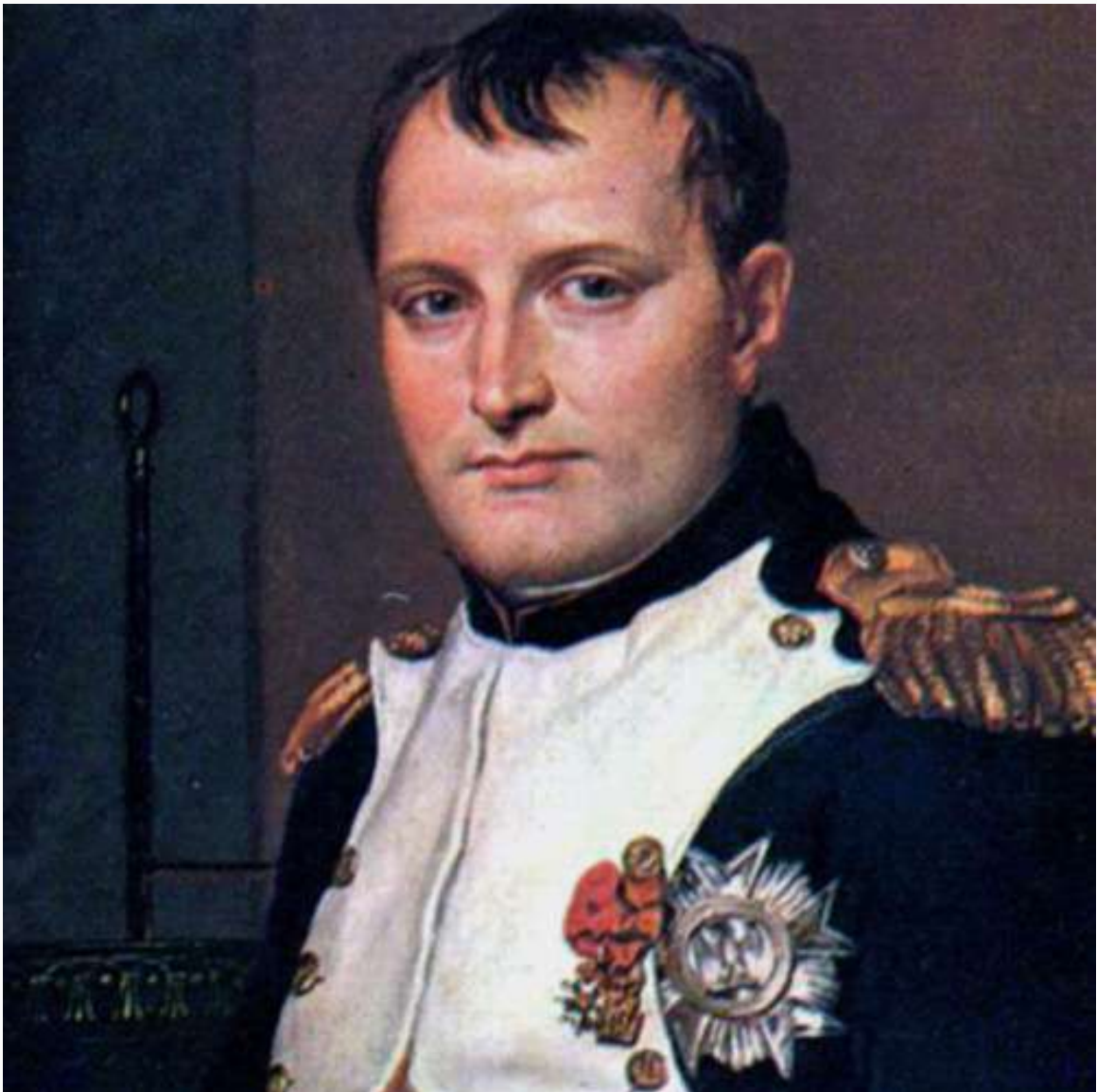


NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

WAS NAPOLEON A GREAT LEADER?



