



# Research Group on Manuscript Evidence

## Style Manifesto

The Research Group on Manuscript Evidence promotes a principled, unified approach to its publications. Foremost among these principles is that form and content must be appropriate for function and audience.

### Spelling, Punctuation, Citations, and the Like

There is no single set of rules concerning such practices as spelling, punctuation, abbreviations, or bibliographical citations. For a given publication, they may be better determined, for example, by the intention of a primarily English or American usage. Once adopted, however, such conventions should be consistent throughout a single publication. Unless otherwise specified, *The Chicago Manual of Style* is followed for American usage, and *Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers* for English.

### Fonts

The Research Group has selected Adobe Garamond as its preferred font in which to set its publications. The choice of a traditional serified font maximizes legibility. Avoiding potential confusion, Garamond offers distinct forms for the glyphs uppercase-I, lowercase-l, and digit-1, and distinguishes between uppercase-O and digit-0. The three weights (**bold**, **semi-bold**, and regular), two styles (upright and *italic*), and extended character set (fi-ligatures, en – and em — dashes, ø and other multinational characters) give sufficient range for professional-quality publishing.

Except for examples used to demonstrate particular letter-forms, the Research Group avoids fake or pseudo-archaizing fonts (especially in titling or display work). For setting Old or Middle English, the Research Group has commissioned a set of additional characters designed to work with Adobe Garamond (for example, *ℓ*, *ℓ* and *℔*, *℔*) that are available to Members.

### Justification and Word-Spacing

In keeping with a principled approach to clarity of comprehension, the Research Group recognizes that both horizontal and vertical white space play an important rôle in visual perception. Following this principle, we use letter kerning to preserve the visual integrity of individual words, single spaces between words, and increased space only between sentences or following colon punctuation.

Our publications employ justification only at a single margin: usually left, but right for Hebrew, Arabic, and so on. Three related aspects of perception underlie this decision. 1) The non-uniform right margin aids the eye in moving from line to line, thereby reducing errors in eye-skip caused by loss of registration. 2) Right justification introduces falsely variable spaces between words, and these random differences impose meaningless disruptions both to perception and to syntactic analysis. 3) Large gaps correlated across multiple lines give the appearance of “rivers” of white space which further distract from the content of the text.

### Line- and Paragraph-Spacing

As a Group, we seek to make the best use of modern technology in conveying our message. This dedication extends to the use of computer-based desktop-publishing tools. In particular, the typewriter-based approach of uniform line spacing is no longer a constraint. We favor varying vertical white space, especially to emphasize groupings. Thus, paragraph spaces should be less than a full line-height, and more white space should be placed *above* a section title than *below* it. Conversely, a caption below a figure should be set closer to the figure than to any following text.

## Reproduction of Photographs

The Research Group seeks to illustrate its publications with reproductions of the works under discussion. We wish to encourage readers to examine such plates and compare them against the commentary, so as both to judge the assessments and to offer their own refinements. With this aim in mind, photographs of manuscripts and similar materials deserve to be treated as representations of primary witnesses. Aside from special techniques, such as back-lighting, any distortion of photographic evidence should be avoided. The "cosmetic" approach, which includes touching up to remove features deemed as blemishes, and masking the text surrounding images or initials, has no place in our publications.

Our goal is to present as much of the evidence as we can, set in its widest context. We deplore the "scrapbook" approach, which presents cutout portions of pages amounting to no more than thumbnail clippings, at varying scales with little or no indication of surroundings. Sometimes photographs of details are desirable, but in general we encourage the reproduction of whole pages, without cropping, extending to the surviving margins and edges. Reproducing the whole page respects the artefact and its state of survival, following the depredations through trimming, wear and tear, and other intrusions. It also allows a single photograph to carry, and to interrelate, evidence of interest to multiple disciplines or areas of interest, beyond a single specialty. This position fosters the integrated approach which the Research Group seeks to promote.