The idea of antiquarianism offered an opportunity to bring together a number of scholars interested in the period 1780-1830 and in the interlinking of certain cultural and economic issues pertinent to that time. It was quickly realized, however, that the idea of antiquarianism per se did not form the central focus of any of the papers; feeling obliged to return to that question, moreover, sometimes proved almost counter-productive to the discussions. Given that the term antiquarianism continues to be a charged one in both academic and popular-culture domains, we feel it is best to abandon the term antiquarianism in the next iteration of the project.

The underlying reason for originally choosing the term antiquarianism was its connotations of an interest in the parochial and the past. During the colloquium we continued to concentrate and be motivated by this interest which was specific to a certain time and tied to certain locations but operated simultaneously within a global nexus of individuals and institutions. It is this focus which we now wish to redirect our energies towards. We feel the colloquium title ‘Exporting Identities’ may prove the basis of a more appropriately-worded title for the next stage, but we would like to emphasize the ideas of importation and various categories of exchange, ranging from the economic to the intellectual. It is important, therefore, to formulate a new title for the project; ideally including the notions of negotiation; exchange; and the centrality of oceans therein; for instance, the phrase ‘Cultures of Exchange’.

In this context, we wish to emphasize the crucial importance of oceanic routes in facilitating this movement between what we would call the local and the global. This importance emerged as a theme common to most of the papers presented, along with the related concepts of cultural and political nationalisms and the multinational nature of both individuals and empires. What is now needed is renewed examination of the specific ways in which oceanic routes facilitated this culture of exchange which was neither cosmopolitan nor international, but predicated upon shared curiosities in race, language, science, religion, amongst others. In other words, the next
phase of the project should chart the multiple connections between individuals and the extent to which localized and rooted identities interacted with, and were transformed by, these global connections.

What precisely these connections might be can be discerned from some of the papers offered at the first colloquium. For instance, the title itself of Emma Rothschild’s paper, “the Swanlike Strains of a Slaughtered Nation: Antiquarians, Historians, Philologists and Empires”, suggests the ways in which individuals with diverse intellectual interests in the parochial and the past interacted with each other. These personal friendships were nevertheless made possible by the shifting political currents of late eighteenth-century Europe. The paper charts how ideas moved across the intellectual map of Europe, in a manner similar to the chain movement of migrants in an emerging global labour market. By focusing on the formal and informal exchanges between the scholars Leopardi, Niebuhr, Hare, Thirlwall and Fauriel and their respective intellectual spheres, the paper reconstructs a three-dimensional ‘web’ of interconnectivity radiating from a common interest in the Gemeingut of European oral poetry. This then enabled further comparisons to be made between the pasts of western and northern Europe and the present of Balkan Serbia. This intellectual network anticipates a moment when the global was poised to bring forth the national.

Although ostensibly concerned with a very different eighteenth century space, Ananya Kabir’s ‘A kind of Florid Oriental Gothic: Imaginative and Intellectual Genealogies of Tod’s Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan’, also drew attention to the intertwinnings of past and present. James Tod’s seminal and influential account of Rajasthan offered ways of analyzing how aesthetic vocabularies of the gothic and the picturesque as well as various legal and antiquarian discourses were imported from Europe in order to furnish ways of understanding and managing the bewildering newness of local topographies, customs and practices encountered by colonial administrators in India. These encounters transformed those discourses which then, in turn, impacted further reinventions of European pasts as well as evolving imperial policies of government and administration in extra-European territories.
A similar focus on colonial practices of mapping and surveying, as embodied in the activities of one individual, was offered in William O’Reilly’s paper, ‘Nurturing Knowledge: Culture, Science and Empire in the Emerging Global Order, 1780-1830’. The seemingly separate worlds of Ireland and India were linked by the work of Charles Vallancey, military surveyor, sapper-engineer, surveyor and amateur philologist, linguist and orientalist. Emergent European disciplines of comparative philology and antiquarianism offered Vallancey a lens through to refract and refocus information gathered by others in India and elsewhere to construct a past for domestic consumption in Ireland.

These three papers suggest possibilities for what the next phase of this project might be. Given our movement towards reconceptualizing this project, we feel it somewhat premature to publish any of the papers at this stage. This is not to suggest that individual participants who may wish to see their papers appear in print in their current form be discouraged from doing so. Rather, we consider the project to be a more ambitious undertaking in which those themes which emerged as central to our collective interests would form the basis for further colloquia over the next two years and quite possibly for a series of edited collections, each exploring specific issues. We aim to hold the next colloquium on 26 or 27 May 2004 and we envisage inviting a number of those participants at the first colloquium whose papers and responses seemed most pertinent to become involved in the next phase of the project. We hope that they would be encouraged to re-articulate their original papers in the light of these new objectives. In addition, we hope to invite a number of colleagues, including Chris Bayly, David Dumville, Colin Kidd and Nigel Leask, whose research interests would now enhance our modified objectives. These objectives include an investigation of the significance of religion, race and class in our understanding of oceanic history and processes of globalisation in the period 1780-1830. We hope these planned meetings, colloquia and publications shall contribute significantly to the emergent fields of oceanic histories and the histories of globalization in a pre-global era; in our understanding of Oceanic Networks of Exchange and our Charting of the Past, 1780-1830.