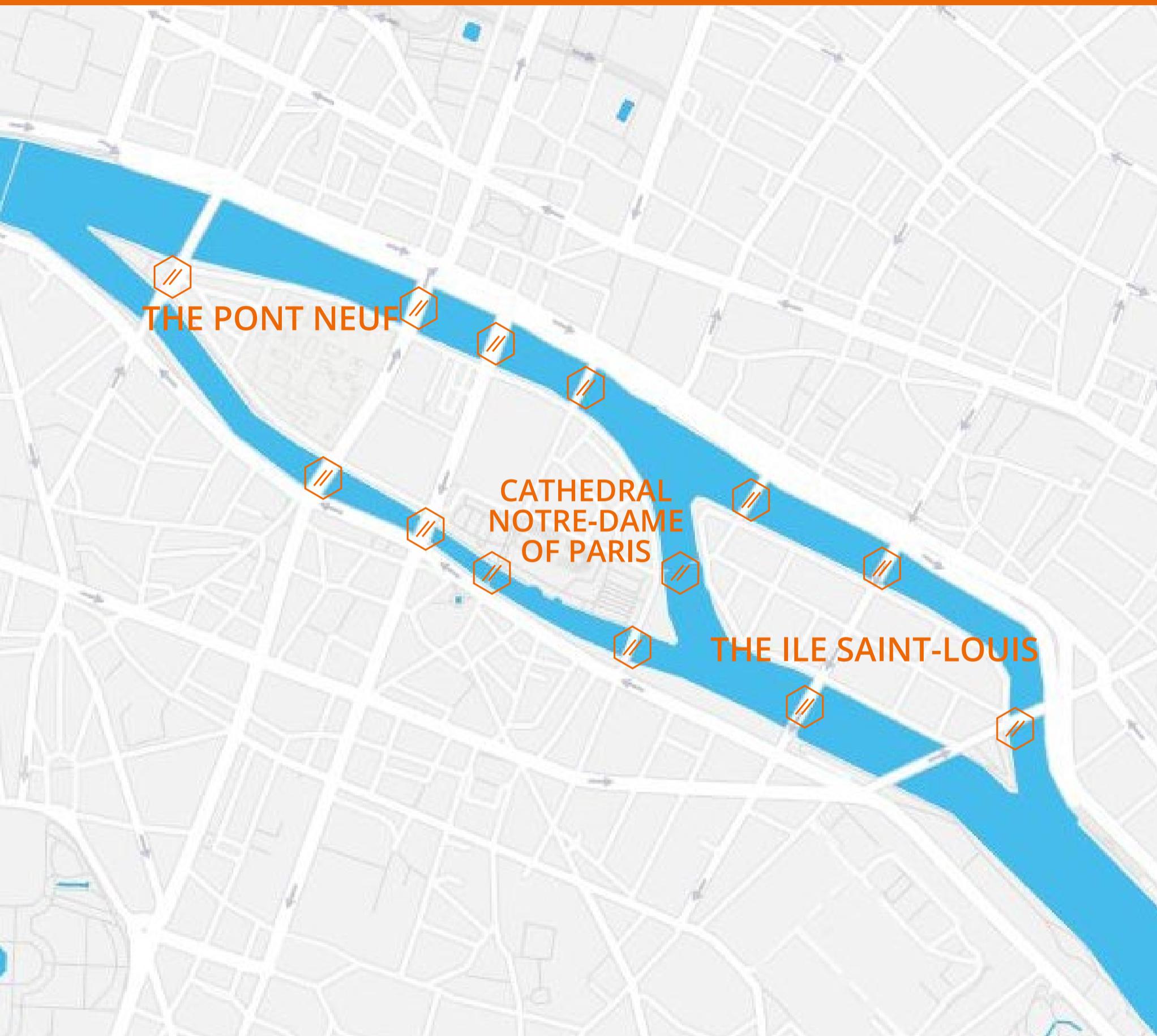




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Circuits
PARALLÈLES
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THE BRIDGES OF
THE HISTORIC HEART OF PARIS

THE BRIDGES OF THE ILE SAINT-LOUIS AND THE ILE DE LA CITÉ



Length: 2H30 walking.

Public: all

Means of transport: by foot or bicycle



Access for persons with reduced mobility: yes. Note that the descent to the Vert-Galant Square is not accessible from the Pont-Neuf. The descent is possible by the access ramp located at 30 Quai des Orfèvres; which implies a detour of 700 metres.

