**Digital d’Holbach – Editorial Guidelines**

Dr Ruggero Sciuto

Many thanks for agreeing to join the *Digital d’Holbach* project. It is great to have you on board!

While working on your edition, please be sure to follow the guidelines below – we strongly recommend that you follow the order in which the individual steps are listed:

# Phase 1: Choosing the base text

Now that you have been assigned a text, the first thing to do will be to choose your base text, i.e. the eighteenth-century edition (or manuscript) that you would like to reproduce in your edition.

## Editions

Most of d’Holbach’s publications underwent several editions in his lifetime. A list of all pre-1789 editions of d’Holbach’s works is available [here](https://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/digital-enlightenment/digital-dholbach/resources-for-authors-digital-dholbach/). This list is based on Jeroom Vercruysse’s seminal [Bibliographie descriptive des imprimés du baron d’Holbach](https://classiques-garnier.com/bibliographie-descriptive-des-imprimes-du-baron-d-holbach-en.html), first published in 1971 and re-edited in 2017. To find all pre-1789 editions of the work you are editing, please scroll down to the relevant text. While the list should be accurate, we recommend that you check the 2017 edition of Vercruysse’s *Bibliographie* to make sure that none have been omitted. Editions in Vercruysse’s *Bibliographie* are listed chronologically rather than by work. To find all pre-1789 editions of the work you have been assigned please begin by locating the first edition – you will find it under its year of first publication. A note at the end of the relevant entry will then redirect you to any additional editions of the same text (in fact, to the years under which any additional editions will be listed). Please note that cross-references within Vercruysse’s *Bibliographie* are not always accurate: we therefore recommend that you leaf through the book and check that you have not missed any. Please also note that some of the editions which appeared in 1770 are misnumbered in the 2017 reprint of Vercruysse’s *Bibliographie* – see [here](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/716681/pdf). Should you not have access to the 2017 edition of Vercruysse’s *Bibliographie*, please let us know.

While unlikely, it is conceivable that some editions may be missing from Vercruysse’s bibliography. We would therefore recommend that you do some extra research to identify and locate any missing editions – [Worldcat](https://www.worldcat.org/) and [Google Books](https://books.google.com/) are excellent places to start.

Once you have a complete list of all pre-1789 editions of your text, we recommend that you check at least two or three copies of each edition, if possible, to make sure that they all match the description provided in Vercruysse’s *Bibliographie* – this is another way of checking that you are not overlooking any editions. Moreover, individual copies may have interesting features such as marginalia or ex-libris that may cast light on the publication history or reception of the text that you are editing.

## Manuscripts

Manuscripts of some of d’Holbach’s works are known, although little studied. Most of these manuscripts are likely to be late-eighteenth-century or early-nineteenth-century copies of print editions. Should you find evidence that one or more manuscripts of your text survive, you are strongly encouraged to request a digitisation and/or arrange a visit to the relevant library or archives. Should you find that the manuscript is in d’Holbach’s (or, say, Charles-Claude Naigeon’s) hand, this may have an impact on your choice of a base text. Otherwise, the manuscript may still be of interest – you may want to mention it, for example, in your introduction, when talking about the reception of your text. Should you need a sample of d’Holbach’s handwriting, please let us know.

## Choosing the base text

The next step will be to choose the version that you would like to use as your base text. Given d’Holbach’s publication habits, it is likely that this will be the first edition. You might, however, decide to opt for a different solution if, for example:

1. You discover a manuscript of your text in d’Holbach’s hand, with correction in his hand, or otherwise predating the first print edition (e.g. a ms in Charles-Claude Naigeon’s hand);
2. You find evidence that d’Holbach was directly involved in the publication of any editions other than the first one;
3. You discover a copy of an edition other than the first one bearing corrections in d’Holbach’s hand.

Should you think that you may have to use a manuscript or an edition other than the first one as your base text, please get in touch to explain the reasons behind your choice before commencing work.

D’Holbach’s texts, of course, continued to be reprinted after his death, and indeed Jeroom Vercruysse’s *Bibliographie* runs until the 21st century. If your text was published posthumously, or if you think that a post-1789 edition might be a good candidate as your base text (perhaps because the date on the cover page does not reflect the actual publication date, or because the editors of that edition claim to be publishing an otherwise lost or unknown manuscript or annotated print copy) please let us know.

