatus, punctus interrogativus, punctus versus (q.q.v.).

The introductory element of a statement; in the liturgy, that part of a prayer which includes the invocation and those premisses of the faith on which the following petition is based.

In typography, a short metal bar with a letter cut into the end, which was subsequently struck into the matrix (q.v.).

. + A point, also the basis of other symbols used in punctuation. + was used by early printers.

See punctus exclamativus.

: / One of the positurae (q.v.) which passed into the general repertory; used to indicate a major medial pause (after a colon, or membrum, q.q.v.), where the sense is complete but the meaning is not. For other syntactic and semantic functions see pp. 69, 73, 153. For various forms of the symbol see plates 12, 16, 17–19, 20–24, 66, 73. In print the double-punctus form (q.v.) gradually replaced the others.

/ ! ; (also known as punctus admirativus). The equivalent of the modern exclamation mark; it first appeared in the second half of the fourteenth century: see plates 30–39.

One of the positurae (q.v.) used to indicate a minor medial pause (after a comma or at the flexus, q.q.v.), where the sense is incomplete. See plates 18–19, 51.

One of the positurae (q.v.) which passed into the general repertory; used to indicate the end of an interrogatio (a question requiring an answer). For variant forms see plates 14, 18, 31, 65, 66, 72, 73. On Spanish practice since the eighteenth century see pp. 56–7.

A reversed, but not inverted punctus interrogativus (cf.
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plates 34 and 35), used in the 16th and 17th centuries to indicate the end of a *percontatio* (q.v.).

*punctus versus*

; One of the *postitulae* (q.v.) used to indicate the *terminatio* (q.v.) of a psalm verse, and the completion of a *sententia* or *periodus*. For variants see plates 11, 16–17, 65, 72, 73.

*Scriptio continua*  
A method of copying a text in late Antiquity without separating words or other elements within a section of the text (cf. plates 1, 64).

*sententia*  
A thought or opinion; especially the substance or significance expressed by the words of a grammatical ‘sentence’ or a rhetorical period (q.v.).

*serif*  
A short finishing stroke added to the ends of other strokes, in particular, the fine cross stroke at the top or bottom of a letter.

*signe de renvoi*  
Any sign used to associate matter in the text with material added in the margin, and especially a passage omitted from the text by the original copyist. ‘.’ was a sign used by printers.

*simplex ductus*  
Originally a critical sign (or *nota*, q.v.) placed within a verse to separate matters erroneously run together (see p. 118, n. 54); subsequently a punctuation symbol. For variants see plates 3, 6, 47–8.

*sort*  
In typography, a letter or character in a fount of type.

*suspension*  
Here, especially a form of abbreviation or simplification of words in which all but the first letter or letters of a word (or the first letter of a syllable) are omitted.

*Terminatio*  
In the liturgy, that special melodic formula at the end of a complete lesson or prayer, which deviates from the pitch adopted for the recitation tone; in psalmody, the melodic formula at the end of a verse.

*tone*  
A pitch adopted for the recitation of a prose text in the liturgy; a melody adopted for the recitation of a psalm, which is repeated for each verse.

*Versus*  
A verse (or line of verse), especially a psalm verse.

*virgula plana*  
— Used by some scribes to indicate a final pause.

*virgula suspensiva*  
// Used to mark the briefest pause or hesitation in a text. Usually it indicates the end of a *comma* (q.v.), but in some 14th-, 15th- and 16th- century copies it could be used for all pauses except the final one. The double form \/// was used as a direction for a paraph (q.v.), and for a final pause (cf. plate 28). // was used by Humanist writers of the fourteenth century to indicate disjunction greater than that indicated by / and less than that indicated by \\.