



A Very Brief History of Visualization: Visions, Stories and Pictures (20,000 years in 45 minutes)



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 @datavisFriendly
 Chicago Humanities Festival, Nov. 11, 2018



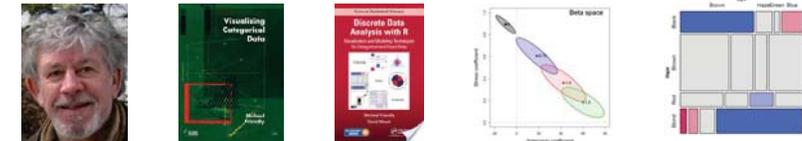
Slides: <http://datavis.ca/papers/CHF-2x2.pdf>

Introducing: me

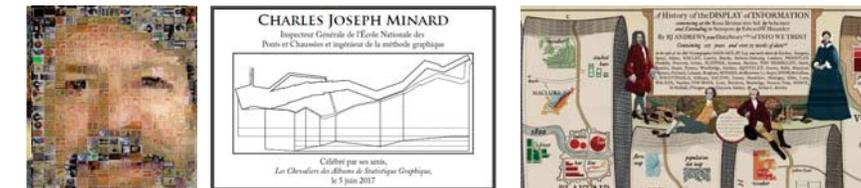
I wear two hats, both reflected on my license plate



Statistical graphics developer (categorical & multivariate data analysis)



History of data visualization: *Milestones Project*; *A Gleam in the Mind's Eye* (2019)



Plan for today

- Introduction: Context for history of data vis
 - Data visualization today: problems & challenges
 - Communication: Words, numbers & pictures
 - Visualization & scientific discovery
 - Prehistory of visualization
- The *Milestones Project*
 - Visualizing history
 - Milestones tour of the history of data vis
- The Golden Age of Statistical Graphics
 - A.-M. Guerry & the rise of social science
 - Visual thinking: C.J. Minard
 - Francis Galton's graphical discoveries
 - Graphical excellence: *Albums de Statistique Graphique*
- Golden Lessons

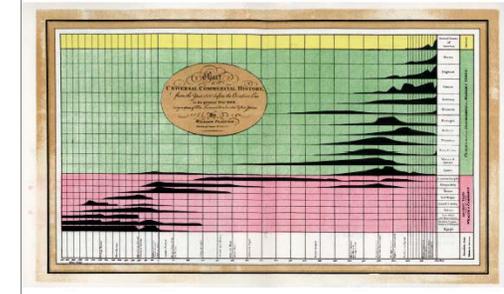
Obligatory shameless plug

This talk is based on our new book, Harvard University Press, 2019



Cover image: A long view of history--- William Playfair (1805), *Chart of Universal Commercial History*.

How and when did civilizations rise and fall from 1500 BCE to 1800 AD?



Datavis today: Problems & challenges

- Today: Immersed in a sea of data
 - fitness trackers, election polls, economic forecasts, what's trending on Twitter
- Big data, complex, high-dimensional problems
 - Personal:
 - how to monitor my heart health? blood sugar?
 - how to manage my investment portfolio?
 - Societal:
 - Tracking disease outbreaks of measles, Ebola, etc.
 - Understanding crime, gun violence, poverty, etc.
 - Effects of climate change on extreme weather, forest fires, etc.
- How can data vis help?
 - Role of graphics in communication & persuasion?

Powerful graphs: Measles and vaccines

Visualizing the impact of health policy interventions

In 2015 Tynan DeBold & Dov Friedman in the *Wall Street Journal* tried to show the effect of the introduction of vaccination programs in the US states on disease incidence, using color-coded heat maps for a variety of diseases

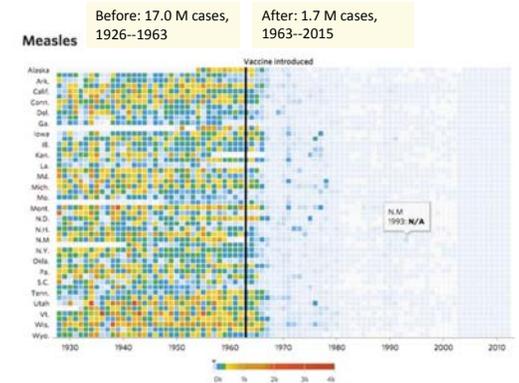
Measles was decimated!

The message hits you between the eyes!

Powerful graphs make comparison easy

In 2014, vaccination rates declined and measles re-emerged in those areas

Effective graphs can cure ignorance, but not stupidity.



Source: <http://graphics.wsj.com/infectious-diseases-and-vaccines/>

Gun homicides

Compared to what??

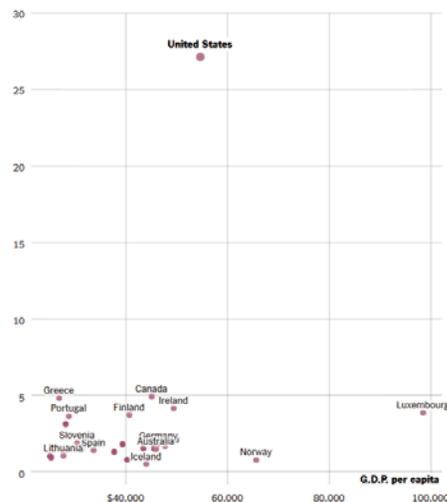
Kevin Quealy and Margot Sanger-Katz in the *New York Times* compared gun homicides in the U.S. to other Western democracies.

The graph was carefully constructed to allow sensible comparisons.

The conclusion is inescapable

Causes are arguable, but the graph demands an explanation

No Other Rich Western Country Comes Close
Gun homicides per day if each country had the same population as the U.S.



From: <http://nyti.ms/28vRifm>

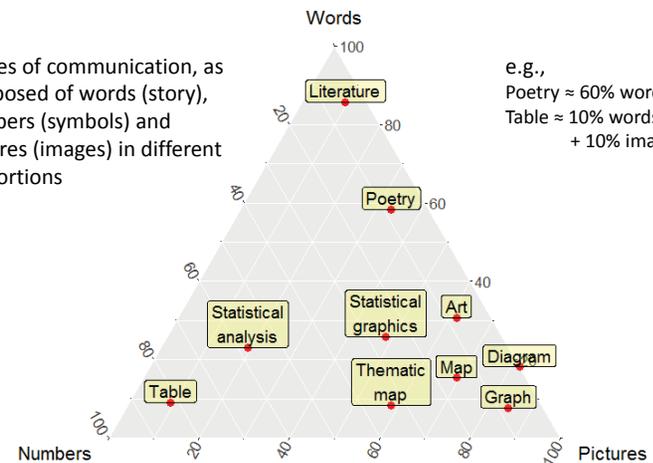
Words, numbers and pictures



Pictures and images in a wider context

Modes of communication, as composed of words (story), numbers (symbols) and pictures (images) in different proportions

e.g.,
Poetry ≈ 60% words + 40% images
Table ≈ 10% words + 80% numbers + 10% images



Lascaux: What were they thinking?



Lascaux II, Chamber of the Bulls

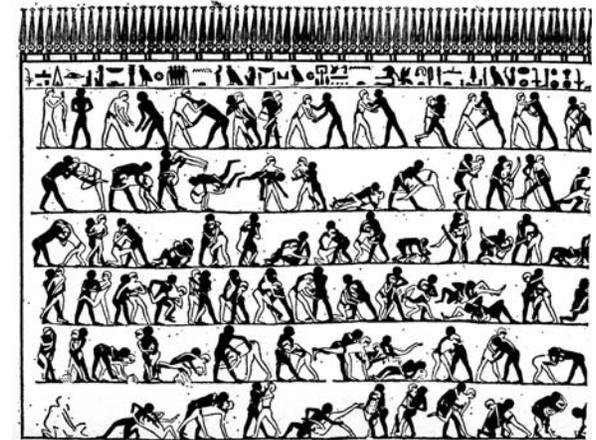
- Visual features:
 - show perspective, a sense of motion, rich use of color & texture
- What was the purpose?
 - Hunting success? NO (they hunted reindeer)
 - mostly symbolic – visual language, story of communal myths
- How to understand them?
 - A **cognitive revolution**: evidence for the modern human mind in Cro Magnon man
 - inner vision, visual thinking, mental imagery– a gleam in the mind’s eye
- Other cave art [20000BC – 10000BC]: Altamira (Spain); Chauvet (France), Cueva de las Manos (Argentina), ...