# Phase 2: Transcribing the base text – the diplomatic transcription

Once you have identified the edition that you wish to use as your base text, the next step will be to create a diplomatic (i.e. unaltered) transcription of that very edition (every text on *Digital d’Holbach* should be made available in both a diplomatic and a modernised transcription).

## Acquiring a working transcription of your base text

Transcriptions of most of d’Holbach’s texts are available on *Tout d’Holbach*. To check whether your text is available on *Tout d’Holbach* please click [here](https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/tout-d-holbach/). To download your text, start by clicking on the relevant title; you will be redirected to the table of content (the URL should look something like this: <https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/tout-d-holbach/navigate/4/table-of-contents/>). At this point, simply delete ‘table-of-contents/’ from the URL (you should be left with something like <https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/tout-d-holbach/navigate/4/>) and click enter: you will be redirected to a new page displaying the text in its entirety.

*Tout d’Holbach* is a constantly growing tool, and more texts are added periodically. In the unlikely event of your text not being available on *Tout d’Holbach*, however, it will be your responsibility to transcribe it (or have it transcribed). For the sake of time saving, we suggest that you find a digitised copy of your text on Google Books or HathiTrust and download the relevant OCR transcription (you can find links to several digitised copies of each eighteenth-century edition of the text you are editing [here](https://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/digital-enlightenment/digital-dholbach/resources-for-authors-digital-dholbach/) – file named ‘A List of Editions of d’Holbach’s Works’). On Google Books, the OCR transcription can be downloaded by clicking on the drop-down menu in the top-right corner (the one marked with a gear) and selecting ‘plain text’. Once the plain text is displayed – it will be divided into multiple sections – you can copy and paste it into a .doc(x) file. On HathiTrust please click on the top-right grey button (‘View Plain Text’) – this is located immediately below the arrows. OCR transcriptions on both Google Books and HathiTrust vary in accuracy. We recommend that you check more than one digitised copy and download the one with the more accurate-looking transcription.

N.B. When pasting your OCR transcription into a .doc(x) file, please make sure you do not use Calibri as your font: we recommend using Times New Roman or Century Schoolbook instead as they make it easier to distinguish, for example, between capital Is and lowercase ls.

## Creating a diplomatic transcription

**Whatever its source (*Tout d’Holbach*, Google Books, or HathiTrust), your transcription will have to be meticulously checked against (a digitised copy of) your base text** – as already mentioned, you can find links to several digitised copies of each pre-1789 edition of the text you are editing [here](https://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/digital-enlightenment/digital-dholbach/resources-for-authors-digital-dholbach/). (Please note that, although much more accurate than any OCR transcriptions you may download from either Google Books or HathiTrust, the transcription downloaded from *Tout d’Holbach* may well be based on an edition other than the one you have chosen as your base text).

As you check your transcription against a copy of your base text, please make sure that the former reflects the latter in its every aspect – you should create a diplomatic transcription of your base text, a transcription which is exactly identical to the base text. Note, in particular, that:

1. punctuation should be left unchanged;
2. paragraphs should be broken when they are broken in the base text;
3. a marker should be used to indicate where the page breaks – you could use, for example, a hash mark in square brackets [#];
4. words should be spelt exactly as they are spelt in the base text (but long ss should be replaced with normal ss);
5. any typos should **not** be corrected;
6. any abbreviations should be retained;
7. any capital letters should be retained;
8. italics should be retained;
9. the transcription should include title page, table of contents, and index (if available);
10. any authorial footnotes (i.e. any footnotes already present in your base text) should be included in the body of the text in square brackets exactly in the spot where the note-call is found in the base text;
11. you do not have to transcribe catchwords or running heads.

# Phase 3: Modernising the base text

Once the diplomatic transcription of your base text is done, please save it, and create a new file for your modernised transcription. This should modernise spelling, removing any eighteenth-century idiosyncracies and typos you may have found in the base text – this applies to proper names, names of places, and titles of works, too. Please also modify any aspects of grammar that do not conform to modern usage. **Any changes that you make to the base text must be accounted for in the ‘Treatment of the base text’** (see section below).

