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Christophe-Augustin Lamare-Picquot and the Fate of his Collection

Networks, Commercial Transactions and Museums

Between 1831 and 1833 the pharmacist and well-to-do traveller Christophe-Augustin Lamare-Picquot (1785–1873) made several attempts to donate his collection of natural history specimens and objects to the French state. It consisted mostly of Indian and Burmese antiquities and some artefacts from South Africa, Madagascar and the Pacific area. Although prominent French scholars such as Burnouf, Cuvier, and Jomard praised the collection in their reports to major scientific societies and urged the state to accept the donation, the French government had neither the financial means to acquire it nor the political will to create a specific setting for non-Western artefacts. As a result, the natural history collection was acquired by the king of Prussia for the Berlin museum, and in 1841 the ethnographic collection was sold to King Ludwig I of Bavaria.

The article focuses on the significant though marginal collector, Lamare-Picquot, who purchased looted artefacts from India and Burma at a bargain price in 1825–1826 and shipped them back to France in 1830. A vast amount of literature has been published on the means, motivations and purposes behind collecting practices in the last twenty to thirty years. These works, such as *Collectors: Expressions of the Self and Others* (2001), edited by Anthony Shelton,¹ have pointed out the ways in which scholarship still favours collectors who are committed to some systematic form of acquisition and to whom a scientific pedigree may be attributed, while adventurers, plunderers and trophy hunters have been incorporated and obscured within the wider histories of museum collections. Lamare-Picquot undoubtedly belongs to the latter category. The circumstances and strategies surrounding Lamare-Picquot's acquisition of objects attest to the ways in which the field of personal biography is mediated by political, social, economic and scientific dimensions. Writing about the experience of a seventeenth-century collector, John Bargrave, Stephen Bann noted that 'the collector is not merely an attribute of the self but also, in a real sense, the model through which the unity of the self is, progressively and retrospectively, achieved.'² To some extent Lamare-Picquot's biography illustrates this idea of the collector as the model through which unity of the self may be achieved.

¹ Anthony Shelton (ed.), *Collectors: Expressions of the Self and Others*, London: Horniman Museum / Coimbra: Museu de Antropologia, 2001, p. 13.

² Stephen Bann, *Under the Sign. John Bargrave as Collector, Traveller, and Witness*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994, p. 78.

This article deals with three aspects, beginning with the political circumstances of the objects purchased. Based on the island of Mauritius, Lamare-Picquot made three trips to India; in the wake of his second voyage in 1825 to the Bay of Bengal, he took advantage of the first Anglo-Burmese war and of the looting of temples by the British army to buy Burmese antiquities, especially Buddhist statues. Lamare-Picquot's motivations in acquiring these objects were diverse, ranging from the desire for scientific recognition, the wish to create a market for non-European objects to the goal of providing France with an ethnographic museum. The second part of this article explores the heated scientific debates between 1831 and 1833 on the subject of Lamare-Picquot's collection; these debates focused on the status of the objects (whether these were antiquities and/or ethnographic material) and consequently on what was the most appropriate institutional setting for the collection: the Louvre Museum (where the objects would be presented along with Egyptian antiquities), the department of geography at the Bibliothèque nationale, or a yet to be created Asian Museum. The ongoing discussions among scholars and the political changes in France contributed to the government's delaying its decision regarding the collection. As an ambitious dealer and thanks to his personal network of diplomats and scholars, in 1832 Lamare-Picquot attempted to sell his collection to Prussia as a means of provoking competition between the two governments. The third and last part of the article examines transnational relations, commercial transactions and the network of scholars involved in the process of acquiring this collection.

A Traveller, Collector and Big-Game Hunter

Born in Bayeux in 1785, Christophe-Augustin Lamare-Picquot³ became a pharmacist like his father and began his career in Saint-Malo. In 1815, supposedly because of the death of his wife and his three sons, he decided to go and live on Mauritius, where he continued to work as a pharmacist. He probably made enough money there to be able to finance several trips to the islands of Réunion and Madagascar as well as India. He went on three journeys to India: one to the Coromandel Coast in 1821–1823,

³ On Lamare-Picquot's biography, see Marcel Chaigneau, Christophe-Augustin Lamare-Picquot, pharmacien, naturaliste, explorateur, in: *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie* 252 (1982), pp. 5–26. Chaigneau's detailed article is mainly devoted to Lamare-Picquot's activities in the fields of natural history and pharmacy. See also Manfred Ruth, Ein Leben mit Katastrophen. Der Naturwissenschaftler, Reisende, Sammler und Philanthrop Christophe-Augustin Lamarepicquot (1785–1873), in: Claudius Müller and Wolfgang Stein (eds.), *Exotische Welten. Aus den völkerkundlichen Sammlungen der Wittelsbacher 1806–1848*, Dettelbach: J. H. Röhl, 2007, pp. 95–105. And the *Rapport fait au Conseil Municipal de Bayeux par G. Villers sur les collections d'ethnographie et d'histoire naturelle données à la ville de Bayeux par Monsieur Lamare Picquot*, Délibérations du Conseil Municipal Bayeux 1866, Archives Départementales du Calvados, sous-série 2MI DM 19–20.

another to Calcutta and the Bay of Bengal in 1825–1826 and the third to the south of Bengal, more precisely to the Sundarbans in 1828–1829. This last journey involved two large ships with a crew of 28 and was plainly designed for the purpose of growing his zoological collections.⁴ He spent forty-two days collecting plants and minerals and hunting animals, such as two hornless rhinoceros⁵, a Royal Bengal tiger and five crocodiles. Lamare-Picquot left Calcutta on 2nd November 1828 and stopped on his way back to France in Madagascar and the Cape of Good Hope in 1829. He arrived in France in 1830 with a hundred boxes containing around 1,100 artefacts and natural history specimens.

