

**Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities**

THESES OF PhD. DISSERTATION

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TÓTHFALUSSY**

THE FUNCTIONS OF SECTION MARKS

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1. Introduction, objective

The issue of the history of using punctuation marks has been on the periphery of Hungarian linguistics for centuries. Since the Hungarian contexts of this topic were studied only by a few so far, a lot of unanswered questions remained. One of these unexploited areas is the problem of section marks.

We can encounter section marks less frequently in the works of ancient authors, but frequently at authors and copyists from the Middle Age throughout Europe and in Hungary, too. The scientific literature counted these characters the markers of chapters and paragraphs. Later there was a suspicion that this is a more complex phenomena than earlier considered from both formal and functional viewpoint. Hence, I set the objective to my work to analyse section marks from both formal and functional viewpoint with an outlook to the tools of text breaking and to European customs. Since section marks primarily appear in codes (or, respectively, less frequently, as a persisting phenomenon in early forms, too), my objective was to take into consideration the approximately 50 Hungarian codes in order to determine for which type of codes the usage of this character was primarily typical and which function it had at macro, meso and micro level. The objective of the analysis is to prove that the function of section marks is differentiated, they are not only markers of paragraphs in our language memories. – With this statement of mine I also would like to challenge the correctness of the designation.

1. Methods

I analysed the text of codes containing section marks based on traditional descriptive text linguistics and grammatical categories (terminology) at macro, meso and micro level, despite of being aware of the fact that these designations did not cover the same text units in ancient Hungarian times than today. The historical text linguistic researches made so far (which are mainly of text grammatical nature) do not involve text breaking at macro level at all. Sándor Károly in his work: Historical grammar of the Hungarian language in the chapter that analyses the text grammar of memories from late ancient Hungarian era even states that the basic analysis unit of the text linguistic part is the text clause (quoted work 761): „let us abandon the analysis of the text as a whole and the macro structure of the text” (Károly 1995: 762). – However, due to the nature of my work, as the subject of the dissertation is the analysis of the reverse P (¶) that is considered marker of sections (cf. for example D. Szabó 1944: IX) and its various versions, during the analysis I have to cover paragraphs, blocks within the paragraphs and sometimes chapters, too (because sometimes marks appear before these, too).

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4. Summary, results

In my dissertation I studied the functions of section marks in our around half hundred codes in Hungarian language. The objective of the research was to prove that section marks were not only markers of paragraphs in our language memories. – With this statement of mine I also intended to challenge the correctness of the designation.

In line with the objective of the thesis, the first large unit of the work is of universal, synoptic nature: it covers the appearance of section marks, the history of the development of section marks and their applications abroad. During the research it came to light that the original meaning of the word *paragraphos* is 'character written beside the text' (Mrs Adamik 2013: 292), from the functions of which only one function was the marking of major content units. The appearance of the word *paragraphos* can be dated around the 4th century BC, but back then the word did not connect to the classic section mark (Γ), then at the time when the hook-like character appeared in the 3rd century BC at the Greeks, the function of this was only partially the separation of major thought units, back then it was already used at the border of other units, as well as for highlighting certain parts. According to Pfeiffer, the German professor of classical languages (1978: 223) paragraphs were initially marked by underlining the first letter of the last line of the paragraph; according to Diringer (1990: 159) the section mark was composed of a vertical line and above it a small dash, which was written to the beginning of the line that followed the end of the paragraph. According to him it may occur that special forms of marks were used instead, for examples a bird. Hence, the original meaning of the word can not be limited merely to the marking of paragraphs: written beside the text, it might have had an articulating, highlighting function. – Later, Isidoros Spanish scientist bishop (560–636), who in his work *Etymologiarvm* summarized the Greek emphasis marks, as well as the so-called critical signs (which were used when preparing critical copies of ancient texts), does mention two types of section marks (the Γ and the reverse of it). Based on the accompanying explanation, the function of these was partly the separation of major units, but back then they were already used for the separation of other units, as well as for the highlighting of certain parts, too.

