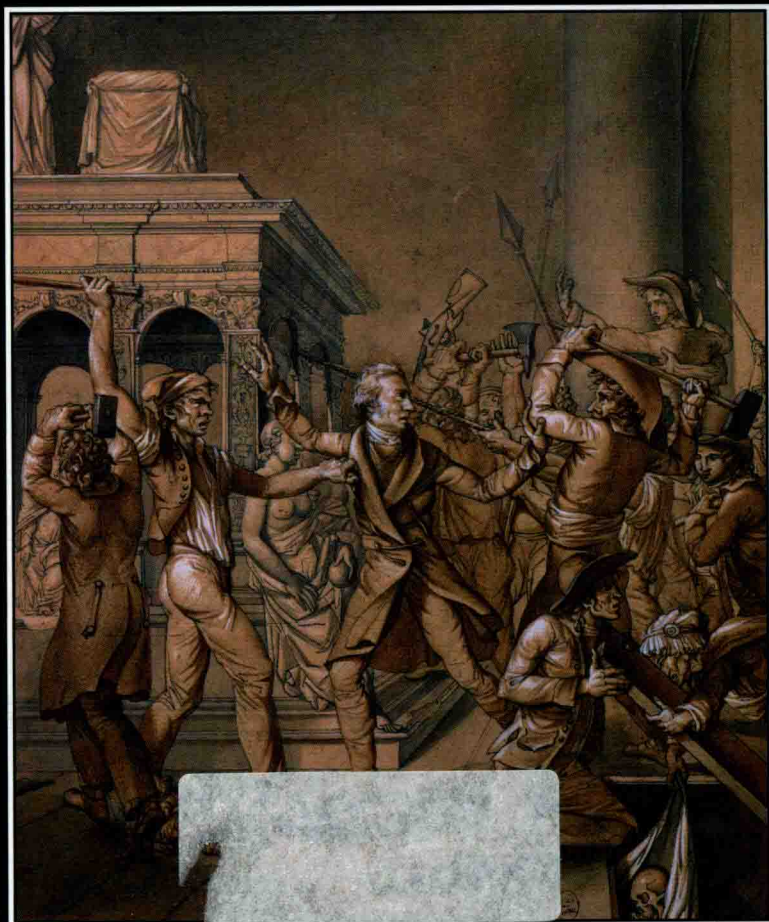


THE HISTORIES OF MATERIAL CULTURE AND COLLECTING, 1700–1950



The Museum of French Monuments 1795–1816

'Killing art to make history'



ALEXANDRA STARA

THE MUSEUM OF FRENCH
MONUMENTS 1795–1816

‘Killing art to make history’

Alexandra Stara

ASHGATE

© Alexandra Stara 2013

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

Alexandra Stara has asserted her right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as the author of this work.

Published by

Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East
Union Road
Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7PT
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
110 Cherry Street
Suite 3-1
Burlington, VT 05401-3818
USA

www.ashgate.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:

Stara, Alexandra, 1967-

The Museum of French Monuments 1795-1816 : 'killing art to make history' / by Alexandra Stara.

pages cm. -- (The histories of material culture and collecting, 1400-1952)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4094-3799-4 (hardcover) 1. Musée des monuments français (1795-1816)

2. Lenoir, Alexandre, 1761-1839. 3. Quatremère de Quincy, M. (Antoine-Chrysostome), 1755-1849--Aesthetics. 4. Cultural property--Protection--France--History. 5. Monuments--Conservation and restoration--France--History. I. Title.

N2050.M7S73 2013

709.4'07444361--dc23

2013005986

ISBN 978-1-4094-3799-4 (hbk)



Printed and bound in Great Britain by
TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall.

THE MUSEUM OF FRENCH MONUMENTS 1795–1816

The first volume in two centuries on Alexandre Lenoir's Museum of French Monuments in Paris, this study presents a comprehensive picture of a seminal project of French Revolutionary cultural policy—one crucial to the development of the modern museum institution. The book offers a new critical perspective of the Museum's importance and continuing relevance to the history of material culture and collecting, through juxtaposition with its main opponent, the respected connoisseur and theorist Quatremère de Quincy. This innovative approach highlights the cultural and intellectual context of the debate, situating it in the dilemmas of emerging modernity, the idea of nationhood, and changing attitudes to art and its histories.

