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Medieval Punctuation, *mise en texte* and the digital world

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It is a generally accepted truth that the act of reading changed irrevocably with the invention of print. And yet, until relatively recently, the modes of reading implied by the medieval manuscript have rarely been to the foreground in studies of medieval culture, and perhaps even more rarely in editing practice.

Similarly, it is widely acknowledged that the vast cultural, scientific, legal and historiographical project of Alfonso X's court represented an enormous leap forward in the kingdoms of Castile and Leon; but with few honourable exceptions, critical interest in this key moment of Peninsular history has, perhaps naturally, concentrated on the 'what' of Alfonso's vision and not on the 'how'.

The current historical moment is especially propitious for recasting our understanding of the relationships between form and content in medieval works. In the space of the last twenty years or so, the invention and expansion of the digital world has created a context in which these relationships might better be analysed, and for two reasons in particular – one epistemological and one practical. On the one hand, all aspects of our social and cultural practice are currently undergoing a radical change, the likes of which has probably not been

seen since the days of Gutenberg, if ever. In consequence, although we are almost certainly merely grasping at the basic implications of the shift to a digital mindset, the consciousness of that process may nonetheless help us to reconsider the implications of other ways of reading, ways of being, in the literate world. This is especially the case due to an increasing awareness of some of the parallels of fluidity and dynamism inherent in manuscript and digital modes of being, which, although attributable to very different material and philosophical sources, allow us some access to the conceptual frame of the manuscript world. On the other hand, the sudden arrival (and constant obsolescence and re-invention) of digital tools permits a range of analytical practices which were either not possible or difficult to put into practice in the world of printed books.

The dawn of the digital age and the consequent realisation of (some) similarities between the reading and analytical practices of the contemporary and medieval manuscript worlds provides something of the background to what follows. The hypotheses upon which the analysis are predicated are: (i) that *mise en page* and *mise en texte* are central elements of the conditioning of reading practices in medieval manuscript culture; (ii) that because textual editing and textual criticism has traditionally regarded these aspects as, at best, secondary to the production of meaning, their relative importance has escaped the attention of scholars; (iii) that digital analytical tools, even in their most basic form, can (but do not always) provide a more nuanced view of textual, and meaning, production; and, (iv) that the Alfonsine project was as systematic and all-encompassing in its form as in its content. The first three are, of course, predicated on the practicalities of the concrete example provided by the fourth. The extent to which

the Alfonsine example might be considered as a paradigmatic case of medieval textuality remains to be seen. Nonetheless, the specific example should provide sufficient grounds for initial support for (or undermining of) the generic hypotheses.

Contexts

The study of *mise en page* and *mise en texte* respectively has tended to be carried out in the context of codicological description (in the former case) and the history of punctuation or diachronic linguistic variation (in the latter). In some senses then, one could say that these aspects are seen as ancillary to, rather than constitutive of, the text. In a philological analysis whose aim is the establishment of text constructed from the traces provided by genetically related versions, the mode of individual realisation is not a central concern. Of course, this is not to say that such matters are not important in textual criticism –the works of Germán Orduna (1990, 1999 amongst many others), for example, or José Manuel Lucía Megías (1999) on the role and importance of *collatio externa* demonstrate the extent to which the physical and material dimension of individual codices need to be taken into account in philological analysis. And indeed almost every critical edition will contain a codicological description of the witnesses used. But what is less clear is the extent to which this information is important in itself, beyond the role it might play in establishing textual relationships. That is, in the world of iberomedievalism, it is relatively rare to find analyses of manuscript text as individual *scripta*, which have their own

internal coherence and meaning. The publication of John Dagenais's *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture* was perhaps the best known attempt to place the focus of scholarship on the material conditions of the manuscript, in perhaps the first sustained attempt to incorporate *mouvance* and *variance* into the field of iberomedievalism. However, the desire to foreground the act of reading tended to emphasise the role of glossing; that is, the role of the reader as scribe meant that the material construction of the text when it was composed again faded into the background. The extended debate that followed on from this publication, principally in the pages of *La Corónica*, revealed something of a trans-Atlantic divide, and although consciousness of scribal practice and textual fluidity is now more often built into philological consciousness and practice, detailed study of the construction of meaning at the stage of composition remains relatively rare, works such as Laurence de Looze's 2006 monograph on the *Conde Lucanor* notwithstanding.

Rather more developed is the study of the place and symbolic importance of illumination and decoration in medieval Iberian manuscripts. In this respect, the Alfonsine codex of the *Estoria de Espanna*, E_1, is particularly well served since it has been the object of recent studies by Rosa Rodríguez Porto (2012) and Laura Fernández Fernández (2010), the latter of whom has written multiple studies of the iconographical significance of other manuscripts from the Alfonsine *scriptorium*. Here the constitution of the text is directly related to the meaning it might carry – at least where the illumination is concerned.

A more fully developed integration of the principles of textual criticism with a self-avowedly materialist approach to the study of the Middle Ages is pointed to

in recent works by, amongst others, Tjamke Snjders (2013) and Nadia Altshul (2003), the latter of whose references to the possibilities of diasystems theory in the study of medieval text, following Lucía Megías and Segre, may point to fruitful ways towards the incorporation of variation in the theoretical basis of textual criticism. Snjders does address the material dimension of manuscript text, and also point to a philology which has a less rigid divide between the textual and bibliographical codes as categories of the establishment of meaning (Snjders, 2013, 285-7).

A more recent attempt to formalise a theoretical stance in which *mise en texte* plays a significant role is represented by the [*Pragmatics on the Page*](#) research project in Finland. This project, which is predicated on the notion that '[t]he page carries an abundance of information, whether conveyed through hand-decoration in printed books, illuminated initials in manuscripts or what Parkes […] calls 'the image of handwriting" (Carroll et al. 2013, 56), proposes a four-fold analysis of the medieval utterance and is perhaps the best available materialist stance for the analysis of text, context, bibliographical and textual codes (56). By the same token, the structural categories applied to the analysis of manuscript, termed here the textual, interactional and stance levels respectively, allow for an incorporation of the punctuation of a medieval texts into the analysis of its meaning.

The punctuation aspect of medieval meaning creation is rarely dealt with in any significant depth. For the majority of scholars of Iberian texts it seems that medieval punctuation was, at best, idiosyncratic, and if any consideration was given to it, it was most usually in the form of proposal for punctuating modern

editions so that meaning could be clarified for the modern reader. Such is the case, for example, of Margharita Morreale's study of the *General Estoria* (Morreale, 1980).[1] A detailed defence of the necessity to present medieval texts in a manner comprehensible to, and fulfilling the graphical expectations of, a modern audience is provided by Pedro Sánchez-Prieto Borja (Sánchez-Prieto Borja, 1998). Each edition, of course, is aimed at a different readership and advocacy for consideration of the importance of *mise en texte* should not be taken as criticism of modern editorial stances. But nor should the latter be taken as a reason to exclude the material elements of the material codex from our understanding of medieval meaning production, a point made rather more forcefully by Jean Roudil in his criticism of editions which fail to do just this (Roudil, 1982 and 1978, 2).

The history of punctuation in Iberian texts is still to be written. Treating Iberian texts as a category in their own right may run the risk of artificial distinctions, since at the time of development those who could write (in Latin, naturally) probably had more in common with fellow literate scribes elsewhere in Europe than they did with their fellow Iberians, but in any case the history of medieval punctuation more widely is far from complete.

Before being able to make specific claims about the rationale behind concrete examples (here vernacular texts in the late thirteenth century) it might be as well to ask the question of what punctuation is *for*. The response to this question is almost certainly context-specific, although it could perhaps be reduced to a simplistic dichotomy represented by two poles on either end of a scale:

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[1] A contrary view is expressed by García (1999).

punctuation as syntactic/semantic structure or punctuation as guide to oral production – or the elocutionary and syntactic schools in Brown's formulation (35). The second of these functions is frequently regarded as the most important; this is recognised for Peninsular texts by Alberto Blecua's comment that 'aunque no de un modo siempre regular, los textos medievales presentan sistemas de signos de puntuación coherentes que intentan reflejar los tonemas de la entonación' (Blecua, 1983, 140). This view is very much in line with that espoused by Malcolm Parkes' magisterial history of punctuation, *Pause and Effect* (Parkes, 1992), which finds the origins of modern punctuation in the efforts of Insular scribes to comprehend the rhythms and structures of a language for which, unlike the case of their continental equivalents, they had no cognate support from their own native languages. An alternative view, perhaps, is that supplied by Isidore, for whom 'Positura est figura ad distinguendos sensus per cola et commata et periodos' (Isidorus Hispalensis, I.20.1), apparently an indication of the semantic centrality of punctuation. Nevertheless, a subsequent comment would seem to suggest that sense and pausing were not mutually exclusive:

Ubi enim initio pronuntiationis necdum plena pars sensui est, et tamen respirare oportet, fit comma, id est particula sensus, punctusque ad imam litteram ponitur; et vocatur subdistinctio, ab eo quod punctum subtus, id est ad imam litteram, accipit. (20.3)

Brown regards Isidore's system of representation as 'aberrant' (2010, 37). Nonetheless, the influence of the Archbishop of Seville –allied to Jerome's Biblical disposition 'per cola et commata' must have held a great deal of weight in the medieval West.

