



Napoleon and his family: the conquest of Europe  
The triumph of nepotism over meritocracy?

*The Espousal of Jérôme  
Bonaparte and Catharina  
of Württemberg, by Jean-  
Baptiste Regnault, 1807*

A colorful family

**Napoleon:** the unique destiny of a man

**Bonaparte:** the name of a clan

The Bonaparte clan briefly reigned over Europe  
by the will of Napoleon



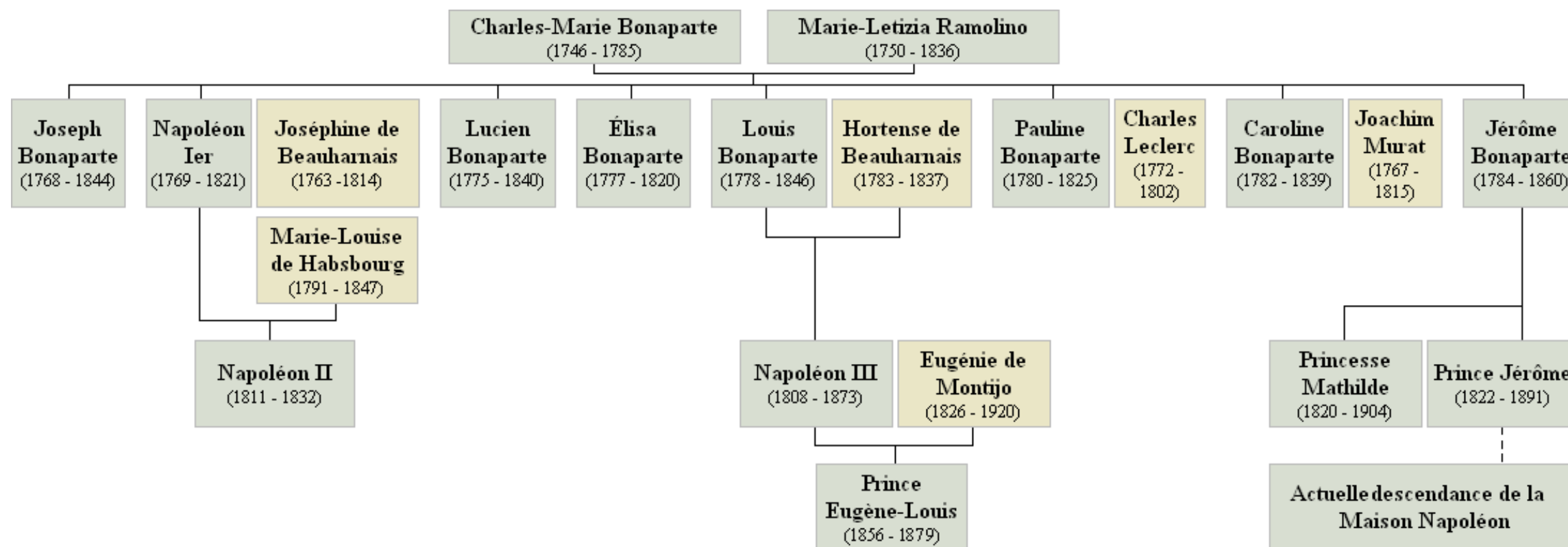
*"If only our father could see us..." (Napoleon at the coronation)*





# Corsica: a strong family tradition: the individual is nothing – The family is everything

## The clan system



1793: the whole family must flee Corsica – The Bonaparte sided with France against the Corsican nationalists



An uncertain future – Lack of financial resources

## Joseph Bonaparte: the elder brother – Close to Napoleon in age

### An impressive career

**1790-1792**

President district of Ajaccio

**1793**

War commissioner

**1797-1798**

Ambassador to Rome

**1800-1802**

State councillor

**1804**

Official heir to Napoleon



**1806-1813**

King of Naples (1806-1808)  
then King of Spain (1808-  
1813)