Open only from 1795 to 1816, the Museum of French Monuments was at once popular and controversial. The salvaged sculptures and architectural fragments that formed its collection presented the first chronological panorama of French art, which drew the public; it also drew the ire of critics, who saw the Museum as an offense against the monuments' artistic integrity. Underlying this localized conflict were emerging ideas about the nature of art and its relationship to history, which still define our understanding of notions of heritage, monument, and the museum.

*Alexandra Stara is Reader in the History and Theory of
Architecture at Kingston University, London, UK.*

The Histories of Material Culture and Collecting, 1700–1950

Michael Yonan, University of Missouri–Columbia, USA

The Histories of Material Culture and Collecting provides a forum for the broad study of object acquisition and collecting practices in their global dimensions from 1700 to 1950. The series seeks to illuminate the intersections between material culture studies, art history, and the history of collecting. HMCC takes as its starting point the idea that objects both contributed to the formation of knowledge in the past and likewise contribute to our understanding of the past today. The human relationship to objects has proven a rich field of scholarly inquiry, with much recent scholarship either anthropological or sociological rather than art historical in perspective. Underpinning this series is the idea that the physical nature of objects contributes substantially to their social meanings, and therefore that the visual, tactile, and sensual dimensions of objects are critical to their interpretation. HMCC therefore seeks to bridge anthropology and art history, sociology and aesthetics. It encompasses the following areas of concern:

1. Material culture in its broadest dimension, including the high arts of painting and sculpture, the decorative arts (furniture, ceramics, metalwork, etc.), and everyday objects of all kinds.
2. Collecting practices, be they institutionalized activities associated with museums, governmental authorities, and religious entities, or collecting done by individuals and social groups.
3. The role of objects in defining self, community, and difference in an increasingly international and globalized world, with cross-cultural exchange and travel the central modes of object transfer.
4. Objects as constitutive of historical narratives, be they devised by historical figures seeking to understand their past or in the form of modern scholarly narratives.

The series publishes interdisciplinary and comparative research on objects that addresses one or more of these perspectives and includes monographs, thematic studies, and edited volumes of essays.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

I.1 Pierre-Maximilien Delafontaine, *Alexandre Lenoir*, oil on canvas, 220×161cm, 1799, Château de Versailles © Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library.

I.2 François Bonneville, *Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy*, c. 1787, engraving.

1.1 Sketch of the convent of the Petits-Augustins, as seen from the rue de Petite-Seine, after an engraving by Père Lupin, c. 1650, author.

1.2 Anonymous, *Alexandre Lenoir opposing the destruction of the royal tombs at Saint-Denis*, pen, ink and wash on paper, 1793, Louvre, Paris © Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library.

1.3 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, façade of the château de Gaillon, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1816), author's collection.

1.4 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, tomb of Héloïse and Abélard (Plate 38), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.

1.5 The entrance to the introductory hall of the Museum of Monuments, as it survives today, author's photo.

1.6 The tombs of La Fontaine (left) and Molière, designed by Alexandre Lenoir, at

the cemetery of Père Lachaise, Paris, author's photo.

1.7 The tomb of Héloïse and Abélard, designed by Alexandre Lenoir, at the cemetery of Père Lachaise, Paris, author's photo.

2.1 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, façade of the château d'Anet at the museum entrance, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1816), author's collection.

2.2 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, plan of the Museum of French Monuments, engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.

2.3 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, introductory hall, first view, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.

2.4 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, introductory hall, second view, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.

2.5 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, introductory hall (Plate 1), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.