Back in France, Lamare-Picquot made several attempts to donate his collection to the French state but failed to persuade the French government to accept it. Consequently, his natural history collection was acquired by the king of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III, for the Berlin museum and in 1841 his ethnographic collection was sold to King Ludwig I of Bavaria for 27,000 gulden (a Bavarian currency) and is now part of the Five Continents Museum in Munich. 27,000 gulden were quite a large sum, roughly equivalent to 250,000 francs. This allowed Lamare-Picquot to continue his journeys and pay for his travel expenses that had risen to 50,000 francs. Lamare-Picquot pursued these interests on an independent basis; not as a government-sponsored traveller but as a freelance entrepreneur on the expectation of profit he expected to gain from the sale of specimens on his return. He left the remaining equivalent of 200,000 francs with a banker who was declared bankrupt three years later, and consequently Lamare-Picquot lost all his money.

In late 1841 or early 1842, Lamare-Picquot travelled to Canada and in 1845 to Mississippi before returning to France in 1847. In 1848, for the first time in his life he received a commission. The French ministry of agriculture asked him to search for nutritious plants in North America that might have the potential to replace potatoes. He tried to introduce breadroot to France, which American Indians of Minnesota used to eat as part of their diet; as a result, the plant was named Picquotiane. He travelled extensively in the United States and Canada, where, as a compulsive collector, he assembled North-American artefacts as well as natural history specimens. In 1865, after further failed attempts, he donated his collections to the Muséum d'Histoire naturelle in Paris in 1865, the École supérieure de pharmacie and the Musée de

⁴ Lamarepicquot, *Réponse pour servir de réfutation aux opinions et à la critique du rapport de M. Constant Duméril sur mon mémoire concernant les Ophidiens, lu à l'Académie des Sciences, le 8 mars 1832 suivie d'une Relation de chasse dans les îles des Bouches du Gange. Adressée à MM. les Membres de l'Académie des Sciences*, Paris: Crochard, 1835, p. 54.

⁵ The two rhinoceroses were sold in 1836 to the Prussian king, Friedrich Wilhelm III, see Kees Rookmaaker, Records of the Sundarbans Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus inermis*) in India and Bangladesh, in: *Pachyderm* 24 (1997), pp. 37–45, pp. 39–41. I would like to thank K. Rookmaaker for sharing this information.

Bayeux in 1867.⁶ In exchange for these donations, he received a modest pension from the Muséum and died almost in penury in 1873.

Lamare-Picquot's final years vividly contrast with his fame and success throughout the 1830s. In 1831 his natural history collection was examined, at his request, by a committee consisting of Georges Cuvier, Constant Duméril and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire.⁷ The collection catalogue written by famous naturalists, such as Jean-Victor Audouin, Adolphe Brongniart, and Achille Valenciennes, praised the techniques of conservation used by Lamare-Picquot (techniques related to his pharmaceutical background). They listed 53 specimens of mammals, 115 birds, 30 reptiles, 123 fishes, 150 insects, 200 shells and 52 shellfish. Not surprisingly Lamare-Picquot features in the annals of natural history. His claim to fame rested on three main reasons: 1) for introducing the 'Picquotiane' into Europe; 2) for being the first to write about half-breed Eskimo dogs (which is why Darwin mentions his name in *The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication* published in 1875) and 3) for capturing a rare specimen of hornless rhinoceros. Although Lamare-Picquot wrote several short articles on snake poisons, breadroot and cholera morbus in India and on Mauritius (this last piece was written in 1831 at the peak of a cholera outbreak in France), he did not explain the rationale underlying his collecting practices in the fields of ethnography and archaeology.

It has been especially difficult to follow up on such a rich and nomadic life because Lamare-Picquot did not sign using his first name Christophe-Augustin, and varied the spelling of his family name. In scientific reports he would sign 'Lamarepicquot', but also use a third spelling – Lamarepicot and even a fourth – Lamarre Picot. As a result, his writings and manuscripts are spread in libraries and archives according to these four spellings, and it has been very difficult to track them down in Paris, Munich and Vienna, where they are kept.

⁶ Archives nationales (Paris), AJ/15/ 548 (dossier Lamare-Picquot) which contains also the *Catalogue général de la collection de M. Lamare Picquot et projet de répartition des objets entre le Muséum d'Histoire naturelle et divers établissements scientifiques des départements*. On Lamare-Picquot's donation to the Musée de Bayeux, see *Délibérations du Conseil Municipal Bayeux 1866*, Archives Départementales du Calvados, sous-série 2MI DM 19–20 and *Rapport fait...* by Mr. Villers (as fn. 3).

⁷ 'Sur les collections rassemblées au Cap et dans les Indes par Lamare-Picquot qui a parcouru plusieurs parties de l'Inde continentale dans l'intention d'y recueillir les productions naturelles du pays et les ouvrages de l'art indigène en rapport avec la religion et les usages des habitans', in: *Procès verbaux de l'Académie des Sciences* 1831, p. 9, p. 590 and pp. 629–631.

Lamare-Picquot's Voyage to Calcutta: 'Fortuitous Event' or Strategic Move?

