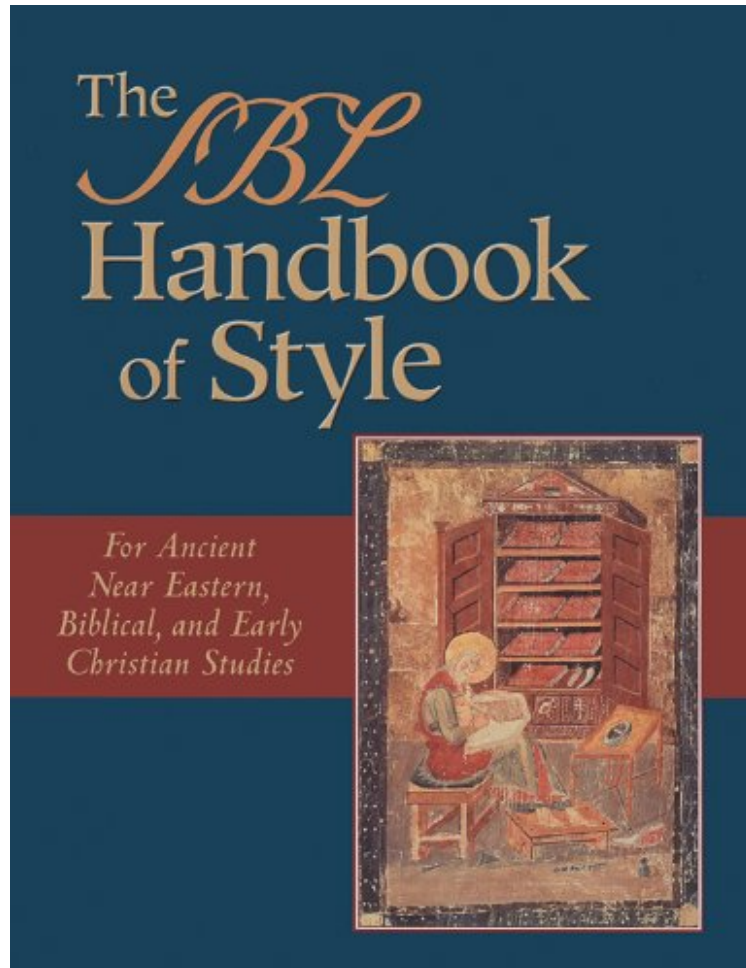


## The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies

*Patrick H. Alexander, Society of Biblical Literature, Shirley Decker-Lucke*  
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From the Inside FlapPatrick H. Alexander, John F. Kutsko, Ph.D., James D. Ernest, and Shirley A. Decker-Lucke comprise the editorial staff of Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts. David L. Petersen, Ph.D., is Professor of Old Testament at Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado, and Chair, SBL Research and PublicationsFrom the Back Cover" . . . A major service for the community of biblical scholars. This comprehensive but handy stylesheet, building on the base of the SBL guidelines, incorporates all that most authors and editors currently need to know about the technical dimensions of publishing activity, from commas and hyphens to abbreviations, from transliterations to forms of annotation. All that's left to authors is to come up with good ideas. All editors have to do is to learn what is here." --Harold W. Attridge, Lillian Claus Professor of New Testament, Yale Divinity School "The SBL Handbook of Style is an astonishing book, a true 'one-stop' reference for authors preparing manuscripts in biblical studies and related fields. It covers an amazing range of topics, from what every literate scholar should know (but may not) to what only the most erudite expert in an obscure sub-field of the discipline would be likely to know. Do you need to know how to cite an Internet publication? Whose job it is to prepare the index and secure permissions? How properly to alphabetize Abraham ibn Ezra (and why)? What the abbreviation AAeg stands for? It's all here. Written in a clear and often witty style, this volume should substantially reduce the incidence of tears and tantrums that so often beset the process of manuscript preparation. Before long biblical scholars will wonder how we ever got along without this indispensable reference work. Every graduate program should make the SBL Handbook of Style a required text." -- Carol A. Newsom, Professor of Old Testament, Emory University " . . . A formidable tool for the twenty-first century that will-and must-be on the desk of every author and editor in the biblical fields, for it combines the most relevant material from the general style manuals with the essentials for publishing on biblical literature broadly conceived." -- Eldon J. Epp, Harkness Professor of Biblical Literature, Emeritus Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, Emeritus Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OhioExcerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.1. Introduction: Using This Handbook This handbook has been created to help editors, proofreaders, and professors of ancient Near Eastern studies, biblical studies, and early Christianity as well as graduate students, and perhaps even undergraduates specializing in these disciplines. Obviously a book like this cannot explicitly address every style-related question that might arise in the course of writing a book, thesis, or term paper; rather, it is meant to resolve questions arising in our particular fields that are covered inadequately, or not at all, in the standard manuals. In preparing this Handbook, we have consulted various of these standard manuals, especially The Chicago Manual of Style (14th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993; referred to hereafter as CMS) and the "Instructions for Contributors," in the Journal of Biblical Literature 117 (1998): 555-79 and also the now somewhat dated Chicago Guide to Preparing Electronic Manuscripts (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Although this style manual takes precedence over these other manuals, CMS in particular will remain a helpful and even indispensable supplement. The next section explains the place of CMS and other reference works in the hierarchy of authorities. As it is written in CMS, "No editor worth the title will apply identical rules to every book manuscript." At the same time, experience has taught us that minute deviations from standard style at the outset can later metastasize gruesomely, causing extra work, frustration, eyestrain, and delays. To make the writing process less painful for author and