Despite this Iberian connection, little effort has been made in the past to trace the usage of *mise en texte* systems in the Peninsula. By far the greatest interest in medieval forms of punctuation, and *mise en page/mise en texte* generally, has appeared in France – perhaps not unsurprisingly given the traditionally *bédieriste* editing outlook – and indeed scholars from the French tradition, or publishing in French journals, have also been to the fore in the analysis of Peninsular punctuation.[2] Thus, Elena Llamas Pombo's recent attempt (Llamas Pombo, 2017) to theorize the *graphèmes suprasegmentaux* of medieval writing is one of a long line of works which deal specifically with French texts. Given the effective invention of a written Castilian language in the second half of the thirteenth century, and the developments in grammatical, rhetorical and philosophical analysis in France at that time, perhaps a focus on French developments can also aid our understanding of the development of trans-Pyrenean textual organization.

There is, then, an absence of a theoretical framework within which to understand late thirteenth century Castilian modes of *mise en page* and *mise en texte* and a significant dearth of empirical studies which have these elements as their focus. The Alfonsine cultural moment is an especially fruitful potential source of inquiry into such matters. The invention of a new language for this

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[2] See, amongst others, Germain-Auffray (1982), Elena Llamas Pombo (2017), Jean Roudil (1978, 1982) and Javier Elvira (1997).

(and every) purpose allowed for a concomitant invention of the discursive form. Allied to this, the all-encompassing nature of the Alfonsine project would suggest that no element of form or content was immune to reform or new casting.

The medieval page

Anyone who has had the privilege of accessing at first hand a thirteenth century codex will appreciate the qualitative material differences between print and manuscript. The image in

1, taken from folio 75r of El Escorial Y-I-2, is a fine illustration of some of the differences. The codex was compiled in the Alfonsine *taller*, it is the only such example for the *Estoria de Espanna*, and is widely known by the siglum E$_1$. This image is not chosen here for any particular textual interest. Indeed, in the history of textual criticism it would probably be considered to have relatively little interest, not least because of the space at the top of column b, which would seem to many as a failing, indicative of a vacuum in which text is *missing*.

Extensive research by Rosa Rodríguez Porto has analysed in depth the spaces left for miniatures in this codex and this has added greatly to our understanding of how the manuscript was intended to look had it ever been completed, although Rodríguez Porto's research suggests that this would have been functionally impossible in any case (Rodríguez Porto, 2012). The analysis here, however, is not focused on absence but rather on how the manuscript might have been read *as it is*. That is, how the range of features identified by Keith Busby –'layout and general appearance of the text, presence or absence of abbreviations (or illuminations), punctuation, disposition in lines and columns, colours, tituli, incipits, location and decoration of capitals, decorated and pen flourished initials' contributed to orient the reading of this particular text in this particular manuscript (Busby, 2002, 127). In this sense, all of the material conditions of the codex potentially affect reading. Some of these conditions may be the product of authorial and scribal intention (upon which we focus below), others not, but all of them framed the act of reading, in one way or another.

Figure 1. Fragment of *Estoria de Espanna*, E₁. Escorial Y-I-2, fol.75r

Unlike in a printed text, here the eye is drawn to a range of structural devices which provide an unconscious framework for the comprehension of, in this case, the history of Rome. Before any attempt can be made to understand the words on the page, a mental structure of comprehension is unconsciously imposed upon the reading. The first, and perhaps most obvious way in which this is done is through the use of different colours. The rubrics are picked out in red, and in consequence the semantic expectations of the reader (e.g. how much information to expect) are laid out for the eye to see and the mind to internalise before reading. But this structural category is not confined to the rubrics, for the importance of the chapters as conceptual divisions is emphasised by the decorated initials in alternating colours. And there are also other key markers: the use of red ink as a line filler, and the (smaller) decorated initial to pick out a subdivision within the chapter serve similar functions. And even within chapters, the paraph marks –again alternating in colour– serve a structural function, for if the peripheral vision of a reader is approximately fifteen characters, this text leaves no possible doubt in the mind of a reader about the imminence (or not) of a forthcoming internal division.[3] One might point out that this is scarcely news, and that in any case, not all medieval manuscripts demonstrate so extensive a form of orientation to reading. While this may well be

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[3] 'One of the most robust findings in research on the process of reading is that the region from which readers obtain useful information (i.e., the perceptual span) is rather limited. That is, the perceptual span for skilled readers of alphabetic writing systems consists of 3-4 letters to the left of fixation (or the beginning of the currently fixated word) and 14-15 letter spaces to the right of fixation'. (Rayner et al., 2010, 834).

the case, it is at least clear from this example that the Alfonsine *scriptorium* had a specific form of textual organisation in mind for one of its most important products and that the meaning of the text is not encoded only in the words but also in other ways of guiding understanding.

The consequences of editorial practice over the years, whether intended or not, have been that the material dimension of manuscript culture has tended to be relegated to an afterthought. It may of course be that the limitations of print necessarily reduced the possibilities of accounting for the *mise en page* and *mise en texte* of medieval works; that is, that the impossibility of reflecting the material dimensions of medieval reading created the conditions in which these elements could be considered as secondary. Thus the mindset of modern researchers derives from the physical limitations of representation. It may also be the case that a positivist search for true meaning beyond the frustrations caused by individual scribal practice in manuscripts had the same effect. Perhaps the most likely explanation is a combination of the two. In any case, print editions have generally tended to exclude the material factor. One might take the view that many of the elements mentioned above as key to the orientation of reading simply could not be represented on the printed page in any meaningful (or cost effective) way. But although this might frequently have been be the case, it is not always so. For while different coloured inks might have presented a significant challenge for printers, different type sizes, or indeed alternative characters –such as the paraph, for example– were certainly available. All of which might suggest that if editors did not seek to represent

elements of *mise en texte* in particular, it was because they did not see the utility