The works (also) dealing with the history of punctuation marks paid little attention to the analysis of so-called section marks, though sometimes it was mentioned in these works that the role of the original Greek section mark (Γ) was taken over later in Latin texts by the reverse P (¶), the C (capitulum), as well as marks similar to the above ones.

Based on the texts subject to the analysis and scientific literature it seems that, similarly to the functions of other punctuation marks, it has developed during the long centuries when section marks were used in which texts of which nations and in which forms and functions, and that the mark is bound together from the viewpoint of the analysis of (formal) functions and the functions traditionally ascribed to the mark, but at the same time is parted, too. Therefore I had to deal separately with the formal and functional features of the section mark(s), as well as with the formal and functional features of the section markers and highlighters in general, too. The analysis paths of these often crossed each other, but also often parted. During the writing of the thesis it was a problem (or, moreover, it became a problem) to decide what is considered section mark at all. Is it the mark that carries out the desired functions, the functions designated to it or is the section mark the one that seems to be a section mark from formal viewpoint?

The fourth large chapter of the thesis contains, following the listing of relevant Hungarian references in bibliography, the analysis of the 17 codes from among the 18 written in Hungarian language that contain section marks. I consulted the Hungarian codes according to their origin of order. During the research it became apparent that section marks typically appear in Franciscan codes, where the most colourful pointing system can be discovered (section marks appear in a total of 12 Franciscan codes). However, occasionally they can be found in codes that belong to other orders, too: in the Festetics- and Czech-codex from the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit, in the Birk-code from the Dominican Order and the Munich- and Sándor-code of disputed origin. There may be several reasons for the exemptions: on one hand, cloisters that belonged to different orders, but were built well within striking distance of one another were buying and selling the codes among themselves (the Clarisses from Óbuda and the sisters from the Dominican Order on Margaret Island); on the other hand, it was not neutral. either, from which work that was generated somewhere else the code was copied, and what kind of habit, literacy, and individual standard of taste the copyist had; thirdly: amidst the turbulent centuries of history (for example: the 150-years' Turkish regime) the codes were scattered across the cloisters, and more than once newer hands wrote or drew letters, punctuation marks into the text, either because they missed something or because they intended to make the preserved book originally written for a private individual suitable for usage in a cloister; fourthly there were efforts to regulate the pointing system of the codes (for example at the Cistercians), and the effect of this could have occurred at other orders, too.

Four types of section marks were used in Hungarian codes: in the codes of the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit most frequently the reverse P-like mark was used, which probably is the equivalent to the π -mark in the word *paragraphos* in Latin character (Wattenbach 1878: 78); but there is also the possibility that this was developed from the combination of the C indicating the capitulum 'chapter' and the vertical line drawn beside it in a way that the vertical line extended beyond the C (Schneider 1999: 90–91). We can also find examples for section marks reminding us on the reverse D in the Franciscan codes, which might have been developed either from the reverse P without stem (for example in the part of the Debrecen code written by the 3rd hand; Keszler 1996: 137), or again from the combination of the C indicating the capitulum 'chapter' and the vertical line drawn beside it (Schneider 1999: 90–91). The codes also contain so-called „half section marks”, (these I did not consider individual section mark types), which in fact are the pre-drawings of the reverse P, only the loop is missing (for example in the part of the Debrecen code written by the 4th hand). – The mark mentioned in the Hungarian scientific literature as gibbet-like (Γ), but considered hook-like in international literature (Gardthausen 1879: 273; Wattenbach 1895: 120) served according to its original function the separation of units within major sections. In our language memories it only appeared in the Festic-code of the Order of Saint Paul the First Hermit. The hook-like sign as regards its form reminds us of the section mark used as text critical sign, which (see above) probably is identical to the left-stem version of the Greek pi (Π), which as regards its original function served the separation of units within major paragraphs (Erbse 1988: 329; Gardthausen 1879: 273; Havas 1996: 69; Isidoros published in year 1966: XXI.; Keszler 1996: 17, the same author 2004: 89–90; Tóthfalussy 2007: 344; Wattenbach 1895: 15, 120). – Copyists generally used only one type of section mark as per book in the codes of different genre, though there were some exemptions to this.

