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Angela Ferrari & Letizia Lala, The applications of the comma in contemporary Italian. From the phono-syntactic perspective to the textual perspective Our study focuses on comma use in contemporary Italian, specifically on texts that are by competent writers, with a medium to formal register and, for reasons of method, non-literary. From a descriptive point of view, we will show that comma use increasingly follows uniformities of a "textual" nature, in that it relates to creating and prioritizing textual units. From an explanatory point of view, we will first demonstrate that any treatment of comma use in terms of syntax and intonation exclusively is bound to fail since the generalizations that it will lead to are either false or break down in offshoots of exceptions and special cases; we will then argue that a significant set of syntactical uses may be reinterpreted from a textual perspective, enabling a more rational, consistent, and realistic representation of comma use.

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