

Summary

The title of this thesis is *Punctuation - rules and usage*. Before we start the description of the punctuation and its rules, we devote a few pages to the historical development of punctuation marks, starting with dots at three different heights marking pauses in recited text at the beginning, through new style of punctuation established by Bembo and Manuzio, finishing with special forms of punctuation of the information age and on-line communication. For comparison I've included a short chapter describing the evolution of punctuation in Czech. The main source of information for this historical introduction was the book *Storia della punteggiatura in Europa*.

The introduction is followed by a more detailed treatise on punctuation, its specific functions and its importance for the comprehension of written text. The section concerning the prosodic functions of punctuation will briefly discuss the problem of the relation between written and spoken language. The following section will describe the individual punctuation marks explaining their function and rules governing their usage according to grammars.

Three different grammars were consulted as neither gives a comprehensive summary of punctuation rules and the fact that they use slightly inconsistent terminology. Apart from the grammars, I've derived this chapter from *Prontuario di punteggiatura* by Bice Mortara Garavelli, the author of the beforementioned work about the history. In this book Mortara Garavelli compares the rules as codified by the three commonly used grammars with her own findings based on current usage.

I've confronted the information presented in this book with my own study of literature and journalistic texts.

The final chapter proceeds from the work of Russian linguist L. V. Ščerba. He singled out two basic types of punctuation: French (English and Italian also belong here) and German (including Czech, Polish and Russian). Both types differ from each other by different approach to syntax. The gist of this chapter is to draw attention to selected differences between the usage of punctuation in Czech and Italian and help prevent unnecessary mistakes in Italian texts written by Czech students.