While on Mauritius, Lamare-Picquot decided to go and set up a base, first in Chandernagore, a former French colony, before moving to Calcutta in 1825. His decision to go to Calcutta was significant: at that time, the British Army conducted several military operations to control the Northeast Frontier. As a result of these wars, temples were being looted and British soldiers took stolen objects with them to Bengal, where they were sold as spoils of war. According to Lamare-Picquot, it was due to the first Anglo-Burmese war – which he termed a 'fortuitous event' or 'fortunate circumstance' (*'circonstance heureuse'*) – that he was able to buy Buddhist antiquities.⁸ In fact, it not only proved fortuitous for him but it also seems that Lamare-Picquot was well aware of the historical importance and the market value of the objects he acquired, and that this was one of his reasons for going to Calcutta in 1825. In addition, according to the famous orientalist and professor of Sanskrit at the Collège de France, Eugène Burnouf, it was during a journey to France in 1825 that Lamare-Picquot came to the conclusion that there was a need for a scientific depository devoted to Indian and Burmese artefacts and antiquities.⁹ Thus, Lamare-Picquot's voyage to Calcutta in 1825 was not merely taking advantage of the 'fortuitous event'. It was probably the result of a deliberate effort to fill a gap in French museums and, by doing so, gain scientific prestige and institutional recognition. Moreover, the objective of filling a gap in French museums was used by several scholars both as a rhetoric and strategic argument to persuade politicians to take concrete measures regarding Lamare-Picquot's collection.

Lamare-Picquot's collection included around 1,100 objects, mostly antiquities and artefacts from India and Burma, around 50 objects from the Pacific area and a few from Madagascar and the Cape of Good Hope. The bulk of the collection included Buddha statues and statuettes made of different materials such as wood, silver, copper and bronze, statues representing Hindu deities made of marble and wood, bas-reliefs in wood, models of temples and pagodas, vases for religious ceremonies and domestic usage, weapons, musical instruments, domestic shrines, figurines in terracotta, and

⁸ *Lettre par laquelle M. Lamarepicquot propose la vente de ses collections d'objets relatifs à l'archéologie, aux religions et à l'histoire naturelle de l'Inde*, Paris: Imprimerie de la veuve Thuau, 1832; see also *Lettre à Monsieur le comte d'Argout*, 2 February 1832, in: Ernest-Théodore Hamy, *Les Origines du Musée d'Ethnographie: histoire et documents* (1890), Paris: Jean Michel Place, 1988, p. 188. In this book, Hamy assembled most of the archival documents related to Lamare-Picquot's collection. See also Archives nationales (Paris), F/17/ 3846 (1).

⁹ Eugène Burnouf (commission par Mohl, Stahl, Eugène Burnouf, rapporteur), *Rapport fait au Conseil de la Société asiatique sur la collection d'antiquités indiennes de M. Lamare-Picquot*, in: *Journal asiatique* VIII (1831), pp. 121–129, here p. 122.

paintings on canvas or wood depicting episodes from Indian mythology. Two main sources give a general idea of the contents of Lamare-Picquot's collection. Firstly, there are scholarly reports written between 1831 and 1833 when Lamare-Picquot tried to donate his collection to the French state. At that time, eminent scholars such as Cuvier, Burnouf and Jomard described the collection meticulously in their reports to leading scientific societies such as the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, the Académie des sciences, the Société asiatique and the Société de Géographie. And secondly, there are a shortlist of objects dated 1829, the brochure for the auction of 1838 and the 1840 inventory kept at the Five Continents Museum in Munich.

The list dated 1829 was sent from Calcutta and entitled *Détail sur pièce composant un envoi en France et en Angleterre* listing 16 items.¹⁰ In it, natural history specimens are itemised together with artefacts and antiquities. The list was examined by a committee of professors from the Muséum d'Histoire naturelle in Paris during its session of 16 March 1830, referred to in a note saying that 'The objects are not clearly identified which makes it impossible for the Muséum to know which objects are important for its collections. We will wait for further details before making a formal request to M. Lamare Picquot.' In fact, in addition to mixing natural history specimens with artefacts and antiquities, the list was also vague about the very contents of the collection both in terms of origin (artefacts are referred as from Africa and Asia without any specific location) and use (with the exception of objects associated with Asian religious cults, all the other artefacts are not clearly specified). The words 'a great variety' are used to refer to natural history specimens, for example, 'a beautiful variety of birds' and to artefacts 'a great variety of gods from the Asian Buddha cult and Brahma cult' and 'a great variety of religious lamps.'

The 1838 brochure entitled *Panthéon Indien – Prospectus de la vente d'une collection*¹¹ had been printed especially for the auction scheduled to take place in Vienna in July 1838. If, as seems likely, the Panthéon auction was organized in the same manner as the exhibition at the Kaiserhaus in Ungergasse in Vienna, then it would have been divided into six divisions so that the visitor could move from Buddhist antiquities acquired as a consequence of the looting of temples, art objects and monuments from China, art objects, weapons and religious statues from New Zealand, the Sandwich Islands and other South Sea islands to 'savage arts' from central Africa, Madagascar and Sumatra, objects related to the Brahmin cult and the people of the Ganges region, and finally the zoological specimens. In the brochure, antiquities are clearly

¹⁰ Lamare-Picquot, *Détail sur pièce composant un envoi en France et en Angleterre* (1829), Archives nationales (Paris), AJ/15/ 548.