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Prehistory: Diagrams, graphic stories

Early Egyptian animated graphic diagram

Wrestling scene on east wall, tomb of Baqt at Beni Hasan (ca. 2000 BCE).



A visual explanation of a wrestling match

Anticipates modern graphic novels

Why? Perhaps Baqt’s last lesson as a wrestler in his youth and later as a coach

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Milestones Project

Milestones in the History of Thematic Cartography, Statistical Graphics, and Data Visualization

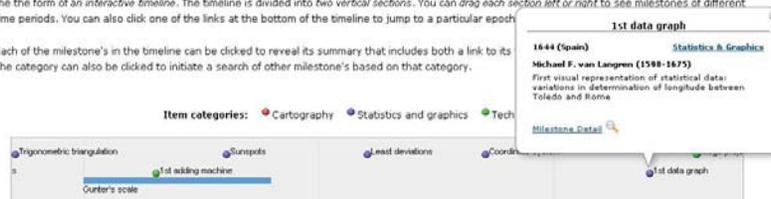
An illustrated chronology of innovations by Michael Friendly and Daniel J. Denis



Timeline

This page provides a graphic overview of the events in the history of data visualization that we call “milestones.” These milestones are shown below in the form of an interactive timeline. The timeline is divided into two vertical sections. You can drag each section left or right to see milestones of different time periods. You can also click one of the links at the bottom of the timeline to jump to a particular epoch.

Each of the milestone’s in the timeline can be clicked to reveal its summary that includes both a link to its category. The category can also be clicked to initiate a search of other milestone’s based on that category.



Web site: <http://datavis.ca/milestones>

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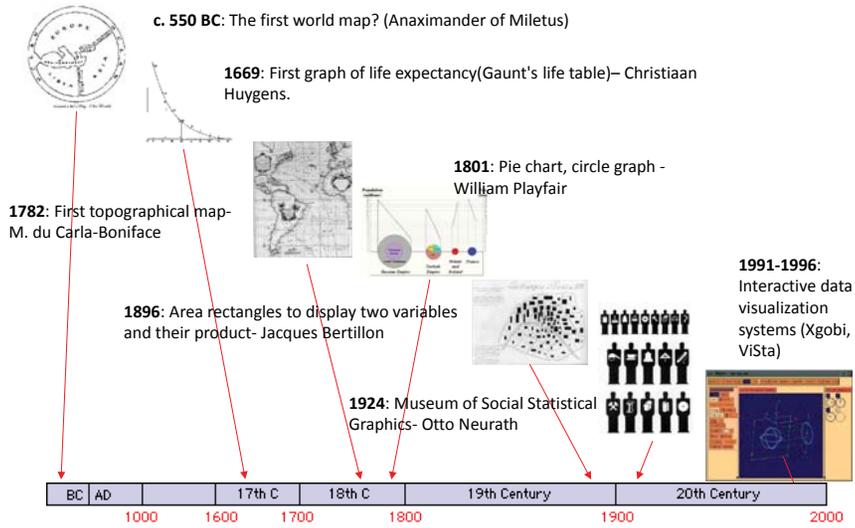
Milestones: Roots of Data Visualization

- **Cartography**: map-making, geo-measurement, thematic cartography, GIS, geo-visualization
- **Data**: population, economic, social, moral, medical, ...
- **Statistics**: probability theory, distributions, estimation, models, stat-graphics,
- **Visual thinking**: geometry, functions, mechanical diagrams, EDA, ...
- **Technology**: printing, lithography, computing, ...
- **Aesthetics**: Graphs and diagrams as beautiful objects

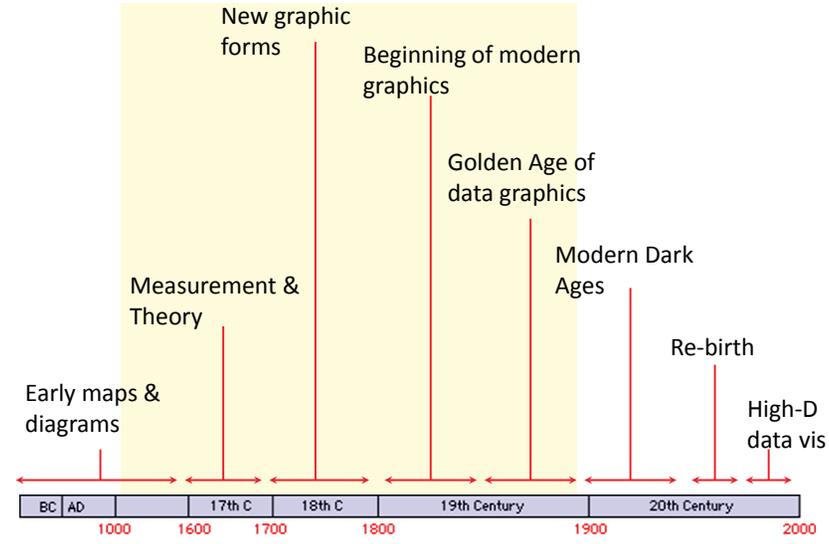
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Milestones: Content Overview

Every picture has a story – Rod Stewart

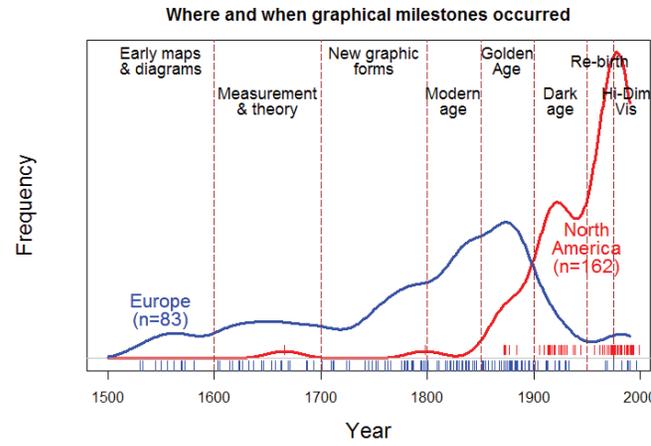


Parsing history: Milestones tour



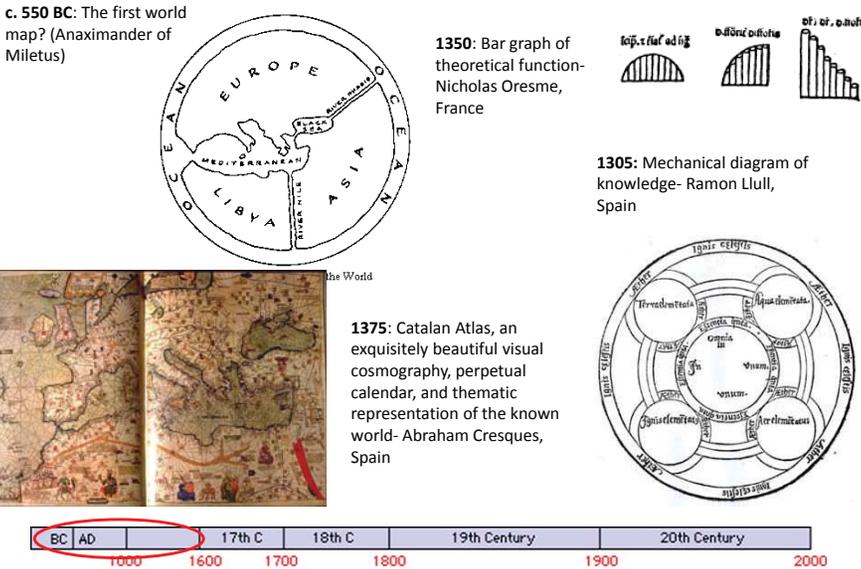
Visualizing history

What does history look like? How do you draw time?



