**Consolidation**

Napoleon embarked on a personal campaign to put down **roots** in order to do what no one else had done in France over the past decade: maintain power.

**A. Peace**

Once Napoleon seized power in the coup, he “surveyed” France and found a country exhausted from years of war and bloodshed. So his next move was to “bring peace to a tired France”. Although it would actually take war to get it, the Treaty of Luneville with Austria in 1801 and the Peace of Amiens in 1802 with hated England did just that: bring peace.

Skepticism reigned supreme after the signing of the Amiens accord. Both countries suspected that it was a mere respite between volleys. The British Prime Minister said it best when he quipped, “peace for a month, war in a year.” However, Napoleon had what he wanted – peace, and his first root.

**B. Napoleonic Code**

Napoleon recognized immediately that the outdated law codes in France were far too complex and inconsistent for an ”Enlightened” country like France. As a result of Napoleon’s work, France received the **Napoleonic Code,** which would streamline over 365 Roman and revolutionary laws that existed when he came to power. He demonstrated a surprising administrative ability for common sense and law making. While physical monuments like the Arc de Triomphe were left as a testament to his glory, his civil code became one of the true “stones of granite” upon which he built his Empire. Before his death on St. Helena, he listed the Napoleonic Code as his “greatest achievement”.

Bonaparte brought this code as a gift to the countries his *Grande Armee* liberated as they marched across Europe. However, the gift was never free. The French invaders always charged a high price for membership in the Empire: gold and recruits. The gold is self-explanatory, the recruits were young men from every country that would be used to fill the ranks of Napoleon’s armed legions, whether they liked it or not. His Civil Code, or Code Napoleon, still echoes in places like Japan, Quebec and New Orleans. It is memorialized in marble friezes around Napoleon’s tomb in the Invalides. It would also serve as his second root.

**C. The Church**

Only a few years after the Jacobins had banned it, Napoleon brought back the Catholic Church in a formal agreement with Pope Pius VII in the **Concordat of 1801.** While he was no Catholic, he was a realist. He recognized that the French were quietly “voting with their feet” by having their children secretly baptized, having private marriage ceremonies, and recognizing the seventh day as a day of rest. In a move that would shock the hard-core revolutionaries in his government, Bonaparte recognized yet another opportunity to put down consolidating roots.

The Pope was delighted to have almost 30 million “believers” back into his flock. The Concordat, however, was self-serving for Pius as well. Napoleon allowed the Pope to ex-communicate hundreds of priests who turned their backs on Rome and who had voluntarily “signed on” in allegiance with the revolutionary government of the Jacobins in 1791. Pius also got a very expensive tiara as a gift from Napoleon... thus the third root.

**D. The State**

If the first three roots represent the “carrot” – the “stick” could not be far behind. Napoleon made sure that there was a spy in every café, theatre and salon. His instrument of covert operations was well chosen: **Joseph Fouche.** This minister of the police kept his “diamond- like heart and reptilian eye” close to the pulse of Parisian society, and very little escaped his gaze. Every week he made reports to Napoleon on topics of “national defense” ranging from suicides, newspaper headlines, subversive talk and wiretapping (opening letters). While the Emperor himself would never really trust him (with good reason - he betrayed every leader before him), he recognized ability in Fouche that he could exploit to help solidify his final root.

**E. The Coronation**

Once the foundation of consolidation had taken hold, Napoleon decided that “First Consul” or “First Consul for Life” was no longer good enough for a man of his stature. Furthermore, numerous unsuccessful assassination attempts convinced him that he needed a Royal pedigree to guard against murder, as Emperors rarely got assassinated. Besides that, he always longed to be “in the club”, and with the title came tremendous power. In December of 1804, and with the Pope present, Napoleon crowned himself Emperor in front of thousands at an invite-only gala in Notre Dame Cathedral. **The Coronation** was a far cry from the obscure island life of Corsica. The moment itself was not lost on Napoleon, as he whispered to his brother, “if only our father could see us now”.