of doing so, and not because it was beyond their capabilities. One further

example of this can be seen in the following figures, again drawn from the
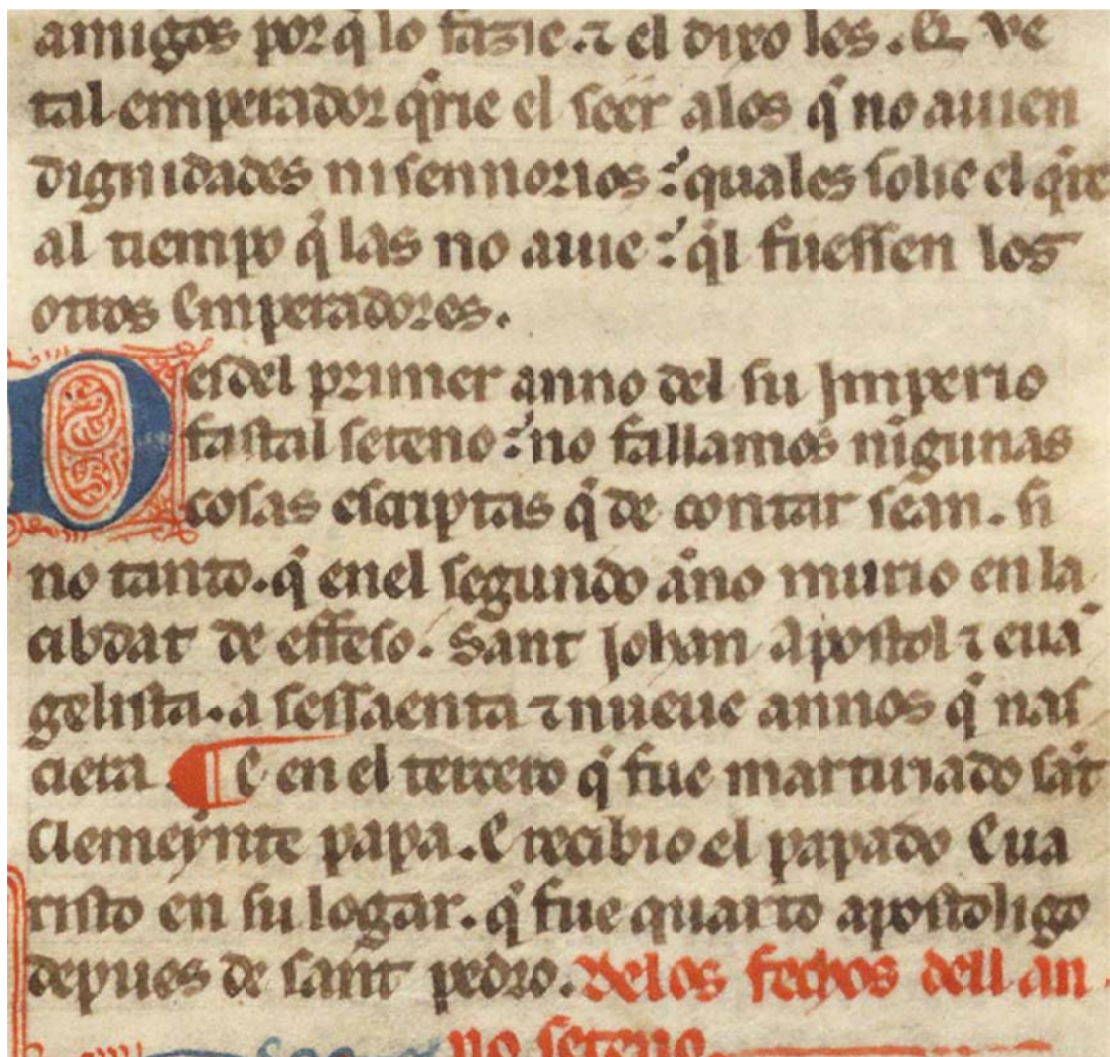
Alfonsine codex E₁ of the *Estoria de Espanna.*

Figure 2. Fragment of *Estoria de Espanna*, E₁. Escorial Y-I-2, fol.88rb, Estoria Digital, 195.49-50

As in the previous example, the text is organized on the page in such a way as to

draw attention to the three line decorated initial, the rubric of the next chapter

and the red paraph mark. Expectation of the (extent of the) content is therefore

provided graphically, or more correctly chromatically, before reading. But there are also other guiding elements, which are more easily represented in print and which editors have chosen to alter. The standard edition of the *Estoria de Espanna*, Ramón Menéndez Pidal's *Primera crónica general*, represents the text in question in the following way:
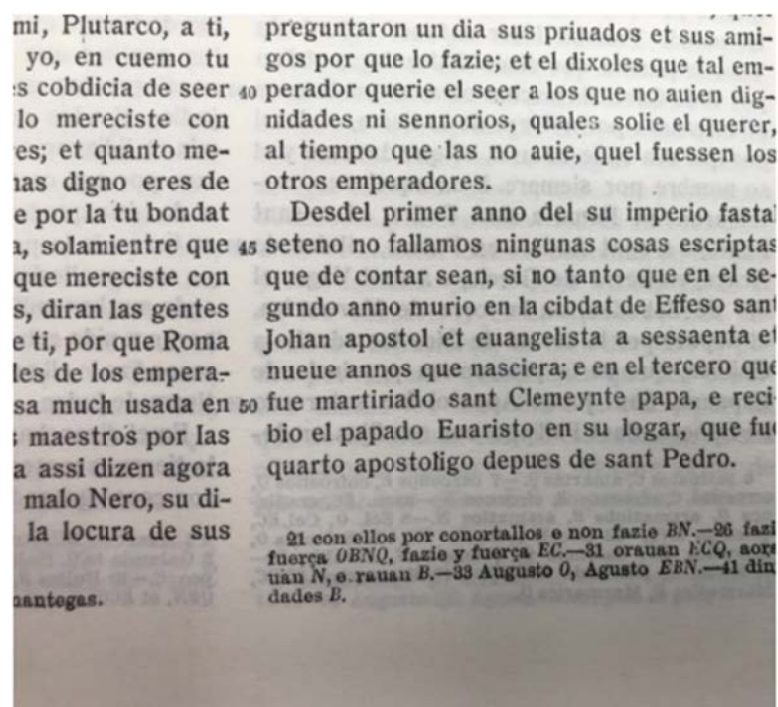

Figure 3. Fragment of *PCG*, Chapter 192, p.143b 44-52

The *PCG* provided an incalculable service to scholars for the best part of a century in providing some level of access to one of Alfonso's most important prose works. But as Diego Catalán revealed (Catalán, 1992), it does not represent the whole of Alfonso's *Estoria* (which was, in any case never completed). It is, in truth, an edition of the royal manuscripts from the Escorial with light emendation, and not a (neo-)Lachmannian search for a hypothesis of an

Alfonsine text.[4] An edition first produced in 1906 should not be judged by the standards of those who have access to a much wider range of information and theoretical reflection. However, it should also be recognised that the *PCG* provided the sole access to the *Estoria* for many years (and is still cited today) and there are elements to its framing of the text that alter the medieval structure. In this example, while the edition specifically recognises the division implicit in the decorated initial by means of an indent (and this is also done elsewhere in the edition), what one might term the sub-section implied by the paraph, which marks out a new year in Trajan's empire, is not recognised by anything more than a semi-colon. One might object that this is a relatively trivial example, but on closer inspection it is possible to see that it is not the only one in this short fragment. For if we pay closer attention to the manuscript, it is possible to see other orientations to reading. In the final four lines there are three separate examples of a *punctus*, which one might assume have a function of indicating a pause. But if so, the pauses are of a different character, not least because two of them are followed by majuscules. In the second line there is a *punctus elevatus* (and there are two other examples in the previous lines). Below I deal in greater depth with this mark in the Alfonsine corpus; here I draw attention to it as an element of the 'grammar of legibility', in Malcolm Parkes' felicitous expression, of the *Estoria* (Parkes, 1992, 23). Since the scribe has taken the trouble to employ a different mark to those in the remainder of the paragraph at this point it is reasonable to assume that there is a coherent reason for it and that the understanding of the medieval reader is being guided in some

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[4] Although Menéndez Pidal may have taken the view that the end result covered both possibilities.

way. However, in the modern edition, there is no punctuation of any kind at this point, and the entire paragraph is a single sentence.

The recent *Estoria de Espanna Digital*, on the other hand, does include an attempt to represent the original punctuation, in the abbreviated and expanded transcriptions and in the variant/edited text:

Figure 4. Estoria de Espanna Digital, fragment of E₁ (abbreviated), folio 88r.

amigos por que lo fazie. e el dixo les. ₄₈ QVe
tal emperador querie el seer alos que no auien
dignidades ni sennorios; quales solie el querer
al tiempo que las no auie; quel fuessen los
otros Emperadores.

D₄₉ esdel primer anno del su Jmperio
fastal seteno; no fallamos ningunas
cosas escriptas que de contar sean. si
no tanto. que enel segundo anno murio en la
cibdat de effeso. Sant Johan Apostol e euan
gelista. a sessaenta e nueue annos que nas
ciera. ₅₀ ¶ E en el tercero que fue martiriado sant
Clemeynte papa. E recibio el papado Eua
risto en su logar. que fue quarto apostoligo
depues de sant pedro.

196 Delos fechos dell an
no seteno.

E₁ N ell seteno anno que fue en
la era de cient e quaraenta
e quatro. ¶ Auino assi. Que

Figure 5. Estoria de Espanna Digital, fragment of E₁ (expanded), folio 88r.[5]

buenas palauras que Traiano dixo; cuentan del las estorias. que por que era tan bueno e tan mesurado e tan compannero de los omnes. e los affazie tan mucho assi; quel preguntaron un dia sus priuados e sus amigos ᵀ por que lo fazie. e el dixo les. ₄₈ QVe tal emperador querie el seer alos que no auien dignidades ni sennorios; ʻqualesʼ solie el querer al tiempo ʻque lasʼ no auie; quel fuessen los otros Emperadores. ₄₉ Desdel primer anno del su Jmperio fastal seteno; no fallamos ningunas cosas escriptas que de contar sean. si no tanto. que enel segundo anno murio en la cibdat de ʻeffeso.ʼ Sant Johan Apostol e euangelista. a sessaenta e nueue annos que nasciera. ₅₀ ¶ E en el tercero ʻqueʼ fue martiriado sant ʻClemeynteʼ papa. E recibio el papado Euaristo en su logar. que fue quarto apostoligo depues de sant pedro.