245 milestones events, classified by place of development

Pre 17th C: Early maps & diagrams



1600-1699: Measurement and Theory

1375: Catalan Atlas, an exquisitely beautiful visual cosmography, perpetual calendar, and thematic representation of the known world- Abraham Cresques, Majorca, Spain [BNF: ESP 30]

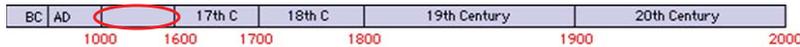
Western world



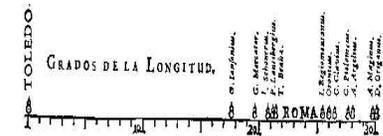
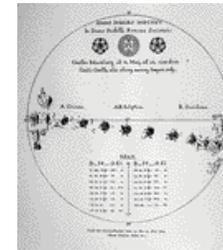
Eastern world (Marco Polo)



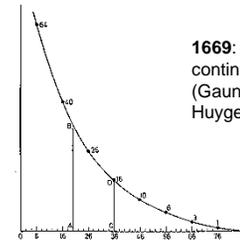
Perpetual calendar



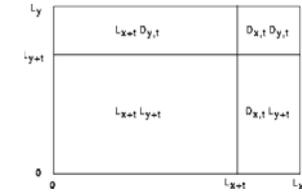
1626: Visual representations used to chart the changes in sunspots over time- Christopher Scheiner



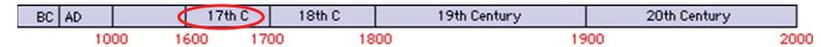
1644: First visual representation of statistical data- M.F. van Langren, Spain



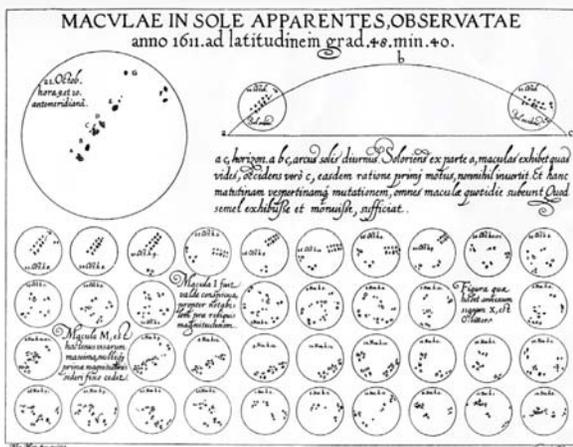
1669: First graph of a continuous distribution function (Gaunt's life table)- Christiaan Huygens.



1693: First use of areas of rectangles to display probabilities of independent binary events- Edmund Halley, England



Sunspots: Great graph, wrong theory



1626: Christopher Scheiner's graph of changes in sunspots over time.

- "small multiples"
- allows comparison
- multiple legends
- A+ for info design!

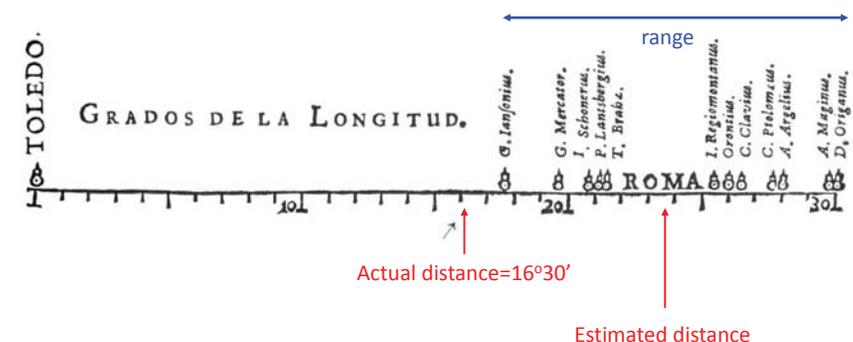
He argued (incorrectly) that these were evidence for solar satellites.

The idea of graphs for visualizing phenomena had arrived.



First statistical graph

1644: First visual representation of statistical data: determination of longitude between Toledo and Rome- M. F. van Langren, Spain



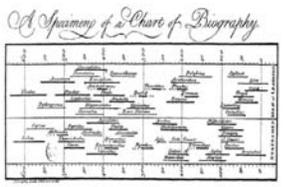
1700-1799: New graphic forms

Mapping the **invisible**, inventing new ways to visualize history & information

1701: Isobar map, lines of equal magnetic declination – Edmund Halley

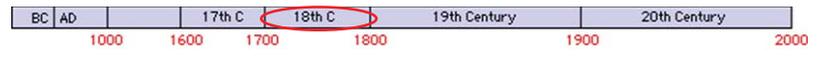
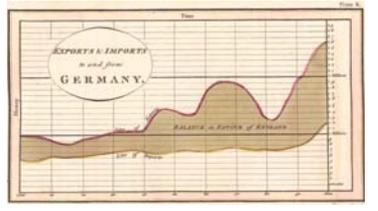


1765: Historical time line (life spans of famous people) Joseph Priestley

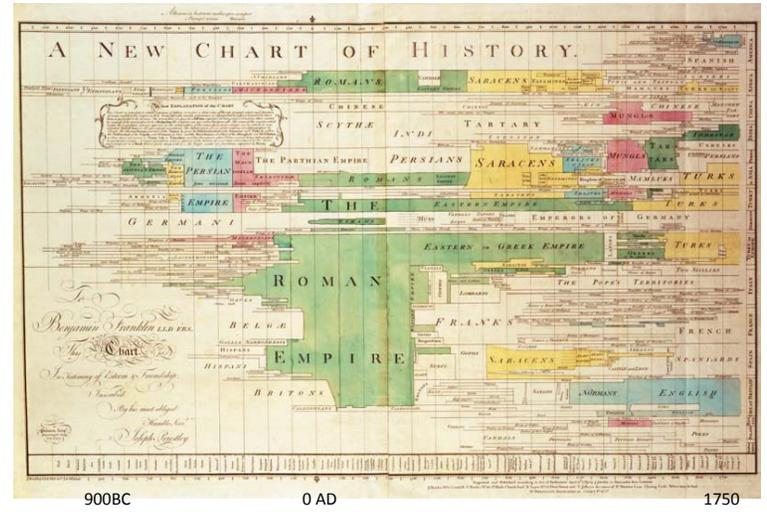


1782: First topographical map- Marcellin du Carla-Boniface

1786: Bar chart, line graphs of economic data- William Playfair



1769: Visualizing world history (duration, influence, domination) – Joseph Priestley



Place
↓
↓
Africa
China

Turkey
Germany

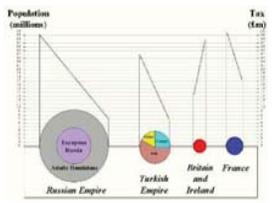
Italy
France
Spain
G.B.

Time →→→→→ 900BC 0 AD 1750
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_New_Chart_of_History

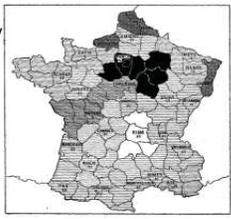
1800-1849: Beginning of modern data graphics

An age of data, and enthusiasm for graphics

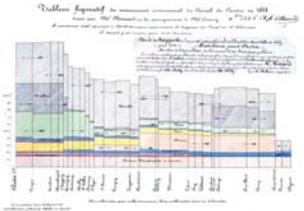
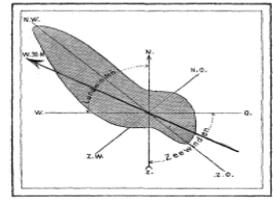
1801: Pie chart, circle graph invented- William Playfair



1819: First modern statistical map (illiteracy in France)- Charles Dupin



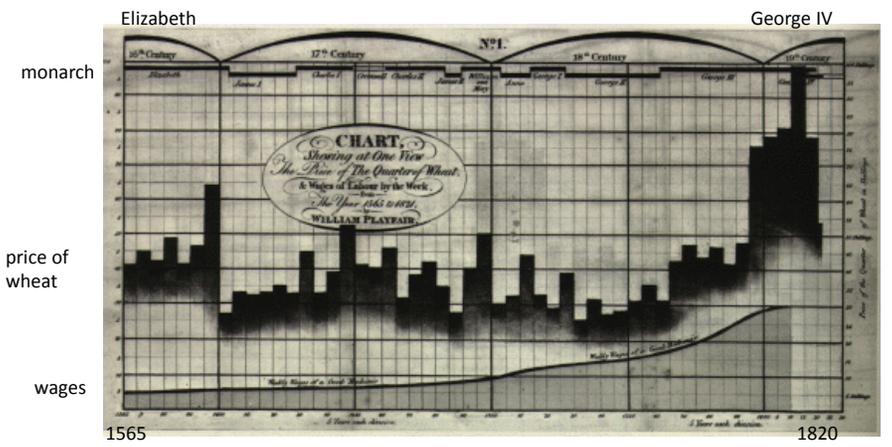
1843: Wind-rose (polar coordinates)- L. Lalanne



