

Marie-Antoinette: a pawn on the European diplomatic chessboard

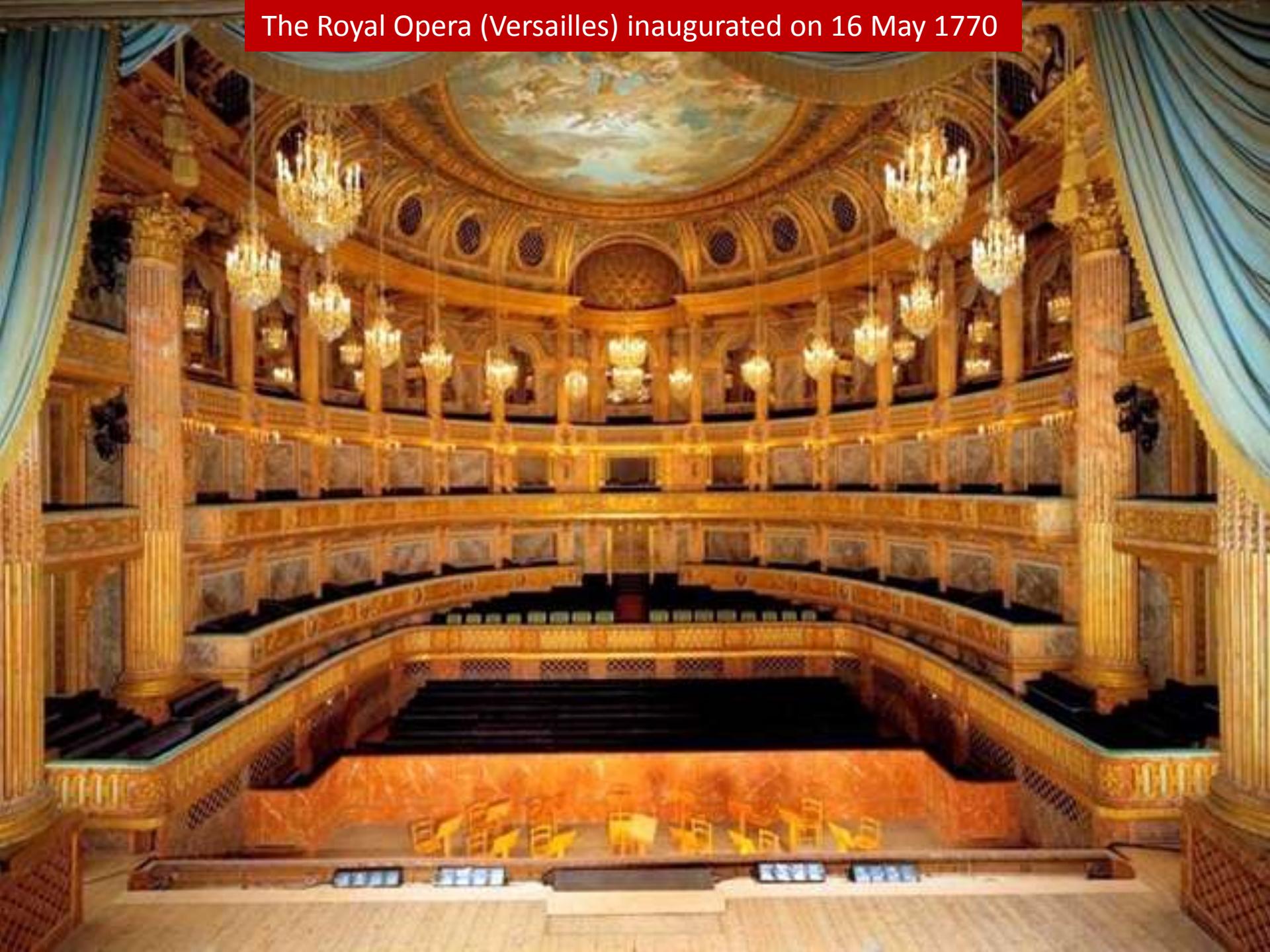


NFT le Dauphin

Coming this winter... Versailles: from political statement to national monument



The Royal Opera (Versailles) inaugurated on 16 May 1770



Merry Saint-Denis Framework - a Silvery Tongue



A fairy tale wedding : 16 May 1770



Duc de Choiseul: the architect of the **Franco-Austrian alliance**

The Seven Years War (The French & Indian War) – 1756-1763

Global conflict involving all the great European powers

Began outside of Europe

Fought primarily for extra-European aims (2 antagonistic imperial powers – France & England)



The French: **25,000 regular troops & militia** (used to fighting in America)

The British: colonial militias unreliable & far less trained than French counterparts

Geography/absence of roads made it hard for the British to employ their numerical advantage

