



CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

Solution to the game “seek and find”

The Coronation of Napoleon and crowning of Josephine at Notre-Dame in Paris, 2 December 1804

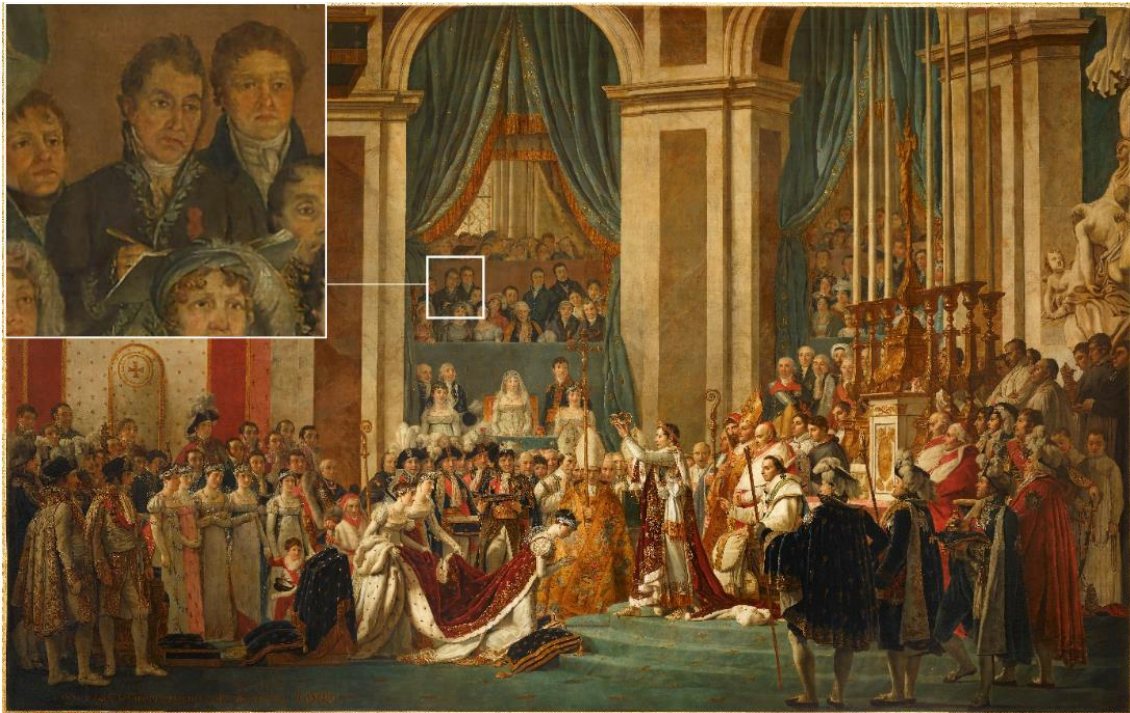
After the proclamation of the French Empire in 1804, Napoleon wanted a coronation ceremony, just like the emperors and kings who had gone before him. Rather than holding it at Reims, which was too closely associated with the monarchy, he decided to hold the ceremony in Paris, in Notre-Dame cathedral.

The magnificent ceremony took place on 2 December 1804, in the presence of cardinals, ambassadors, and great dignitaries of the Empire, the Court and the army. The emperor was anointed by Pope Pius VII before he, himself, placed the crown on Josephine's head.

This is the scene the artist Jacques-Louis David was to paint between 1805 and 1808, and then replicate between 1821 and 1822. One is held at the Louvre while the other is on view in the [Coronation Room](#) at Versailles. Measuring almost 9 metres by 6, it is an immense gallery of portraits, featuring around 190 subjects, surprise guests, etc. Now, we're inviting you to explore some of the secrets of his huge canvas in this game of 'Seek and find'.

- The painter Jacques Louis-David

Clue: He is sketching the scene from a gallery above, beneath great curtains.



David has portrayed himself, in the gallery, sketching the coronation, as a **symbolic representation of the effort he had to make to create this work**. He is accompanied by his wife and two daughters.

David depicted many of the artists of the time sitting in the galleries. They fulfil the role of extras in the work, as they weren't actually present during the ceremony, but David wanted to pay homage to them.

- Napoleon's sisters

Clue: Caroline, Pauline and Elisa are standing side by side. One of them is wearing a pink dress.



Caroline Murat, the first on the left, is the youngest of Napoleon's sisters. She became Queen Consort of Naples when her husband was made King of Naples in 1808. Caroline often came into conflict with her brother. In 1805, she bought the Elysée Palace, which she had restored, because it was in a very bad state.

Pauline Borghese, in the centre, wearing a pink dress, is the only one of the three sisters to have remained close to her brother and her loyalty even extended to visiting him while he was exiled on Elba.

Elisa Bacchioci, on the far right of the trio, married a young Corsican officer, against her brother's wishes. A great lover of literature, she hosted a salon in Paris, which was attended by Chateaubriand, among others.

- Napoleon's brothers

Clue: Joseph and Louis are swathed in capes of embroidered gold.



Joseph Bonaparte, the first on the left, was Napoleon's older brother. He is known for having been the king of Spain.

Louis Bonaparte was Napoleon's third brother. He married the daughter of his brother's wife, Josephine, and was made king of Holland.

Annoyed at this marriage, Napoleon's two other brothers, Lucien and Jerome, did not attend the coronation and are missing from the painting.

- Napoleon's mother

Clue: Letizia is wearing a tiara and veil.



Letizia, seated in the gallery in the centre, is the Emperor's mother. She did not actually attend the coronation, but her son had the artist include her. She was a very pious woman, and engaged in good deeds all her life.

- Napoleon's sister-in-law

Clue: Hortense is holding the only child in the painting by the hand.



Hortense de Beauharnais, Josephine's daughter, was actually Napoleon's stepdaughter. He adopted her, and her brother Eugene, following his marriage to Josephine. Hortense had three sons, the eldest of which, Napoleon-Charles Bonaparte, is the one in the painting. She is holding him by the hand.

To find out more

Discover another painting of Napoleon by Jacques-Louis David – Bonaparte crossing the Alps – in the book by Frédéric Lacaille, curator at the Palace of Versailles in charge of 19th-century paintings. Add to your knowledge of [Napoleon Bonaparte by visiting the web page dedicated to him](#). Finally, find out more about one of the great events of the 19th century – the shipping of Napoleon's ashes – through Eugene Isabey's painting, presented in the [video entitled 'Image d'un Siècle' \('Image of a century'\)](#).