Total distance: 4 km

Advice: in order to fully enjoy this walk, choose a sunny day and take your time... There is no bicycle path along the entire tour; it is the same route for the pedestrians, be careful of the one-way streets.



Starting point: the Sully-Morland station (metro line 7 or bus lines 86 and 87)
Velib station: 2 Quai des Célestins, 75004 Paris

At the end of the alley, on the left is the Pont au Double.

THE PONT AU DOUBLE

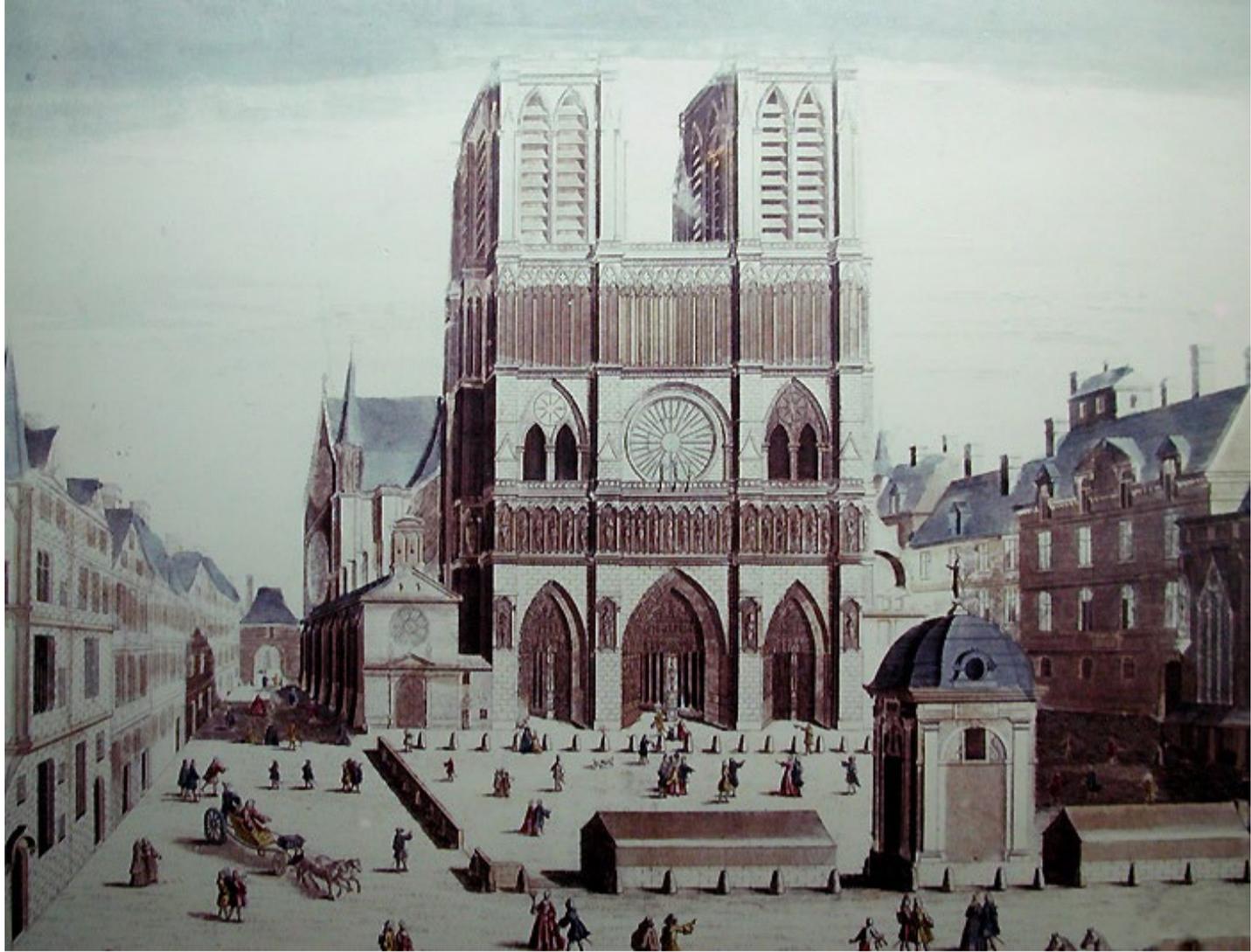
In 1626, the directors of the Hôtel-Dieu, Notre-Dame neighbouring hospital, obtained the permission to build a stone bridge on the Seine small channel. It would enable them to build new facilities to welcome the sick. The construction works lasted four years and the new building of the hospital was finished in 1634.