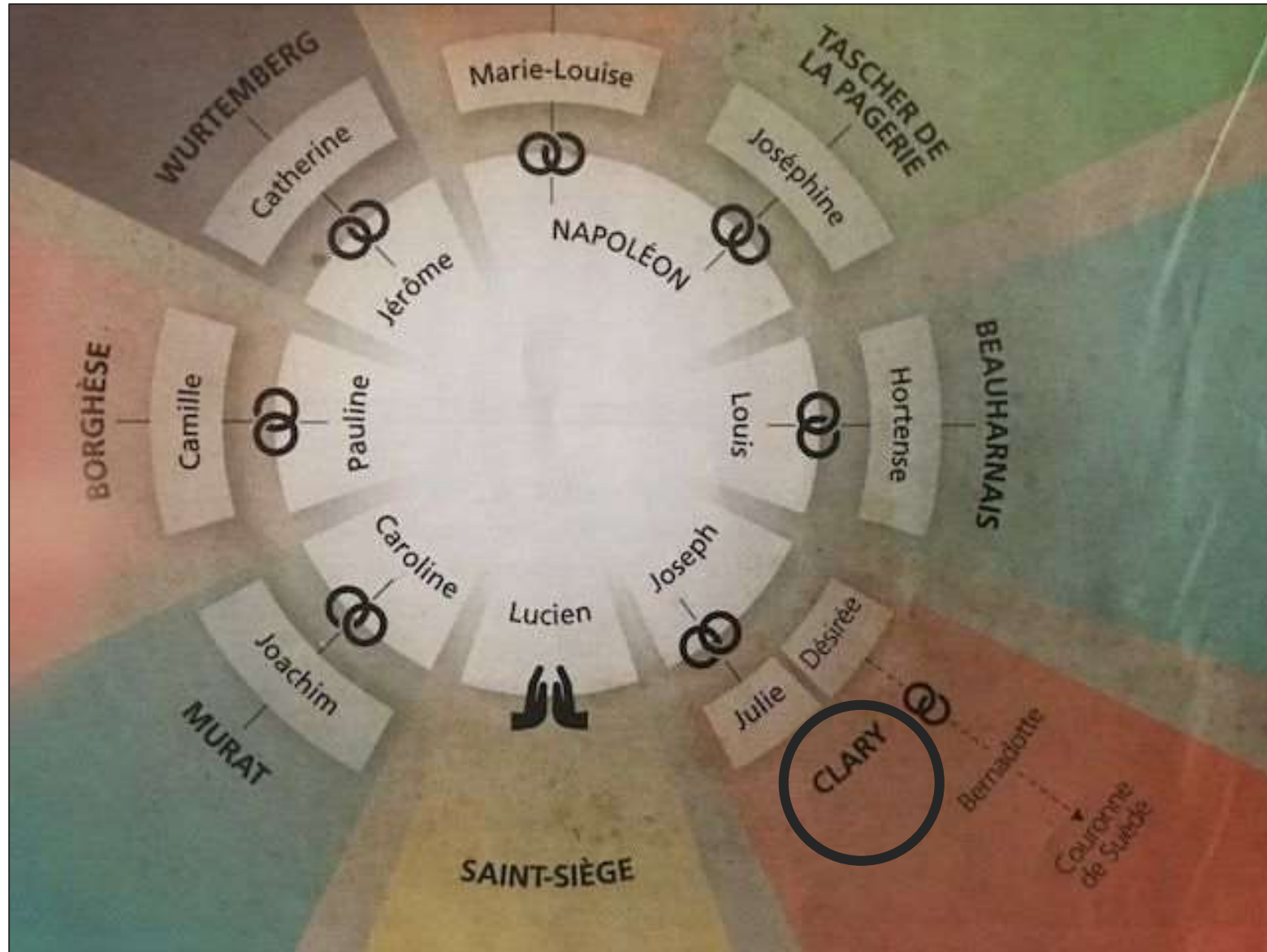
**1815**

President of Council of  
ministers during Waterloo  
campaign

The diagram illustrates the family of Napoleon Bonaparte, centered around his marriages and children. The central figure is **NAPOLÉON**. The marriages and their children are as follows:

- Marie-Louise** (WURTEMBERG) - Children: Jérôme, Catherine
- Joséphine** (TASCHER DE LA PAGERIE) - Children: Louis, Hortense
- Désirée** (BEAUHARNAIS) - Children: Julie, Bernadotte (Couronne de Suède)
- Lucien** (SAINT-SIÈGE) - Children: Joseph, Caroline
- Camille** (BORGHÈSE) - Children: Joachim, Pauline

The name **CLARY** is circled in red, indicating a connection to the Clary family.