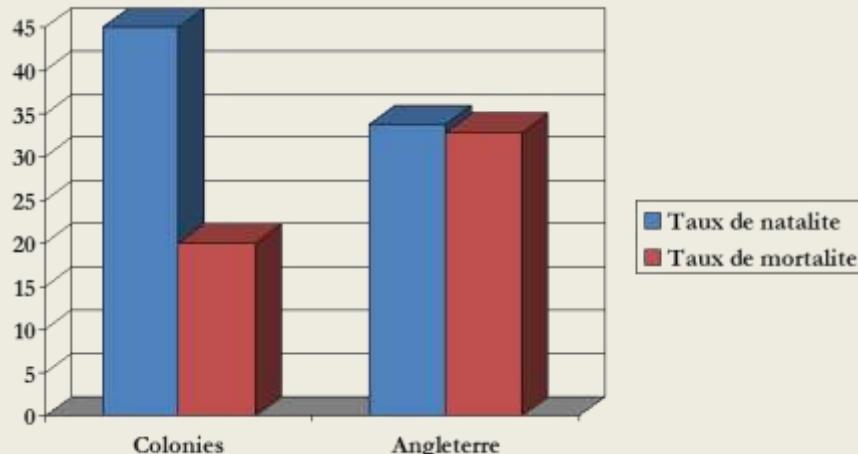
New France believed impregnable

France at a military disadvantage in North America

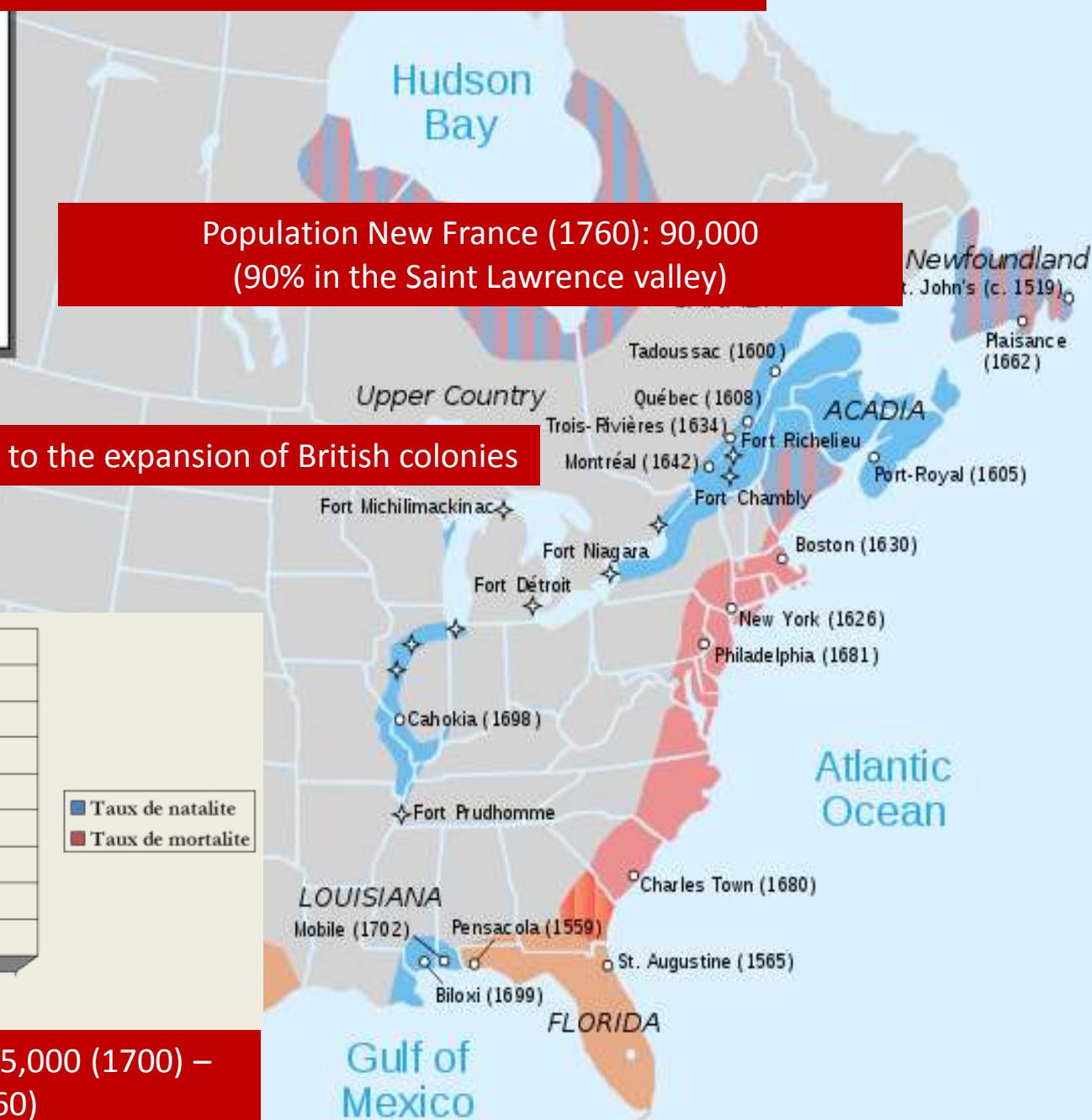
- France
- England
- Territories disputed between France and England
- Spain
- Territories disputed between Spain and England
- Forts
- Towns

Population New France (1760): 90,000
(90% in the Saint Lawrence valley)

New France: an obstacle to the expansion of British colonies



Population British colonies: 265,000 (1700) –
Over 1 million (1760)



France's ambition: to link New France with Louisiana

A military barrier to British westward expansion deemed unacceptable in London



Pacific
Ocean



Gulf of
Mexico

1. Settlement colonization (St Lawrence valley, New Orleans & Acadia)

2. Trading posts (fur trade)



Network of forts
Alliances with Natives

"The Hispanic civilization destroyed the Indian; the British civilization despised & neglected him; the French civilization adopted him and took care of him"

American historian Francis Parkman
(late 19th century)

Pacific
Ocean

Atlantic
Ocean



Franco-Indian alliances

The French considered less of a territorial threat than the land-hungry British

New France's survival possible thanks to alliances
Indians = indispensable economic partners (fur trade)

New France: tightly controlled and **militarized**

All able-bodied men (age 16 to 60) incorporated into a militia (16 000 men)

MMercenaries + civil militia (defending their homes) + “Indian” war techniques
=
Increased **violence**

1755-1757: advantage to France



Montcalm



July 1756: the fall of Minorca (symbol of England's maritime power)

England humiliated = political crisis

Atlantic Ocean



William Pitt (the elder)

Spain



Cadiz

Tangier

Gibraltar



England saved from military defeat in the New World thanks to the opening of a new front... in Germany!

