British Library, dating from the early 5th to the 10th c. Yoshizawa & Kobayashi (1999: 5) think that the dry-point writing in these Dunhuang MSS was entered by students who were taking notes during a lecture. They also think that these notes may ultimately help to verify the pronunciation of Classical Chinese and give insights into the methods of Buddhist teaching. Yoshizawa even invented an apparatus specifically for the study of dry-point writing, called *kakuhitsu scope*, “which consists of a special lamp, a metallic case, reflectors and filters, and enables the characters to be read and photographed” (Yoshizawa & Kobayashi 1999: 4).

In Korean, dry-point writing is known as *kakp’il* writing (*kakp’il* meaning ‘stylus’ in Korean). The existence of *kakp’il* writing in Korean MSS was only discovered in the year 2000, again by the Japanese scholar Kobayashi. According to King (2010: 219), Kobayashi’s discovery “revolutionized thinking on the history of writing in both Korea and Japan, and has forced scholars to go back and re-examine virtually every single Koryŏ-era [AD 918–1392] hanmun (Literary Sinitic) [i.e. Classical Chinese] text of a canonic Buddhist or Confucian nature for the presence of kakp’il [dry-point] kugyŏl markings [i.e. annotations that render Chinese more easily understandable for Koreans].” The interest in glossing in general and dry-point glossing in particular has since been rising in East Asia, and King reports that “kugyŏl studies have become the ‘final frontier’ of Korean historical linguistics” (*ibid*.).

Since Asian MSS are composed of paper, rather than parchment, the typical Asian stylus looks quite different from the typical European stylus. Asian styli are usually made of wood, bamboo or ivory (never brass, iron or silver) and have a length of about 24 cm. They are 6–10 mm thick and have a pointed end used in writing. Yoshizawa & Kobayashi (1999: 4) report that some of the styli found in Japanese shrines, temples, palaces or museums still showed fibrous remains at their tips, which could be shown to be microscopic scraps of Japanese paper through chemical analysis.

### 2.4.7 Dry-Point Writing in Post-Conquest England

It appears that the use of the stylus as writing implement in English MSS was also known in the post-Conquest ME period. Oxford, Corpus Christi College 198 (Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, AD 1410×1420)\(^6\) contains scribbles

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86 A digital facsimile of the MS is publicly available from “Early Manuscripts at Oxford University”. For unknown reasons, the facsimile pictures are slightly out of focus and quite grainy. A sprawling dry-point scribble is visible slanting upwards in the margin of f. 146, but I can only recognize some smudged edges of letter-like strokes. URL: <http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=corpus&manuscript=ms198>.
that “have mostly been pumiced away in the cleaning process. A few survive in dry point, nearly all illegible” (Manly & Rickert 1940: 98). Unfortunately, Manly & Rickert do not provide examples of scribbles that were still legible, which would allow some tentative conclusions as to what the nature of the connection of these scribbles with the base text might be. In addition to these scribbles, the MS bears a dry-point signature Burle on f. 146, which is associated by Manly & Rickert with a prominent London family who had personal ties with Chaucer. Manly & Rickert think the signature represents an owner’s mark, “which looks as old as the text” (1940: 98).

To what extent dry-point writing was still practiced in post-Conquest England has not been investigated systematically so far. Clanchy (1993: 118–120) does not mention dry-point writing in his portrait of ME stylus usage. Hunt (1991), who is aware of the Anglo-Saxon dry-point practices (cf. 1991: 9), does not report any dry-point finds in the numerous post-Conquest MSS that he investigated. We cannot make any statements about the falling out of use of Anglo-Saxon dry-point annotation practices, however. Whether the late use of the stylus in a Chaucerian MS context represents a continuation of the OE practice or whether we have to assume a polygenetic origin, is difficult to assess, as the lack of reports in the literature does not necessarily imply the lack of existence of similar notes in other ME MSS. Since the stylus is still used in connection with wax tablets at the time, the transfer from the context of the wax tablet to the context of MSS seems in any case always a possibility without any need for an Anglo-Saxon model.