The access to the bridge was reserved for the patients of the hospital, which caused the discontentment of the Parisians. It was then decided to open the bridge for all in exchange for a right of passage set at the amount of a double denarius for someone by foot. This toll gave its name to the bridge. It was destroyed in 1709.

In 1848, in order to make the Seine small channel navigable, the bridge was replaced with a bridge having only one masonry arch, exchanged in 1883 for the current cast iron arch. It is the only bridge in Paris to have that red ochre colour.





Notre-Dame de Paris's parvis before 1748 - 17th century anonymous engraving.

Leave the park passing by the right and move to Notre-Dame's parvis.

Admire this cathedral!

It is a marvel of Gothic architecture. The construction works started in 1163 under Louis VII's reign and ended almost two centuries later in 1345 under Philip VI's reign. When it was finished, it was one of the biggest cathedrals in the West. At that time, it was surrounded by small wooden houses, shops, inns...

They were demolished in the 1860s-1870s when the Baron Haussmann began his works of redevelopment of the Ile de la Cité. The unoccupied parvis isolated the cathedral and opened up new perspectives. Look at the floor. Can you see the light slabs? These are the outlines of the former streets and buildings which had been destroyed.

Focus on the frontage.

Facing west, it is actually a big square (about 40 metres x 40 metres) and two towers sit on top of it.

Focus more specifically on:

- the three portals; from left to right are the Portal of the Virgin (1210), the Portal of the Last Judgment and the Portal of Saint-Anne (it is the oldest and is mainly composed of pieces sculpted around 1200);
- the gallery of Kings (twenty-eight statues of more than 3 metres high depict the kings of Judah and Israel) and the stone rose; the latter dates back to the 1220s and is the smallest rose of the cathedral (9.60 metres of diameter);
- the gallery of the chimeras and the two towers; this arch gallery links the bases of the two towers which culminate at 69 metres.

Now come closer to the frontage.

About thirty metres away from the portals (between the left one and the middle one), the bronze plaque inlaid with a wind rose is the kilometre 0, the mileage starting point of French roads.



Continue your walk by the Rue d'Arcole on the left when you face Notre-Dame.

On your left is the Hôtel-Dieu that we mentioned during your detour by the pont au Double. It is the oldest hospital in Paris. Founded in 651 by the Parisian bishop Saint Landry, it hosted the sick but also the poor. Originally rather small, it was extended over centuries. During its long history, the Hôtel-Dieu moved several times but always stayed on the Ile de la Cité. The current buildings date back to 1875.

n°15 On the opposite pavement, on the left of the blue gate (ambulance's exit) and above the small balustrade on the side frontage is a hole on the wall. It is the mark of a shellfire shot during the Liberation of Paris in August 1944.

50 metres away, turn right into Rue Chanoinesse.