I processed a total of 17 codes in my work: with the exemption of the Tihanyi-code every code that contains section marks. The majority of the codes was of mixed content, and some of them originated from more than one hand. During processing I always indicated beside the hands in parenthesis in text units of which genre the section marks can be found.

In line with the objective set to my work, I intended to analyse the text breaking function of the section marks in the dissertation in a breakdown as per macro, meso and micro level. However, the demarcation of these levels in the 14th - 16th century is extremely complicated. During my work it was a problem that in several cases it was not possible to conclude definitively on the border of which text or grammar unit the mark stands. This

problem was referred to by Sándor Károly, too, moreover, he also mentioned that during the breakdown into text clauses it is difficult to free ourselves from today's language and style effects (Károly 1995: 761). – This is in fact true, but the same applies to other text linguistic units, for example if we think of text parts considered today paragraphs or clause blocks. The paragraph is „the unit of lengthy written texts, which indicates a change in topic or partial topic. Today paragraphs can be indicated from formal viewpoint by indented lines, from content viewpoint by title clauses or thematic nouns, too” (Kugler–Tolcsvai 2000). Nevertheless, indented text units did not exist in the age under review (at most reverse indented texts). This means that we can make the classification of a paragraph or a block within a paragraph merely on the basis of its function. The question is raised whether indeed there were paragraphs relevant to today's function in the age of codes. – According to János Horváth, codes „follow the stylish ideal of constant flow” (János Horváth 1931: 264), whereas from content viewpoint they are broken down very precisely (a part of the texts has scholastic origins). Hence, the question is whether this statement was made merely on the basis of forming. (Words and clauses existed also in ancient history, in spite of early scripts were written by uninterrupted writing (without breaks) (*scripto continua*). – However, the fact remains that the intention of breaking down texts somehow has existed from ancient times, and similarly, there were also efforts in ancient Hungarian to indicate major units of the text. Accordingly, it can be assumed that the breakdown as per macro, meso and micro level existed (if not consequently) already in the age of codes.

However, a couple of problems still remained. If for example a title-like header clause (or a longer introductory part) is followed by longer expositions broken down in points (sometimes also numbered) with enumeration character, which may even last for pages, these parts rather seem to be separate paragraphs. Nevertheless, I valued those parts containing enumeration differently where after the header clause the numbered text was only of clause- or structural length. In these cases I considered these units one single paragraph. However, in course of the continued research it turned out that there are some codes (e.g. Guary-code, Kazinczy-code), where some parts of the enumeration are so different (clause blocks, clauses, structures) that they could not be classified into the regular categories. In these cases I had no other choice than classifying them into a group beyond the grammatical category: into the enumeration category. – In case of other enumerations (classifiable in grammatical categories, too) it can also be assumed that enumeration was a more important point of view in the 14th -

16th century than the grammatical unit when using the section mark. Here the section mark corresponded to the function of today's section mark (§).

We used to have and we still have other special cases that are difficult to classify. It was for example a problem to classify quotations and dialogues into the traditional clause- and text linguistics categories. Sándor Károly also emphasized that quotations are special from the viewpoint of text continuity; these have a different character (from the viewpoint of using the anaphora, the conjunction, etc.) compared to not quotation-like text clauses (1995: 762). – Accordingly, I indicate quotations separately during the analysis and in the statistics.

From text linguistic viewpoint I also paid attention to the so-called non-continuous text clauses without conjunction (these do not connect to the preceding text clause or text clauses). The latter are typically chapter titles, clauses in the beginning of chapters, as well as clauses in the beginning of the new part of the text [paragraph?] cf. (Károly 1995: 766; Gallasy 2003: 563), but similar to these are also exclamative, imperative, desiderative and interrogative clauses, too.

