

## House Style Notes for Authors and Editors

*Fourth edition – November 1999*

In producing our authors' books we aim to publish text that is: (a) well written according to generally accepted rules of English grammar;\* and (b) well presented according to generally accepted typographical practice.\* If authors can share in observing these principles they can significantly contribute to the smooth progress of their books through the production process.

We hope that by the time the text reaches us the wording is in its final, grammatical form. Authors will know how to handle basic grammar; they may not be so aware of typographical conventions. Our house style is a collection of conventions which we prefer to follow;\* it is focused on quite common small points which are not commonly recognised outside the publishing industry. They are presented here under alphabetically-ordered topic headings.

Sometimes house-style rules offer an element of choice. It is important to make the choice and then apply it consistently throughout the book. Consistent presentation is important: it makes for tidy, unobtrusive typographical presentation and thus strengthens the force of the text. Bibliographic references need particular care in this respect.

\* IN PRACTICE our approach to style is fairly flexible. If we receive text that is prepared to a different style from ours, we will accept it as it is, provided that it is (a) used consistently, (b) functional, (c) appropriate for the intended market, and that it (d) doesn't present us with production problems. We are particularly ready to recognise standard American variations from our preferred style. However, the editor of a collection of articles may decide to impose consistent style across all articles, particularly to bibliographic references.

### ABBREVIATIONS

Avoid using abbreviations, especially in the main body of text, unless they really seem to be necessary. Abbreviations are more commonly used in bibliographical references, in notes, and in tables.

Distinguish between contractions and truncated abbreviations.

### Contractions

A contraction starts with the first letter of the full word and ends with its last letter.

Do not use a full point after a contraction (unless it falls at the end of a sentence):

Dr, Mr, Mrs, St (Saint – plural SS), Ltd, edn and so on

BOYDELL & BREWER

(exception: numero – no., avoids possible ambiguity)

### **Truncated abbreviations**

These generally close with a full point:

vol., ed., c. (*circa*), trans., fig. etc.

They are commonly used in references:

vol. I, fig. 13, p. 77, fol. 2r (folio 2 recto)

However, use line 3, lines 3–5 (not l. 3, ll. 3–5) to avoid possible confusion with number 1 or number 11.

### **Plurals**

Opinion differs on whether all plural abbreviations should be treated as contractions. We prefer not to use a point after a plural abbreviation which ends in s:

Drs, edns, vols, eds and so on

Some plural abbreviations do not end in s and they usually take a closing point:

pp., edd. (or eds), nn.

Please note:

fols 3r–4v, pp. 35ff

where distinction is made between fol., fols (for folio and folios) and f, ff (no closing point unless falling at the end of a sentence) for following pages (f for one following page, ff for more than one following page; in both cases reference is being made to more than one page, therefore pp. must

### **Abbreviated units of measurement**

Do not close with a point; keep singular form for plural expressions; close-up to the measurement; don't use italics:

65lb, 4km, £5 3s 8d, 220mm and so on

(exception: 6in., to avoid any possible ambiguity)

### **Sets of initials**

Close up; do not use points:

NATO, HMSO, BL, BN, OE, ME, MS (plural MSS)

but:

i.e., e.g., cf., Ph.D.