Footnotes:

R. Q: del enperador Traiano **2.** Q: exxvj. **3.** Q: E **4.** Q: delos | Q: trinjco **5.** Q: agripua | Q: .xix. **6.** Q: franco. | Q: las cauallerias. | Q: francoen | Q: om **7.** Q: E **30.** Q: Esilo **31.** Q: edixo **32.** Q: pulcarco | Q: ensannamiento **34.** Q: e **35.** Q: Cayo so **36.** Q: la | Q: grant | Q: om **37.** Q: deçipulos. | Q: deçipulo. **38.** Q: om | Q: socratis | Q: lo | Q: om | Q: por **39.** Q: om | Q: tu **40.** Q: Repas **43.** Q: om | Q: om **44.** Q: la | Q: por poridat | Q: om | Q: om **45.** Q: E **46.** Q: que | Q: vno **47.** Q: que **48.** Q: Equelos | Q: quelos **49.** Q: epheso **50.** Q: om | Q: clemente

Figure 6. Estoria de Espanna Digital, fragment of edited text, chapter 195.

[5] A singular advantage of the digital format is to allow for a consistent mode of reference to the text, by chapter and sentence.

While it can hardly be said that this mimics medieval reading practices, at least it does provide some sense of alternative modes of textual organization. In the same digital edition, however, the reader's text mimics Menéndez Pidal's punctuation and textual disposition.

en el senado de Roma de dezir un a otro cuando se oravan algun bien: «Mas bien aventurado seas que Agusto, e mejor que Trajano». $_{47}$ E entre muchas buenas palavras que Trajano dixo, cuentan del las estorias que porque era tan bueno e tan mesurado e tan compañero de los omnes e los afazie tan mucho assi quel preguntaron un dia sus privados e sus amigos por que lo fazie, e el dixoles $_{48}$ que tal emperador querie el seer a los que no avien dignidades ni señorios, cuales solie el querer, al tiempo que las no avie, quel fuessen los otros emperadores. $_{49}$ Desdel primer año del su imperio fasta'l seteno no fallamos ningunas cosas escritas que de contar sean si no tanto que en el segundo año murio en la cibdat de Efeso sant Joan apostol e evangelista a sessaenta e nueve años que naciera; $_{50}$ e en el tercero que fue martiriado sant Clemeynte papa, e recibio el papado Evaristo en su logar, que fue cuarto apostoligo depues de sant Pedro.

Figure 7. Estoria de Espanna Digital, fragment of reader's text, chapter 195.

Editions, of course, must pay more than lip service to multiple possible readerships and it is not uncommon to think that modern forms of textual disposition are a requirement for modern comprehension. But one might also wish to consider quite *what* is to be comprehended. For if *mise en page* and (especially) *mise en texte* are an inherent part of the meaning of a text, then the comprehension that follows in their absence may well be valid, but it is not akin to the oriented understanding of the medieval reader.

Alfonso el Sabio and the *punctus elevatus*

In what follows I concentrate on one of Alfonso's texts in particular, the aforementioned *Estoria de Espanna*. The experience of editing digitally Alfonso's history of Spain gave rise to a number of insights regarding the form of textual organization of the historical discourse. As the [Estoria de Espanna Digital](#) had as one of its central tenets respect for the punctuation employed (and as a result the original punctuation is transcribed as faithfully as possible) searching for patterns of discursive markers though the use of digital files became possible – albeit initially solely through the search function in the xml transcriptions of the manuscripts.[6] A very preliminary search revels the presence of the following punctuation marks:
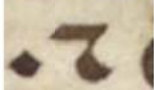
Paraph	
Punctus	
Punctus elevatus	
Tironian sign	
Punctus/Majuscule	
Punctus interrogativus	

Figure 8. Punctuation marks in the *Estoria de Espanna*, manuscript E₁.[7]

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[6] At present, in autumn 2018, the search tools are not yet fully developed within the edition. The raw xml transcriptions, however, can be analysed in a variety of ways.

[7] There are other markers (e.g. the *tripunctus* and the hyphen) but they appear not to have the same level of significance.

The baseline analysis of the presence (or not) of these marks was cross referenced against the physical constitution of the codex, that is, principally the quires of which it is constituted. E_1 is made up of 26 quires, most of which are octavo, although there is some textual disruption in the early quires. The advantages of this kind of analysis can be seen from some small details which might, on the surface, appear to be trivial. Thus, for example, a decline in the frequency of the paraph marks in folio 69r is matched by a similar decline in 76v. On closer examination it can be seen that this is attributable to the absence of red paraph marks on both although there are spaces for them, and that the former opens the quire and the latter closes it. The blue paraph marks, by contrast are all present. One might take the view that this is a detail of little importance, but it does reveal to us something of how the manuscript was composed. First, this shows the order of working, since we can assume that all the blue paraphs were put into the manuscript first –if this were not the case someone would likely have noticed the error. We can also assume that the paraph marks were added before the codex was bound, since the reason for the absence of the red ones is almost certainly that 69r and 76v, two sides on the same sheet, were probably face down and the illustrator forgot to turn the bottom sheet in the quire over after completing 69v and 76r. Such details can therefore be important. Similarly, it is noticeable the tironian sign disappears almost completely between folios 18r and 27v, being replaced by 'e' as a conjunction. In this case, there is no apparent direct relationship with the quire

structure, so if the change in procedure is due to a change of scribe, it would also denote that individual scribes did not each work on separate quires.

A contextual analysis of the discourse markers in the Alfonsine texts would almost certainly reveal other such procedural and contextual information. But here I concentrate on the use of one of the markers referred to above, the *punctus elevatus*, as seen in the example of Figure 2.

1. The *punctus elevatus* in E₁.

The history of the *punctus elevatus* as an element in Western punctuation is outlined by, *inter alia*, Parkes (1992), Brown (2010) and Llamas Pombo (2017). Possibly an extension of the system of pointing Gregorian chant, the *punctus elevatus* appears in a range of contexts, the earliest such being dated by Parkes at c.790, and was clearly established as a punctuation mark by the twelfth century – at least in Latin texts (Parkes, 2). The form of this mark in E₁ is that of a point complemented by a stroke at an angle of roughly 45 degrees, up and to the right, above it. It should be noted that in the early folios, the upward stroke is much thinner, but that after a change in hand in folio 8r l.21 noted by Catalán the standard broader stroke is more common (Catalán, 1997, 42). For the sake of representational convenience, it appears in the *Estoria de Espanna Digital* as a modern semi-colon, but it should be made clear that the function it has in context bears little or resemblance to that of the modern semi-colon; rather it appears to have served a function more akin to that of the modern colon.

A search of the xml files containing E_1, to which were added the first two quires of E_2 since these were known to have been composed at the same time in Alfonso's *scriptorium* and to have formed a part of the same codex initially, reveals that there are no fewer than 3,286 examples in the 212 folios which comprise the Alfonsine text (not all of which contain text). Although for a variety of reasons averages are a very blunt measure, not least because the content of certain folios require a greater level of usage, nonetheless a mean of almost 16 examples per folio, or 4 per column, does at least suggest that the mark in question was a significant one. The extent to which it was employed consistently is, of course, another question.

The usage of the *punctus elevatus* in $E_1 + E_{2a}$ falls into three categories. Occasionally, it can be used as a line filler to ensure that the text box is completed on the right margin. Since it is quite common to see a hyphen in line end position, this is not for the purposes of word breaking but almost exclusively to fill space, perhaps in response to the *horror vacui* of which Busby speaks (Busby, 2002, 302). The remaining two types, however, are more indicative of systematic usage. The first is to punctuate binary statements of the type 'e… ; e', 'ni…; ni' or more commonly 'lo uno…; lo al' (or 'lo otro'). A typical example of this structure can be seen in folio 122v:

¶ E fuesse Juliano pora tierra de parcia. E ouo y muchas batallas e priso muchas uillas e muchos castiellos de tierra de Persia. los unos por fuerça; los otros que se dieron de su grado. *EED*, 353.5

It is noticeable that this usage begins around folio 53r, and thus does not appear in any significant way in the first textual block identified by Menéndez Pidal and Catalán (Catalán, 1997, 65-82), regarded by both as composed prior to the rest of the chronicle, and which runs until the end of the eighth quire in folio 56v. This use of the *punctus elevatus*, which occasionally extends to lists, is not uncommon, but it does not represent the vast majority of examples.

