Edward R. Tufte

The Visual Display of Quantitative Information

SECOND EDITION

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For my parents
Edward E. Tufte and Virginia James Tufte

To the memory of
John W. Tukey (1915–2000)

Introduction to the Second Edition

This new edition provides high-resolution color reproductions of the many graphics of William Playfair, adds color to other images where appropriate, and includes all the changes and corrections accumulated during the 17 printings of the first edition.

This book began in 1975 when Dean Donald Stokes of Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School asked me to teach statistics to a dozen journalists who were visiting that year to learn some economics. I annotated a collection of readings, with a long section on statistical graphics. The literature here was thin, too often grimly devoted to explaining use of the ruling pen and to promulgating "graphic standards" indifferent to the nature of visual evidence and quantitative reasoning. Soon I wrote up some ideas. Then John Tukey, the phenomenal Princeton statistician, suggested that we give a series of joint seminars. Since the mid-1960s, Tukey had opened up the field, as his brilliant technical contributions made it clear that the study of statistical graphics was intellectually respectable and not just about pie charts and ruling pens.

After moving to Yale University, I finished the manuscript in 1982. A publisher was interested but planned to print only 2,000 copies and to charge a very high price, contrary to my hopes for a wide readership. I also sought to design the book so as to make it *self-exemplifying*—that is, the physical object itself would reflect the intellectual principles advanced in the book. Publishers seemed appalled at the prospect that an author might govern design.

Consequently I investigated self-publishing. This required a first-rate book designer, a lot of money (at least for a young professor), and a large garage. I found Howard Gralla who had designed many museum catalogs with great care and craft. He was willing to work closely with this difficult author who was filled with all sorts of opinions about design and typography. We spent the summer in his studio laying out the book, page by page. We were able to integrate graphics right into the text, sometimes into the middle of a sentence, eliminating the usual separation of text and image—one of the ideas *Visual Display* advocated. To finance the book I took out another mortgage on my home. The bank officer said this was the second most unusual loan that she had ever made; first place belonged to a loan to a circus to buy an elephant!

My view on self-publishing was to go all out, to make the best and most elegant and wonderful book possible, without compromise. Otherwise, why do it?

Most of all, the book, as a thing in itself, gave to me fresh new eyes for the intellectual and aesthetic joy of visual evidence, visual reasoning, and visual understanding.

January 2001
Cheshire, Connecticut

Introduction

Data graphics visually display measured quantities by means of the combined use of points, lines, a coordinate system, numbers, symbols, words, shading, and color.

The use of abstract, non-representational pictures to show numbers is a surprisingly recent invention, perhaps because of the diversity of skills required—the visual-artistic, empirical-statistical, and mathematical. It was not until 1750–1800 that statistical graphics—length and area to show quantity, time-series, scatterplots, and multivariate displays—were invented, long after such triumphs of mathematical ingenuity as logarithms, Cartesian coordinates, the calculus, and the basics of probability theory. The remarkable William Playfair (1759–1823) developed or improved upon nearly all the fundamental graphical designs, seeking to replace conventional tables of numbers with the systematic visual representations of his "linear arithmetic."

Modern data graphics can do much more than simply substitute for small statistical tables. At their best, graphics are instruments for reasoning about quantitative information. Often the most effective way to describe, explore, and summarize a set of numbers—even a very large set—is to look at pictures of those numbers. Furthermore, of all methods for analyzing and communicating statistical information, well-designed data graphics are usually the simplest and at the same time the most powerful.

The first part of this book reviews the graphical practice of the two centuries since Playfair. The reader will, I hope, rejoice in the graphical glories shown in Chapter 1 and then condemn the lapses and lost opportunities exhibited in Chapter 2. Chapter 3, on graphical integrity and sophistication, seeks to account for these differences in quality of graphical design.

The second part of the book provides a language for discussing graphics and a practical theory of data graphics. Applying to most visual displays of quantitative information, the theory leads to changes and improvements in design, suggests why some graphics might be better than others, and generates new types of graphics. The emphasis is on maximizing principles, empirical measures of graphical performance, and the sequential improvement of graphics through revision and editing. Insights into graphical design are to be gained, I believe, from theories of what makes for excellence in art, architecture, and prose.

This is a book about the design of statistical graphics and, as such, it is concerned both with design and with statistics. But it is also about how to communicate information through the simultaneous presentation of words, numbers, and pictures. The design of statistical graphics is a universal matter—like mathematics—and is not tied to the unique features of a particular language. The descriptive concepts (a vocabulary for graphics) and the principles advanced apply to most designs. I have at times provided evidence about the scope of these ideas, by showing how frequently a principle applies to (a random sample of) news and scientific graphics.