During the analysis it was also a problem that sometimes various functions accompany each other, they are multi-causal, which means for example that one mark can at the same time be honorary mark, border of clauses, moreover, the marker of blocks within paragraphs.

Despite of the difficulties and problems I make the attempt to outline the scope of utilisation of section marks and to present the frequency of various functions. This is shown in the chart with the title 'Summary sheet of the functions of section marks'. I classified those cases into the intonation marker and honorary function when only these functions could be established. Section marks carry out the function of marking chapters to a percentage of 0.8%, marking paragraphs and clause blocks to 33%, text clauses to 28%. The appearance of section marks between phrases and half-clauses is 31.1%, with merely intonation marker function 0.7%, with honorary function 3%, with other function 2.6% and with separator function 0.8%.

Summary sheet of the functions of section marks

Code	Total	Chapter marker	Paragraph and clause block marker	Between text clauses	On the border of phrases, in syntagma and between half-clauses	Intonation marker	Honorary	Other	Separator
Müncheni	62		50 (from which markers of pericopa 41)						12
Sándor	2		1		1				
Birk	5		3		2				
Festetics	236		50	83	86	17			
Czech	2								2
Jókai	383		72	111	131		69		
Guary	118		102	11			5		
Simor	1		1						
Weszprémi	11	8	3						
Nádor	16		16						
Lobkowicz	275	1	3	207	53		11		
Debreceni 1.	30		19	5	6				
Debreceni 2.	134		40	78	15			1	
Debreceni 3.	549		215	99	225			10	
Debreceni 4.	20		8	9	3				
Debreceni 5.	6	1	2	3					
Debreceni 6.	1		1						
Vitkovics	103	11	74	18					
Miskolci	4		3						1
Székelyudvarhelyi	42		41						1
Kazinczy	818		227	168	371			52	
Kulcsár	3		-						3
Total	2821	21 (0.8%)	931 (33%)	792 (28%)	893 (31.6%)	17 (0.7)	85 (3%)	63(2.1%)	19 (0.8%)

Based on the researches it seems that the existence or the lack of section marks is not a subject of the quality or the nature of the related grammatical units, but is a matter of the substance of the text, a matter of the reader (or, respectively, in case of usage at a cloister, the listener) and the copyist. The purpose of the scribe on one hand is to make the content human-readable with the help of supportive marks and to create this way a real mental and spiritual dialogue between the text and its reader, or, respectively, between God and the true believer practicing religion; on the other hand, the copyist leaves the print of its own personality on the text with sorting out and/or choosing and arranging the marks. The writer subordinates the usage of section marks to these objectives. The existence and the putting of section marks is probably no subject to strict rules, it is an optional procedure. The reason for the appearance of the marks mainly in codes is that the marks were part of the pointing repertoire, which from time to time was passed on by means of observance.

It is important to note that the indication of section marks is not primarily determined by the genre of the text, but phraseology and text contents together: how logical and consequent the writer is, how much the text enables or requires the usage of section marks. Genre determines the frequency of the appearance of section marks in the context of Hungarian codes insofar as how much it creates a frame for the usage of the marks. For example in the majority of epic works: in the legend, in various proverbs, etc. there is more action and trouble, and the actors are important pillars of the story, so they have more opportunity to speak, to state their thoughts and their feelings, to initiate a dialogue, this means that this *ab ovo* creates a frame for example for the frequent usage of quoting clauses and quotations. This may also be the explanation for the high number of section marks in this part of the code.

The function of section marks is much more differentiated than it was supposed earlier. In consideration of the original meaning of the word, the designation of the phenomena is: correct, only the meaning content assigned to it during the centuries limited merely to the indication of paragraphs is incorrect. It would be reasonable to study the functions of section marks also in the context of order, genre of text, person of the copyist and source text.

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