By far the most common usage is what might be termed anaphorical, that is, to mark the presence of a main clause –frequently beginning with the main verb– which is separated either explicitly or implicitly from its antecedent, usually by means of a subordinate clause. Frequently that subordinate clause will be introduced by 'pues que', as in folio 41r:

> ¶ E este rey pues que uio que todos uarones e mugieres assi se uinien con el. E se derraygauan de la tierra; fizo les ante que dend saliessen quemar sus uillas e quantas pueblas otras auien por que depues non touiessen y feuza pora tornar alla e fuessen bunos. *EED*, 89.4

A similar example can be seen in folio 62v in which the qualifier of the subject distances the subject from the main verb, which is in consequence preceded by the *punctus elevatus*:

> ¶ E sabet que est anno en que se fallo primera mientre el cuento desta era; fue a cinco mil e ciento e sessaenta e un anno que el mundo e adam fueron fechos e se començo la primera edat. *EED*, 127.22

More complex examples also abound, as in, for example, folio 177v:

> ¶ El buen Rey con el cuedado que tenie. quando uio los conseios departidos; con el su grand coraçon começo de fablar a los suyos. en esta guise e dixo les assi; ya oyestes amigos lo que Paulo e su companna an començado. *EED*, 525.3

In the first instance, the main verb 'começo' is separated from its antecedent by a complex temporal clause, and the main clause itself is complicated by a second qualifier and the use of direct speech. The use of the *punctus elevatus* to introduce direct speech is not common in E$_1$, however, as can be seen in folio 75v:

> ¶ E quando los senadores le dizien gracias por alguna cosa que les prometie; dizie el quando lo mereciere. me las daredes. *EED*, 175.12

Here the *punctus elevatus* serves the principal role of highlighting the main verb, and not the clause in direct speech. The absence of the *punctus elevatus* is therefore more striking after 'mereçiere' than after 'el'. In cases such as that demonstrated in Figure 2 above, the antecedent is also a temporal one and the basic structure is still the same. Perhaps the most striking, and complex type of example can be seen in 139r:

> E aquellos ostrogodos que uiuien en tierra de Scicia; tan grandes anchuras de tierra tenien. E tantos senos dessa mar; e rios con grandes riberas. et tanto saliron esforçados e puiaron a grand nombrada por sus fechos; que Vuandalo et Margomano

principes delos Esquadios de que oyeron los grandes fechos dellos; et cuemo les yua bien; metieron se so el so Sennorio. *EED*, 404.15

In this case, there are several main clause verbs that depend on the same subject ('tenien', 'oyeron', 'metieron') which give rise to several separate punctuation markers. One might object that the system here is not entirely regular, but it seems clear that there is a basic principle of syntactic structuring in operation; that is, that at least in the context of this manuscript from the Alfonsine *scriptorium*, there seems to have been a consciousness of the value of the *punctus elevatus* as a way of distinguishing a particular syntactic structure –which I here term as anaphorical– rather than indicating a pause (although it may also have had this function, of course). The significance of this is two-fold: on the one hand it contributes to the arguments that punctuation in medieval texts could have a syntactic as much as a elocutionary value, which may also have implications for the nature of the reading implied by the use of such a system, that need not necessarily be considered to be solely oral; and on the other it raises the possibility that the design of the Alfonsine project implied the organization of form as well as content. Is there then evidence for the use of the same system of punctuation (and here we refer solely to the *punctus elevatus*) more widely in the Alfonsine corpus?

2. The *punctus elevatus* in the Alfonsine corpus

It is known that E_1, the manuscript from which the above examples are drawn, was composed in the royal *scriptorium* sometime in the period 1270-74. Although there are certain inconsistencies (e.g. with regard to the use of the Tironian sign) the formal structure is quite consistent, but this does not, on its own, permit us to posit the existence of an *Alfonsine* system of textual organization beyond this codex.

In respect of the language employed in the Alfonsine project, the following view of Inés Fernández-Ordóñez –that one cannot truly speak of an Alfonsine standard– is widely held:

> Pero aun dentro de la dimensión terminológica y discursiva, apenas puede hablarse de una norma lingüística alfonsí tal como hoy entendemos ese concepto, esto es: el empleo mayoritario o uniforme de ciertas opciones lingüísticas con exclusión de otras, que pasan a ser consideradas dialectales o subestándar. (Fernández-Ordóñez, n.d)

However, the disposition of text on the page is a different matter. There are known to be eleven extant manuscripts which are direct products of the Alfonsine *taller* (with their approximate dates of composition in braces):

1. *Estoria de Espanna*: Esc. Y-I-2 and first two quires of X-I-4 [1270-4]
2. *General Estoria*: Libro 1 – BNE 816 [1270-74]
   http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000131513&page=1
3. General Estoria Libro 4: BAV Urb.Lat. 539 [1280?]
   https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Urb.lat.539
4. *Libro de saber de astrología*: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, BH 156 [1276-79]
5. *Libro de las cruzes*: BNE 9294 [1259]
   http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000037615
6. *Libro conplido en los iudizos de las estrellas*: BNE 3065 [1254?]
   http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000023119&page=1

7. *Lapidario*: Esc. h.I.15 [1250?]
8. *Libro de las formas et las imagenes*: Esc. H.I.16 [1279]
9. *Canones de Albateni:* Paris Arsenal 8322 [1276-79?]
   http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b71003376.r=Arsenal%208322?rk=21459;2
10. *Libro de astromagia*: BAV Reg.Lat. 1283a
    [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.1283.pt.A
11. *Libro de ajedrez, dados e tablas*: Esc. T-I-6 [1283?]

Additionally there are the codices of the *Cantigas de Santa María*, but as these are (a) in verse and (b) in Galician, they are not included here. As can be seen from the above list, most of the prose works surviving are from the second half of Alfonso's reign. Unfortunately, none of the legal works, which might have given a better indication of organizational systems of extensive prose, have come to us directly from Alfonso's *taller*.

A brief examination of these manuscripts reveals that the same system appears to be in place for most. The following examples, chosen at random, demonstrate similar anaphoric usage in three of the Alfonsine manuscripts.
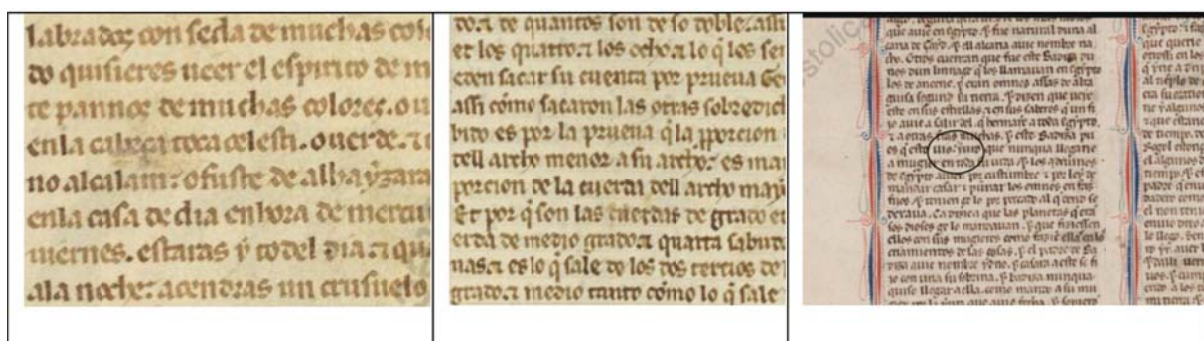

Figure 9. *Astromagia*, 34vb; *Canones* 4rb and *General Estoria IV*, 3va

Almost all of the manuscripts have examples, although not all to the same degree. Thus, *GE1* has particularly noteworthy usage on 271v and 10v, amongst

many others (albeit perhaps to a lesser extent than E_1)[8] and the *Libro conplido* also has extensive usage (e.g. 97, 119, 202). An exception may be the *Libro de las cruzes*, although this may have much to do with the subject matter of the work, which militates against the kind of syntax which seems to give rise to the use of the *punctus elevatus*. Even in this case, however, other structuring devices common to the Alfonsine texts seem to be present.

A detailed analysis of all of the Alfonsine corpus, and one which dealt with all aspects of *mise en page* and *mise en texte* is required in order to confirm the wider hypothesis. Nonetheless, even with such limited evidence as is available currently (and there is no way as yet to analyse the other manuscripts digitally) the apparently consistent use of the *punctus elevatus* in these syntactic conditions across a range of textual types and at different moments in the life of the *scriptorium* would seem to suggest that the control exercised over the physical disposition of text was extensive and coherent. Quite how original this system was, that is, the extent to which it could be termed a specifically Alfonsine system of textual disposition, is another question.