"America was conquered in Germany" (Pitt)

Barbary States

Hungary

Adriatic Sea

Papal States

Rome

Naples

Marseille
Toulon

Barcelona

Valencia

Minorca

Balearic Islands



Sardinia

Mediterranean Sea

Sicily



Genoa

Madona

Adriatic Sea

Adriatic Sea

1756: the European diplomatic system dominated by the old Franco-Austrian enmity (since the 16th century)



The War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748)

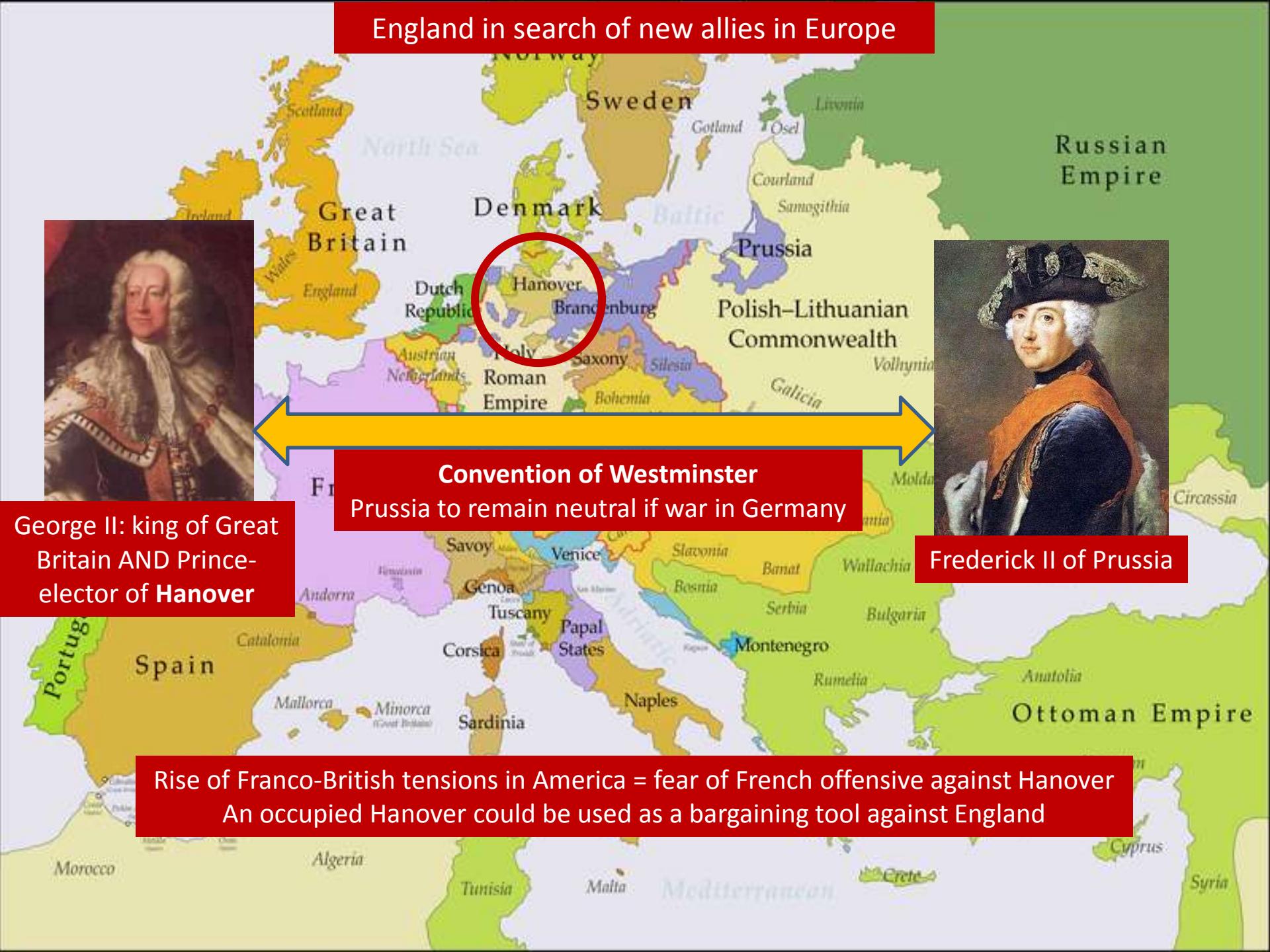
The rise of Prussia: a new balance of power in central Europe



Maria-Theresa: the only way to re-conquer Silesia is to put an end to rivalry with France
The reversal of 3 centuries of alliances



England in search of new allies in Europe



1 May 1756: treaty of alliance Franco-Austrian

Marie-Antoinette: the **centrepiece** of the new European puzzle



Marie-Antoinette's marriage to the
Dauphin of France (heir to the throne)

To transform an unlikely alliance into a
sincere, balanced & lasting friendship

Maria-Theresa: a matrimonial strategy aimed at
strengthening **Austria's influence** in Europe



Marie-Antoinette: an accomplished young woman
Good knowledge of Latin
Can translate Italian poetry in German
Spoke French perfectly

Marie-Antoinette proud to be chosen among her many sisters to rule *“over the most beautiful kingdom in Europe”*

Mercy-Argenteau: Maria-Theresa's eye at Versailles



The Court of Versailles: the most brilliant but also the most treacherous Gossips, clans & shifting factions



The Duc de Choiseul dismissed

Marie-Antoinette unprepared (simpler life in Vienna)

Strict Etiquette



Madame Adélaïde and the devout party

The « French party »: the anti-Austrian faction at court



Mme du Barry



Louis XVI & Marie-Antoinette: a mismatched couple

Marriage unconsummated for 7 years: an humiliation for Marie-Antoinette



« The poor man »

Awkward, shy & inhibited – A poor showing on official occasions

A passion for hunting, locksmith

« My tastes do not accord with the King's. He is only interested in hunting and in mechanical work. I know you will agree that I should not look particularly well standing beside a forge”