¹¹ Lamarepicquot, *Panthéon Indien. Prospectus de la vente d'une collection d'antiquités Bouddhiques et Brahmaniques, d'objets d'ethnographie et d'histoire naturelle de l'Asie orientale, du centre et autres localités de l'Afrique, de la Chine, de l'Océan austral, de Madagascar et autres lieux de l'Orient, etc. etc.*, 1838.

distinguished from ethnographic material, a concern that echoes the debates at that time on the distinction between ‘ancient civilisations’ and ‘savage’ peoples. Although Buddhist objects from Tibet and the Ava Kingdom are explicitly differentiated from Brahmin antiquities from India and along the Ganges River, there is no clear mention of the criteria used for organising the objects. In contrast with the 1829 list, the ten-page brochure gives details throughout of the materials of the Asian statues and the names of the deities represented; it also specifies the uniqueness of some materials such as raffia and gives the objects’ designations in the native languages of New Zealand and the Sandwich Islands. As stated in the brochure, probably written by Lamare-Picquot himself, the decision not to print an auction catalogue was due, on the one hand, to the vast quantity of objects and, on the other hand, to the expenditure associated with printing a catalogue of this kind.

As for the 1840 manuscript inventory, its title clearly indicates ‘historical and mythological annotations’ and mainly concerns the Asian collections that are now part of the Five Continents Museum in Munich. This inventory was examined in great detail by Wolfgang Stein and several collaborators in the volume *Exotische Welten* (2007).¹² It is important to note the huge difference between the 1829 list and the 1840 inventory, as it reveals the way in which Lamare-Picquot was rethinking his collection, realising how important it was as a form of documentation in its own right.

Two main features characterise Lamare-Picquot’s collection: first, its geographical scope ranging from objects from India, Tibet, Madagascar, the Cape of Good Hope to the Pacific islands. Although Lamare-Picquot never went to Polynesia, his collection comprised a wide variety of material from the Pacific whose modalities of acquisition remain unknown.¹³ Secondly, its historical framework comprised antiquities as well as contemporary objects. Along with antiquities, Lamare-Picquot collected contemporary ritual objects such as Bengal images of divinities associated with local religions such as fishermen cults. He was aware of what an ethnographic collection should consist of, and he selected objects deliberately on the basis of their fabrication techniques: the raffia ones from Madagascar are a good example. The extreme diversity, both geographically and historically, as well as in terms of the material collected, attests to the fact that Lamare-Picquot wanted to assemble rare and precious objects along with everyday ones. He seemed interested in collecting beautiful objects that were at the same time testimonies of social and cultural practices, for example, the collection of fifty miniature sculptures in terra-cotta made by indigenous people

12 Wolfgang Stein, *Götzenbilder und Indianische Gerätschaften. Kunst und Kuriositäten aus Indien, Birma und Ceylon*, in: Müller and Stein (2007) (as fn. 3), pp. 117–157. ‘Inventaire de la collection dite Panthéon indien avec annotations historiques et mythologiques, exposée en ce moment à Presbourg au palais du Prince Ant. Palfr, Presbourg, 24 août 1840, signé Lamarepicquot’, Archiv des Staatlichen Museums für Völkerkunde München, in: Müller and Stein (2007) (as fn. 3).

13 On the South Sea collection, see Michaela Appel, *Die Transatlantischen Sammlungen*, in: Müller and Stein (2007) (as fn. 3), pp. 305–306.

and representing Hindus of different professions and castes from the Ganges.¹⁴ His choice of pieces shows that Lamare-Picquot was definitely not a mere collector but a kind of forerunner – an expert *avant la lettre* even – and knew how and what to collect, what sort of information was relevant and which were the objects worthy of being collected. All these issues were not acknowledged as significant at all in early nineteenth-century collecting practices of non-Western objects. Lamare-Picquot's presumable sources of influence might have been English collectors based in India.

In the archives as well as in printed literature, there is almost no mention of the price Lamare-Picquot paid for the Indian and Burmese antiquities. However, two documents allow to gauge a general idea of the amount. In a letter dated February 1832 to the Minister of Commerce et des Travaux publics, Comte d'Argout, Lamare-Picquot mentioned that he had bought rare and precious objects from Burma *à vil prix* or at a bargain price ('*à bas prix*' or at a low price).¹⁵ Lamare-Picquot must have bought many objects from the looters themselves. Thanks to the recent articles by Ralph Isaacs¹⁶ we know that Frederick Marryat, who had fought in the first Anglo-Burmese war, assembled his collection due to looters. Marryat formed a collection of more than 173 objects, most of which had been plundered from the sealed relic chambers of stupas in several parts of Burma. Back in London in 1826, Marryat exhibited his Burmese artefacts to the public; he attempted to offer his collection to the British Museum in exchange of being appointed Trustee and paid 2,000 pounds for the expenses related to forming the collection. As he argued, 'when it is considered that there will never be another opportunity of obtaining the same and that no collection of this kind exists in any other Museum, I do not think that I am very exorbitant in my demands.'¹⁷ As Alexandra Green noted, the number of donors (mostly from the military) of objects from Burma to the British Museum in the early nineteenth-century 'is small compared with the South Asian collections' at the same institution and 'there were fewer people [...] likely to become interested in Burma's material culture and to bring objects back to the United Kingdom.'¹⁸

¹⁴ On this collection see Mireille Lobligeois, Objets et figurines ethnographiques: collectes en Inde au XIXe siècle, in: *Outre-Mers* 88, 332 (2001), pp. 153–169, here pp. 156–159.

¹⁵ Lettre de Lamare-Picquot à Monsieur le comte d'Argout, 2 February 1832, in: Hamy (1988) (as fn. 8), p. 188.

¹⁶ Ralph Isaacs, Captain Marryat's Burmese Collection and the Rath, or Burmese Imperial State Carriage, in: *Journal of the History of Collections* 17, 1 (2005), pp. 45–71 and Marryat's Burmese Curiosities, in: *Journal of the History of Collections* 22, 1 (2010), pp. 69–79.

¹⁷ Isaacs (2005) (as fn. 16).

