

Punctuation in sixteenth century manuscripts and prints

/	virgule	The virgule marks a short pause in a sentence. Sometimes it is also used to mark the end of a sentence. During the 16 th century it shrinks to the form of a comma.
,	comma	Since the comma goes back to the virgule, it can have the same double function: to mark a pause in a sentence or to indicate the end of a sentence.
:	colon	The colon can be used as a comma or a period. It is used before a summary or before direct speech. It is often used to indicate an abbreviation or a parenthesis.
;	semicolon	The semicolon marks a longer pause in the sentence. It is quite rare in the 16 th century.
.	period	A single dot on the base line marks the end of a sentence. If it is obvious that the sentence is complete, the period may be omitted. After a single letter or group of letters, it indicates an abbreviation. Sometimes there is another period at the beginning of the abbreviation.
?	question mark	Question marks are rather rare in 16 th century manuscripts. Often questions are not marked by punctuation.
!	exclamation mark	Exclamation marks are even rarer than question marks in the 16 th century, and may have a different form.
-	horizontal dash	The horizontal dash is not often used in 16 th century manuscripts.
(...)	parenthesis	A parenthesis can be marked by round or square brackets or by colons.
“...”	quotation marks	Quotations can also be marked by other punctuation marks.
¶	paragraph mark	
-	hyphen	Hyphenation is not always highlighted. Words and syllables may be hyphenated at any point. Often, two short, parallel, horizontal, or diagonal strokes are used as hyphens.

Literature:

- SAMUEL A. TANNENBAUM, *The Handwriting of the Renaissance*, New York 1930, 139-52
- HELMAR JUNGHANS, *Interpunktion und Großschreibung in Texten der Lutherzeit* (Lutherjahrbuch 74, 2007, 153-80)