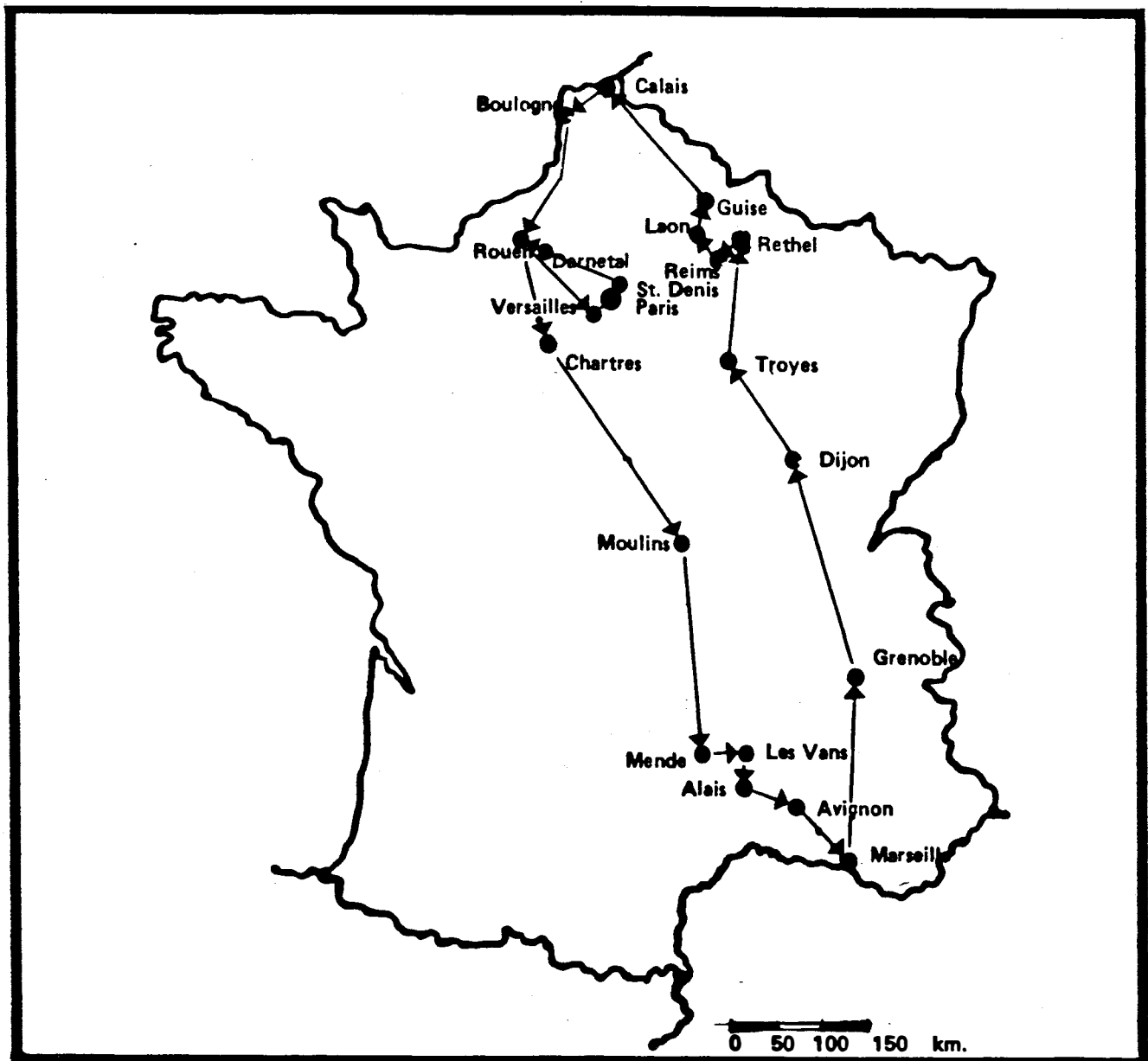


A TOUR OF FRANCE – 154 DAYS ON HORSEBACK

WITH BROTHER BARTHELEMY

December 4th 1716 – May 7th 1717.



At the end of 1716, St. La Salle sent Brother Barthélemy on a special tour of the communities of the Institute to prepare the Brothers for the General Assembly that was due to be held soon at St. Yon.

Brother Barthélemy did the whole journey—all 2240 kilometres of it—on horseback. In all, it took him 154 days, if we include the short time he spent in each community “visiting” the Brothers and taking a short rest. It was a real “Tour de France”, but under what conditions! The “Petit Registre” kept in the Generalate; gives us a great many details: it is the first Institute census, in 1717.

Let us trace the journey undertaken by Brother Barthélemy and try to gauge his difficulties. The number of Brothers in each community is given in brackets.

Departure:	ROUEN (St. Yon)	4/12/1716		RETHEL	20/02/1717 (4)
	CHARTRES	9/12/1716 (4)		LAON	4/03/1717 (5)
	MOULINS	16/12/1716 (2)	(6)	GUISE	? /03/1717 (3)
(1)					
	MENDE	24/12/1716 (2)		CALAIS	16-18/03/17 (6)
	LES VANS	31/12/1716 (2)		BOULOGNE	18-21/03/17 (6)
(2)					
	ALES	8/01/1717 (4)	(7)	ROUEN	27/03/1717 (10)
	AVIGNON	8-10/1/1717 (4)		DARNETAL	2/04/1717 (2)
(3)					
	MARSEILLE	15/01/1717 (2)		VERSAILLES	16/04/1717 (4)
(4)					
	GRENOBLE	22/01/1717 (4)		ST. DENIS	18/04/1717 (2)
	DIJON	8/02/1717 (2)		PARIS	25/04/1717 (11)
(5)					
	TROYES	15/02/1717 (2)	Llegada:	ROUEN (St. Yon)	7/05/1717 (9)

N. B. It was only nine days after Brother Barthelemy got back from his journey that the General Assembly at St. Yon began. It lasted from May 16th to May 23rd 1717.

- (1) "Brother Barthelemy arrived here after many difficulties and dangers. It took him eight days on horseback in the middle of winter." (Rigault Vol. 1, p. 407).
- (2) "The track was covered in snow, and the traveller ran the risk of losing his life. He rested till the day after the Epiphany." (id. p. 407).
- (3) "It took him a week to get to Marseilles from Grenoble." (id.).
- (4) "At the beginning of 1714, 'in the middle of winter', St La Salle sent Brother Jacques, Director of Grenoble, whose judgment he trusted, to observe, assess and report back." (Rigault, vol 1, p. 381).
- (5) "Five days to cover the stretch Troyes-Rethel." (id.). Brother Barthelemy thought his last days had come, or at least, he was going to lose all his money:
 - a/ He fell off his horse; one foot got caught in the stirrup, and he was dragged along the ground for a long distance." (Blain p. 654).
 - b/ He met up with some shifty-looking travellers, but he got off lightly with only a bad fright. He went to recover in the community of the holy Director, Brother Louis, at Rethel." (Rigault, vol 1, p. 408).
- (6) "It looks as though he stayed a long time in Guise." The "Petit Registre" referred to by Rigault does not say when he arrived there.
- (7) "He took the shortest road from Boulogne to Rouen, going along the coast, through the Bray region." (Rigault Vol. 1, p. 408).

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