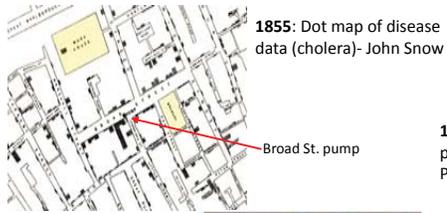
1844: variable-width, divided bars, area ~ cost of transport- C. J. Minard



1821: Bar chart and line graph showing three time series: Price of wheat, weekly wages and reigning monarch over a 250+ year span- William Playfair

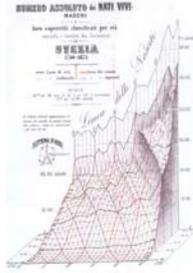


1850-1900: Golden Age



Broad St. pump

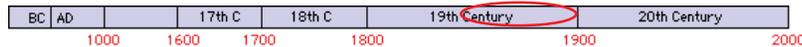
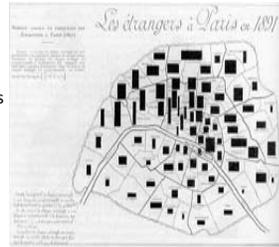
1879: Stereogram (3D population pyramid) - Luigi Perozzo



1884: Recursive multi-mosaic on a map - Emile Cheysson

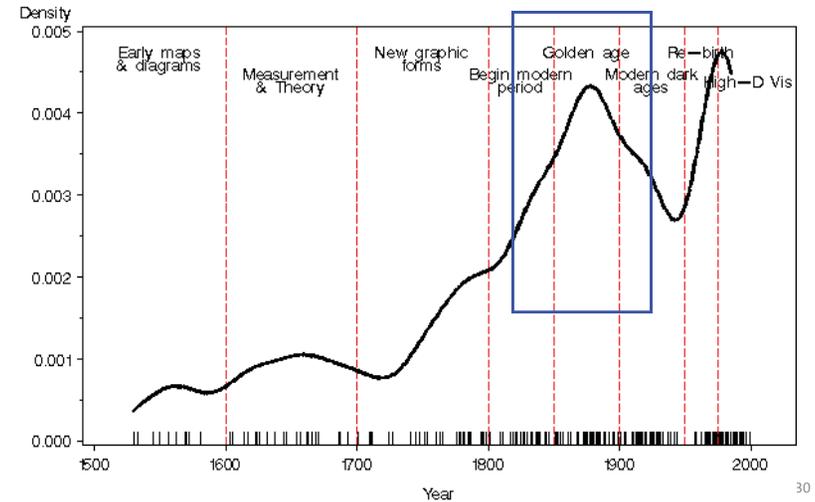


1896: Area rectangles on a map to display two variables and their product - Jacques Bertillon



Why a golden age?

Milestones: Time course of developments



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Stories from the Golden Age (1850-1900)

Stories:

- A.-M. Guerry & the rise of social science
- Graphic vision of C. J. Minard
- Galton's graphical discoveries
- Statistical albums

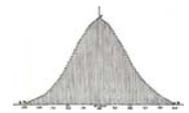
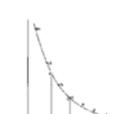
Themes:

- Statistics: numbers of the state
- Rise of visual thinking
- Escaping flatland: 2D → 3D
- Visualization → Theory (graphic discovery)
- Data → Theory → Practice
- Graphical excellence



Big questions of the early 1800s

- Issues for European states
 - Demography: taxes, raising an army (Süssmilch, 1741)
 - "Statistik": Numbers of the state (Achenwall, 1748)
 - Social problems: crime, suicide, literacy, etc.
 - Disease epidemics, e.g., cholera
- Anthropometry: the measure of Man
 - Distributions of human characteristics
 - Birth, mortality, lifespan
- Beginnings of statistical theory and application
 - Normal distⁿ (de Moivre, 1733)
 - *L'homme moyen* (Quetelet, 1835)



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The discovery of “social facts”

Social laws à la physical laws

Do crime and other moral variables represent:

- ▶ structural, lawful characteristics of society, or are they
- ▶ simply indicants of individual behaviour?

Guerry argued:

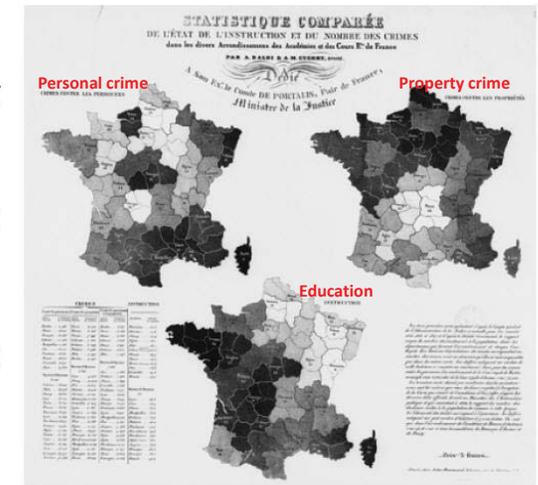
Each year sees the same number of crimes of the same degree reproduced in the same regions. (Guerry, 1833, p.10)

... We are forced to recognize that the facts of the moral order are subject, like those of the physical order, to invariable laws (Guerry, 1833, p14)

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1829: Statistique comparée de l'état de l'instruction...

- ▶ First shaded thematic maps of crime data
- ▶ First comparative maps of social data
- ▶ ↳ crime against persons seemed **inversely related** to crime against property!
- ▶ Instruction: ↳ *France obscure* and *France éclairée* (Dupin, 1826)
- ▶ North of France highest in education, but also in property crime!



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1833: Essai sur la statistique morale de la France

- ▶ Divided the 86 departments into 5 regions
- ▶ Supplemented data from the *Compte général* with:
 - ▶ Suicides in Paris, 1794–1832
 - ▶ Prostitutes in Paris (Parent-Duchâtelet)
 - ▶ Wealth (taxes per inhabitant)
 - ▶ Distribution of clergy
 - ▶ ...
- ▶ First study to use crime data to “test” hypotheses
- ▶ Attracted widespread interest in Europe



Guerry's 1833 map of literacy in France

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1833: Semi-graphic tables

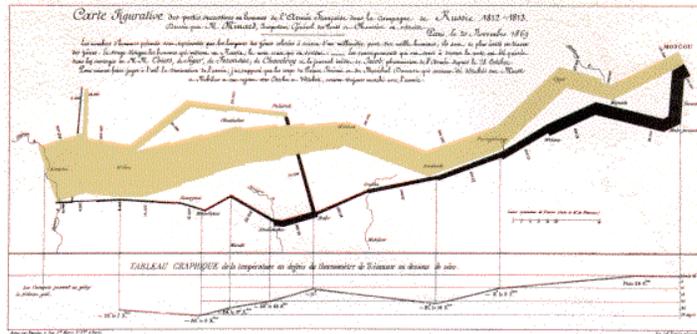
Crimes against persons

- ▶ **Indecent assault on adults** (*viol sur des adultes*) decreases with age
- ▶ **Indecent assault on children** increases with age (top for 70+)
- ▶ **Paricide** rises to max at age 60–70

INFLUENCE DE L'AGE.
DISTRIBUTION DES CRIMES AUX DIFFÉRENS ÂGES, PAR PÉRIODE DE DIX ANNÉES.