¹⁸ Alexandra Green, From India to Independence. The Formation of the Burma Collection at the British Museum, in: *Journal of the History of Collections* 28, 3 (2016), pp. 449–463, here p. 450.

We know that Lamare-Picquot went to London in July 1830, and again in January 1831, probably to buy artefacts to increase his own collection.¹⁹ In a letter addressed to Edmé-François Jomard, head of the department of geography of the Royal Library (later renamed Bibliothèque nationale) dated July 1838, Lamare-Picquot mentions that his purchases in London had contributed to the importance of his collection. A second relevant document is a list of expenses dated 20 November 1832 when Lamare-Picquot was still trying to get his expenses paid for by the French state in exchange for the donation of his collections.²⁰ These expenses covered a period of four years and two months, or fifty months of travel, and amounted to 66,565 francs. This amount included 22,750 francs spent on travel expenses and 24,649 francs on assembling the collection of Indian and Burmese archaeological and ethnographic objects along with the zoological collections. As for the other items listed as expenses, they are related to shipping fees, maritime insurance, port entry fees, storage, the installation of the collection, the two aforementioned trips to London and the printing costs of the reports. But we can only wonder to what extent the Indian and Burmese antiquities were really bought at a bargain price. Or could the so-called bargain price in fact have been a ploy to convince the French state to accept the donation and thus have the collector's name associated with the first ethnographic museum to be created in France?

The Failure to Create an Ethnographic Museum in early Nineteenth-Century France

At the time when Lamare-Picquot presented and offered his collection to the French state and France's scientific societies, intellectual and political circles were engaged in a heated debate about the creation of an ethnographic museum in France. This debate was focused on the epistemological status of the objects: whether they were antiquities and/or ethnographic material and consequently, if the most appropriate setting for the collection should be the Louvre Museum, the department of geography at the Bibliothèque nationale, or a yet to be created Asian Museum.²¹ Lamare-Picquot's collection provided Edmé-François Jomard with the opportunity to bring about his long-held ambition to set up an ethnographic museum.²² By late 1831, Jomard pre-

¹⁹ Lettre de Lamare-Picquot à Jomard, 'État des dépenses', July 1838, Archives nationales (Paris), F/17/ 3846.

²⁰ Lamarepicquot, 'Voyage dans l'Inde, dans le Bengale et dans la partie méridionale de l'Afrique', 20 November 1832, Archives nationales (Paris), F/ 17/ 3846.

²¹ On these debates, see Hamy (1988) (as fn. 8). See also, Nélia Dias, *Le Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro (1878–1908). Anthropologie et Muséologie en France*, Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1991.

²² Lettre de Jomard appelant l'attention du Ministre sur la nécessité de former une collection ethnographique, 14 April 1831, Archives nationales (Paris), F/17/ 3846.

sented the French government with a list of the expenditure and the area of space needed to create an ethnographic depot.²³ Jomard only mentioned between seven and eight hundred objects from the Lamare-Picquot collection and, more interestingly, he estimated its price between 20,000 and 25,000 francs. Along with Lamare-Picquot's collection, five other collections were expected to constitute the foundation of the forthcoming ethnographic depot: a Chinese-Japanese collection of 600 objects estimated to be worth 20,000 francs,²⁴ the Latour-Allard collection of pre-Columbian objects (around 180 objects)²⁵ estimated at 9,000 francs, a collection of twenty further pre-Columbian objects made of gold whose price was estimated at 20,000 francs and two other small collections estimated at 16,000 francs. The comparison of the acquisition prices for these collections with the Lamare-Picquot collection confirms that in financial terms Asian antiquities were almost equivalent to pre-Columbian objects. Therefore, the sum of 90,000 francs was a considerable price to pay for the ethnographic depot; for this reason, Jomard had assessed that this amount could be paid to the owners in instalments over a period of eight to nine years. In a letter sent on 28th December 1831 to Lamare-Picquot, the Minister of Commerce et des Travaux Publics, Comte d'Argout, explained that even though the ethnographic museum commission headed by Cuvier had reported quite favourably, the French government could not acquire the collection due to budget restrictions.²⁶

Along with two other colleagues, in February 1832 Jomard presented a report on Lamare-Picquot's collection²⁷ to the Société de Géographie in which he emphasized two main points. First, he described the collection's relevance in terms of ethnography, thus leaving aside its archaeological and religious dimensions. The latter had been at the core of the reports by the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres (April 1831) and the Société asiatique (May 1831). Jomard used the term 'ethnographical' to emphasize the very nature of the objects to be displayed: 'objects considered in relation to practical and social utility', thus distinct from art objects and religious ones.

23 Jomard, Calcul approximatif de l'espace et de la dépense nécessaires au dépôt ethnographique, in: Hamy (1988) (as fn. 8), pp. 181–184.

24 According to Hamy, it was probably the Giniez collection whose fate remains unknown.

25 By late 1824, Latour-Allard went to Mexico and acquired 180 pre-Columbian objects that were assembled by the Real Expedición Anticuaria; between 1826 and 1830 he unsuccessfully attempted to sell his collection to the French government. The collection was bought by a private collector, and in 1849 it was acquired by the French government for the forthcoming Musée américain du Louvre. On Latour Allard collection see: Marie France Fauvet-Berthelot, Leonardo López Luján and Susana Guimarães, Six personnages en quête d'objets. Histoire de la collection archéologique de la Real Expedición Anticuaria en Nouvelle Espagne, in: *Gradhiva* 6 (2007), pp. 104–126 and Archives nationales (Paris), O/3/1427, dossier no. 78.