Graceful, elegant, vivacious

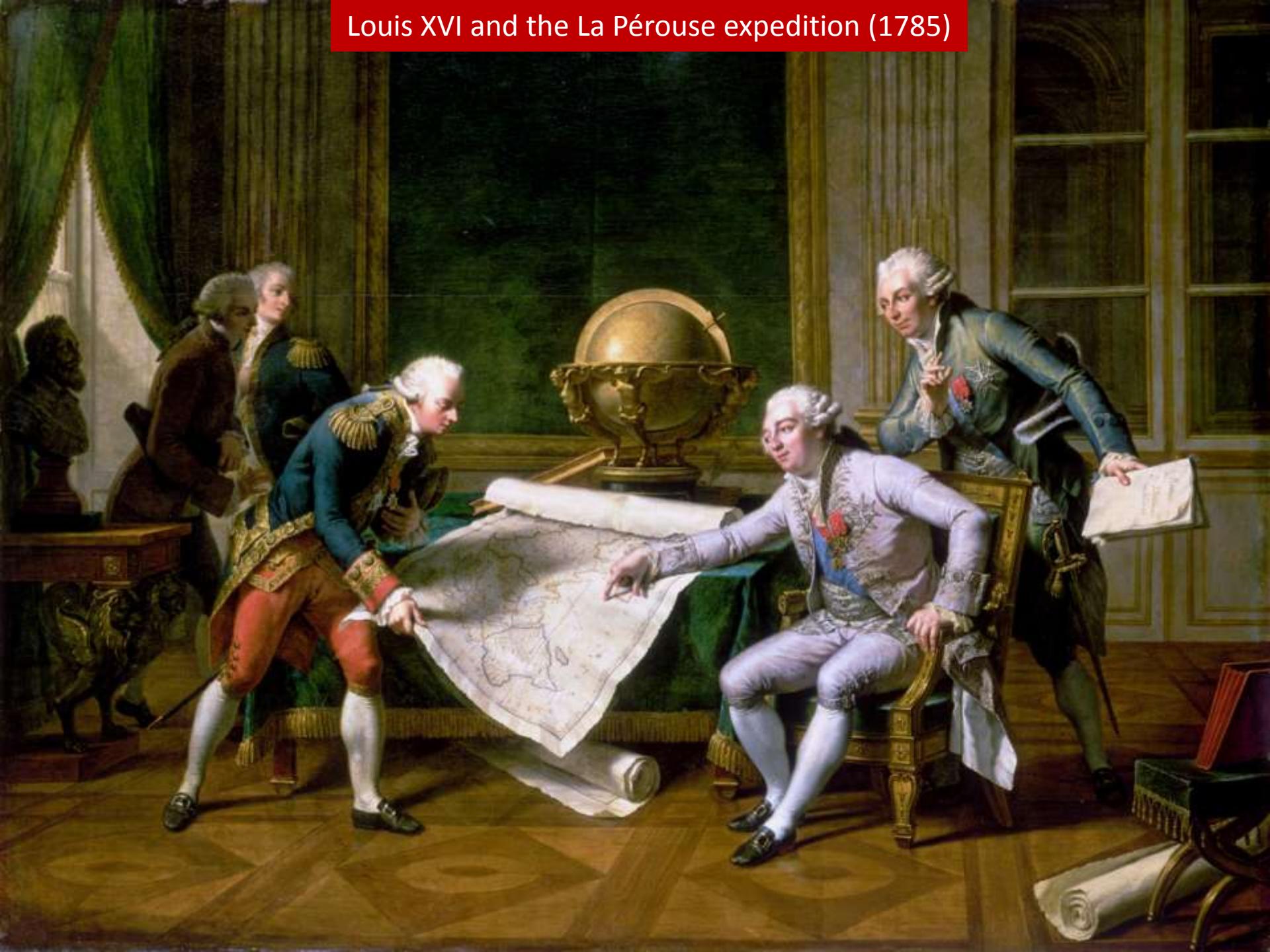
Louis XVI: far from the image of the mediocre, apathetic monarch
A solid, yet incomplete education (mathematics, sciences, geography)
Open to reforms

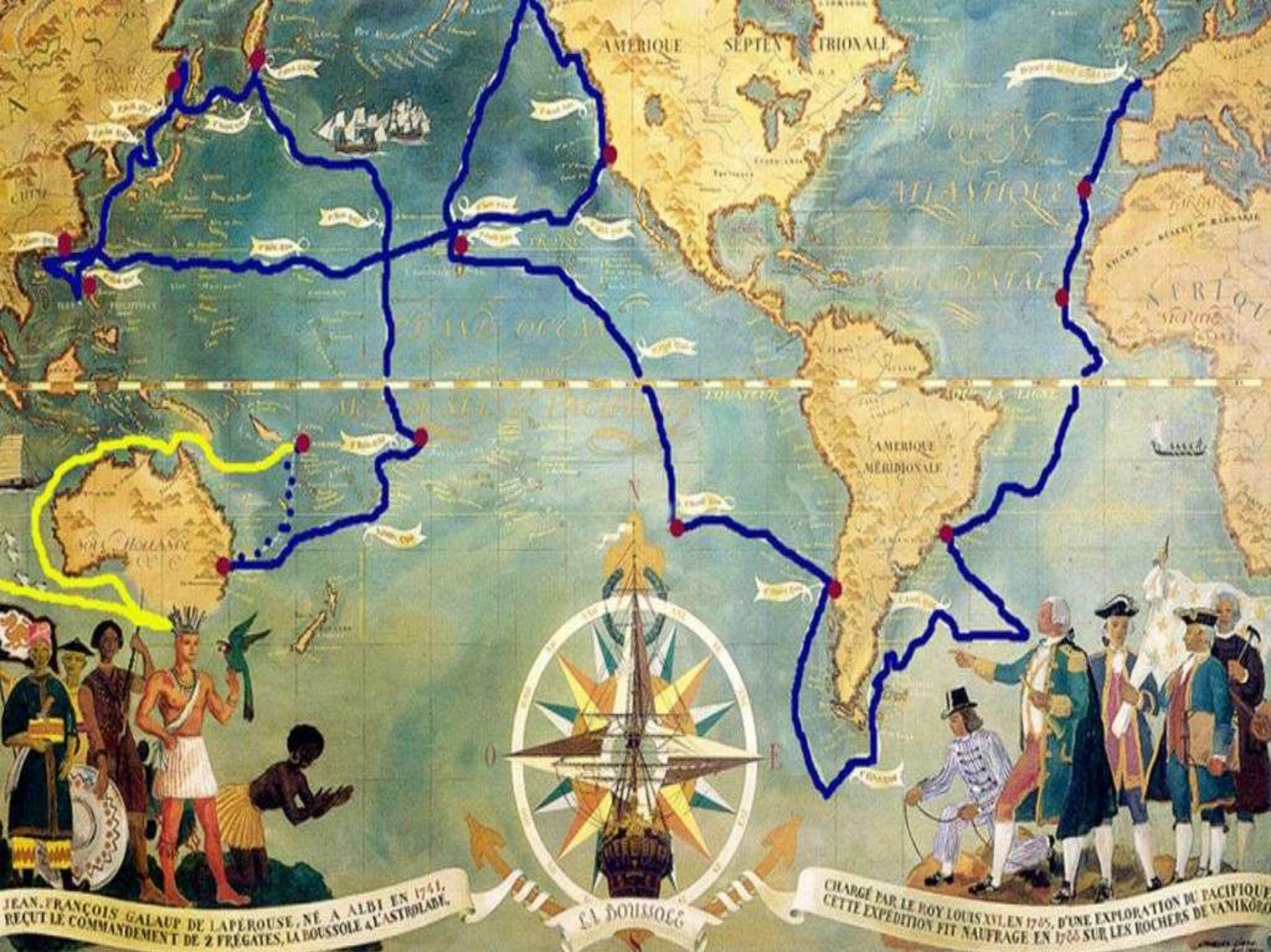


Louis XVI's trip to Cherbourg, Normandy (June 1786)



