

Prince Napoléon Bonaparte and his explorations in the northern seas (1856) **Aude BARTHE¹, Eloïse GAILLOU¹**

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Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte (1822-1891) belonged to the Imperial House of France, he was known for being the nephew of Emperor Napoleon I, and the cousin of Emperor Napoleon III (Fig. 1). He was better known as “Plon-Plon”, a nickname given to him as a child, and widely used by his friends and referred to as such in the press. Significantly, he played a political role as Corsica's deputy and minister of Algerian and Colonial Affairs. However, he was not held in high regard within the House of Bonaparte due to his anticlerical and left wings opinions.

In the same way as many men of his time, Napoléon-Jérôme Bonaparte was a science enthusiast. After the Crimean War, he led a fifth month's expedition on the ship *La Reine Hortense* in 1856. This lecture will present this expedition, and the samples collected along his journey, which now belong to the collections of the mineralogy museum of the Paris School of Mines. Furthermore, we will highlight the importance of these samples in our collections.

From June 16th to October 2nd 1856, Bonaparte traveled through northern Scotland, the Icelandic fjords, Greenland, and Scandinavian countries. He aimed to visit extraordinary geological landscapes such as the ones that can be seen in Iceland (Reykjavik, Geysir geysers, Onundar fjord), Scotland (Edinburgh, Inverness) and Greenland (Godthaab, Arsuk fjords near Igvitut). He also visited places where important mineralogical discoveries were made (for example in Arendal and Ytterby). Thanks to the work of his friend and fellow traveler Charles Edmond in *Voyage dans les mers du Nord à bord de la corvette La Reine Hortense* (Edmond, 1857; Fig. 2), we know the itinerary of his journey and the different activities carried out in the countries. During his voyage, three others ships accompanied him with more than eighty persons: captains, surgeons, professors, engineers, naturalists, etc. Among them, Alexandre de Chancourtois, geologist, curator, and professor at Paris School of Mines. Both a friend and head of Prince Napoleon's cabinet at the Ministry of Algeria and the Colonies, de Chancourtois played a major role in his trip as a geologist and collector of samples given by Prince Napoléon to the School.

Shortly after his return from the North, he organized a mineralogical cabinet at his home in the Royal Palace. Prince Napoléon himself gave his samples to the School along with a letter dated 21 February 1868 addressed to the Director of the School. We still have copies of the letter and the director's reply. The only condition he listed in his letter was that his collection should not be separated. Today, we have more than 250 samples listed under his name in our collections. The samples that Prince Napoleon brought back are still valuable today: they represent (sometimes ancient and closed) mining sites from 1856 in northern countries, holding potential economic values. Some of the places visited are type localities, minerals and rocks collected in those places are not necessarily accessible nowadays. This type of scientific expedition played an essential role in the mutations of scientific knowledge in France and in Europe. In the 19th century, the purpose of these voyages was to verify theories, extend fields of research and collect new natural's species.