3. Sources and inspirations

As mentioned above, the origins of the *punctus elevatus* as marker of pauses are relatively well understood, but the manner in which its use developed, to the point that it could be employed for specifically syntactic functions in the Alfonsine texts, is rather more complex. Initially, this requires an examination of

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[8] A point borne out by a recent article (Sánchez-Prieto Borja, 2017) which suggests that the *punctus elevatus* is relatively rare in the GE.

its usage in the previous century or so widely in Europe, though this of course implies its usage in other languages, principally Latin and especially in the context of the Bible, whose syntactic structures are necessarily different. Allied to this is the necessity to understand the contexts for the possible invention of an Alfonsine system; by whom might this have been done and what would their influences have been?

With regard to the first question, it is possible to find multiple examples of the use of the mark in biblical texts. Thus, for example, BNE Vitr/21/4 a Bible of the Remy d'Auxerre tradition and, according to the catalogue of the Biblioteca Nacional de España, perhaps written in the North of Italy, has repeated use of the *punctus elevatus*, as befits a text organized *per cola et commata*. The explicit specifically states:

> Expleta est biblia ista ad honorem domini nostri ihesu christi et beatissime uirginis marie et beati domini confesoris sub anno domini millesimo ducentesimo septuagesimo secundo, indictione quinta decima, die undecimo intrante madio, prope nomam. Ego Iohannes filius Iacobi notarius scripsi (fol.519vb)

That is, it was written in precisely the same years in which the Alfonsine *scriptorium* was at its height. While not all Bibles of the time employed this system, many did. However, the logic behind *per cola et commata* is a specifically biblical one, and not directly related to the syntax of a Castilian language whose written form was only then being crystallised. In any case, the

thirteenth century, as pointed out by Parkes, saw a significant development in *mise en page* and *mise en texte*, and much of this was due to developments in the use of books (Parkes, 1992, 44). Although many of the literate individuals of late thirteenth-century Castile were clerics, by no means all were. Marina Kleine's detailed study of the chancellery documents of Alfonso's reign (Kleine, 2015) gives us a fine picture of that aspect of the members of Alfonso's chancellery and though we know little about the constitution of the *scriptorium* responsible for Alfonso's prose works, it is likely that many were not clerics and that their influences could have lain elsewhere. The development of universities, not least under the influence of Alfonso himself, and the expansion of Roman law, saw significant growth in the cadre of literate secular individuals, whose frame of reference would not have been solely religious texts. While it is true that there must have been extensive cultural and intellectual interchange between Castile and other cultural centres in Europe, not least the intellectual ferment of Paris in the 1260s and 1270s, it is yet to be demonstrated that such direct influences had any bearing on the grammatical education of Alfonso's intellectuals.

Other influences may have been found closer to home. If it is indeed the case that an autochthonous system was developed, it may well have been inspired in the source material available. If we limit ourselves to sources of the *Estoria*, it is possible to find examples of the use of the *punctus elevatus* in a range of texts; not least in some thirteenth century manuscripts of *De Rebus Hispanie*:
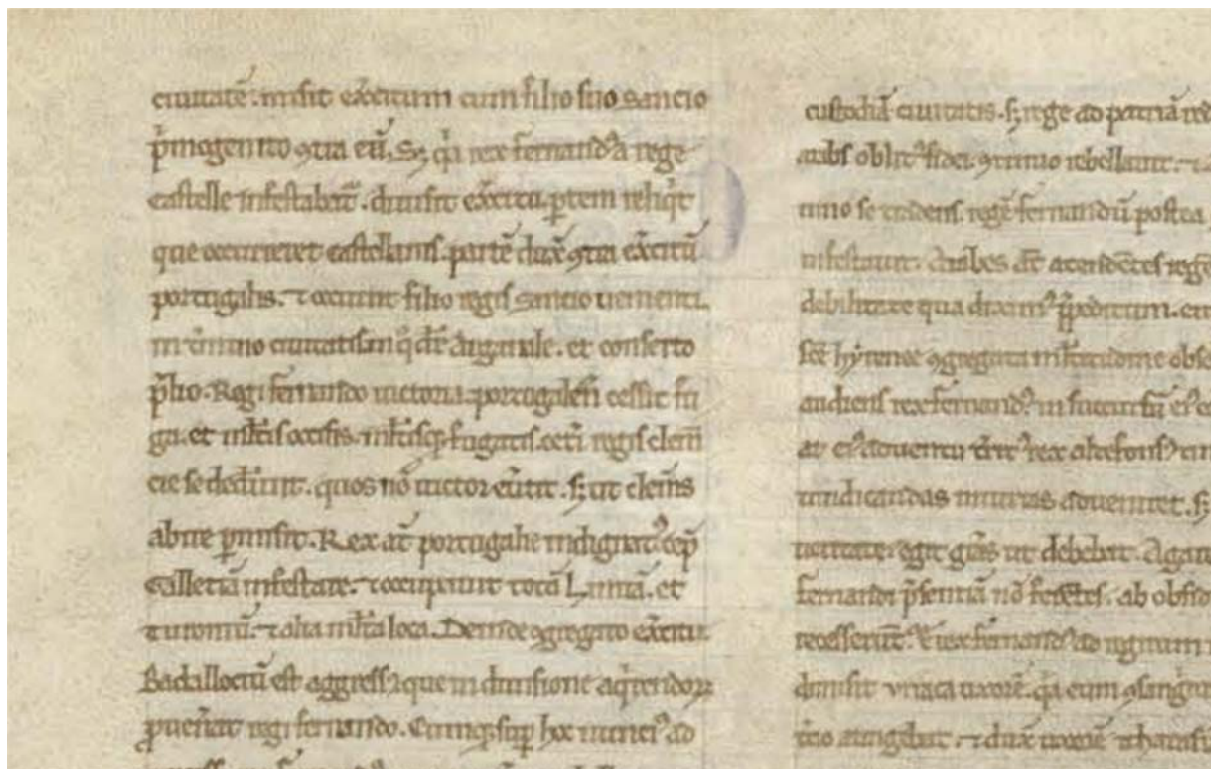
Figure 10. *De Rebus Hispanie*, Ms A VIII.xxiii Image 75

Perhaps of greater interest are two examples from different manuscripts of the other most significant source of the *Estoria*, the *Chronicon Mundi*:
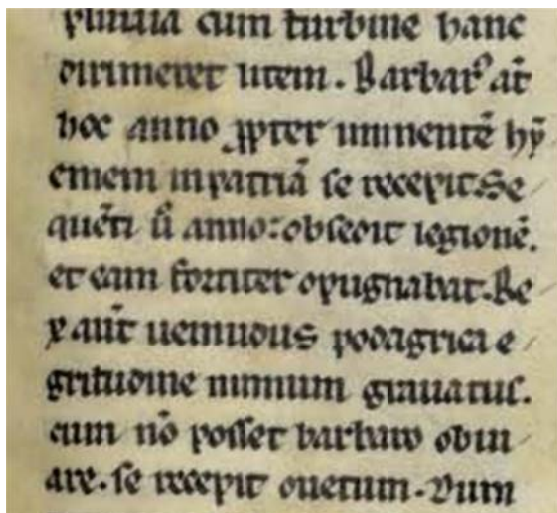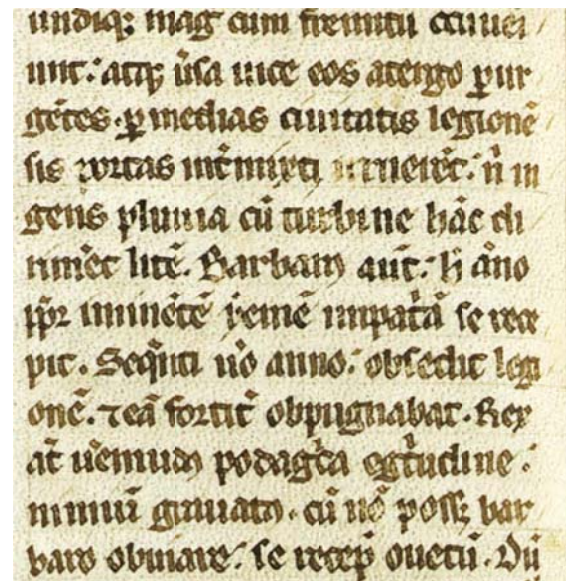
Figure 11 *Chronicon Mundi* S 68v