- 2.6 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, tomb of Richelieu, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.
- 2.7 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, introductory hall (Plate 9), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.
- 2.8 Jean-Lubin Vauzelle, *The Great Hall of the Museum of French Monuments*, showing the monument to Diane de Poitiers in the foreground, oil on canvas, c. 1820, Musée Carnavalet, Paris © Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library.
- 2.9 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, tomb of François I, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.
- 2.10 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, thirteenth-century hall, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.
- 2.11 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, thirteenth-century hall (Plate 16), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.
- 2.12 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, cloister with entrance to fourteenth-century hall on the left (Plate 25), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.
- 2.13 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, fourteenth-century hall (Plate 19), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.
- 2.14 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, fourteenth-century hall, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.
- 2.15 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, fifteenth-century hall entrance (Plate 21), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.
- 2.16 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, fifteenth-century hall, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.
- 2.17 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, sixteenth-century hall, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.
- 2.18 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, sixteenth-century hall (Plate 32), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.
- 2.19 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, seventeenth-century hall, first view, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.
- 2.20 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, seventeenth-century hall, second view, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.
- 2.21 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, seventeenth-century hall (Plate 35, detail), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.
- 2.22 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, cloister (Plate 29), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.
- 2.23 J.E. Biet and Jean-Pierre Brès, cloister (Plate 27), engraving, in *Souvenirs du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris, 1821–26), author's collection.

2.24 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, cloister, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.

2.25 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, Elysium, first view, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.

2.26 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, Elysium, second view, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.

2.27 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, tomb of Dagobert I, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.

2.28 Jean-Baptiste Réville and Lavallée, tomb of Héloïse and Abélard, engraving, in *Vues pittoresques et perspectives des salles du Musée des Monuments Français* (Paris 1816), author's collection.

2.29 Charles-Marie Bouton, *Folie de Charles VI*, oil on canvas, 146×114cm, 1817, Musée de Brou, Bourg-en-Bresse © Hugo Maertens Bruges/Direction des musées de France.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMMF	<i>Inventaire général des richesses d'art de la France</i> , Archives du Musée des monuments français, 3 vols (Paris, 1883–97)
AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
EUI	European University Institute

PREFACE

My first encounter with Lenoir and his museum took place in the Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge, as an attempt to understand modernity through the practices of collecting and displaying. For those years, I owe a great debt to Dalibor Vesely and Peter Carl, who introduced me to the ideas that have defined my academic development, and to the people who have become treasured friends and colleagues. I took my fascination with the Museum of Monuments along to the Department of the History of Art, University of Oxford, where the invaluable guidance and unfailing encouragement of Paul Crowther helped me turn it into a doctoral thesis. Paul has supported me ever since, and I wish to offer him a very heartfelt thank you.

The work that turned my early investigations into this book has been conducted under the auspices of Kingston University London, where I benefited both from financial and moral support, through the School of Architecture and Landscape, the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, and the Visual and Material Culture Research Centre.

I also wish to thank a number of people who have helped shape my understanding of Lenoir's museum and have supported this project in various ways: Dan Karlholm, Alberto Pérez-Gómez, Dominique Poulot, Donald Preziosi, Richard Wrigley, and my dear friend Penelope Bouloukou; special thanks to the series' editor Michael Yonan, and the whole team at Ashgate, for their faith and hard work.

I am grateful to Torsten Schlicht for much, in this case for his help with images; hopefully the end product will live up to expectations. Without my mother Anthoula's francophilia, which she instilled in me early on, this project would not have taken place; I cannot thank her enough. Finally, I would like to dedicate this book to my father, Gregory, whose poetic constructs are a lifelong inspiration: *je le mets – thé, viens!*.

CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xiii</i>
Introduction	1
1 A History	13
2 A Visit	47
3 In Search of Order	89
4 Opposition	123
5 The Inevitability of the Museum	147
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>163</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>179</i>

INTRODUCTION

Revisiting the Petits-Augustins

The first Museum of French Monuments in Paris, inaugurated in 1795, is a familiar name in the history of the institution, despite being permanently closed in 1816 with little trace of its original setting remaining, and having only one scholarly publication dedicated to it since.¹ Nevertheless, from the later twentieth century onwards scholars have increasingly recognised it as a very significant project, with Andrew McClellan stating that 'no account of the dawn of the museum age in France would be complete without it', yet references to it remain brief and limited in scope.² Another visit to this pioneering modern museum is long overdue, and this book proposes to conduct it.

