

Late Louis XIV and the Regency: 1690-1723, 2

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The History of
Paris – Architecture, Urbanism, Society - Part 4:

Paris
under the Bourbons, The End of Louis XIV and the Régence, 1680-1723

Course Schedule: Fridays 10:30
am – 12:00 noon.

19 Nov.
– Lecture at Gallery – Sunset:
The end of the reign of Louis XIV, 1680-1715

26
Nov. – Lecture at Gallery – A new Dawn: Paris under the Regent Philippe
’Orléans, 1715-1723.

3 Dec. – Visit – Hôtel de Soubise. Meet in courtyard of
60 rue des Francs Bourgeois 75003.

Métro:
Rambuteau or Hôtel de Ville.

10
Dec. – Visit – End of the Grand Style and Watteau. Musée du
Louvre. Meet near information desk
inside the pyramid with ticket in hand at 10:15.

Bibliography:

Anthony Blunt, Art and Architecture in France 1500-1700, Pelican History of Art, Penguin (latest edition).

Anthony Sutcliffe, Paris, an Architectural History, Yale University Press.

Antonia Fraser, Love and Louis XIV, Phoenix.

Christine Pevitt, Philippe d'Orléans, Regent of France Atlantic Monthly.

The Régence 1715 - 1723.

1715

- At

his great grandfather's death Louis XV is only five years old. Louis XIV's nephew Philippe Duke of Orléans is proclaimed Regent and takes over the government. The court moves from Versailles to the Tuileries palace in Paris close to the Regent's official residence at the Palais -Royal. The great noble families settle across the river in the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

1716 - Founding

of the first bank in France by the Scottish banker John Law.

1718 - Foundation

of New Orleans in Louisiana named in honor of the Regent by Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne de Bienville. Law's bank becomes the official state bank, emits notes, credit and sells stocks in colonial trade. It meets with huge popular success and encourages a frenetic speculation at the newly founded stock market (Bourse).

1720 - Resounding

stock market crash and bankruptcy of Law's bank.

1722 - Sacre of the young Louis XV. The court returns to Versailles.

1723 - Louis

XV is declared majeur at 13. The Regent become Prime Minister but dies suddenly on 2 December.

Arts and

Architecture: An immense relief results from the end of the very long (72 years) reign of the Sun King. The tolerant even dissolute lifestyle of the Regent and his entourage, and the new possibilities for quick enrichment offered by the stock market, mark this period as one devoted to the fast life, luxury and pleasure. The grand aristocratic portrait in a baroque style remains the province of Nicolas Largillière (1656-1746). Aristocratic hunt and still lifes are the specialty of the animal painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686-1755). Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) is the first painter to break completely with the Grand Style of the previous period to create an intimate, decorative art mixing "vulgar" subjects drawn from street theatre with aristocratic scenes from château life. The "fête galante" is born consecrating love and sentiment as the chief pre-occupations of a society increasingly drawn to the private side of life and its pleasures. Colour and movement operate a great return in French painting. The "Rubénistes" overthrow the "Poussinistes" of the old academic tradition. Architecture and principally decoration become light and refined favouring undulating curves and floral motifs over the vocabulary of classicism and geometry. This is the great period of private and aristocratic rather than royal architecture and notably the hôtels particuliers of the Faubourg Saint-Germain in Paris.

1718-19 – Galerie dorée, Hôtel de Toulouse, Vassé.

1721 - Hôtel Matignon, Courtonne.

1728-31 - Hôtel Biron, Aubert and Jacques Gabriel.