He was the leader France needed

Source 1: Map of the wars and conflicts ongoing in France and neighbouring countries from 1789-99



He was the leader France needed

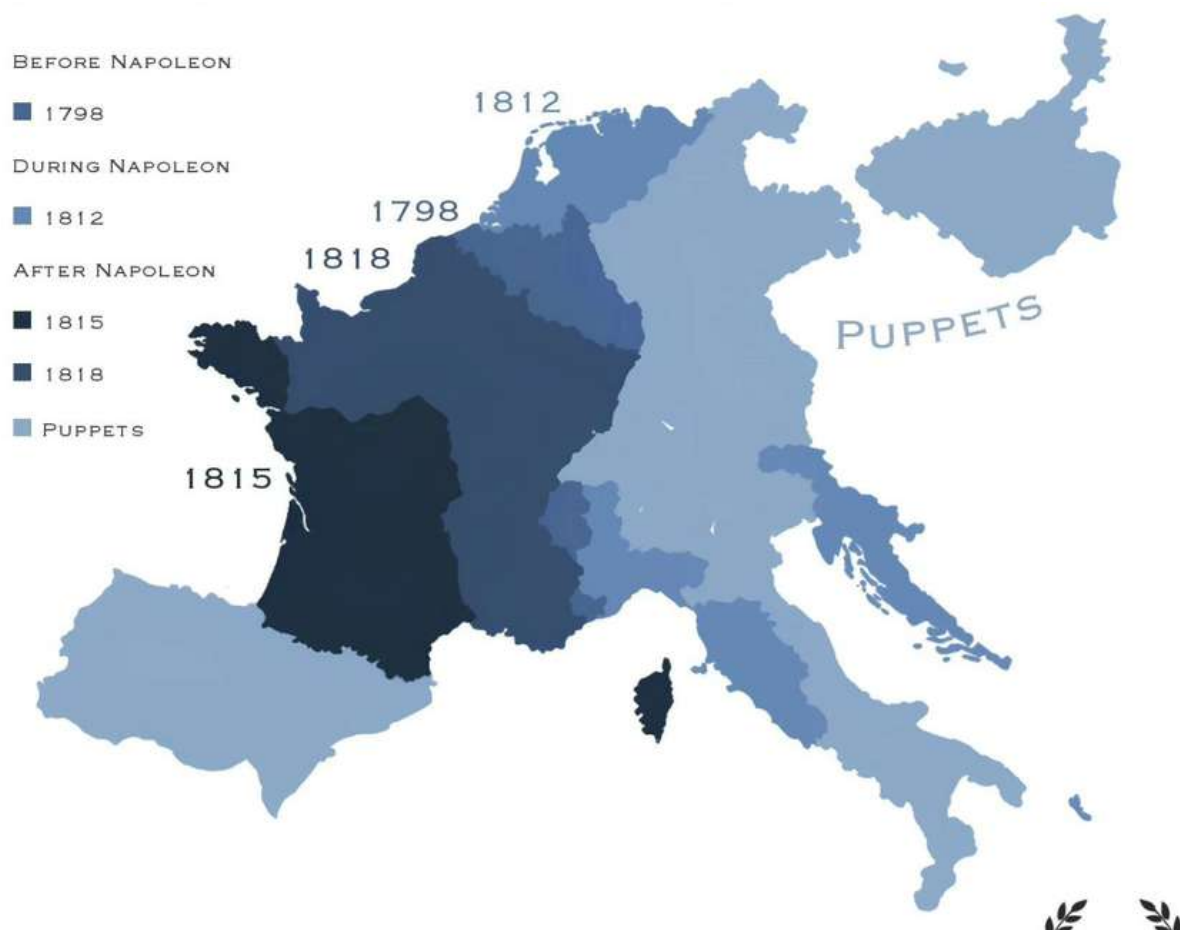
Source 2: Extract from the Memoirs of Madame de Remusat, 1880

I can understand how it was that men worn out by the turmoil of the Revolution, and afraid of that liberty which had long been associated with death, looked for repose under the dominion of an able ruler on whom fortune was seemingly revolved to smile. I can conceive that they regarded his elevation as a degree of destiny and fondly believed that in the irrevocable they could find peace. I may confidently assert that those persons believed quite sincerely that Bonaparte, whether as consul or emperor, would exert his authority to oppose the intrigue of faction and would save us from the perils of anarchy.