publisher alike, we have decided to apply uniform standards to all books in as many details as possible. 2. Editorial Responsibilities Editors and proofreaders strive to ensure that a given book both adheres to a specific style and respects the unique demands of each volume. To achieve their myriad goals, editors and proofreaders rely on "authorities." The top three authorities in this case are-in descending order: (1) Book style sheet (2.1) (2) The SBL Handbook of Style (2.2) (3) Other authorities (2.3) 2.1 Book Style Sheet Chief among the arbiters of editorial problems is the book style sheet. Inevitably, each book will present unique issues. If enough issues arise, the project editor will need to create a book style sheet. These issues, often concerning capitalization, spelling of unique terms, hyphenation, and so on, should be documented (documented, not merely listed in alphabetical order) in the book style sheet. 2.2 The SBL Handbook of Style The SBL Handbook of Style is designed to address those editorial and stylistic issues that are not specific to a particular book manuscript. 2.3 Other Authorities Answers to questions of editing, style, grammar, punctuation, spelling, hyphenation, and capitalization of ancient proper names, not covered in The SBL Handbook or documented on the style sheet can be answered by other authorities, listed in 2.3.1 through 2.3.5 below. As has been mentioned, CMS can also be a useful supplement. 2.3.1 BIBLICAL NAMES AND TERMS For biblical names and terms, follow the version of the Bible used in your book, which should be specified in the book style sheet. If the translations are your own, indicate that. In general, we prefer the names and terms found in the NRSV or the Anchor Bible Dictionary (New York: Doubleday, 1992), which follows the NRSV. 2.3.2 NONBIBLICAL ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN NAMES For nonbiblical ancient Near Eastern names, use the gazetteers and indexes in the following: Michael Roaf, Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia (New York: Facts on File, 1990), and John Baines and Jaromr Mlek, Atlas of Ancient Egypt (New York: Facts on File, 1980), supplementing these sources with Jack Sasson, ed., Civilizations of the Ancient Near East (4 vols.; New York: Scribners, 1995). For the titles of ancient Near Eastern texts, follow any of the resources mentioned in the previous paragraph, as well as such works as James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (3d ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969 [= ANET]), William W. Hallo, ed., The Context of Scripture (3 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997- [= COS]), or the Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World series (= SBLWAW). For more technical Assyriological matters, consult Riekele Borger, Handbuch der Keilschriftliteratur (3 vols.; Berlin, de Gruyter, 1967-1975 [= HKL]), which contains resources for Akkadian and Sumerian studies up to 1974. The annual "Keilschriftbibliographie" in *Orientalia* supplements HKL. Further issues can be resolved using Erich Ebeling et al., eds., *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* (Berlin, 1928- [RIA]). For more technical Egyptological questions, see Wolfgang Helck, Eberhard Otto, Wolhart Westendorf, eds. *Lexikon der gyptologie* (7 vols.; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972-1992 [= L]). Undoubtedly, the *Encyclopedia of Egyptology*, in progress at Oxford University Press, will be an exceptional resource. 2.3.3 NAMES OF DECEASED PERSONS Consult Merriam-Webster's Biographical Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1997). 2.3.4 PLACE NAMES For placqe names, Merriam-Webster's Geographical Dictionary (3d ed.; Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1997). 2.3.5 OTHER WORDS For all other words that the manuscript contains, Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (10th ed.; Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 1994). For compound words not in Merriam-Webster, see the rules and examples in CMS. NOTES 1. Proofreaders use certain marks when editing. These marks can be found in Appendix J.