The Museum of Monuments opened to the public almost concurrently with the Louvre but remained in its shadow as its less prestigious, more populist counterpart. The creation of amateur antiquarian Alexandre Lenoir, it presented the first chronological panorama of French art through confiscated sculptures and architectural fragments, gathered in temporary depots during the Revolution. Unlike the Louvre, which displayed undisputed masterpieces of art, such as Classical statues and Renaissance paintings, the status of the Museum of Monuments was ambiguous and contested. The objects in its collection had been, until very recently, intrinsically linked to worship and commemoration, forming integral parts of buildings and other sites. Putting such symbols of the toppled *Ancien Régime* on public display was controversial enough during the Revolution; but from 1799 onwards, with the demise of radical politics, the existence of such a display caused even greater offence in some circles, being seen as a reminder of Revolutionary vandalism. For its critics across regimes, the 'monuments' in Lenoir's museum always managed to evoke the wrong kind of memories, alluding to collective identities that the community was apparently trying to shake off. Nevertheless, the project was consistently popular with the general public and praised as pioneering by several notable figures of the arts and letters. It was a small number of committed opponents, most prominent among them the respected academician and influential theorist of art and architecture Quatremère de Quincy, who upheld that the Museum of Monuments was an aberration of the recent, troubled past and should be closed. They succeeded in doing so in 1816, via royal decree. Quatremère coined the phrase

‘killing art to make history’ to sum up his objection to Lenoir’s museum. Underlying this apparently localised conflict were emerging ideas on the nature of art and its relationship to history, the concept of national heritage and the role of the museum, which still define our cultural understanding today.



I.1 Pierre-Maximilien Delafontaine, *Alexandre Lenoir*, 1799, Château de Versailles © Giraudon/The Bridgeman Art Library

Alexandre Lenoir, the museum's creator, curator and most fervent supporter, was neither a scholar nor a substantial artist, but an amateur with a considerable sense of opportunism. He was born in 1762 in Paris, to a family of merchants, but raised in the Alsace countryside by a clergyman uncle. As a young man, he returned to the capital to study painting with the painter to the king, Gabriel-François Doyen. Interested in the arts at large, but without any formal studies outside his apprenticeship with Doyen, Lenoir remained in his master's studio for fifteen years without notable success. In the mean time, he also wrote a theatrical play that was published in 1786, entitled *Les amis du temps passé* ('The friends of times past'). In 1792, he abandoned his career as an artist to



I.2 François Bonneville, *Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy*, 1787

take guardianship of the former convent of the Petits-Augustins on the left bank of Paris, turned into a depot for confiscated *Ancien Régime* artefacts by the Revolution, and transformed it into the Museum of French Monuments three years later.³

The project was neither erudite nor systematic. In addition to Lenoir's own scholarly shortcomings, throughout its life the museum existed in the most tumultuous and unstable of political contexts, alongside dramatic cultural changes affecting the role of the past in the present and the significance of art in general.⁴ As such, and because of the nature of its exhibits, the museum itself was a project characterised by conflict and ambiguity, where much was determined by circumstance rather than careful planning. But this deep entanglement in the welter of its context is arguably why the Museum of Monuments was such a crucial and meaningful instance in the history of the institution. Between the often conflicting visions of the various individuals involved in its making – ministers, committees and, of course, Lenoir – and the different currents, ideologies and concerns of its environment, the museum emerged as the complex imprint of an entire cultural process. One could retrace in detail the history of the changing regimes of those two decades simply by reading the modifications in Lenoir's various catalogue editions, or by observing the changes in the acquisition policy of its monuments.