The **Clary family**: the richest & most influential family in Marseilles



Désirée: “a good deal”



1794: Joseph marries Julie Clary

A good **opportunity** for an ambitious Bonaparte

Napoleon: Joseph's **agent** in Paris (real estate/financial/commercial speculation including... pasta)



1796: Napoleon appointed **commander-in-chief of the French army of Italy**



The Clary family to be among the **suppliers**

**Commissions** paid to Joseph & Napoleon

Joseph appointed **war commissioner** in Italy

## Political cooperation Clary-Bonaparte – Coup of 18 Brumaire (1799)



Julie & Désirée's mission: to convince Bernadotte not to oppose the 18 Brumaire coup

General Bernadotte (Bonaparte's  
military & political adversary)



Married 1798



The Clary family rewarded for its support/financial help

# March 1796: Napoléon marries Rose (Joséphine) de Beauharnais – The marriage of two antagonistic worlds

## Napoleon in love

33 years old, 2 children & in **debts**  
Poor reputation



Marrying Bonaparte: **security and status**

Eugène and Hortense de Beauharnais  
adopted by Napoleon



## The Bonaparte and Josephine: a tense relationship



Pauline



Madame Mère not invited to give her consent

Josephine and her in-laws: worlds apart



Napoleon's 3 sisters (Pauline, Caroline & Elisa) depicted as inactive



The 3 sisters objected to Josephine being crowned & refused to carry her massive velvet train