The modernised version of your text should conform exactly to modern usage (please refer to Maurice Grevisse’s *Le Bon Usage* if in doubt). The use of capital letters should also reflect modern standards. It should therefore be limited to proper nouns, any words following a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark, and words such as Dieu/Dieux, when referring to (a) particular God(s), Diable, when referring to the Devil as opposed to a devil, and the like. Punctuation should be retained but amended as necessary to make the text as easily readable as possible (this includes quotation marks). Lengthy sentences, however, are characteristic of d’Holbach’s style, and we therefore recommend that you do not add any full stops unless strictly necessary – semicolons are to be preferred. Paragraphs, however long, should similarly never be broken. Italics are normally meaningful in d’Holbach’s works and are often used to highlight a (silent) quotation. Any sentences or short phrases italicised in the base text should therefore be italicised in the modernised text, too, and no italics should be added to the modernised text. You may, however, un-italicise single words that are italicised in the original for emphasis.

Please remove from your transcription any authorial footnotes (i.e. any footnotes already present in the base text) and paste them into a separate .doc(x) file in the same order as they appear in the base text. Each footnote in the authorial footnotes file should be given a code ([af1], [af2], [af3], etc.) and the same code should be used in the base text in the exact place were the note-call was found.

## The Treatment of the base text

Any changes that you make to the diplomatic transcription (excluding minor changes to punctuation) must be accounted for in a dedicated file: the ‘Treatment of the base text’. This file should list, carefully and in a specific order, all eighteenth-century words or sentences that have been modernised. Please be sure AutoCorrect is off when you work on your Treatment.

For an example of how the Treatment of the base text should look in an English language edition, please see here.

As per the example provided, words within each box should be ordered alphabetically. Words that have been modified in more than one way should be listed in all the relevant boxes. Thus, the word ‘Pantheres’ should go under ‘Initial capital letters were used in’ as well as ‘the grave accent was not used in’. Where multiple inflections of a single noun or verb (e.g. ‘sotise’ and ‘sotises’, or ‘devoit’, ‘devroit’, ‘devoient’, and ‘devroient’) are present, please make sure you list all inflections separately.

N.B. As you modernise your text, please be sure never to use the find and replace option as that is likely to jeopardise your work. For the sake of time, we recommend that, when you find a word that needs to be modernised (e.g. connoit), you search the whole text for that and related words (if you search for ‘connoi’ you will get ‘connoit’ as well as ‘connoitre’, ‘connoissance’, ‘méconnoissable’, etc). By doing so, you will avoid constantly checking your Treatment to see whether a word has already been listed and you will also be able to indicate whether a word is consistently spelt in a specific way or not (in which case you can indicate in Treatment the frequency with which a certain spelling is used, e.g. ‘(sometimes)’ or ‘(once)’).

# Phase 4: Collating the variants

The following step will be to collate the variants for your texts. To do so, please check the diplomatic transcription of your base text against a copy of all pre-1789 editions of your text (but please note that, on some occasions, e.g. when a work was published posthumously, you may have to collate variants from some post-1789 editions, too). This [list of editions](https://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/digital-enlightenment/digital-dholbach/resources-for-authors-digital-dholbach/), which is based on Vercruysse’s bibliography and will therefore not include any new editions you may have found in phase 1, contains links to digitised copies of most pre-1789 (and some post-1789) editions of d’Holbach’s works, i.e. to most of the editions from which you will have to collate variants. In the rare case where no digitised copies of a specific edition are available online, variants will have to be collated from a physical book in a library – some information on where to locate some extremely rare editions can be found in Vercruysse’s bibliography. Should you have found any pre-1789 editions of your work unknown to Vercruysse, variants will have to be collated from them, too.

## What counts as a variant?

Not every discrepancy between base text and subsequent editions will count as a variant. Simple changes in spelling that do not alter the meaning of a word (e.g. ‘demandait’ instead of ‘demandoit’, ‘fondements’ instead of ‘fondemens’, or ‘entiére’ instead of ‘entière’) do not count as variants (but ‘matiere’ instead of ‘maniere’ does count as a variant because in this case the meaning of the word changes). Changes in punctuation similarly do not count as variants unless they affect the meaning of a sentence/paragraph. Please disregard any changes in case (uppercase vs lowercase) or font (italics, etc), too. Typos (and the corrections thereof), however, should be treated as variants, as they may be indicative of the quality of the edition. Signatures (i.e. the letters written at the bottom of the first page of any gathering) and catchwords are to be disregarded.