| A. CRIMES CONTRE LES PERSONNES. | | DE 20 A 30. | | DE 30 A 40. | | DE 40 A 50. | | DE 50 A 60. | | DE 60 A 70. | | AU-DESSUS DE 70 ANS. | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| N° | NATURE DES CRIMES. Sur 1,000. |
| 1 | Meurtres et coups | 182 | 179 | 180 | 178 | 177 | 176 | 175 | 174 | 173 | 172 | 171 | 170 |
| 2 | Viol sur des adultes | 169 | 168 | 167 | 166 | 165 | 164 | 163 | 162 | 161 | 160 | 159 | 158 |
| 3 | Meurtres | 147 | 146 | 145 | 144 | 143 | 142 | 141 | 140 | 139 | 138 | 137 | 136 |
| 4 | Viol sur des enfants | 141 | 140 | 139 | 138 | 137 | 136 | 135 | 134 | 133 | 132 | 131 | 130 |
| 5 | Enlèvement | 133 | 132 | 131 | 130 | 129 | 128 | 127 | 126 | 125 | 124 | 123 | 122 |
| 6 | Mariage | 123 | 122 | 121 | 120 | 119 | 118 | 117 | 116 | 115 | 114 | 113 | 112 |
| 7 | Viol sur des adultes | 118 | 117 | 116 | 115 | 114 | 113 | 112 | 111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 |
| 8 | Blasphème | 117 | 116 | 115 | 114 | 113 | 112 | 111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 |
| 9 | Blasphème | 116 | 115 | 114 | 113 | 112 | 111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 |
| 10 | Blasphème | 115 | 114 | 113 | 112 | 111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 |
| 11 | Blasphème | 114 | 113 | 112 | 111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 |
| 12 | Blasphème | 113 | 112 | 111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 |
| 13 | Blasphème | 112 | 111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 |
| 14 | Blasphème | 111 | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 |
| 15 | Blasphème | 110 | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 |
| 16 | Blasphème | 109 | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 |
| 17 | Blasphème | 108 | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 |
| 18 | Blasphème | 107 | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 |
| 19 | Blasphème | 106 | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 |
| 20 | Blasphème | 105 | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 |
| 21 | Blasphème | 104 | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 |
| 22 | Blasphème | 103 | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 |
| 23 | Blasphème | 102 | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 |
| 24 | Blasphème | 101 | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 |
| 25 | Blasphème | 100 | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 |
| 26 | Blasphème | 99 | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 |
| 27 | Blasphème | 98 | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 |
| 28 | Blasphème | 97 | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 |
| 29 | Blasphème | 96 | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 |
| 30 | Blasphème | 95 | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 |
| 31 | Blasphème | 94 | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 |
| 32 | Blasphème | 93 | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 |
| 33 | Blasphème | 92 | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 |
| 34 | Blasphème | 91 | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 |
| 35 | Blasphème | 90 | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 |
| 36 | Blasphème | 89 | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 |
| 37 | Blasphème | 88 | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 |
| 38 | Blasphème | 87 | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 |
| 39 | Blasphème | 86 | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 |
| 40 | Blasphème | 85 | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 |
| 41 | Blasphème | 84 | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 |
| 42 | Blasphème | 83 | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 |
| 43 | Blasphème | 82 | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 |
| 44 | Blasphème | 81 | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 |
| 45 | Blasphème | 80 | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 |
| 46 | Blasphème | 79 | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 |
| 47 | Blasphème | 78 | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 |
| 48 | Blasphème | 77 | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 |
| 49 | Blasphème | 76 | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 |
| 50 | Blasphème | 75 | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 |
| 51 | Blasphème | 74 | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 |
| 52 | Blasphème | 73 | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 |
| 53 | Blasphème | 72 | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 |
| 54 | Blasphème | 71 | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 |
| 55 | Blasphème | 70 | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 |
| 56 | Blasphème | 69 | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 |
| 57 | Blasphème | 68 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 |
| 58 | Blasphème | 67 | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 |
| 59 | Blasphème | 66 | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 |
| 60 | Blasphème | 65 | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 |
| 61 | Blasphème | 64 | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 |
| 62 | Blasphème | 63 | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 |
| 63 | Blasphème | 62 | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 |
| 64 | Blasphème | 61 | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 |
| 65 | Blasphème | 60 | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 |
| 66 | Blasphème | 59 | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 |
| 67 | Blasphème | 58 | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 |
| 68 | Blasphème | 57 | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 |
| 69 | Blasphème | 56 | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 |
| 70 | Blasphème | 55 | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 |
| 71 | Blasphème | 54 | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 |
| 72 | Blasphème | 53 | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 |
| 73 | Blasphème | 52 | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 |
| 74 | Blasphème | 51 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 |
| 75 | Blasphème | 50 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 |
| 76 | Blasphème | 49 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 |
| 77 | Blasphème | 48 | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 |
| 78 | Blasphème | 47 | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 |
| 79 | Blasphème | 46 | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 35 |
| 80 | Blasphème | 45 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 35 | 34 |
| 81 | Blasphème | 44 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 35 | 34 | 33 |
| 82 | Blasphème | 43 | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 35 | 34 | 33 | 32 |
| 83 | Blasphème | 42 | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 35 | 34 | 33 | 32 | 31 |
| 84 | Blasphème | 41 | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 35 | 34 | 33 | 32 | 31 | 30 |
| 85 | Blasphème | 40 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 36 | 35 | 34 | 33 | 32 | 31 | 30 | 29 |
| 86 | Blasphème | 39 | 38 | | | | | | | | | | |

2. The graphic vision of C. J. Minard



- Marey (1878): “defies the pen of the historian in its brutal eloquence”
- Tufte (1983): “the best statistical graphic ever produced”

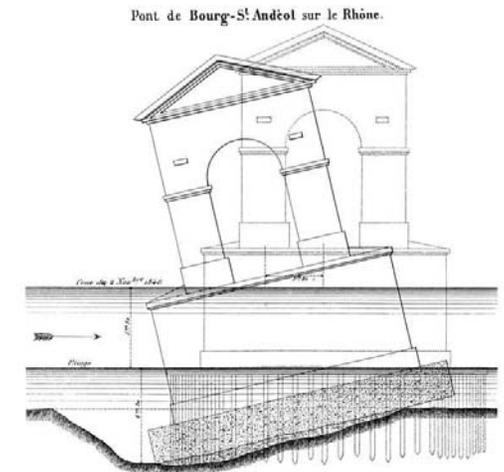
41

Visual thinking, visual explanation

Minard’s main career was as a civil engineer for the ENPC (bridges & roads)

1840: Why did the bridge at Bourg-St. Andèol collapse?

Minard’s report consisted essentially of this self-explaining diagram.



Big questions of the mid 1800s

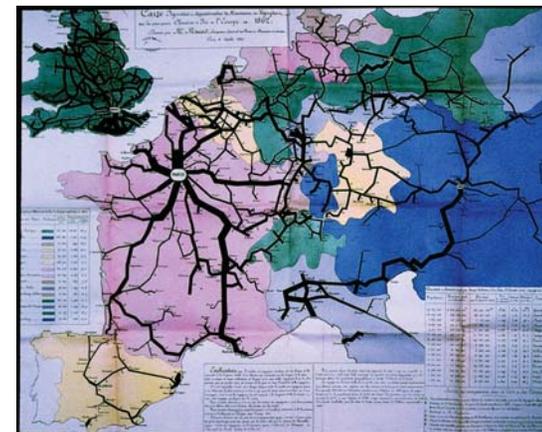
- 1830—1860: emergence of modern French state, dawn of globalization
- Trade, commerce, transportation:
 - Where to build railroads, canals?
 - How to compete with imports/exports?
 - Visualizing changes over time, differences over space
 - → Flow maps and other graphical innovations
- These questions motivated the Golden Age.

See: Friendly, M. (2008). The Golden Age of Statistical Graphics, *Statistical Science*, 23, 502-535

43

Flow maps as visual tools

Transport of passengers on the principal railroads in Europe in 1862



The dominant principle which characterizes my graphic tables and my figurative maps is to make immediately appreciable to the eye, as much as possible, the proportions of numeric results.

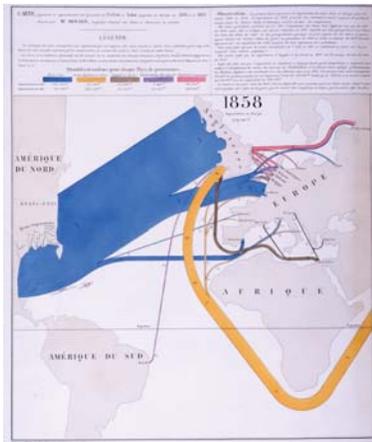
...Not only do my maps speak, but even more, they count, they calculate by the eye.