Louis XVI and the La Pérouse expedition (1785)





JEAN-FRANÇOIS GALAUP DE LA PÉROUSE, NÉ À ALBI EN 1741,
REÇUT LE COMMANDEMENT DE 2 FRÉGATES, LA BOUSSOLE & L'ASTROLABE.

LA BOUSSOLE

CHARGE PAR LE RÔY LOUIS XVI EN 1785, D'UNE EXPLORATION DU PACIFIQUE,
CETTE EXPÉDITION FIT NAUFRAGE EN 1788 SUR LES ROCHERS DE VANIKROD

A political crisis: the Queen unable to produce an heir to the throne
“The Austrian woman” (the foreigner) accused of neglecting the king while taking lovers



Joseph II

Violent campaigns of pornographic libels against Marie-Antoinette from the early 1780s
"The great Messalina"

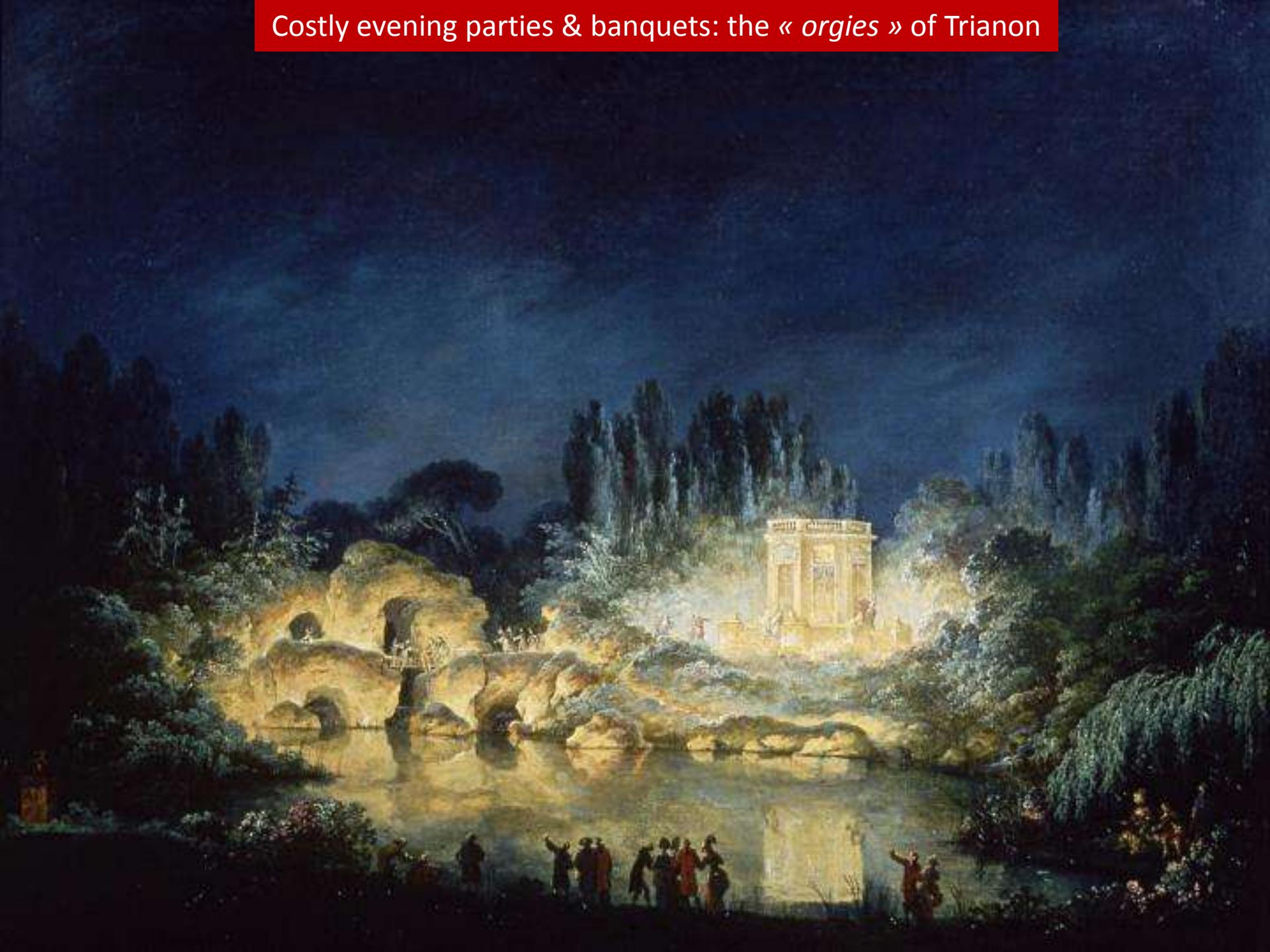


Je ne respire plus que pour toi,
un baiser, mon bel Auger!

Marie-Antoinette's taste for privacy: the Petit Trianon only accessible to a few
Growing bitterness at the neglected court of Versailles



Costly evening parties & banquets: the « orgies » of Trianon



The affair of the diamond necklace



Eve of Revolution: a perceived reversal of roles

A king without neither power nor mistresses governed by the Queen



Maria-Theresa & Joseph II: Marie-Antoinette to influence France's foreign policy and favor Austria's interests

Marie-Antoinette: an hostage and a guarantee



Marie-Antoinette unwilling to intervene in the political sphere (until 1787)

1. The Queen hesitant to get involved in complex issues
2. Caution: the Franco-Austrian alliance remained fragile

Marie-Antoinette did not seek to serve her family's interests
To appease diplomatic differences between France & Austria

The fight for a word: Marie-Antoinette's aversion for Louis XV's mistress



Marie-Antoinette about du Barry: « *The stupidest and most impudent creature imaginable* »



Du Barry's nickname for Marie-Antoinette:
« *that little redhead* »

Mme du Barry's salacious past revealed to Marie-Antoinette



The aunts' secret hope: Marie-Antoinette's dislike for du Barry would get her in trouble with Louis XV

When a private matter becomes an affair of state...