Variants can vary in length from as little as a single letter or an accent (e.g. matiere vs maniere or pécher vs pêcher) to a whole word (e.g. ce Dieu si barbare vs ce Dieu si sage), sentence, paragraph, or chapter. D’Holbach’s works typically contain minimal variants, but if you were to find any extensive variants, please do let us know as that may affect the way in which you edit and present your text.

## Listing the variants

A separate file should be created for each edition from which you are collating variants – if a digitised copy of the relevant edition is available, please make sure you paste the link at the beginning of the file. When reporting a variant, please make sure to stick to the following pattern:

page in which the variant was found (in the edition from which you are collating variants): text as appears in the base text / text as appears in the edition from which variants are being collated with any changes highlighted in yellow

Thus, if the base text has, for instance, ‘Les serviteurs zêlés de ce Dieu si barbare ne vont-ils pas’ and the edition from which variants are being collated ‘Les serviteurs zêlés de ce Dieu si cruel ne vont-ils pas’, you should write on your file:

p.123: Les serviteurs zêlés de ce Dieu si barbare ne vont-ils pas / Les serviteurs zêlés de ce Dieu si sage ne vont-ils pas

As for the example above, when you report a variant please be sure to transcribe some of the words surrounding the actual variant (possibly at least three on each side): these are called anchor words and allow the editors to locate the variant in the text.

# Phase 5: Authorial notes

As indicated above, authorial notes should be removed from the modernised transcription of the base text and pasted in a separate .doc(x) file in the same order in which they appear in the base text. Each footnote in the authorial footnotes file should be given a code ([af1], [af2], [af3], etc.) and the same code should be used in the base text in the exact place were the note-call was found.

The text of the authorial footnotes should be modernised following exactly the same rules as the rest of the text. Any abbreviations should be resolved.

Please note that this only applies to the modernised transcription – in the diplomatic transcription, authorial footnotes should be treated in the same file, as indicated in phase 2 above.

# Phase 6: Annotation

Authors are free to write their annotation in either English or French, but the same language must be used for both annotation and introduction. Notes can be added to the main text as well as to the variants, the authorial footnotes, and the diplomatic transcription. They can be used, for example, to:

1. explain any obscure passages/references;
2. refer to secondary sources on a specific topic;
3. refer to other eighteenth-century or pre-eighteenth-century texts that discuss the same ideas as in the paragraph or sentence you are annotating;
4. point to the source(s) of any quotes or ideas – a fully searchable catalogue of d’Holbach’s library can be found [here](https://www.voltaire.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/DHolbachs-library-Catalogue.pdf);
5. provide information about people, places, works, events etc. with which you would not expect your reader to be familiar – please bear in mind that the readers of an online edition may come from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds and that they may have various levels of academic preparation;
6. provide information about the significance of a certain person, place, work, or event within d’Holbach’s corpus – *Tout d’Holbach* may come in useful in this respect: just search it to find any occurrences of the same person, work, etc within d’Holbach’s texts;
7. highlight similarities between the work you are editing and other works by d’Holbach – this is particularly important as it may cast light on the limits of the Baron’s textual corpus. To identify instances of text reuse between the work you are editing and other texts by d’Holbach, you can start by using [TextPAIR](https://anomander.uchicago.edu/text-pair/holbach), a text alignment tool developed at the University of Chicago (but please note that this only applies if the text you are editing is available on *Tout d’Holbach*): just type the title of the work you are editing in the title box on the source column and ‘d’Holbach’ in the author box in the target column and hit search. Then try the reverse, i.e. try typing the title of your work in the title box in the target column and d’Holbach in the author box in the source column. Please note that TextPAIR is only likely to identify a very limited number of *loci paralleli* and that nothing will replace an in depth, first-hand knowledge of the texts at stake;
8. Explain the importance of a variant;
9. Point to anything of interest in the diplomatic transcription.

Please note that any references to other works by d’Holbach should be made to existing editions in *Digital d’Holbach*. Where no edition is available, please simply refer to the first edition of that particular text.

# Phase 7: Introduction

The structure of the introduction is flexible, but it is expected that the author cover the genesis and publication history of the work they have been assigned, the issue of authorship (discussing reasons for and against attributing it to d’Holbach), the ideas discussed in the text, and its reception. The introduction should be followed by a list of all editions from which variants have been collated.

Introductions can vary in length and can be written in either English or French (but the language of the introduction must be the same as the annotation). Should the author decide to write their introduction and annotation in English, any quotations from French texts should however be given in the original French.