Figure 12 *Chronicon Mundi* T 187ra

Both these manuscripts are from the thirteenth century and both have the same use of the *punctus elevatus*, in precisely the same sentence, in a syntactic role which is remarkably similar to the anaphoric role suggested in the Alfonsine texts above. However, what cannot be determined is exactly when these manuscripts were written, and by whom; for which reason there is the intriguing possibility that the punctuation of these Latin manuscripts may have been inflected by the Alfonsine vernacular system. But without a detailed examination of the punctuation of Latin language texts in the first half of the Peninsular thirteenth century, it is impossible to know if this is the case. Another intriguing possible influence lies in the work of Vincent de Beauvais, whose *Speculum Maius* is perhaps the best extra-peninsular equivalent of Alfonso's historical and encyclopaedic ambition and was compiled in broadly the

same period. His work was certainly known in the Alfonsine *scriptorium* since it was employed as a historical source. [9]

In any case, there is enough evidence to suggest that, whatever the immediate inspiration, the Alfonsine manuscripts were designed in such a way as to take specific account of the disposition on the page, both in general and in the particular case of the punctuation mark in question here. What remains to be seen is how that system was understood and developed by subsequent scribes.

4. Afterlife of the Alfonsine system

If it is tentatively accepted that there was an Alfonsine system which specifically employed the *punctus elevatus* in a syntactic role, it is reasonable to ask how great an influence it might have had on subsequent texts. In this regard, we are fortunate that the second of the royal manuscripts of the *Estoria de Espanna*, Escorial Y-I-2, known by the siglum E_2, presents us with a ready comparator. For in addition to the two quires composed in Alfonso's *taller*, the manuscript comprises a further 31 quires composed in 1289 during the reign of Sancho IV in the royal *scriptorium*, to which were added a further 14 quires during the reign of Alfonso XI in the fourteenth century in an attempt to complete the chronicle. We therefore have a single work composed in three different stages, and by three

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[9] The importance of Vincent de Beauvais, the Dominican order in general, as well as the rise in university learning and the development in the pecia system, are all highlighted by Parkes (2010) and Rouse (2010) as significant elements in thirteenth-century developments in the organization of literate discourse. The history of specifically Peninsular mise en page is yet to be written. Although all of the elements cited by Parkes may well have contributed to Alfonsine practice, there likely to have been autochthonous developments also.

different intellectual authors, and in each case the subsequent contributors, all of whom worked in the royal scriptorium, had the form and content of the previous sections to hand by way of example. The 1289 sections, as can be seen from Figure 13 below are known as hands E_{2c} and E_{2e} respectively, and since they were composed at the same time, it has sometimes been proposed that they were written by the same scribes.
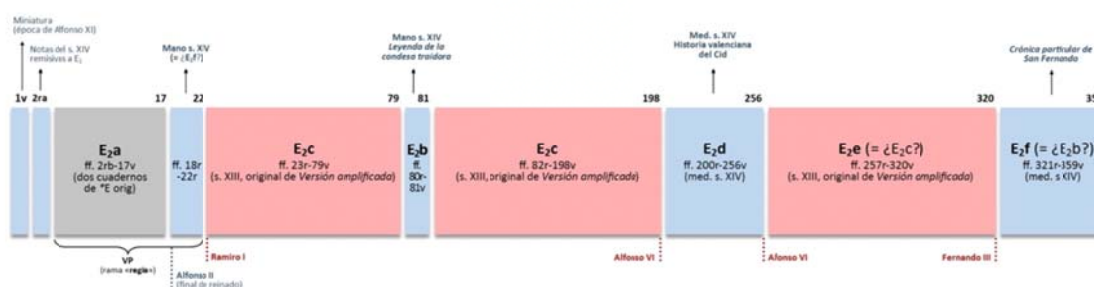

Figure 13 Composition of manuscript E_2 *Estoria de Espanna Digital*

An initial analysis of the 23 quires, representing 180 folios, of section E_{2c}, reveals that it is clear that the Alfonsine punctuation system remained in place in Sancho's *taller*, since there are no fewer than 2455 examples of the use of the *punctus elevatus* in this section; a proportion that is broadly similar to the usage pattern seen above in E_1 and E_{2a}. The function of the mark is also the same, thus we can see the linkage of clauses in 639.51, the standard Alfonsine usage in 734.15, double anaphorical usage in complex sentences in 639.4 and a triple usage in 779.7. The evidence would therefore seem to bear out the existence of a standard *mise en texte* in Alfonsine prose, and also that this system survived into

Sancho's *scriptorium*, presumably put in place by a significant proportion of the same scribes who were working in the Alfonsine *taller*.

However, an examination of the second section composed in 1289 reveals a rather different picture. For in the 64 folios represented by the E_{2e} scribe(s) there are only 82 occasions in which the *punctus elevatus* is employed, and of these relatively few are of the anaphoric type analysed here; rather the use of the *punctus elevatus* as a line filler seems to have assumed the principal role. Furthermore, the anaphoric role is most evident in the first quire, there being 11 examples before folio 262. Two conclusions can be drawn from this: first, the Alfonsine system, which appears to have had some presence in Sancho's *taller*, seems to have weakened greatly in the absence of the Learned King. That is, without a dominant guiding hand ensuring coherence and consistency in the presentation of the work, the system of textual disposition weakened dramatically from an early stage.[10] Second, the use of digital tools can tell us much about the composition of medieval text – in the light of the above it seems unlikely that the entirely of E_{2e} was composed at the same time and in the same manner as E_{2c}.

A detailed examination of the influence of Alfonsine *mise en texte* on subsequent manuscript practice is yet to be carried out. However, within the limited scope of the manuscripts included in the *Estoria de Espanna Digital*, a number of indications in this regard can be seen. In the three manuscripts employed in addition to E1 and E2 there are effectively no examples of the *punctus elevatus*,

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[10] This is not to suggest that the king was responsible for quality control personally, but rather that after his death the absence of his intellectual direction was reflected in a weakening of the form of presentation of the works produced in the *taller*.