1. Marie-Antoinette's approach: to ignore the « favorite »



3. Franco-Austrian alliance threatened



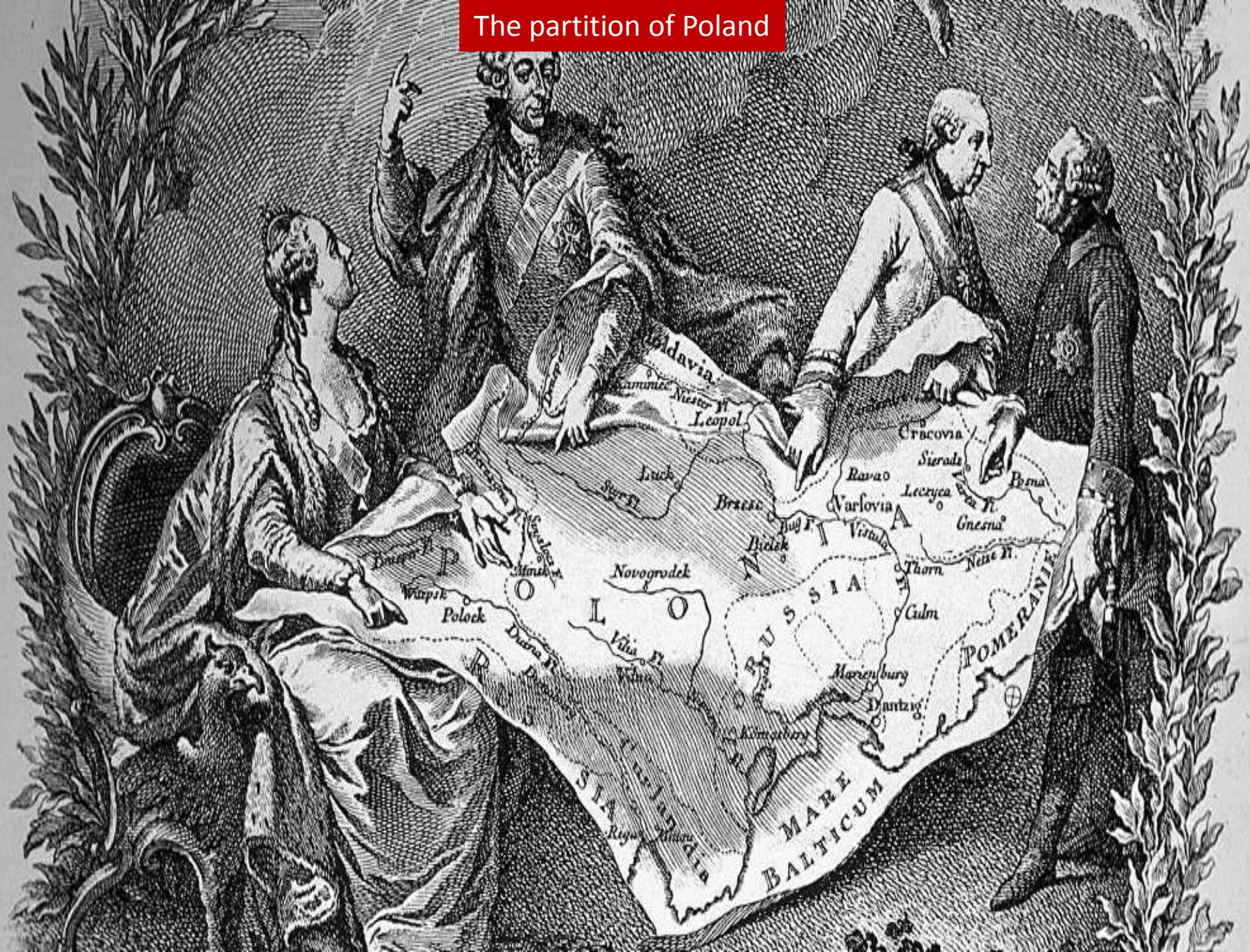
2. Mme du Barry complains to Louis XV

4. Marie-Theresa's intervention



« You should not know or see the Barry in any other light than that of a lady admitted to the court and to the King's society”

The partition of Poland



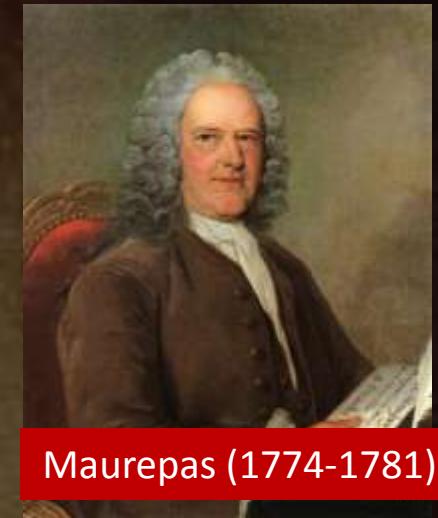
1784 diplomatic tensions between Austria & Holland



Louis XVI: jealous of his power

Marie-Antoinette so-called political influence helped build the image of a weak & hesitant king

Louis XVI knew how to govern with
the support of strong ministers



Maurepas (1774-1781)