-- Minard (1862)

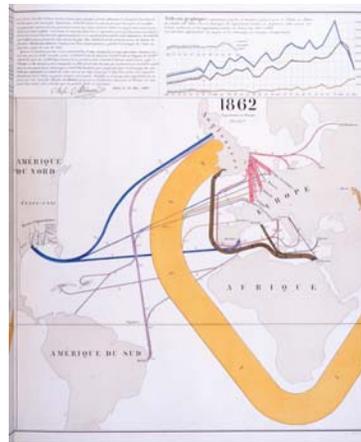
44

Effect of US Civil War on cotton trade

Before



After



45

3. Galton's visual discoveries- Bivariate normal correlation surface (1886)

Table 9.1 One of Galton's correlation tables

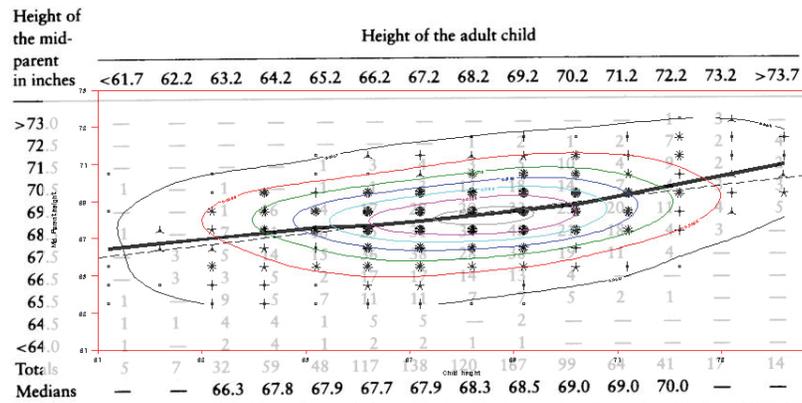
| Height of the mid-parent in inches | Height of the adult child | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| | <61.7 | 62.2 | 63.2 | 64.2 | 65.2 | 66.2 | 67.2 | 68.2 | 69.2 | 70.2 | 71.2 | 72.2 | 73.2 | >73.7 |
| >73.0 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 3 | — |
| 72.5 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 71.5 | — | — | — | — | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 2 |
| 70.5 | 1 | — | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 18 | 14 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 69.5 | — | — | 1 | 16 | 4 | 17 | 27 | 20 | 33 | 25 | 20 | 11 | 4 | 5 |
| 68.5 | 1 | — | 7 | 11 | 16 | 25 | 31 | 34 | 48 | 21 | 18 | 4 | 3 | — |
| 67.5 | — | 3 | 5 | 14 | 15 | 36 | 38 | 28 | 38 | 19 | 11 | 4 | — | — |
| 66.5 | — | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 17 | 17 | 14 | 13 | 4 | — | — | — | — |
| 65.5 | 1 | — | 9 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 1 | — | — |
| 64.5 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 5 | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — |
| <64.0 | 1 | — | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Totals | 5 | 7 | 32 | 59 | 48 | 117 | 138 | 120 | 167 | 99 | 64 | 41 | 17 | 14 |
| Medians | — | — | 66.3 | 67.8 | 67.9 | 67.7 | 67.9 | 68.3 | 68.5 | 69.0 | 69.0 | 70.0 | — | — |

Source: Galton (1886), p. 68.

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Visual smoothing → Insight

Table 9.1 One of Galton's correlation tables

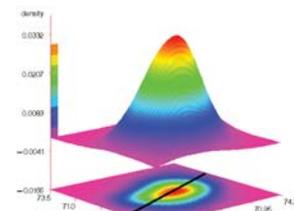


Source: Galton (1886), p. 68.

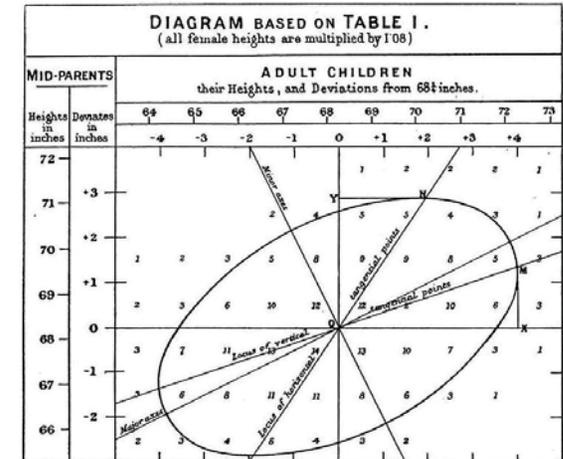
47

Visual insight → Theory

- Level curves are ellipses
- Regression lines are loci of conjugate tangents



... that Galton should have evolved all this ... is to my mind one of the most note-worthy scientific discoveries arising from analysis of pure observation (Pearson 1920, p37)



Galton (1886, Pl X): Smoothed contours of heights of parents and children

48

Galton's discovery of weather patterns- Perhaps the most notable *purely graphic* discovery ever!

METEOROGRAPHICA,

METHODS OF MAPPING THE WEATHER;

ILLUSTRATED BY UPWARDS OF 600 PRINTED AND LITHOGRAPHED DIAGRAMS

REFERENCING, &c.

THE WEATHER OF A LARGE PART OF EUROPE,

During the Month of December 1861.

By FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S.

(Galton, 1863)

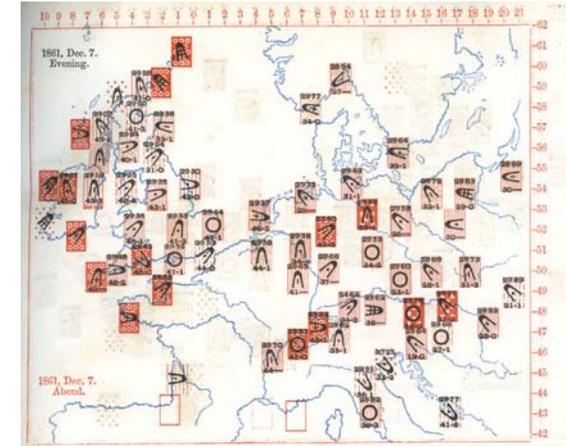
Method: All weather stations across Europe asked to record data 3x/day for all of Dec., 1861

Data: recordings of barometric pressure, wind dir/speed, rain, temp., cloud: 3x/day, 50 weather stations in Europe.

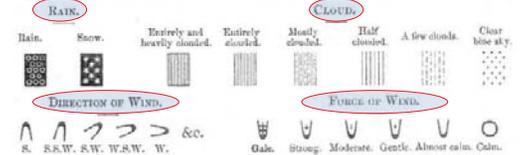
Graphic analysis: 3x31=93 maps, each with multivariate glyphs showing all variables

Visual ideas:

- Iconic symbols
- Multivariate glyphs (stamps!)



EXPLANATION OF THE SYMBOLS USED IN THE WEATHER CHARTS.



Visual abstraction → Patterns

How to see patterns of geographical variation over time?

- Iconic symbols on a geographical grid
- "Small multiples:" separate graphs laid out for direct comparison



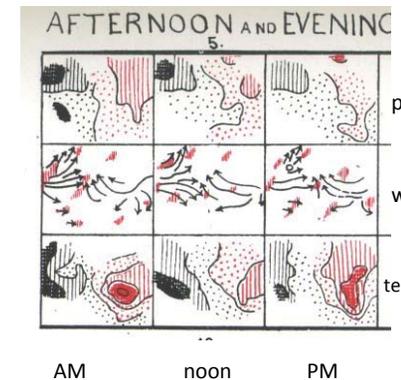
Symbols in Barometrical Charts.

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| | Inches. | Inches. | Inches. | Inches. | Inches. | Inches. | Inches. |
| Black | - | 29.95 to 29.71 | 29.70 to 29.46 | 29.45 to 29.21 | 29.20 and below. | | |
| | | ○ | ○ | * | ● | | |
| Red | - | 29.96 to 30.20 | 30.21 to 30.45 | 30.46 to 30.70 | 30.71 and above. | | |

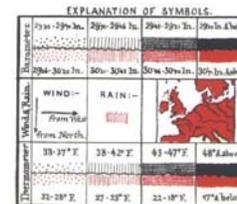
Visual abstraction → Patterns

What varies with what, over time and space?