and none at all with the anaphoric usage. However, this is not to say that the disposition of the text was never transferred from one copy to another. Particularly noteworthy in this regard is manuscript T, a fourteenth-century copy of the *Estoria*.
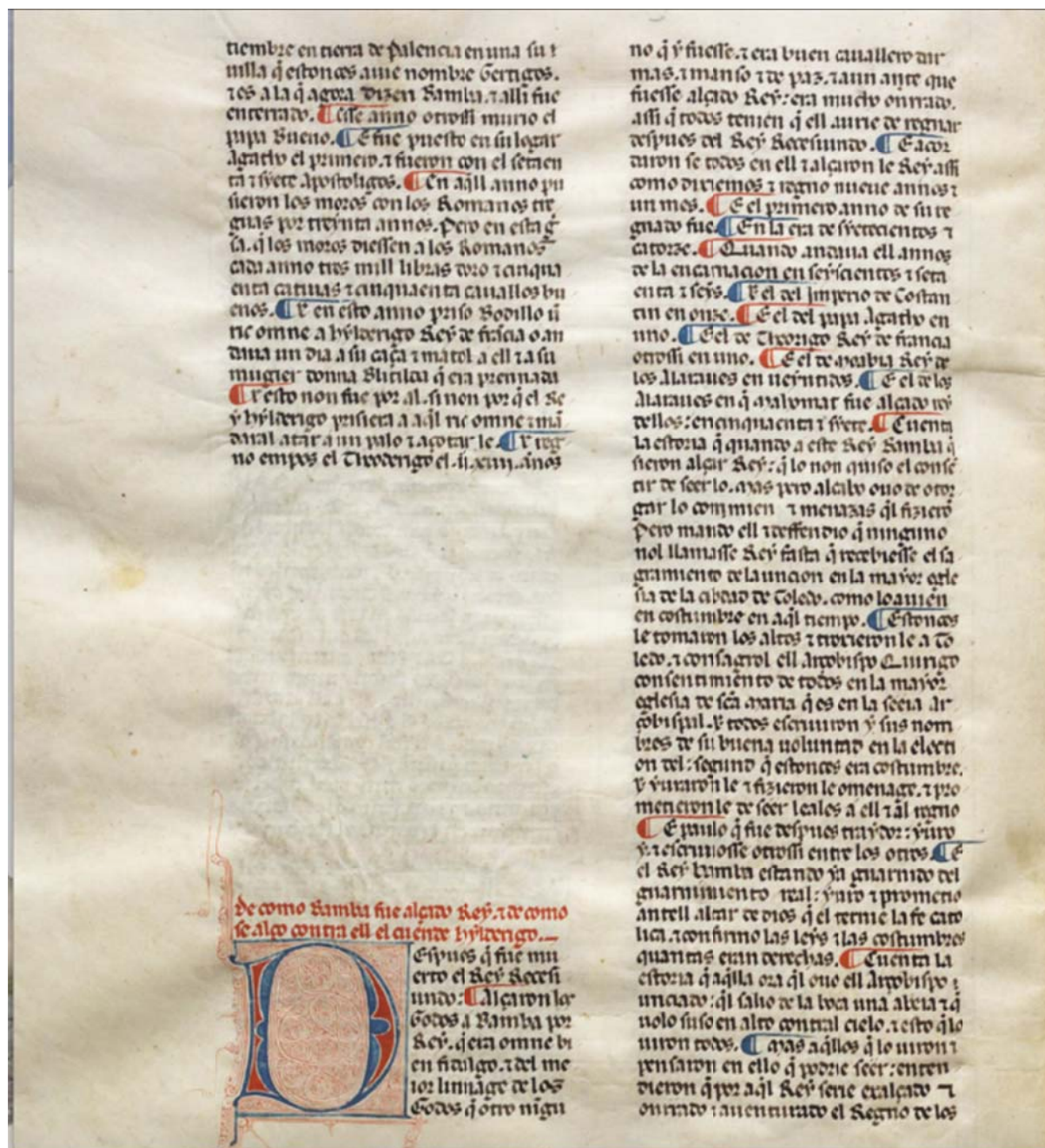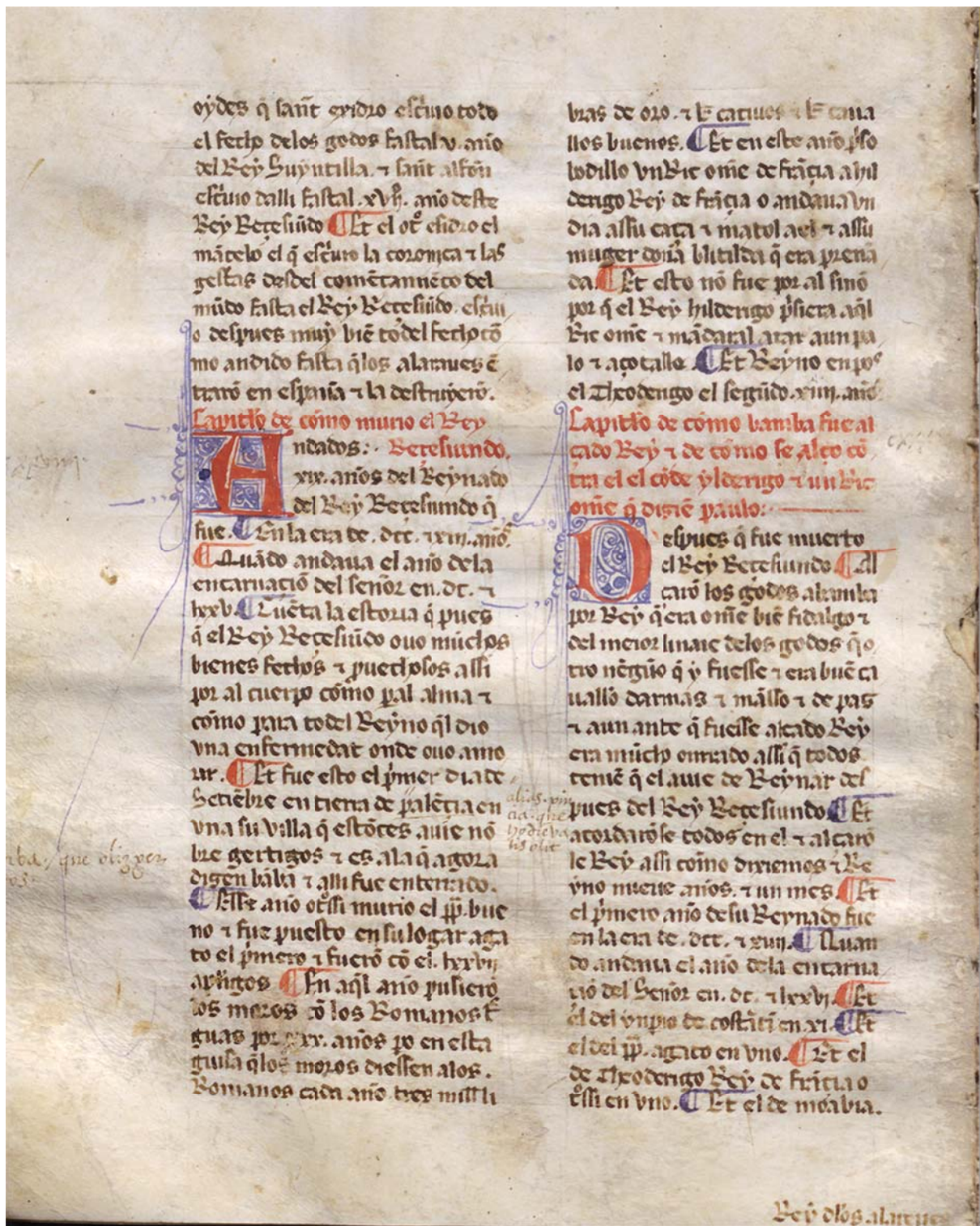
Figures 14 and 15 Manuscript E$_1$, 176v and T, 59v

What is noticeable about this example is that the disposition of the text on the

page is all but identical. That is, with one exception, all of the paraphs of the

Alfonsine text appear in the same place in the fourteenth-century exemplar. This is noteworthy because T is not a copy of E_1, indeed in this section it is a copy of a different branch on the *Estoria* stemma. While it could, of course, be a product of coincidence, the range of similarity is such that it is more likely that both derive from prototypes that shared a physical disposition. The implication is therefore that there was a coherent system of textual organization and that the disposition of the paraphs at least, though not other elements of punctuation, was considered to be important in the establishment of the meaning of the chronicle, at least at the moment of initial copying. The other fourteenth century manuscript employed in the *Estoria Digital*, known as Q, does not respect this textual organization –not all copyists were so attentive to non-linguistic discursive markers.

Conclusions

Little of the above analysis would have been feasible (or at least not in the same way) without digitally-tagged transcriptions. The utility of such digital materials depends, of course, on the quality and depth of the information recorded –they are, after all, composed by human initiative. But they do offer us the possibility of encoding a range of data which may allow us a greater analytical depth than has been possible to date; attention to *mise en page* and *mise en texte* is a particularly fine example of this since it allows us to consider a wider range of information than previously and to analyse it in creative ways. But the production of digital data is, for now at least, a labour intensive business,

confined in this case to five manuscripts; we are merely scratching the surface of the possibilities of analysis.

It would also be unwise to overstate the importance of the evidence outlined here, based as it is, in great part, on the analysis of one punctuation mark. However, the extensive example provided by E_1 and E_2 does seem to point to the existence of a specifically Alfonsine form of textual organization. The initial evidence of the other manuscripts from the *scriptorium*, at the very least, suggests that the hypothesis is worthy of further investigation. Such investigation should encompass all aspects of *mise en texte* and *mise en page* as a related system of conditioning ways of reading, one which gives a richer understanding of the construction of meaning than has previously been possible. More broadly, Parkes's notion of grammar of legibility must be extended to the full set of characteristics outlined by Busby. Furthermore, Parkes's analysis is predicated on the historical evolution of systems of punctuation with an almost exclusive concentration on texts written in Latin. However the initial indications of the analysis of Alfonsine texts demonstrates that syntactic (as well as enunciative) concerns could well have underpinned the construction of a specifically vernacular, context-driven form of *mise en texte*. That notion of context therefore demands a dialectic analysis of the system, that is, one in which (for example) the internal organization of the Alfonsine system is understood not just in terms of the history of punctuation generally, but also of the material and cultural conditions of, *inter alia*, the evolution of Western punctuation, the dynamics of university education, the place of grammar in the trivium, the spread of (Dominican?) literacy and the very specific multilingual

and intercultural conditions of the Peninsula in the second half of the thirteenth century. But most of all, such analysis should spring from the conditioned ways of reading inherent in the manuscript form which was the principal vehicle for the transmission and preservation of the vast majority of wisdom and knowledge.

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