Each year, the world over, somewhere between 900 billion (9×10^{11}) and 2 trillion (2×10^{12}) images of statistical graphics are printed. The principles of this book apply to most of those graphics. Some of the suggested changes are small, but others are substantial, with consequences for hundreds of billions of printed pages.

But I hope also that the book has consequences for the viewers and makers of those images—that they will never view or create statistical graphics the same way again. That is in part because we are about to see, collected here, so many wonderful drawings, those of Playfair, of Minard, of Marey, and, nowadays, of the computer.

Most of all, then, this book is a celebration of data graphics.

PART I

Graphical Practice

I Graphical Excellence

Excellence in statistical graphics consists of complex ideas communicated with clarity, precision, and efficiency. Graphical displays should

- show the data
- induce the viewer to think about the substance rather than about methodology, graphic design, the technology of graphic production, or something else
- avoid distorting what the data have to say
- present many numbers in a small space
- make large data sets coherent
- encourage the eye to compare different pieces of data
- reveal the data at several levels of detail, from a broad overview to the fine structure
- serve a reasonably clear purpose: description, exploration, tabulation, or decoration
- be closely integrated with the statistical and verbal descriptions of a data set.

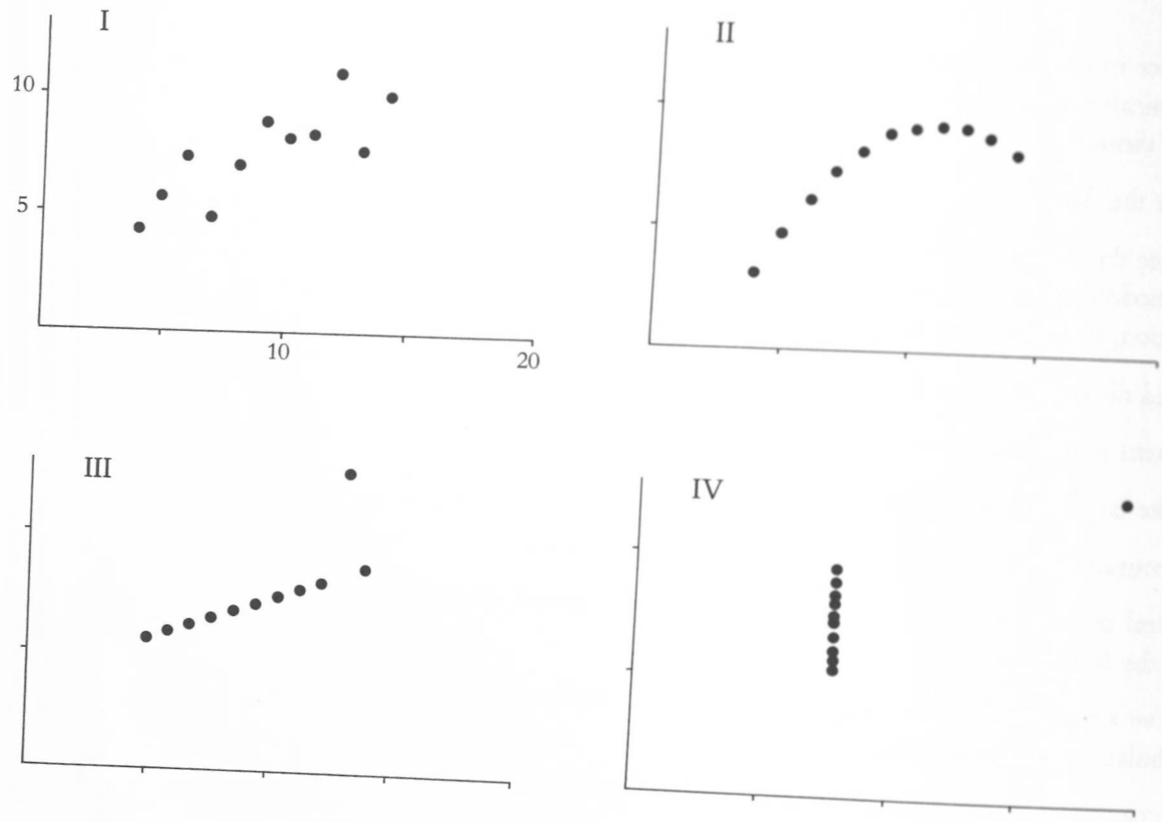
Graphics *reveal* data. Indeed graphics can be more precise and revealing than conventional statistical computations. Consider Anscombe's quartet: all four of these data sets are described by exactly the same linear model (at least until the residuals are examined).