None dared to utter the word "republic," so deeply had the Terror stained that name; and the government of the Directory had perished in the contempt with which its chiefs were regarded. The return of the Bourbons could only be brought about by the aid of a revolution; and the slightest disturbance terrified the French people, in whom enthusiasm of every kind seemed dead. Besides, the men in whom they had trusted had one after the other deceived them; and as, this time, they were yielding to force, they were at least certain that they were not deceiving themselves.

He should be remembered as a failure

Source 3: Map of France before, during and after Napoleon's rule



He should be remembered as a failure

Source 4: Extract from “Wars, Blockade, and Economic Change in Europe, 1792-1815.” by François Crouzet, *The Journal of Economic History*, 1964

So in the later years of the Napoleonic wars, from 1807 onward, Continental countries, nearly all of whom had by then sided willy-nilly against England, were subjected to a drastic sea blockade by the British; they were completely cut off from overseas markets and the most valuable part of their seaborne trade was destroyed...It is well known that, as a consequence, the great seaports of the Continent, which had been the hubs of its economic life in the eighteenth century, were completely crippled, from 1807 onwards. Harbors were deserted, grass was growing in the streets, and in large towns like Amsterdam, Bordeaux, and Marseilles, population did actually decrease...In Marseilles, the value of industrial output fell from 50 million francs in 1789 to 12 in 1813...the most important casualty was the linen industry, which had been very widespread in several Continental countries in the eighteenth century, specially in western France, Flanders, Holland, and Germany. It was an export industry (in the 1780's, Bas-Maine had been exporting two thirds of its output) with its main markets overseas, in the West Indies and in Spanish America... In 1810, Laval was making 18,000 pieces of linens, as against 36,000 in 1789.

He saved a splintered France

Source 5: Allégorie du Concordat de 1801 (Allegory of the Concordat 1801), by Pierre Joseph Célestin François with an extract from Article 6 of the Concordat



Extract from the Concordat of 1801

Article 6

Before assuming their functions, the bishops will take directly at the hands of the First Consul, the oath of loyalty used before the change of government, expressed in the following terms :

I swear and promise before God, on the Holy Scriptures, to observe obedience and loyalty to the Government established by the Constitution of the French Republic. I also promise to have no dealings, to attend no council, to converse with no group, whether within or without, which would be contrary to the public peace; and if, in my diocese or elsewhere, I learn that something is being plotted to the detriment of the State, I will make it known to the Government.

He saved a splintered France

Source 6: Napoleon's account of the internal situation in France, 1804 (and why he accepted the role of Emperor)

A plot conceived by an implacable government was about to replunge France into the abyss of civil war and anarchy. The discovery of this horrible crime stirred all France profoundly, and anxieties that had scarcely been calmed again awoke. Experience has taught that a divided power in the state is impotent and at odds with itself. It was generally felt that if power was delegated for short periods only it was so uncertain as to discourage any prolonged undertakings or wide-reaching plans. If vested in an individual for life, it would lapse with him, and after him would prove a source of anarchy and discord. It was clearly seen that for a great nation the only salvation lies in hereditary power, which can alone assure a continuous political life which may endure for generations, even for centuries.

He was an opportunist who seized power

Source 7: Satirical cartoon about the coup of 18 Brumaire titled 'Exit liberté à la François! or Buonaparte closing the farce of Egalité', 1799



He was an opportunist who seized power

Source 8: Extract from the Letters of Napoleon I, 1801-6

To Fouché, June 1, 1805, Head of the Ministry of Police

I would like newspaper editors [to have] enough sense not to publish news harmful to the nation. The attention of the papers ought to be directed toward attacking England— English fashions, English customs, English literature, the English constitution.

To Fouché, May 7, 1806, Head of the Ministry of Police

A fourth volume of Millot (a French author) has just been published, containing all kinds of ridiculous nonsense and harmful to the glory of our arms. It is the height of indecency that such an ignoramus should write in the grand manner about contemporary events. Have the book suppressed.