2 ladies in waiting replaced the  
jealous sisters in David's painting

## Hortense de Beauharnais & Louis Bonaparte: a loveless marriage decided by Joséphine & Napoleon

Hortense disgusted & terrorized by her husband



Paranoiac, pathologically jealous & complex of inferiority



## The Bonaparte clan & the choice of an heir to the new dynasty: Joseph & Louis

Napoleon's choice: Napoleon-Charles

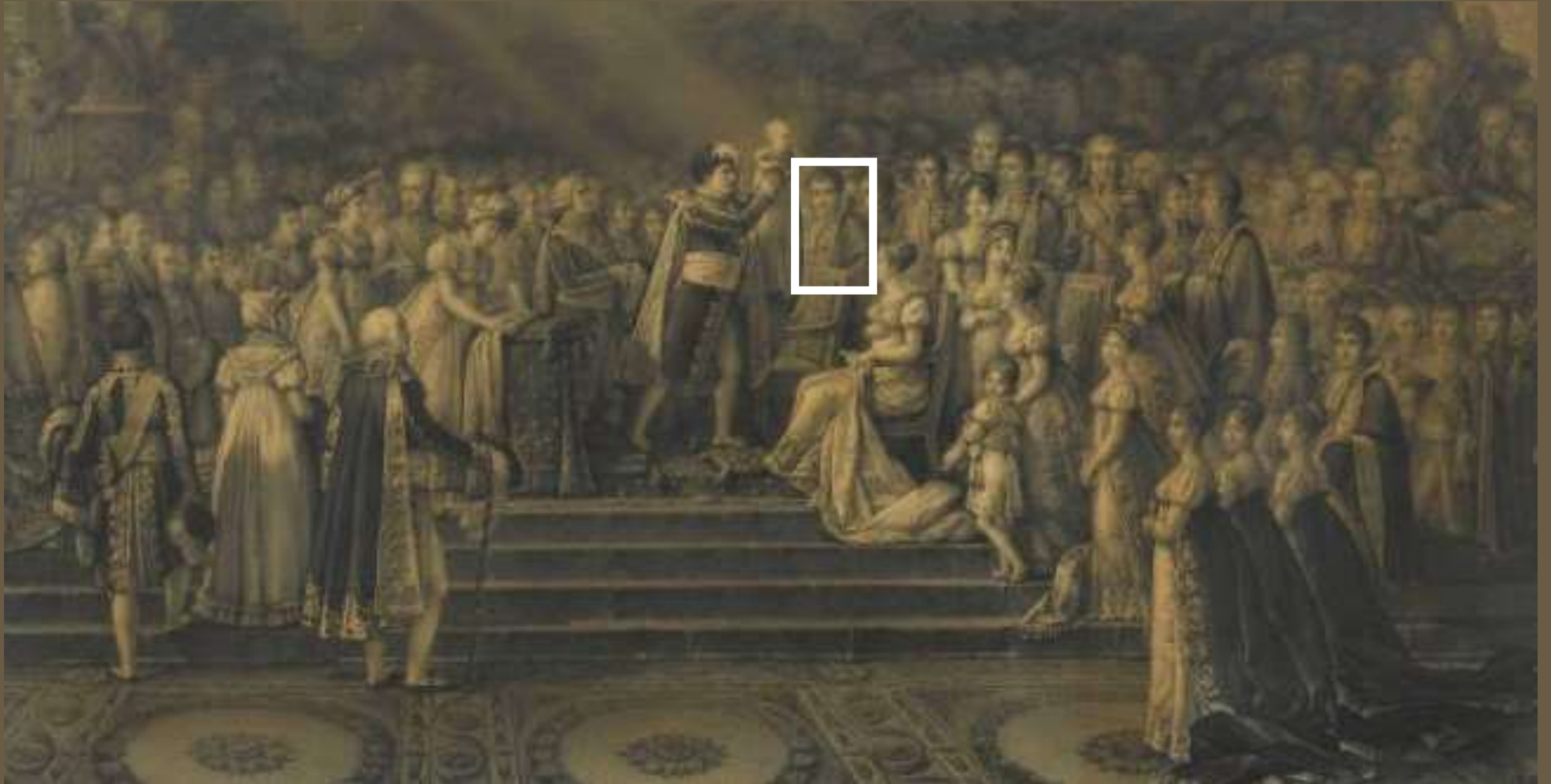




Hortense and her son  
right behind Josephine

Joseph & Louis in the left corner

The christening of the King of Rome (10 June 1811)



A brilliant Court life