This is not, however, the aim of this book: such a mapping of the museum's superficial inconsistencies would detract from the more significant investigation of its underlying coherence, interpreting it as a meaningful and consequential project, despite – or rather *because* of – its combination of scholarly shortcomings, irresolutions and conflicts. It will be argued that the unique fusion of circumstances from which the Museum of Monuments emerged rendered it one of the most eloquent manifestations of a

paradigm shift, while, at the same time, allowing it to articulate an innovative response to the increasingly problematic relationship between culture and its history. The role of Quatremère de Quincy and his writings on art is an essential component in this enterprise. Alongside, and beyond, his opposition to Lenoir's project, Quatremère engaged at length with the idea of the museum in general, which he saw mainly as problematic, in the context of his extensive writings on art and architecture. The book will propose that such an examination of Quatremère's work shows that his misgivings about Lenoir's project were largely circumstantial, as the latter was effectively a response to Quatremère's own concerns. This approximation is doubly significant: on one hand, it sheds new light into Quatremère's celebrated critique against the museum, and on the other, it asserts the Museum of Monuments as a founding moment in the invention of national heritage and the role of the museum in modernity.

Revolution, Monument, Museum

Neither the museum nor the monument were concepts new to the French Revolution. Several projects of making royal art collections accessible to the public, and thus re-inscribing the legitimacy of the monarchy in Enlightenment terms, were conceived and executed in Europe in the decades before the Revolution. The Salons for new art held by the École des Beaux-Arts in the palace of the Louvre since the 1730s were a significant first step towards this, opening up royal premises to the general public in the name of artistic education. The idea soon extended to permanent collections, with the Luxembourg gallery of royal paintings opened to the public in 1750, nominally as a study space for artists to improve the quality of their work through exposure to masterpieces, but equally in the spirit of public cultivation. For this purpose, the paintings were hung in a 'compare and contrast' manner, resembling the Salon style of display. Emerging ideas about the development of styles and chronology began to influence the arrangement of publicly accessible collections, such as the imperial collection in Vienna, which was chronologically rearranged by Christian von Mechel in the 1780s. This practice, however, remained an exception, at least until the following century. Significantly, the idea of parts of the Louvre being permanently converted to a public museum was also considered from the 1750s onward. A host of proposals and counterproposals were commissioned under both Louis XV and XVI, in line with the Encyclopaedists' dream of a comprehensive art institution for public instruction, though none were executed until after the Revolution.⁵

Similarly, conceiving of ancient artefacts as monuments – that is, as condensers of meaning through which the present could glean an understanding of the past so as to confirm a sense of collective identity – was rapidly developing since the first decades of the eighteenth century. Bernard de Montfaucon's seminal *L'Antiquité expliquée* ('Antiquity explained'), the first volume of which appeared in 1719, established the idea of monuments as concrete and retrievable records of the past – that is, as 'historical'. He used the expression in the preface of his work, writing that not only sculpture and architecture but also costume, armour and even the different genres of painting could

be understood as 'historic monuments'. His subsequent *Monumens de la Monarchie Française* ('Monuments of the French Monarchy', 1729–33) introduced this concept to royal sculptures and architecture of France, a seminal work for all subsequent studies of the topic and for the Revolutionary appropriation of the idea of the historic monument, including Lenoir's museum.⁶

Despite their existing presence in cultural discourse, both monument and museum underwent deep and enduring changes during the French Revolution. In the context of the urge for a brave new world, they were emancipated from traditional hierarchies and meanings in order to become building blocks for the new national construct. It is thus that a museum of monuments became possible for the first time and, in fact, necessary. This transformation, however, was fraught with problems, as it came up against a fundamental paradox inherent in the Revolutionary vision of total regeneration: on one hand it implied a severing of the links with the past, since so much of the past had been dismissed as problematic; on the other, it demanded a certain historical continuity to escape arbitrariness, to legitimise its existence in the larger scheme of things, to prove itself a 'historical necessity' and, ultimately, to confirm the very identity of the French people as the collective it proposed to regenerate. In the domain of the arts, and specifically the inheritance from the immediate past, this ambiguity was at its most acute. The arts of France, from the first Merovingian kings until the Revolution, had been developing in a framework dominated by the monarchy and the Church, the two primary structures the Revolution challenged. So, broadly speaking, the entire artistic inheritance of the Revolution was suspect because it potentially carried references to ideals now proscribed.