He was a military genius

Source 9: Map of Napoleon's battles, showing his victories, defeats and mixed results



He was a military genius

Source 10: Extract from “Napoleon as a Military Commander: the Limitations of Genius” by Peter J. Dean, 2000

One of the most important factors of Napoleon's personality and its effect on his abilities as a military commander was his genius to inspire others. Contrary to the beliefs of Count von Wartenburg, Napoleon was eminently aware of the impact of morale on modern warfare. He believed in the maxim that "morale is to the physical as three is to one", further emphasizing the point while in exile on St Helena: "Moral force rather than numbers, decides victory." It was through his system of awards appealing to soldiers' soul in order to electrify the man that Napoleon was so successful in obtaining unquestionable obedience from his rank and file. This position is supported by Rothenburg who argues that "He (Napoleon) inspired Frenchman and foreigners alike with fierce loyalty and devotion."

Napoleon's personality and the system of personal loyalty that he adopted demanded the substitution of the 'Army of Virtue,' established under the revolution and appealing to sacrifice for the good of the people and state, with the 'Army of Honour'. This 'Army of Honour' appealed to the interests of the soldier and established a link to the Empire and Napoleon through a system of awards and preferment's. John Lynn argues that it was not true "that the soldiers of the Empire were devoid of public spirit and incapable of self sacrifice. Rather, it was a question of which strings those who governed choose to pull..."

He was a clever tactician but lacked an overall strategy

Source 11: Extract from “Napoleon as a Military Commander: the Limitations of Genius” by Peter J. Dean, 2000

The Napoleonic wars were a mere continuation of those of the revolutionary era with regards to tactics, organization and weaponry. Bonaparte inherited these elements as well as a professional French officer corps, seasoned and trained veterans and new rules for the recruitment of rank and file from the revolutionary wars. Most of the reforms that were used to such great effect under Napoleon's generalship had actually been introduced at the end of the old regime in France. It was the Republican armies under the guidance of Generals Kellerman, Jourdan, Moreau and others that refined the infantry tactics of Guibert and the artillery reforms of Gribeauval and the Du Teil brothers that dominated the Revolutionary and Napoleonic epochs.

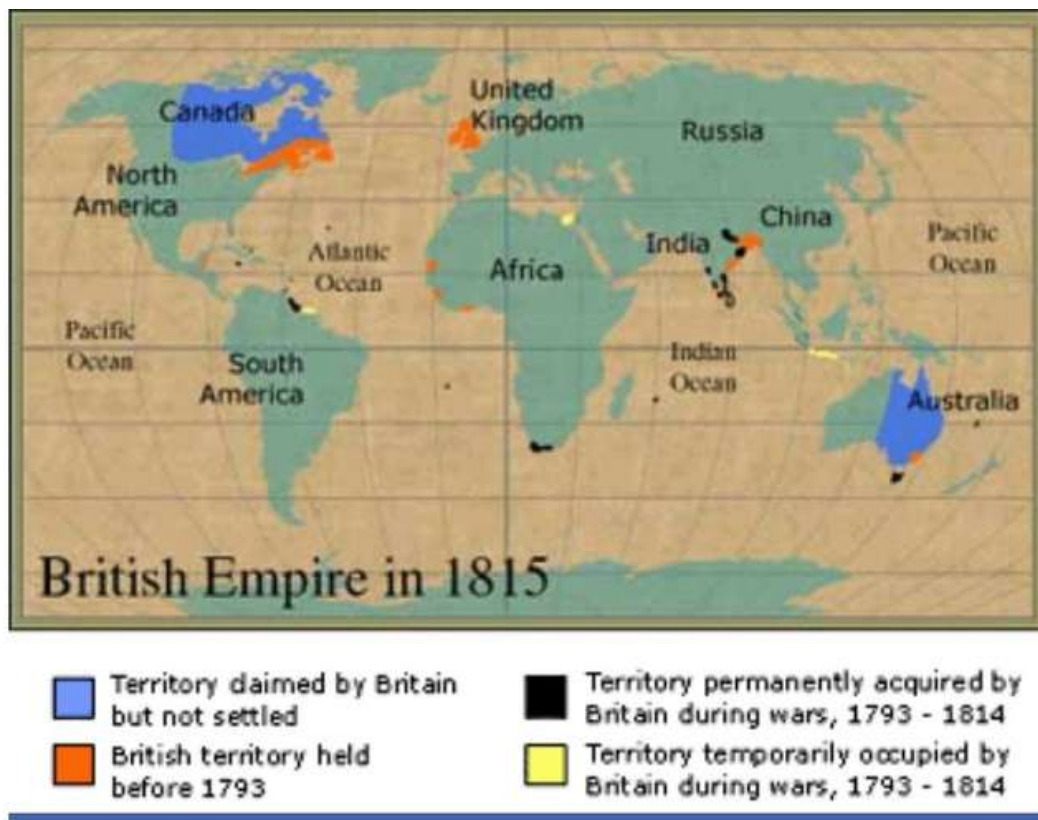
He was a clever tactician but lacked an overall strategy