Louis XVI: 2 important decisions

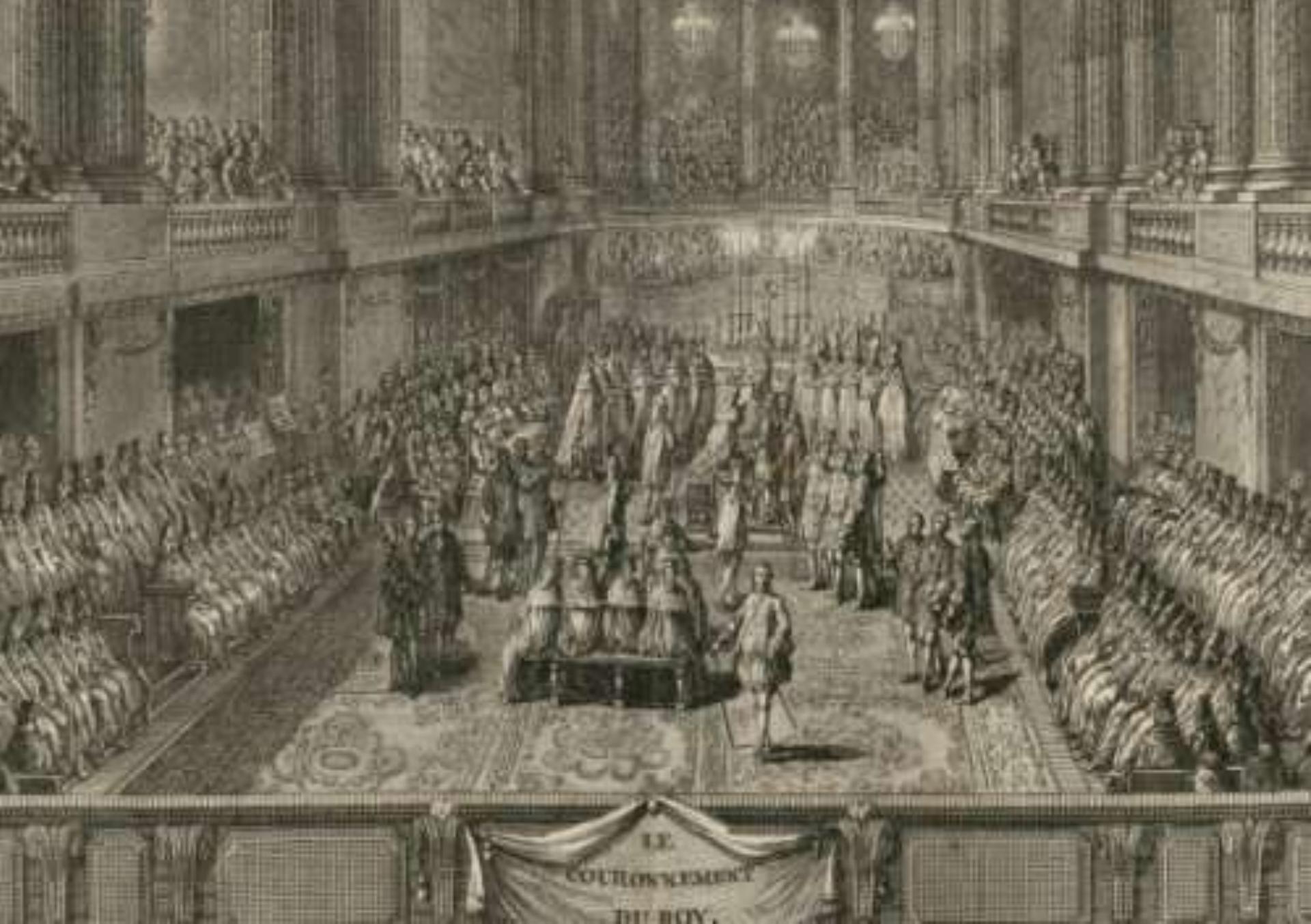
1. The recall of the Parliaments (higher courts of justice) - 1774
2. The war against England (1778)

Women should have no part in the
affairs of state



Vergennes (1774-1787)

Louis XVI's coronation (June 1775): Marie-Antoinette in attendance as a spectator



The coronation of Marie de Medici (1610)



Marie-Antoinette obtained permission to meet Choiseul but the former minister was not to return to power



1787: the Queen attends the King's Council by necessity & duty

From the king « *above me* » to the king « *beside me* »



Loménie de Brienne



Jacques Necker

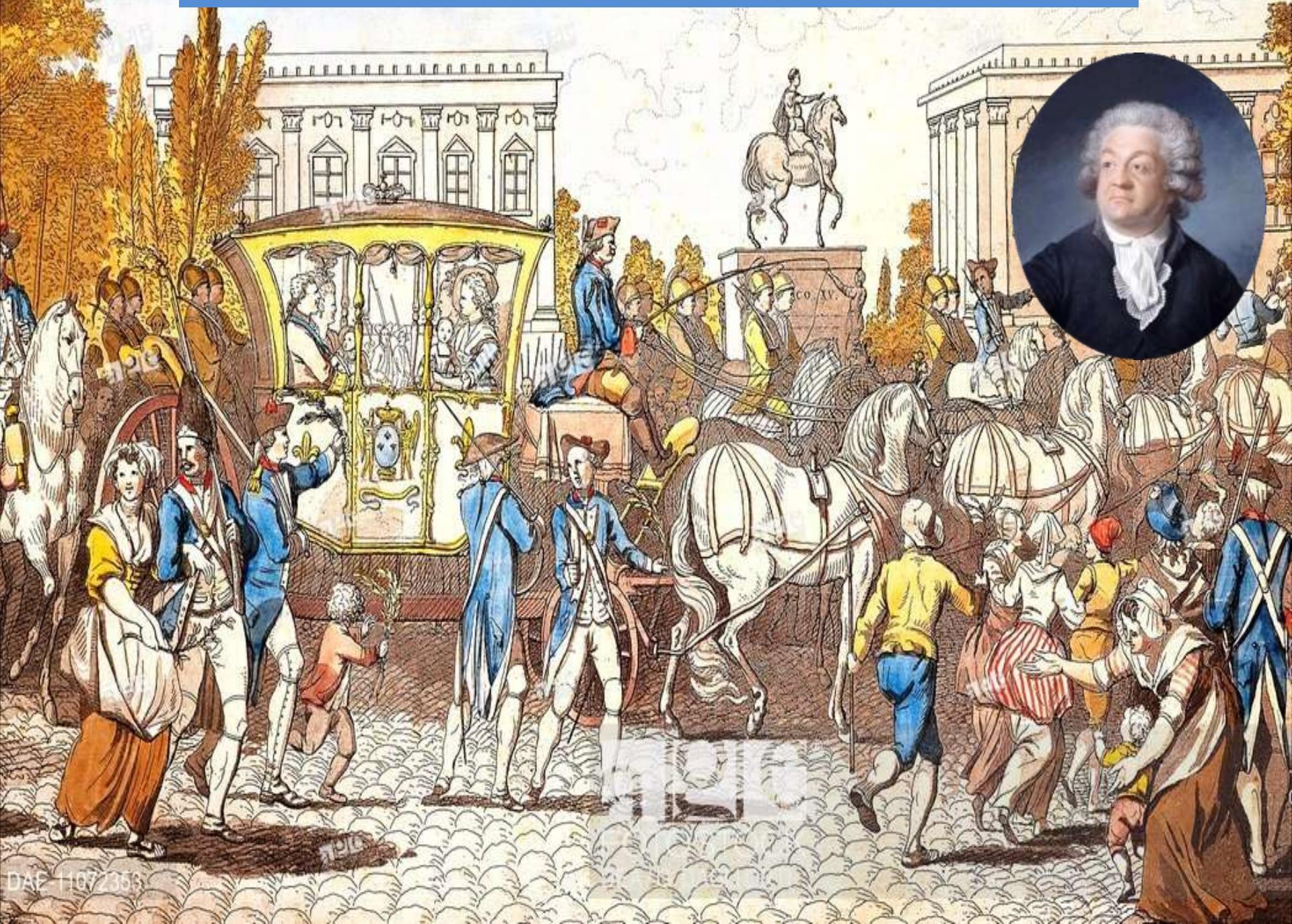
The Queen's interventions to regain the initiative in 1789