- mini, abstract maps: vars x TOD
- iso-contours, shading to show equivalence
- arrows to show wind direction



Data for Dec 5, 1861



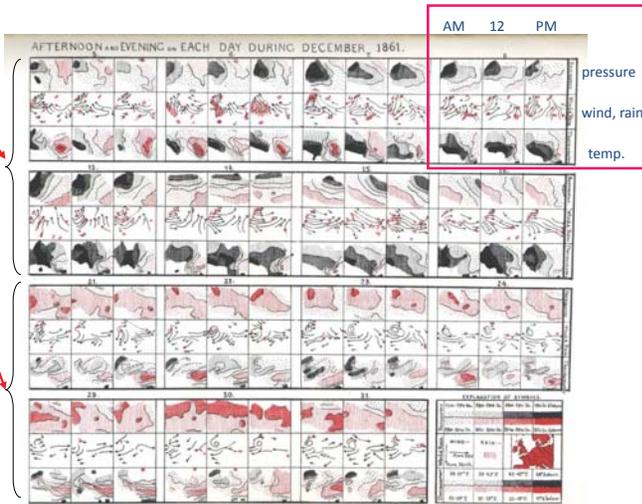
The large picture → Insight

Pattern:
Low pressure (black) in early Dec. → CCW wind

High pressure (red) in late Dec. → CW wind

Graphic: 3x3x31 grid, mapping {pressure, wind/rain, temperature} x {AM, 12, PM} x day {1:31}

(try this with your software!)



A series of weather maps from the *Meteorographien*.

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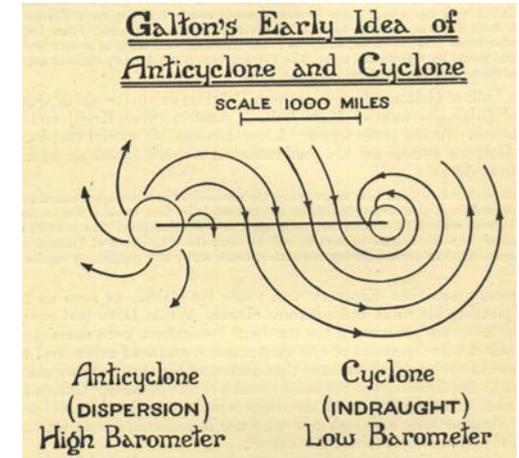
Visual insight → Theory

Visual insight from 93 (3x31) high-D graphs:

- Changes in wind dir w/ pressure over time
- → Winds revolve inwardly (CCW) in low pressure areas— as in a cyclone;
- → revolve outwardly (CW) in high pressure areas— “anti-cyclone”

Theory:

- Explained by Dove’s ‘Law of Gyration’
- Prediction: reversed pattern (CW/CCW) in southern hemisphere – confirmed!

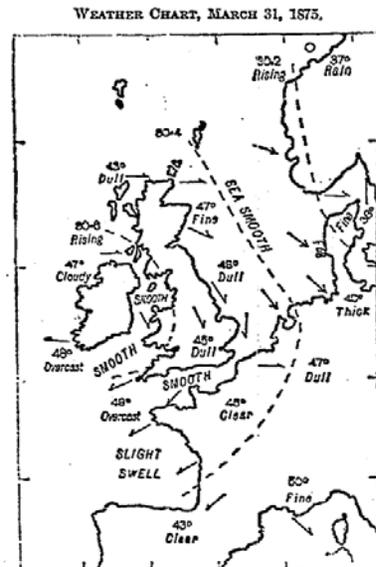


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Theory → Practice

The first modern weather map, *London Times*, Apr. 1, 1875

Galton did for weathermen what Kepler did for Tycho Brahe. This is no small accomplishment. (Wainer 2005)



The dotted lines indicate the gradations of barometric pressure. The variations of the temperature are marked by figures, the state of the sea and sky by descriptive words, and the direction of the wind by arrows—barbed and feathered according to its force. ○ denotes calm.

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4. Statistical atlases: Data → practice, national identity & graphical excellence

- Widespread collection of gov’t statistics on pop., trade, moral & political issues in Europe & US, starting ~ 1820
- How to use this?
 - Visualizing progress, goals yet to be achieved
 - Visualize a national identity, present a graphic portrait of a nation
- Statistical albums ~ 1870—1910
 - France: *Album de Statistique Graphique*: 1879-1899
 - USA: Census atlases: 1870/80/90
 - Germany: local albums (Berlin, Frankfurt, etc.)
 - Switzerland: *Atlas graphique de la Suisse*: 1897, 1914
 - Others: Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria, etc.

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Album de statistique graphique

- Published by the *Statistical Graphics Bureau*, Ministry of Public Works, Émile Cheysson, director
- 18 volumes: 1879-1899, 12—34 plates each, ~ 11"x15" pages
- Graphic forms:
 - Flow maps (simple, double, multi)
 - Pie maps, star, radial, polar time-series, proportional circles
 - Mosaic maps, anamorphic maps, planetary diagrams
 - Choropleth, bi-polar scales
 - Charts: line, bar, time-series
- Pinnacle of the Golden Age:** exquisite sampler of all known graphic forms!

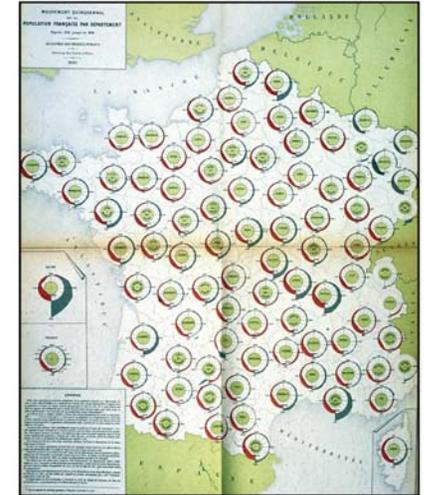
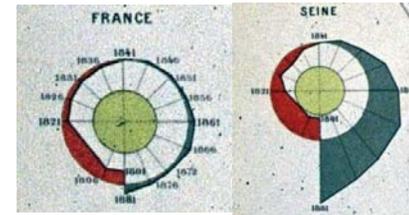


57

Album de statistique graphique

Spiral time-series on a map

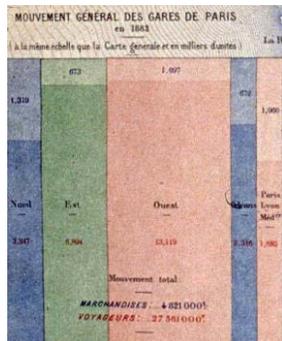
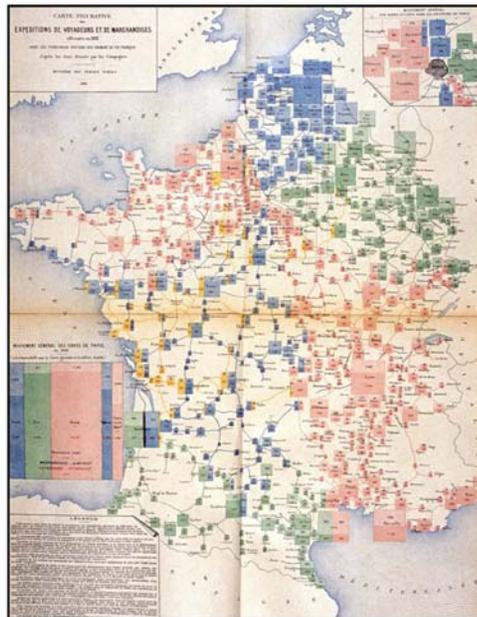
Changes in the population of France from 1801—1881, by department [Album, 1881, plate 25]



Recursive multi-mosaic map

Distribution of **passengers** and **goods** from the Paris railways to the rest of France [Album, 1884, pl. 11]

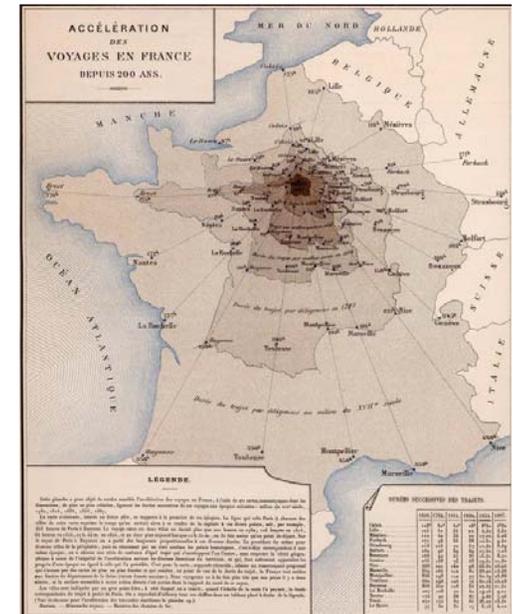
(The image that launched my interest in the history of data vis.)