Source 12: Graph showing Napoleon's troop losses on the way into Russia (in red) and while retreating from Russia (in black) during his Russian campaign of 1812-13



The British and European monarchies were the real aggressors

Source 13: Map showing the expansion of the British Empire during the Napoleonic Wars with an extract from 'The Fortunes of Africa' about the British slave trade by Martin Meredith, 2014



In the decade between 1791 and 1800, British ships made about 1,340 voyages across the Atlantic, landing nearly 400,000 slaves. Between 1801 and 1807, they took a further 266,000. The slave trade remained one of Britain's most profitable businesses...

The British and European monarchies were the real aggressors

Source 14: Satirical cartoon of Napoleon, published in Britain in 1803



He was a bad statesman who failed to secure his conquests

Source 15: Extract from the article “The End of the Holy Roman Empire” by R. Cavendish, in History Today, 2006

The French diplomat Talleyrand recommended a French-Austrian alliance which would dominate Europe, but Napoleon was not interested. Later in 1806 he routed the Prussians at Jena and took Berlin, where he decreed a blockade of British trade. Saxony saw the light and joined the Confederation of the Rhine. The insatiable Bonaparte went on to create a new kingdom of Westphalia for his brother Jerome and coax or bully all the German states except Austria and Prussia to join the Confederation, where they found themselves under a far more ruthless master than they had ever known before. Napoleon sarcastically remarked that Germany was always ‘becoming, not being’, but in the long run, ironically enough, the consequence of his policies would be the stimulation of German nationalism and the emergence of a united Germany which would humble the French in the two World Wars.

He was a bad statesman who failed to secure his conquests

Source 16: 'The 3rd of May 1808 in Madrid, or "The Executions"' by Spanish painter Francisco Goya.

Painted in 1814 after the restoration of Ferdinand VII, it commemorates Spanish resistance to Napoleonic tyranny during the French occupation in the Peninsular War.



He was the father of the modern age

Source 17: Extract from the Napoleonic Code, 1804

Of the Publication, Effect, and Application of the Laws in General

1. The laws are executory throughout the whole French territory, by virtue of the promulgation thereof made by the First Consul. They shall be executed in every part of the Republic, from the moment at which their promulgation can have been known. The promulgation made by the First Consul shall be taken to be known in the department which shall be the seat of government, one day after the promulgation; and in each of the other departments, after the expiration of the same interval augmented by one day for every ten myriameters (about twenty ancient leagues) between the town in which the promulgation shall have been made, and the chief place of each department.
2. The law ordains for the future only; it has no retrospective operation.
3. The laws of police and public security bind all the inhabitants of the territory. Immovable property, although in the possession of foreigners, is governed by the French law. The laws relating to the condition and privileges of persons govern Frenchmen, although residing in a foreign country.
4. Private agreements must not contravene the laws which concern public order and good morals.

Book I: Of Persons

Title I: Of the Enjoyment and Privation of Civil Rights

1. The exercise of civil rights is independent of the quality of citizen, which is only acquired and preserved conformably to the constitutional law.
2. Every Frenchman shall enjoy civil rights.