Constant **state of anxiety**  
over the future of her  
marriage



Joséphine: the **link** between  
the old aristocracy and the  
new regime

Napoleon's policy of  
**merging** the two worlds  
(the old and the new)

15 December 1809: Napoleon divorces Joséphine



1810: Napoleon marries Marie-Louise of Hapsburg (a “belly”) – A political mistake



20 March 1811: the birth of the King of Rome



## Napoleon's first abdication (3 April 1814): Napoleon II not a viable option

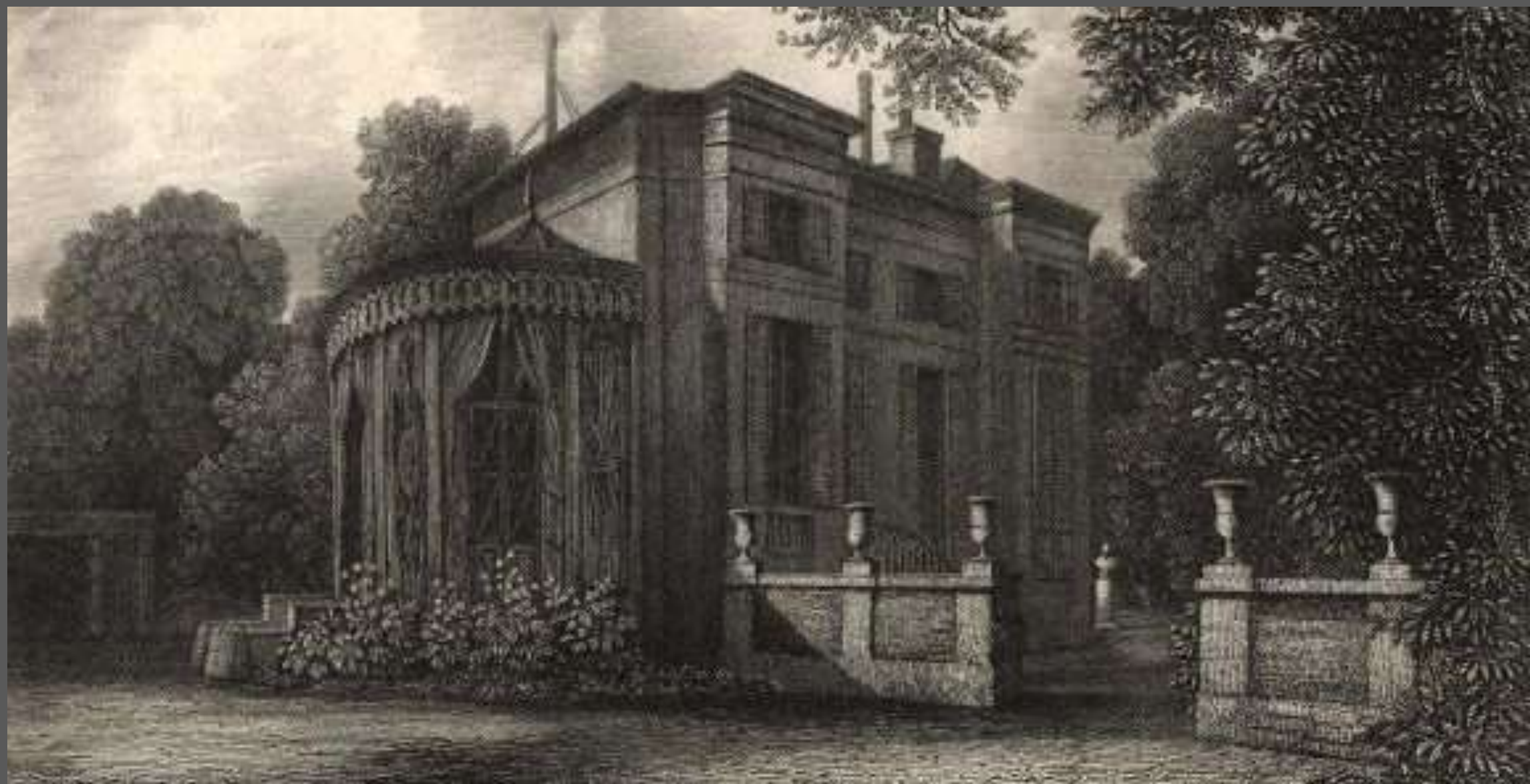


The Bonaparte: a family on the rise thanks to Napoleon's growing fame (1796-1799)





