

## 1 Introduction: Using This Handbook

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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, eye strain, 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.