26 Lettre de M. Le Pair de France, Ministre... à M. Lamare-Picquot, 28 December 1831, in: Hamy (1988) (as fn 8), p. 186.

27 Rapport sur la collection ethnographique de M. Lamare-Picquot, par une commission spéciale, in: *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (25 February 1832), pp. 86–96.

Secondly, by pointing out the ethnographic importance of Lamare-Picquot's collection, Jomard strategically promoted his own agenda, that is the creation of a geo-ethnographic museum at the Bibliothèque nationale, where material objects from non-Western countries would be displayed along with texts, drawings and maps. He also deliberately side-lined the ethnographic collection kept at the Musée de Marine (created in 1827 in the Louvre Museum), an omission that contributed to his project's dismissal. As Jomard stated in an 1831 brochure,²⁸ ethnographic collections were distinct from natural history collections as well as from antiquities and fine art collections because they mainly consisted of products of industrial arts (*produits des arts industriels*). Thus, as testimonies of manners and customs, ethnographic collections were a complement to geographical descriptions and travel narratives. In other words, ethnographic collections shouldn't be displayed along with marine artefacts and ship models as it was the case at the Musée de Marine and required a distinctive setting in close articulation with the department of geography.

Lamare-Picquot's collection was also appropriated by Orientalists, among them Eugène Burnouf and Abel-Rémusat. In their report for the Société asiatique of May 1831, they supported the idea of creating an ethnographic museum dedicated to Asian peoples.²⁹ A third proposition supported by Louvre curators and scholars suggested the inclusion of Lamare-Picquot's collection in this museum along with Egyptian antiquities (a Musée Égyptien had been established at the Louvre in 1827). Along with the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman antiquities, non-Western objects were deemed to be a core element of a vast ensemble devoted to illustrate the history of mankind. As André Etienne Justin Pascal Joseph François d'Audebard, Baron de Férussac, collector and founder of the *Bulletin Universel des sciences et de l'industrie* 1824 argued, 'Can one, in effect, separate Hindu and Egyptian monuments? Must we not, on the contrary, bring them closer together in order to grasp the connections and/or observe the differences between them?'³⁰ The term 'monument' is also employed by Alexandre Lenoir, founder of the Musée des Monuments français, in his 1833 report to the Société libre des beaux-arts.³¹ Lenoir referred to Lamare-Picquot's collection as consisting of two types of monuments: antique and modern, mythological and ethnographic.

²⁸ Jomard, *Remarques sur le but et l'utilité d'une collection ethnographique et les moyens de la former*, in: Hamy (1988) (as fn. 8), pp. 125–144.

²⁹ Rapport fait au Conseil de la Société asiatique sur la collection d'antiquités indiennes de M. Lamare-Picquot, in: *Journal asiatique* VIII (1831), pp. 121–129.

³⁰ 'Peut-on, en effet, éloigner les monumens indous des monumens égyptiens? Ne faut-il pas, au contraire, les rapprocher pour en saisir les rapports ou en constater les différences?', Baron de Férussac, *Sur le projet d'un musée ethnographique*, in: Hamy (1988) (as fn. 8), p. 151.

³¹ Alexandre Lenoir, *Extrait du Rapport mythologique, historique et critique fait à la Société Libre des Beaux-Arts le 18 juin 1833 sur les antiquités indiennes et les sujets zoologiques formant la belle collection exposée à la Sorbonne et appartenant à M. Lamare-Picot*, Paris: Imprimerie de Crapelet, n.d.

According to Lenoir, Indian antiquities should be displayed along with Egyptian and Mexican antiquities in the Louvre, as a means of highlighting ‘the history of human-kind through monuments’.

These debates among geographers, orientalists, curators, and art historians focus on the extension of the geographical contours of classical antiquity and on the status of non-Western objects in general and of Asian ones in particular. They reveal the role played by museums in the early nineteenth century as providers of ample material for comparisons among different cultures and periods. Non-Western objects were labelled according to their institutional location, as ‘ancient arts’, ‘industrial arts’ or as ‘monuments and productions of the arts and industry’, they thus raised questions about the role that could be ascribed to commonplace artefacts. The brief existence of a Musée américain at the Louvre Museum³² illustrates the struggle between the partisans of the Louvre as an institution exclusively devoted to classical antiquities and the defenders of a museum dedicated to universal history. With the advent of specialised museums in prehistoric archaeology, national antiquities, and ethnography from the 1860s onwards, the non-Western artefacts housed at the Louvre were progressively dispatched to those new settings.

Well aware of the ongoing discussion on the status of non-Western objects, Lamare-Picquot employed various terms depending on the objects’ provenance and their nature, such as ‘antiquities and diverse monuments’, ‘art objects’ or ‘art pieces’ for his Chinese material. He usually described the Asian objects as ‘*ouvrages de l’art indigène, antiquités*’ and ‘objects of ethnography and mythology’ while the term ‘savage arts’ was specifically used for the East African objects. He was convinced that, for the first time, a significant quantity of Burmese and Indian objects had been collected which would establish a reference for research in France. That was probably the reason why the objects were accompanied by manuscript notes, sometimes attached to the objects themselves. These notes listed indigenous names of the deities and/or the figures represented (a feature several orientalists noted and highlighted³³). According to the 1838 *Panthéon Indien* brochure, the notes were written on site with the help of Brahmans and other ‘learned people’, obtained subsequently from ‘the best English or French authors’ or translated from the Vedas (p. 10). Lamare-Picquot legitimized the information by claiming that the notes were taken in the field, that he had attended religious ceremonies and that the notes were consequently based on

32 On the Musée Américain du Louvre see Adrien de Longpérier, *Notice des monuments exposés dans la salle des Antiquités Américaines (Mexique et Pérou) au Musée du Louvre*, Paris: Vinchon, 1850; see also Susana Guimarães, *Les Anciennes collections précolombiennes au Louvre: le musée des antiquités américaines de A. de Longpérier*, Paris: École du Louvre, 1994.