He was the father of the modern age

Source 18: Extract from 'We're still living in the Age of Napoleon', by Ishaan Tharoor, Washington Post May 7, 2021

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the German philosopher who popularized the idea of the “zeitgeist,” saw Napoleon as its embodiment, as “history on horseback.” He reinvented military tactics through his campaigning and battles, broke Europe’s old feudal order with his conquests of swaths of the continent and, depending on one’s 19th-century convictions, died a romantic world hero or as a doomed tyrant, consumed by insatiable hubris and self-regard. To this day, myriad nations can trace their legal codes to Napoleonic edicts, myriad academics can locate the origins of their disciplines in Napoleon’s ambitious study of Egypt, and myriad people who are short of stature can get accused of harboring his fiery temper. Everywhere you look, we inhabit a world that, in some sense, Napoleon helped bequeath. He “is nearly synonymous with the spread of the modern bureaucratic state, not only the institutions themselves, but the modern outlook that goes with them: meritocracy, liberal property rights, public service and equality before the law,” Everett Rummage, creator of “The Age of Napoleon” podcast, told Today’s WorldView. “In much of Europe, Napoleon’s armies were the force that smashed feudalism and ushered in the turbulent, dynamic 19th century,” Rummage added. “Those countries he didn’t conquer were forced to emulate French methods to survive the onslaught. Napoleon was a harbinger of the modern world, with all its terrors and abuses, but also all its progress and possibilities.”

The French Revolution, not Napoleon, brought real change



Source 19:

French emigrants are welcomed back to France at the Tuileries Palace in Paris, a print published in 'Bonaparte', by Georges Montorgueil and illustrated by Job (pseudonym of Jacques Marie Gaston Onfroy de Breville), 1908

The French Revolution, not Napoleon, brought real change

Source 20: Extract from the Napoleonic Code, 1804, which made women subservient to their husbands, after they had gained more rights as independent citizens during the French Revolution

CHAPTER VI.

Of the respective Rights and Duties of Married Persons.

- 212. Married persons owe to each other fidelity, succour, assistance.
- 213. The husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband.
- 214. The wife is obliged to live with her husband, and to follow him to every place where he may judge it convenient to reside: the husband is obliged to receive her, and to furnish her with every thing necessary for the wants of life, according to his means and station.
- 215. The wife cannot plead in her own name, without the authority of her husband, even though she should be a public trader, or non-communicant, or separate in property.
- 218. If the husband refuse to authorize his wife to plead in her own name, the judge may give her authority.

Of second Marriages.

- 228. A woman cannot contract a new marriage until ten months have elapsed from the dissolution of the preceding marriage.