The Queen's role remained secondary until the end of the monarchy (1792)



"The King has only one man at his side and that is his wife" (Mirabeau)



“She is great, noble and unfortunate; but I shall save her” (July 1790)



Late political association impossible without mutual esteem & feelings
Their fates intertwined



Children



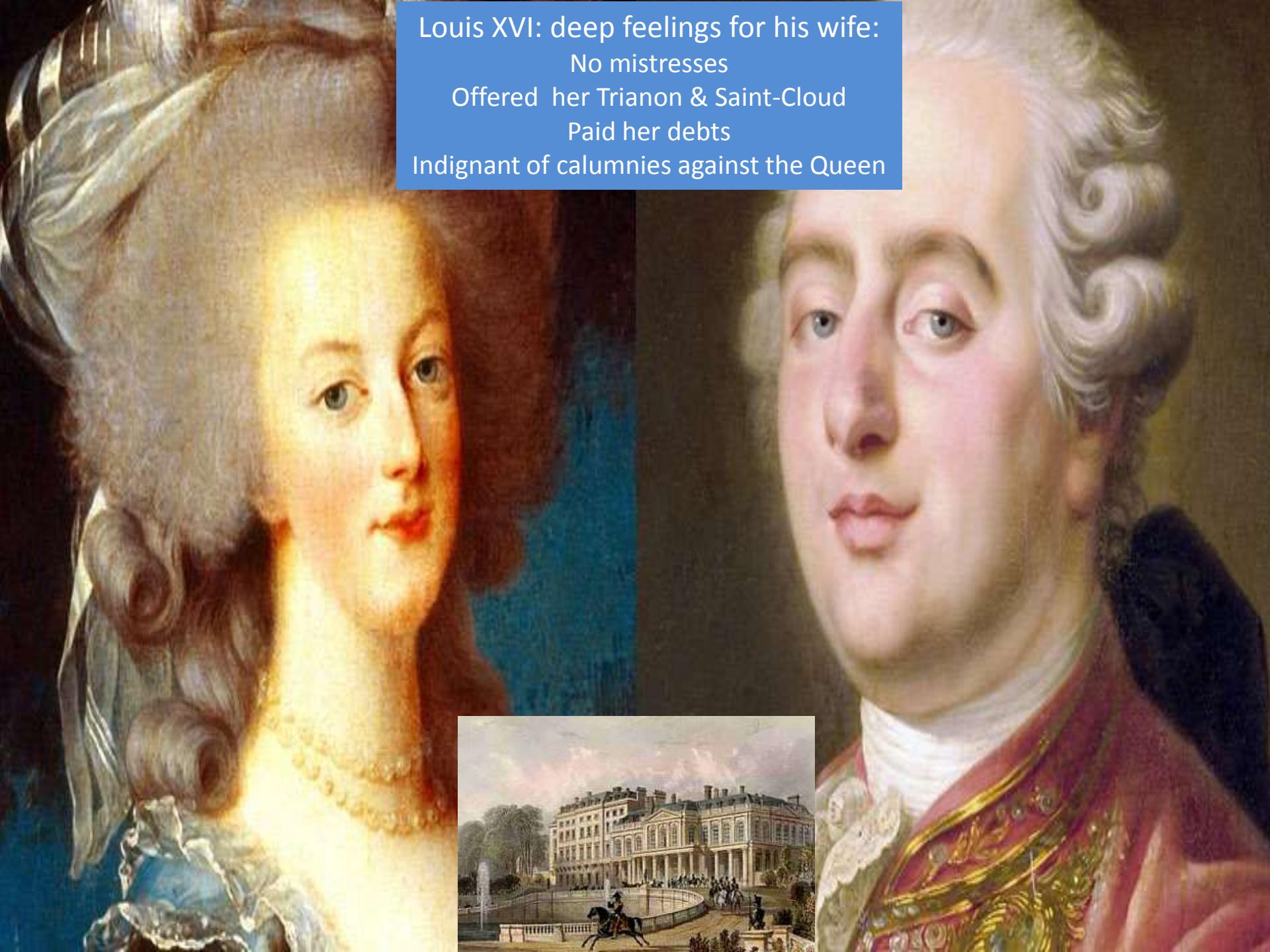
5 October 1789: the Parisian mob marching on Versailles

The Queen refused to be separated from her husband: "*I do not wish the King to incur a danger which I cannot share*"



The flight to Montmedy (1791): the King refused to be separated from his wife and children





Louis XVI: deep feelings for his wife:
No mistresses
Offered her Trianon & Saint-Cloud
Paid her debts
Indignant of calumnies against the Queen



Fersen