Anamorphic map

Shrinking France to show change in travel time over 200 years [Album, 1888, plate 8]

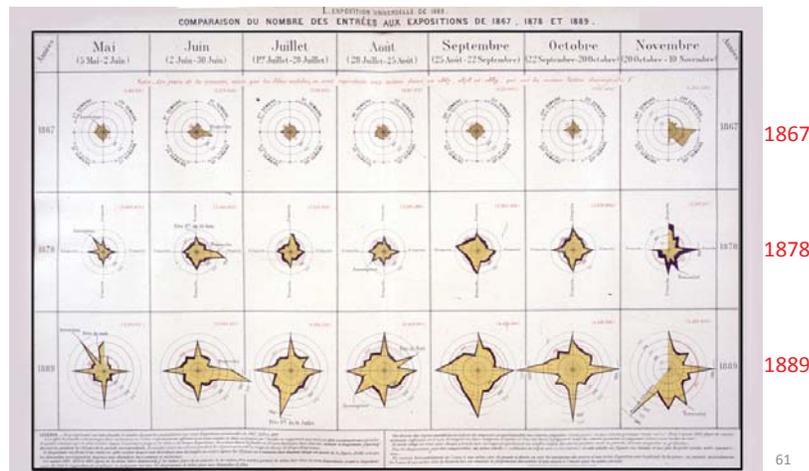
| | 1650. | 1789. | 1814. | 1834. | 1854. | 1887. |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Caen | 123 | 60 | 40 | 25 | 15 | 10 |
| Lille | 105 | 34 | 24 | 18 | 12 | 8 |
| Metz | 110 | 40 | 34 | 22 | 17 | 12 |
| Strasbourg | 171 | 53 | 55 | 38 | 26 | 18 |
| Belfort | 148 | 58 | 59 | 47 | 33 | 23 |
| Besançon | 166 | 54 | 57 | 37 | 25 | 18 |
| Clermont | 145 | 48 | 44 | 32 | 22 | 15 |
| Nice | 438 | 114 | 98 | 65 | 45 | 31 |
| Marseille | 392 | 104 | 118 | 80 | 55 | 38 |
| Montpellier | 356 | 93 | 114 | 77 | 53 | 36 |
| Toulouse | 330 | 95 | 108 | 70 | 48 | 33 |
| Bayonne | 258 | 100 | 116 | 64 | 43 | 29 |
| La Rochelle | 297 | 105 | 75 | 42 | 28 | 19 |
| Nantes | 173 | 90 | 56 | 37 | 25 | 17 |
| Paris | 175 | 87 | 61 | 36 | 25 | 17 |
| Le Havre | 97 | 52 | 34 | 17 | 11 | 8 |



50

Two-way table of star/radar diagrams

Attendance at the universal expositions in 1867, 1878, 1889 (rows), by month (cols) and days (rays). [Album, 1889, plate 21]



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ASG now online: David Rumsey

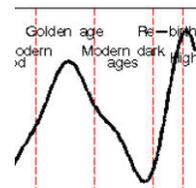
17 volumes, <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/nl72bu>



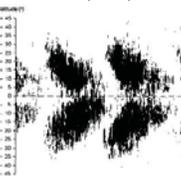
62

Golden Age → Modern Dark Ages

- Albums: discontinued (cost), became routinized
- Statistics: enthusiasm for graphics replaced by rise of quantification
 - Statistical models (regression, correlation)
 - Estimates \pm standard errors: precise!
- Few innovations, but popularization
 - College courses, text books
- Some significant graphical discoveries
 - E.W. Maunder (1904): "butterfly diagram" of sunspots
 - Hertzsprung-Russell (1911) diagram: stellar physics
 - Henry Moseley (1913): atomic number



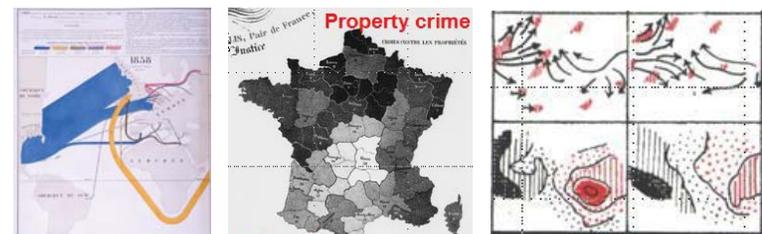
Maunder (1904)



63

Golden Lessons: worthy goals

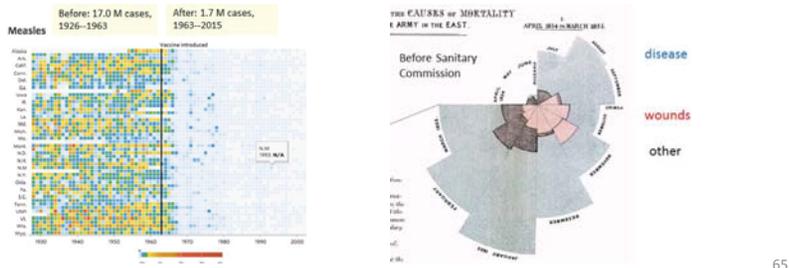
- What are the lessons for the future?
- Phenomena, not numbers
 - Playfair, Guerry, Minard, Galton, etc. all developed new graphic forms to show **phenomena** of deep interest:
 - balance of trade, rates of crime, patterns in weather data, ...
- **1st lesson:** data visualization today should strive for a similar focus



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Golden Lessons: graphical impact

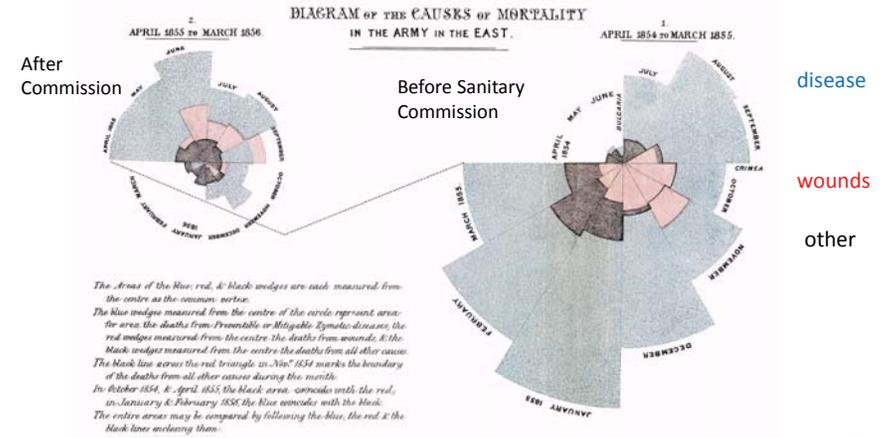
- Impact = Interocularity, Immediacy, Inescapability
 - Playfair, Guerry: data should “speak to the eyes”
 - Minard, Lalanne: allow “calculation by the eyes”
 - Nightingale: graphs should speak to the heart and mind, influence public policy & practice
- 2nd lesson:** graphic designers should strive for visual impact in graphs and tables



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Impact: Nightingale's coxcomb

Florence Nightingale: Deaths in the Crimean war from battle vs. other causes
 → Preventable death from disease always dominated death on the battle field



66

Golden Lessons: Expressive power

- Hand-made graphics were often beautiful, but entailed much sweat and hard work.
- Today: software– ease of use (menus) vs. expressive power (code)
- Theories of graphics → graphic “languages”



- 3rd lesson:** Reduce the distance between a graphic idea and appearance on screen or paper.

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Thank you!

Questions?

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