*The Hôtel Bonaparte on the Rue Chantierine by Gustave, Comte de Reiset*



Château de Malmaison: “a delicious spot” (Hortense de Beauharnais)









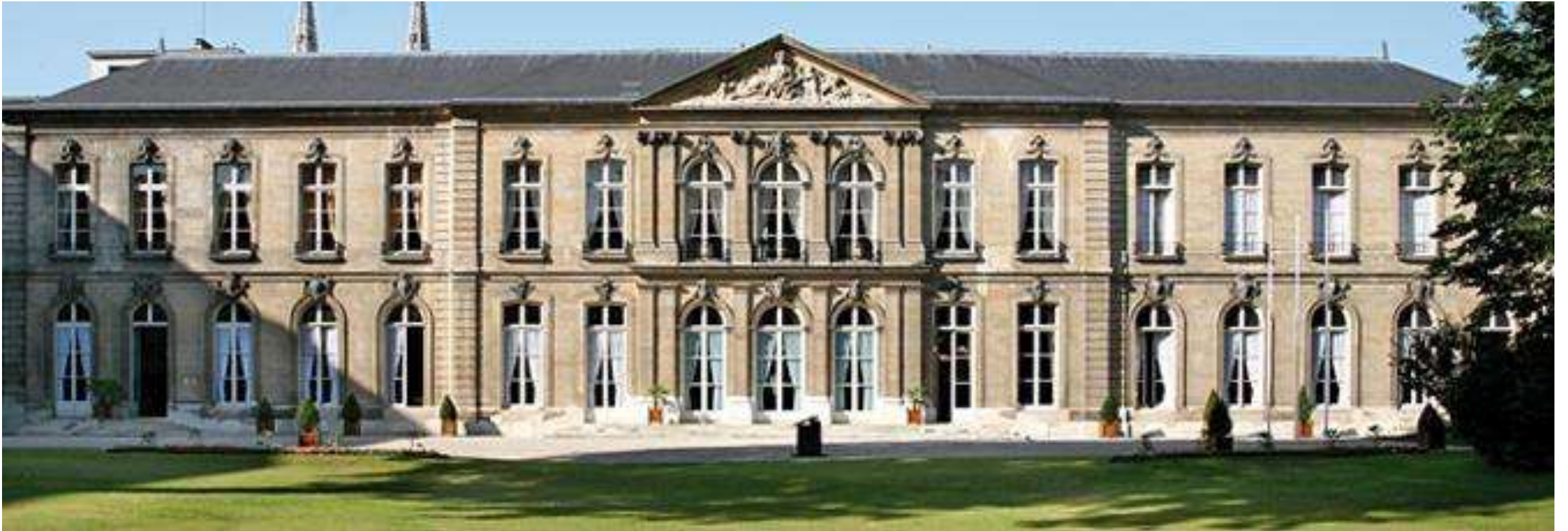


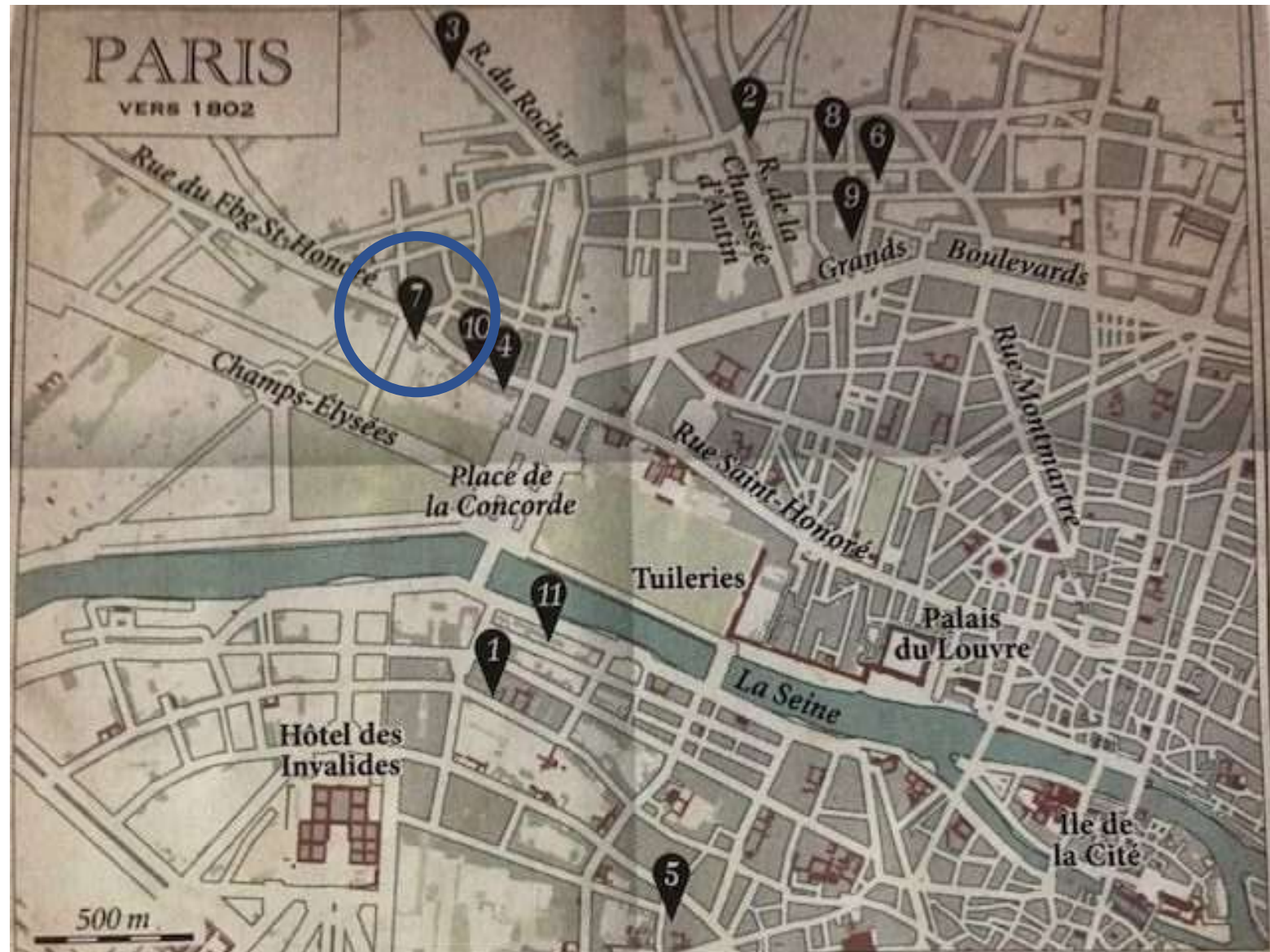
## The Bonaparte in Paris: hijacking primary real estate