33 Eugène Burnouf in his report (1831) refers to the indigenous names of the deities and sometimes corrects Lamare-Picquot’s information in the light of William Ward’s work.

facts and observation (*'faits, que j'avais sous les yeux'* ['things that happened before my very eyes']). In addition, he repeatedly stated that the notes resulted from discussions and exchanges with the Brahmins – *'j'ai consulté les Brahmins'*.³⁴ But Lamare-Picquot's account barely mentions the issue of language and recourse to a translator. He was undoubtedly aware of the importance of visual evidence and eye-witness experiences in terms of assembling material culture and of collecting information in the field. As Burnouf pointed out, looking at vases and lamps could provide a more precise idea of the ritual ceremonies than reading travellers' detailed descriptions. In other words, analogising Asian objects to those of ancient Greece or Egypt could yield new insights on the history of mankind and call into question the supremacy and uniqueness of textual sources.

Throughout 1831–1833, Lamare-Picquot inundated the main French scientific institutions with requests to convince scholars as well as politicians and deputies of the uniqueness of his collections. Aware that the French state would never buy his collection, Lamare-Picquot stressed his willingness to donate it as a pure gesture of patriotism based on his devotion to science and to the public benefit. He engaged in intensive networking activities involving writing letters, asking for reports about his collection from the main scientific societies and publishing these reports in separate brochures as a way of raising its profile and providing scientific recognition of his collecting practices. At the same time, he was active in sale proposals for his collection³⁵ and in putting it on display at the Sorbonne gallery (1833). In the 1837 edition of the Galignanis' guide, Lamare-Picquot's collection is referred to as 'more rarely visited and to which it is extremely difficult to obtain admission'³⁶, a statement that signals the importance of this collection through exclusivity.

Political and personal circumstances played a key role in the fate of Lamare-Picquot's collection: the Comte d'Argout resigned as Minister of Commerce and Travaux Publics, and two fierce supporters of Lamare-Picquot's collection – Cuvier and Rémusat – passed away during the 1832 cholera outbreak. In spite of Jomard's relentless efforts to create an ethnographic museum and to donate his own collection as the starting point of the new institution, it would take fifty years from his first attempt until the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro was finally founded in the wake of the Universal Exhibition of 1878. It is worth noting, however, that ancient Asian collections were not displayed in this museum but at the Musée Indochinois du Trocadéro and later at the Musée Guimet (see Ting Chang's article in this volume), an indicator of the ongoing debates on the status of ancient 'civilisations' within the ethnographic field.

³⁴ *Inventaire de la collection dite Panthéon indien avec annotations historiques ...*, in: Müller and Stein (2007) (as fn. 3), p. 121.

³⁵ *Lettre par laquelle M. Lamarepicquot propose la vente de ses collections d'objets ...* (as fn. 8).

³⁶ *Galignanis New Paris Guide*, Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1837, p. 81.

Transnational Relations and Commercial Transactions

While the French government delayed its decision regarding the collection, Lamare-Picquot emphasised in his letters to the government and to the Minister of Commerce that both the Prussian and the Russian governments were interested potential buyers. It is possible that Lamare-Picquot's assertions were true, but it is also possible that they were meant to incite competition among national governments for his collection, thereby increasing its market value. The argument that the collection could be sold abroad appears to be a constant motif in several letters written by Jomard³⁷ and other scholars to justify the need for an urgent political decision. In addition, these scholars also referred to ethnographic collections in places such as Göttingen, Weimar, Berlin, Saint Petersburg and London in order to point out that France lacked a specific institutional setting for this type of collection. Between 1831 and 1833, Lamare-Picquot also attempted to sell his collection abroad: he mentioned on several occasions that German and Austrian scholars had visited his collection and published scholarly reports about it. In other words, he seems to have been a determined and ambitious entrepreneur, dealer and networker. Indeed, he assembled a network of politicians including deputy Félix Bodin and Le Carpentier, and scholars both in the field of Natural History, Philology, History of Religions and Indology such as Count Dietrichstein, Marcus Joseph Müller, Othmar Frank, Friedrich Creuzer³⁸, Carl Alexander von Hügel and Alexander von Humboldt, who was instrumental in the process of the acquisition of his natural history collection for the Berlin Museum. At the same time, he was well connected to diplomats and ministers, including the aristocrat Maximilian von Lerchenfeld (German Minister of Finance between 1833 and 1835 and *envoyé extraordinaire* to Vienna between 1835 and 1841) and Baron Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. In a letter sent to Jomard from Vienna in 1838, Lamare-Picquot referred to the competition with the ethnographic Carl von Hügel collection (today in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Vienna), and consequently his decision to announce the public sale of his collection accompanied by the catalogue entitled 'Panthéon'. As he made clear, this public sale was in fact a strategic move to force the Imperial Austrian government to take a decision regarding his own collection (*'Je pris la décision de provoquer, par une sorte de vente publique, le gouvernement impérial à s'expliquer*

³⁷ Jomard, 'A monsieur le Ministre, secrétaire d'État..', 14 August 1831, in: Hamy (1988) (as fn. 8), p. 166.