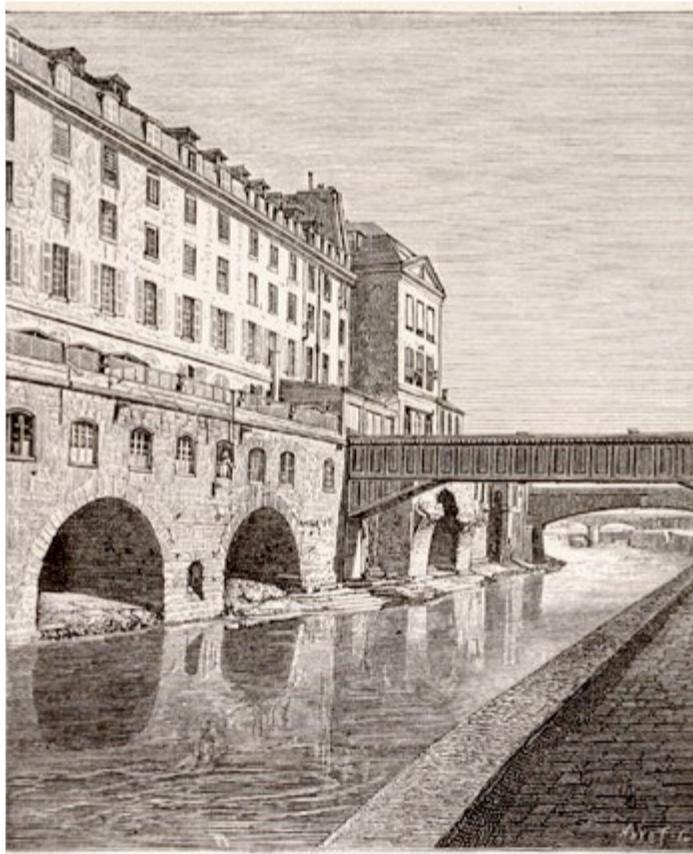
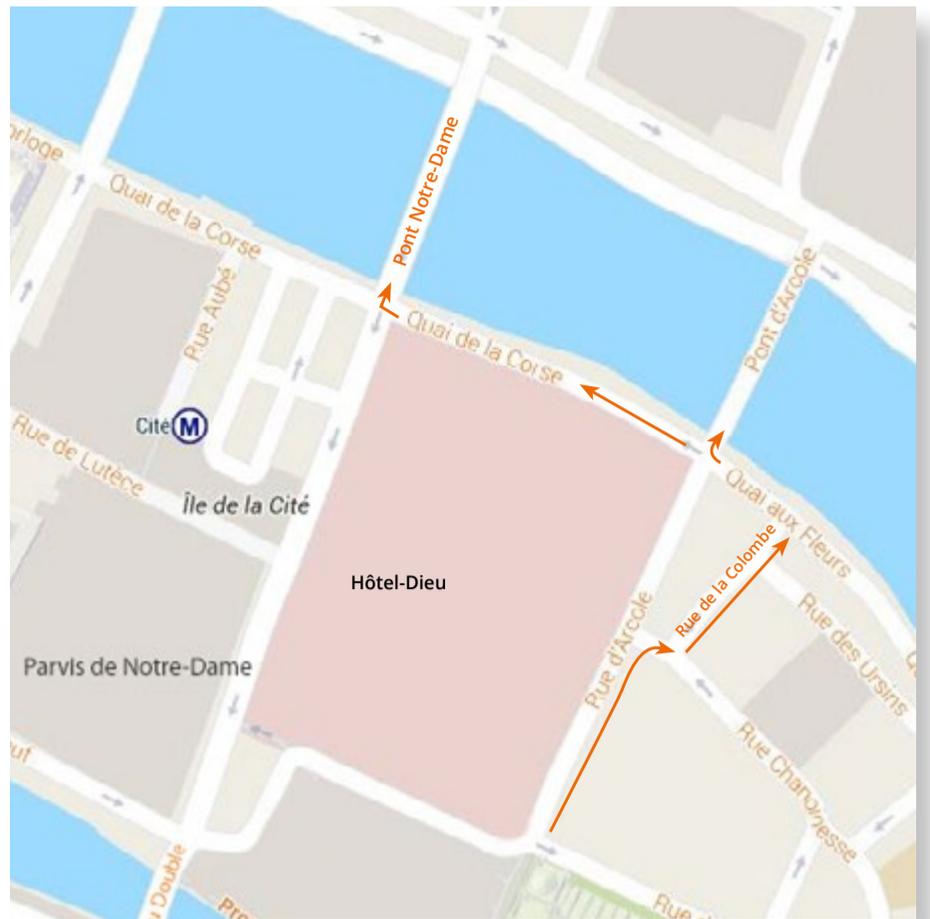


Fig. 41. — Vue de l'Hôtel-Dieu du côté de la Seine et de la passerelle en bois derrière laquelle on aperçoit encore la culée du pont Saint-Charles (1877).

The Hôtel-Dieu seen from the Seine 1877, Theodor Hoffbauer



On the corner of the Rue Chanoinesse and the Rue de la Colombe, the frontage belongs to an authentic wine merchant of the 18th century. An edict in 1729 decreed that they had to have signs and railings. The signs were often decorated with patterns linked to their activity and the railings aimed at protecting their precious drink.

Turn left into Rue de la Colombe.

n°6 Can you see the row of cobblestones which breaks the continuity of the street? It marks the location and the width of the fortified wall protecting Lutèce in the 4th century.

On the corner of the Rue de la Colombe and Rue des Ursins, you are around the former Seine banks, at Saint-Landry harbour. It was the first harbour in Paris and the most important of the capital until the 12th century. It was removed in the beginning of the 19th century during the construction of the Quai Napoleon nowadays Quai aux Fleurs and the banks were lifted.