**Ostentation & luxury:** the proof of social and political success

Joseph (1805): Hôtel de Brienne





Caroline (1805): the Élysée Palace – Extensive renovations







Eugène de Beauharnais (1803): Hôtel de Villeroy





# The remapping of Europe after 1804 – The French Empire surrounded by kingdoms created by Napoleon



The Bonaparte at the peak of Napoleon's power: a massive headache



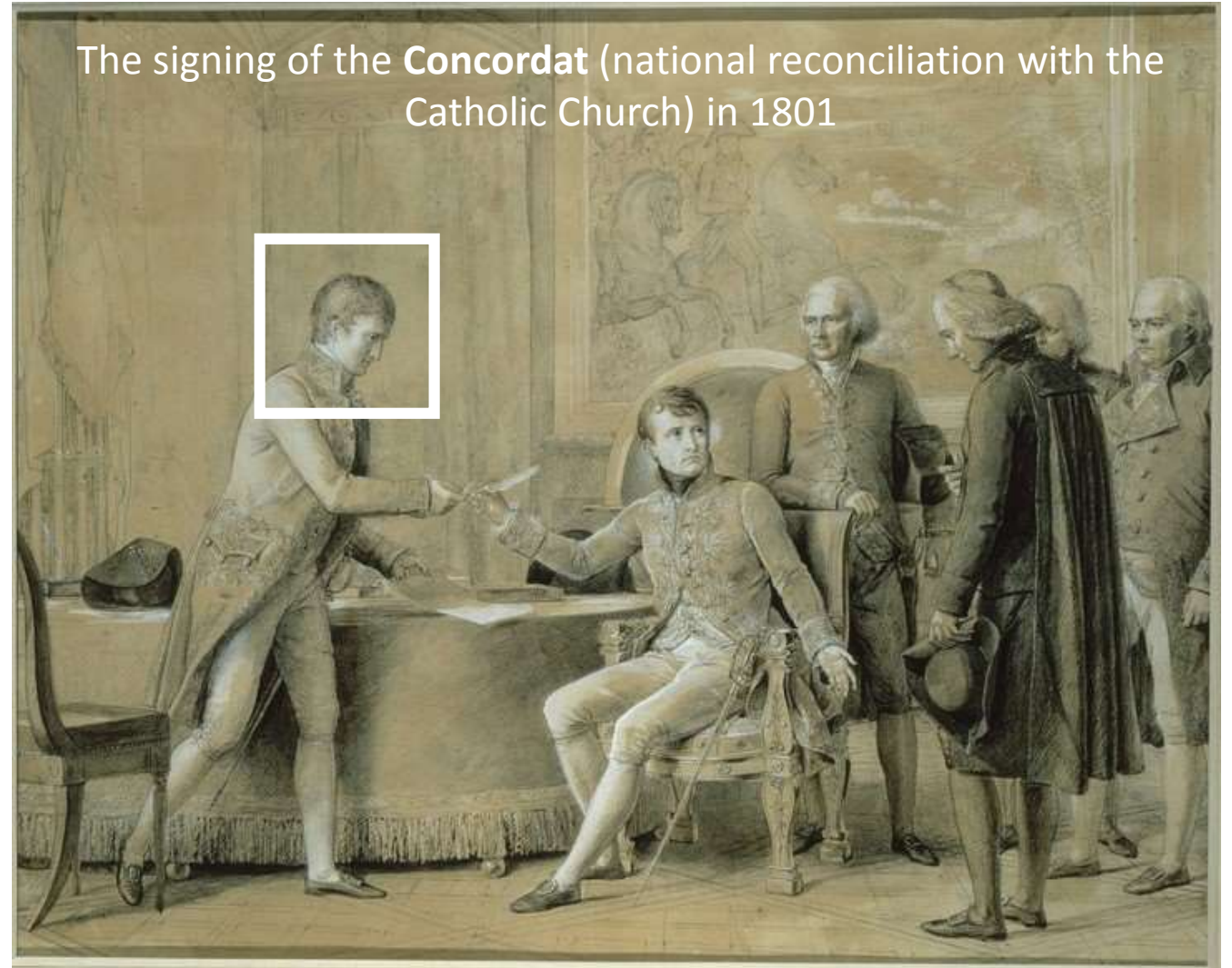
## Lucien Bonaparte and the 18 Brumaire coup: a **key** role



Lucien: the most capable – Falling out with Napoleon and self-imposed exile



Joseph: the most serious – Intelligent, cultured, soft-spoken & measured – Excellent diplomat



## 1800: the negotiation of the **treaty of Mortefontaine**



Château de Mortefontaine



# 1803: Louisiana sold to the U.S.



From king of Naples to king of Spain: a “poisonous” promotion



# The Continental System



## 1807: the invasion of Spain



The Madrid uprising (May 1808)



Near unanimous hostility, hatred & resentment towards the new king and the French occupation

Joseph: a poor military tactician  
despised by Napoleon's top generals

Napoleon's top priority: Russia

Joseph: the "*rey intruso*"  
The intruder king  
"Joseph nobody"



