

Corpus des notes marginales (1-10)

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The markings – marginal notes, underlinings, bookmarks, turned down corners – on the books in Voltaire’s vast library bear witness to his thinking. The *Corpus des notes marginales* reproduces them alongside the extracts to which they relate. Comprehensive editorial notes show how Voltaire’s reading influenced his writing.

On Voltaire’s death in 1778, his vast library, consisting of some 7000 volumes, was sold by his niece, Marie-Louise Denis, to Catherine the Great of Russia for 30,000 roubles. The empress, who had corresponded with Voltaire for fifteen years, wished to preserve the library intact as a monument to the writer, and housed the collection in the palace of the Hermitage. It was subsequently transferred to the Imperial Public Library, and then incorporated into the National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, where it now resides.

Beginning in the 1950s Russian scholars typed out the extracts annotated by Voltaire and his secretaries and added their notes and markings for publication. The *Corpus des notes marginales* was launched by Akademie Verlag in East Berlin in 1979, with the Voltaire Foundation as co-publisher. Akademie Verlag was obliged to abandon the project in the mid-1990s, but in 2003 the Voltaire Foundation took the decision to complete it.

In 2004 Natalia Elaguina, Head of Western Manuscripts at the National Library, began sending material to the Voltaire Foundation, and it is thanks to her that the *Corpus des notes marginales* is being published as volumes 136 to 145 of the *Complete Works of Voltaire*.

MARGINALIA OUTSIDE ST PETERSBURG

Some of Voltaire's marginalia outside St Petersburg have already been identified.

If you know of any other eighteenth-century marginalia that resemble the handwriting of Voltaire or his secretary Wagnière, please contact Gillian.Pink@voltaire.ox.ac.uk

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Table of Contents:

- 1: A–Buzonnière (vol.136, 2008)
 - 2: Caesar–Challes (vol.137A, 2009)
 - 2: Chalons–Cyrillus (vol.137B, 2009)
 - 3: Dale–Frisi (vol.138, 2010)
 - 4: Gachet d'Artigny–Koran (vol.139, 2011)
 - 5: La Barre–Ludlow (vol.140A, 2012)
 - 5: Luna–Muyart de Vouglans (vol.140B, 2012)
 - 6: Nadal–Plato (vol.141, 2006)
 - 7: Plautus–Rogers (vol.142, 2008)
 - 8: Rollin–Sommier (vol.143, 2012)
 - 9: Spallanzani–Zeno (vol.144, forthcoming)
 - 10: Marginalia outside St Petersburg (vol.145, forthcoming)
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