³⁸ On F. Creuzer's work on religious symbolism and the relationships between India and Greece see Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus. Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. 45–47.

clairement au sujet de ses vues avec moi').³⁹ It was thanks to Baron von Hammer-Purgstall, an Austrian diplomat and a specialist in Ottoman history,⁴⁰ that Lamare-Picquot exhibited his collection in Vienna in 1838, and he apparently remained in Austria for two years.⁴¹ Lamare-Picquot followed what was, according to Maya Jasanoff,⁴² frequent practice among collectors – to offer their collections to their own country of origin and, if it failed to react quickly, to sell the collections to other countries for the best price. Indeed, in 1841, that is ten years after his first attempts, Lamare-Picquot took a step which he must have been planning for some time and sold his ethnographic collection to King Ludwig I of Bavaria, having failed to persuade the French government to buy it. King Ludwig I paid 27,000 gold guildens for the collection, quite a high price, according to Manfred Ruth.⁴³ 'Time will tell! What one has, one has, and later it can be better accommodated!' These words are attributed to King Ludwig I of Bavaria in response to laments that there was no room to house the ethnographic collections he had recently purchased.⁴⁴

Concluding Remarks

What were Lamare-Picquot's motives for assembling his collection? Lamare-Picquot's collecting activities were unquestionably inspired by his scientific interest in terms of developing the field of ethnography. In doing so, he sought scientific and social recognition for his collecting practices and the opening of a market for non-European objects. A further personal motivation may also have been the desire to compete with other collectors and to position himself on the market as a dealer. Individual interests might explain his drive to collect. He was not just possessed of a passion for accumulation, he created his collection with an underlining purpose: coming from provincial roots, he sought to refashion his own image, to use Maya Jasonoff's terms, and recreate himself as a connoisseur of Asian antiquities and acquire social status accordingly. He relentlessly referred to the ways in which eminent scholars praised his collection and the information related to it. Though he claimed to be financially

³⁹ Lettre adressée à M. Jomard par Monsieur Lamare-Picquot, Vienna, 28 July 1838, Archives nationales (Paris), F /17/ 3846.

⁴⁰ It was to Baron von Hammer-Purgstall that Honoré de Balzac dedicated his novel *Le Cabinet des Antiques* (1838).

⁴¹ Rapport de Mr. Villers, 1866, pp. 68–70, in: Délibérations du Conseil Municipal Bayeux 1866, Archives Départementales du Calvados, sous-série 2MI DM 19–20.

⁴² Maya Jasanoff, *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750–1850*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

⁴³ Ruth (2007) (as fn. 3), p. 98.

⁴⁴ Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002, p. 163.

disinterested – which was partially true – he was nevertheless aware of the monetary and documentary value attached to his collection.

In the late 1870s the fate of Lamare-Picquot's collection became a sort of cliché for French scholars in their efforts to convince the state to create an ethnographic museum. Significantly, in the 1830s, when the destiny of Lamare-Picquot's collection was still uncertain, scholars and public figures had evoked the fate of Bernardino Drovetti's Egyptian collection (today in the Museo Egizio in Turin) as a cautionary example: in 1821 the collection had ended up in the possession of the king of Sardinia in Turin after Drovetti had unsuccessfully offered his collection to the French government in 1819. It is not irrelevant that in 1833 Lamare-Picquot gave some objects – a pagoda model along with goblets, coolers and an incense burner – to the Musée céramique at the Sèvres Porcelaine Manufactory⁴⁵ directed by Alexandre Brongniart where ceramic products (rare as well as from everyday life) from different geographical regions but 'significant from a technical point of view' were assembled in order to demonstrate 'the march and the progress of the ceramic arts'.⁴⁶ The principle that technical procedures might be the basis for chronologies and consequently stand in for texts conferred to the ceramic arts a distinctive status in the light of which non-Western objects could be considered as arts. That the German anthropologist Gustav Klemm was in charge of the Royal Porcelain Collection in Dresden since the early 1830s (Brongniart visited this collection accompanied by Klemm), is significant in view of the role played by the notion of ceramic arts as mediating between the categories of art object and ethnographic object. Along with the objects donated to the Musée céramique, other objects (mainly pagoda models and wood religious sculptures) collected by Lamare Picquot ended up in Jomard's own collection.⁴⁷

In the absence of governmental institutional measures, private individuals spurred and promoted non-Western collecting practices, thus playing the role of forerunners both at home and abroad. These individuals developed their collecting practices in a period before ethnography, art history and archaeology became separate institutionalised disciplines and in doing so they opened new venues for the systematic comparison of widely different objects. At the same time and because of their interest in collecting non-Western objects, they also paved the way for commercial transactions and for the emergent market related to these objects. Collecting, as Jenny

⁴⁵ Alexandre Brongniart and D. Riocreux, *Description méthodique du Musée céramique de la Manufacture royale de Porcelaine de Sèvres*, Paris: A Leleux, 1845, p. 21; see also Sylvie Millasseau, Brongniart as Taxonomist and Museologist: The Significance of the Musée Céramique at Sèvres, in: D.E. Ostergard (ed.), *The Sèvres Porcelaine Manufactory: Alexandre Brongniart and the Triumph of Art and Innovation, 1800–1840*, New Haven and London: Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, 1997, pp. 123–147.

⁴⁶ Alexandre Brongniart, *Traité des arts céramiques*, Paris: Béchét, 1844, pp. XVII–XVIII.

⁴⁷ *Catalogue des objets d'antiquité et de la collection ethnographique de feu M. Jomard*, Paris: E. Thunot, 1863, pp. 13–16. See also Hamy (1988) (as fn. 8), p. 106.

Uglow reminds us in her review of James Delbourgo's book, *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum*, 'was itself a form of currency, a means of leverage.'⁴⁸

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⁴⁸ Jenny Uglow, *Collecting for the Glory of God*, in: *The New York Review of Books* (12 October 2017), pp. 34–36, here p. 36.