Spain in open rebellion against *Napoladron* (“Napo-thief”) and Joseph’s rule



1813: Joseph flees his kingdom

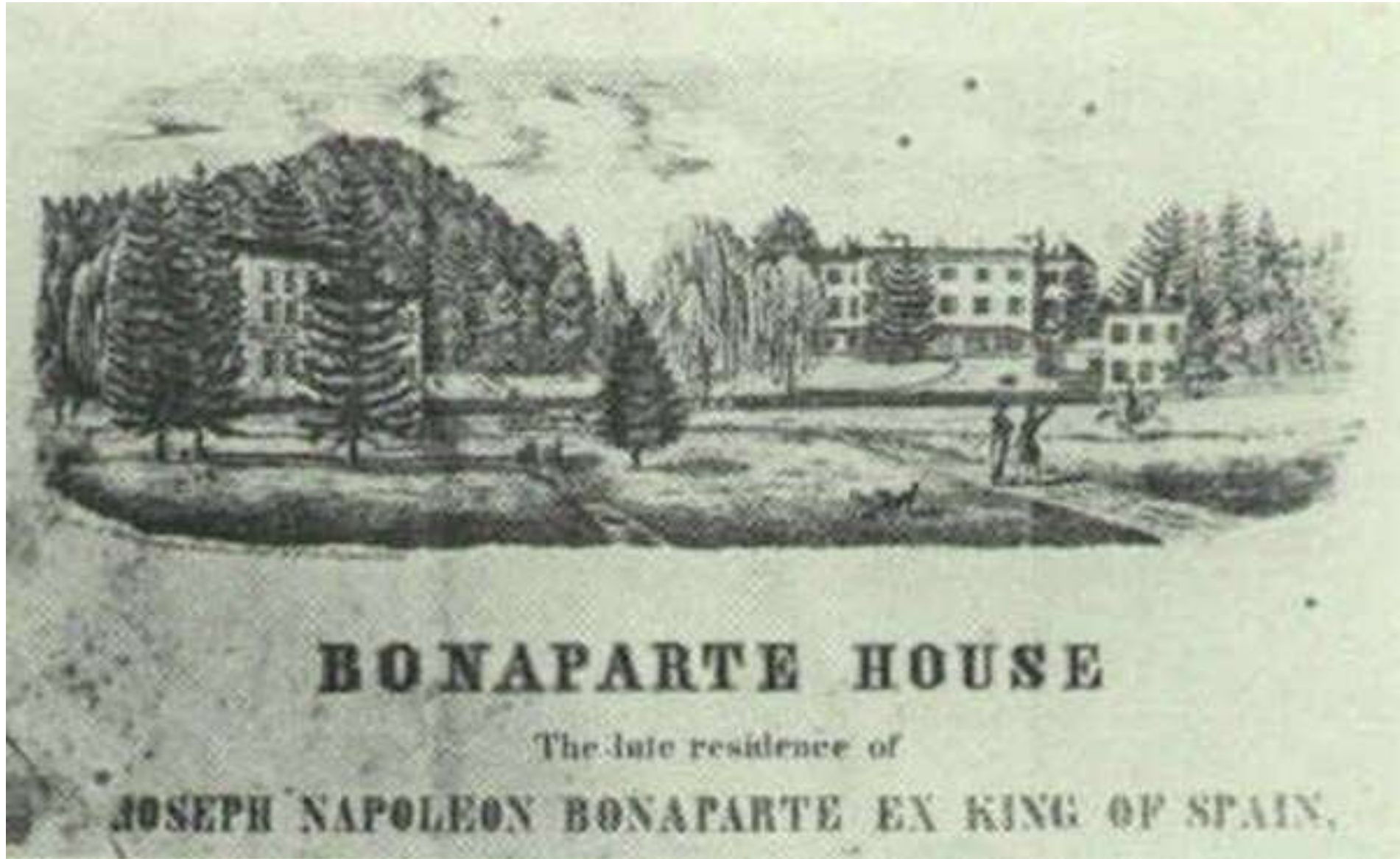
Joseph *"too good to be a great man"* (Napoleon in Saint-Elena)





Joseph: the only  
brother who tried to  
save Napoleon from  
capture (1815)

Joseph: exile in the U.S. (near Philadelphia)







**Tensions with Louis-Napoleon (Napoleon III)**

1832: the death of the King of Rome (Napoleon II) – Joseph: the official heir to the Bonaparte throne

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The Grand Coronation Procession of NAPOLEONE to the Emperor of France, from the Church of Notre Dame, Decr 2<sup>d</sup> 1804.

London: Published by J. Smith, in Pall Mall, in 1804.



*Gardi d'Honneur*, finishing the Procession.  
*Senator Fouche*, Intendant General of Police, bearing the Scepter of Justice.  
*Brother Bernadotte*, Augeron, & all the brave Train of Republican Generals, marching in the Procession.  
*Pushing Continental Powers*, Driven-Battery to the Emperor.  
*Ladies of Honor*, (exposed Politicians) — from Queen to J. King.  
*The Imperial Majesty NAPOLEONE & 1<sup>st</sup>* by the Emperor's side.  
*The Holiest Pope Pius VII*, conducted by his old faithful Friend, Cardinal Richelieu, offering the Incense.  
*Talleyrand Perigord*, Prime Minister & King at Arms, bearing the Emperor's Gleanings.  
*Madame Talleyrand*, in dress, M<sup>rs</sup> Mathews, the Prophetess, conducting the New Apparatus, or J. Rich. of Glory.  
*The Three Imperial Graces*, — (The first, High Priestess, brought from the Temple, & Emperor's) — from the Temple, & Emperor's.  
*The Imperial Highness Prince Louis*, — from the Temple, & Emperor's.  
*High Constable of the Empire*.