One of the first radical measures of the Revolutionary Assembly after the fall of the Bastille, on the famous date of 14 July 1789, was the nationalisation of Church property, decreed on 2 November of the same year, and the subsequent spoliation of the vast wealth of artefacts included therein. These were then either sold for profit to foreign collectors, or reconverted to primary material – for example, metal was melted down and used to make guns, the pages of books and manuscripts were used to make cartridges, and so on. However, this unqualified destruction could not have been sustained for long. The various manifestations of the new regime all agreed that a strong cultural policy was essential for forging the identity of the new state, and artefacts from the past had an important role to play – although in what guise exactly was unclear. So, on 13 October 1790, the Commission of Monuments was created: it consisting mainly of Parisian academics and men of letters, whose task was the careful assessment of the artistic riches of France, deciding for each case individually what was to be done – that is, whether the works in question were to be preserved in the name of public instruction and advancement of the arts and sciences, or disposed of in the name of the Revolutionary ideal. One of the very first actions of the Commission of Monuments was the creation of depots for the collection of all confiscated artefacts. The two largest in Paris were instituted at the Hôtel de Nesle and the convent of the Petits-Augustins respectively, the latter decreed on the 15 October. From then on, a perpetual war between pro-conservation and pro-destruction parties was to rage throughout the Revolutionary era, with endless discussions, motions and decrees.⁷

The argument for conservation centred on two issues. First, it was deemed necessary to maintain artworks considered masterpieces in their field for the education of future artists and confirmation of the new regime's support for the arts, in accordance with Enlightenment doctrines. This usually pertained to Renaissance paintings and Classical sculptures, and was the simplest category to deal with, not only because of their considerable antiquity, thus detachment from the affairs of the recent past, but also because their categorisation as high art largely absolved them from any 'inappropriateness' of symbolic content.⁸ Second, the preservation of French artefacts was emerging as potentially significant, with those pieces newly perceived as historic monuments and, thus, components of the elusive continuity the new regime needed to establish with the past, alongside its agenda of regeneration.

During the first phase of the Revolution (1789–92), with the monarchy precariously still in place, many proposals regarding the transformation of Church property into 'national' monuments were couched in idealised, encyclopaedic projects, where the arts, letters and sciences were brought together both as theoretical knowledge and concrete artefacts, to compose a multi-institution of study, instruction and general enlightenment, spearheading the advancement of the nation.⁹ A great number of such proposals were put forward during those three years, including several by prominent figures such as the diplomat Talleyrand, the philosopher Condorcet and, intriguingly, Quatremère de Quincy himself, the latter to be discussed later in the book. It is also worth mentioning here the project of antiquarian and naturalist Aubin-Louis Millin, presented to the National Assembly in December 1790, under the title *Antiquités nationales ou Recueil de monuments pour servir à l'histoire générale et particulière de l'empire français* ('National antiquities or collection of monuments to serve the general and particular history of the French Empire'). Unlike the other encyclopaedic proposals for national monuments, this one avoided the difficulties associated with the conservation of the actual works by suggesting they are 'collected' via representation in illustrated volumes instead. Millin completed his five-volume work in 1798. According to Françoise Choay, the preface to this work, presented to the Assembly in 1790, was the first instance of the use of the term 'historic monument', although, as Dominique Poulot has shown in an earlier study, Bernard de Montfaucon had clearly described monuments as 'testimonies of past times' and tantamount to 'historic facts' themselves.¹⁰

Less ambitiously but more consequentially, the two main committees in charge of nationalised property, in conjunction with the Commission of Monuments, issued four Instructions between 1790 and 1791, promoting conservation. Although ostensibly practical documents, aiming to take stock and protect from theft and vandalism the vast wealth of Church property suddenly left unguarded, the Instructions played a key role in defining cultural value and, therefore, in shaping the idea of national monument.¹¹ Much of what was recorded, of course, ended up in the foundries or sold, to fuel the increasingly costly Revolutionary campaigns. At the same time, the Instructions also issued specific criteria for the preservation of artefacts on the grounds of either artistic or, significantly, historic interest. For example, the Third Instruction of 1790 stated that 'all monuments older than the year 1300 shall be conserved because of the representation