He was the Legend: Napoleon Le Grand

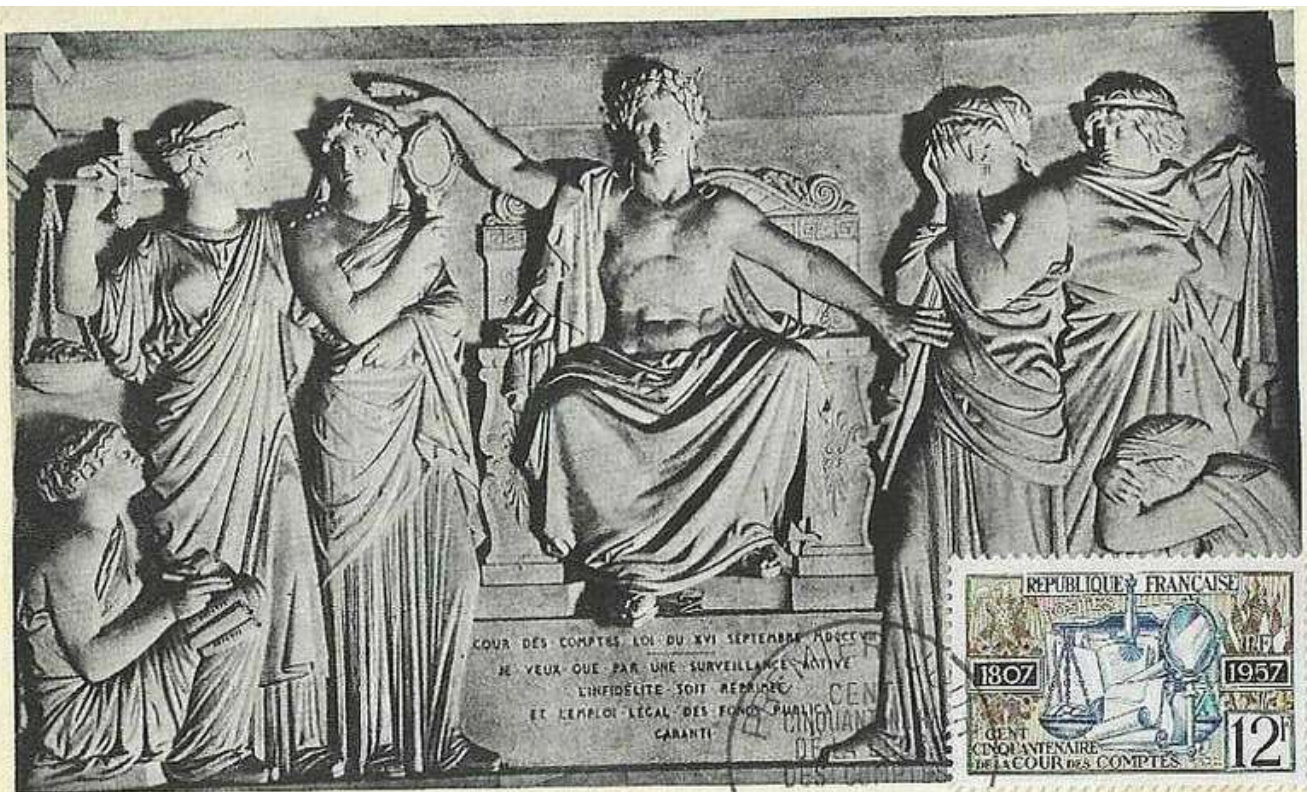
Source 21: Extract from 'On the 200th anniversary of Napoleon's death, his legacy divides France' by Rick Noack, May 5, 2021

"Napoleon Bonaparte is a part of us," said French President Emmanuel Macron, before laying a wreath at the emperor and former military leader's tomb in central Paris. He suggested that the country has managed to shed the worst aspects of Napoleon's empire while improving upon the best of his contributions.



He was the Legend: Napoleon Le Grand

Source 22: 1957 postcard showing the sculpted relief in Napoleon's tomb commemorating his creation of the Cours de Comptes, to celebrate the 150-year anniversary of the court



150^e ANN. DE LA
COUR DES COMPTES

He curated the myth of his own 'greatness'

Source 23: Bonaparte at the Pont d'Arcole by Antoine-Jean Gros, 1796, with commentary from 'The French Revolution and Napoleon: A Sourcebook', by McPhee and Dwyer, 2002



Two accounts of the battle of Arcola, November 1796

The most celebrated image of the Italian campaign was Gros' painting of Bonaparte crossing the bridge at Arcola. Despite the fact that neither Bonaparte nor Augereau actually succeeded in storming his way across the bridge, the battle was almost immediately transformed into one of the major themes of Napoleonic propaganda. The cowardice of the troops was discreetly overlooked in the official reports and disappeared entirely with the legend that portrayed the French grenadiers in heroic posture. So too was the fact that Bonaparte ended up being pushed or thrown off the bridge into the swampy waters below.

He curated the myth of his own 'greatness'

Source 24: Tweet explaining Napoleon's use of Classical Roman imagery in his Arc de Triomphe



The Cultural Tutor 
@culturaltutor

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The Arc de Triomphe in Paris is one of the world's most recognisable landmarks. But... what actually is it?

Here's one clue: it has a statue of Napoleon as a Roman emperor being crowned by the goddess of victory.

And it was Napoleon who had the Arc de Triomphe built...