I		II		III		IV	
X	Y	X	Y	X	Y	X	Y
10.0	8.04	10.0	9.14	10.0	7.46	8.0	6.58
8.0	6.95	8.0	8.14	8.0	6.77	8.0	5.76
13.0	7.58	13.0	8.74	13.0	12.74	8.0	7.71
9.0	8.81	9.0	8.77	9.0	7.11	8.0	8.84
11.0	8.33	11.0	9.26	11.0	7.81	8.0	8.47
14.0	9.96	14.0	8.10	14.0	8.84	8.0	7.04
6.0	7.24	6.0	6.13	6.0	6.08	8.0	5.25
4.0	4.26	4.0	3.10	4.0	5.39	19.0	12.50
12.0	10.84	12.0	9.13	12.0	8.15	8.0	5.56
7.0	4.82	7.0	7.26	7.0	6.42	8.0	7.91
5.0	5.68	5.0	4.74	5.0	5.73	8.0	6.89

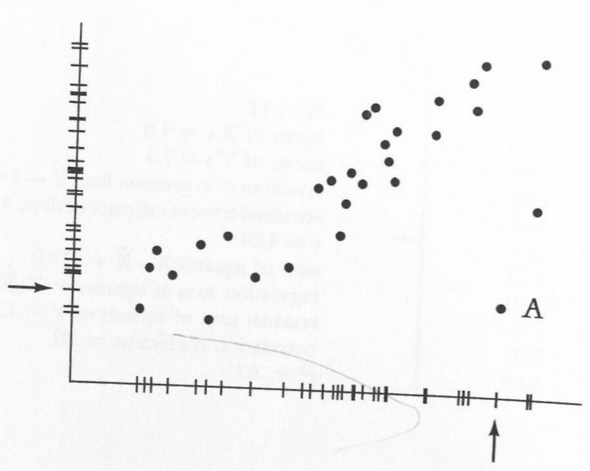
$N = 11$
mean of X's $= 9.0$
mean of Y's $= 7.5$
equation of regression line: $Y = 3 + 0.5X$
standard error of estimate of slope $= 0.118$
$t = 4.24$
sum of squares $X - \overline{X} = 110.0$
regression sum of squares $= 27.50$
residual sum of squares of $Y = 13.75$
correlation coefficient $= .82$
$r^2 = .67$

And yet how they differ, as the graphical display of the data makes vividly clear:

F. J. Anscombe, "Graphs in Statistical Analysis," *American Statistician*, 27 (February 1973), 17–21.



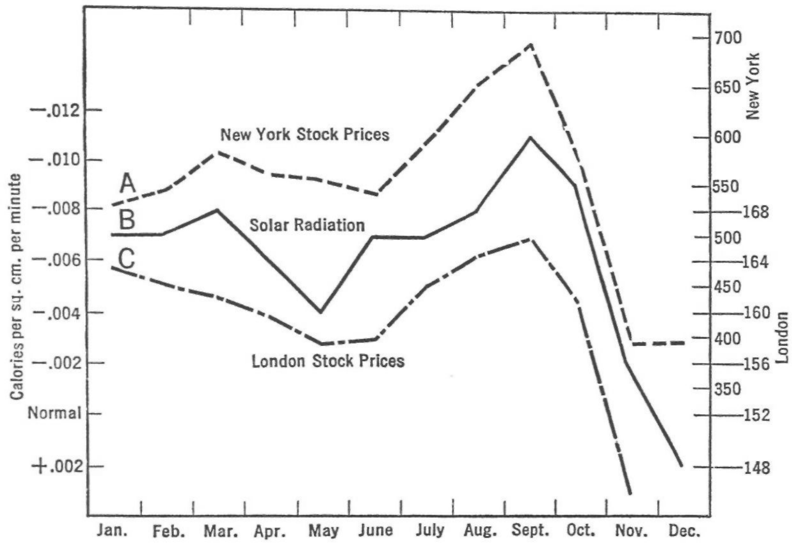
And likewise a graphic easily reveals point A, a wildshot observation that will dominate standard statistical calculations. Note that point A hides in the marginal distribution but shows up as clearly exceptional in the bivariate scatter.



Stephen S. Brier and Stephen E. Fienberg, "Recent Econometric Modelling of Crime and Punishment: Support for the Deterrence Hypothesis?" in Stephen E. Fienberg and Albert J. Reiss, Jr., eds., *Indicators of Crime and Criminal Justice: Quantitative Studies* (Washington, D.C., 1980), p. 89.

Of course, statistical graphics, just like statistical calculations, are only as good as what goes into them. An ill-specified or preposterous model or a puny data set cannot be rescued by a graphic (or by calculation), no matter how clever or fancy. A silly theory means a silly graphic:

Edward R. Dewey and Edwin F. Dakin, *Cycles: The Science of Prediction* (New York, 1947), p. 144.



SOLAR RADIATION AND STOCK PRICES

A. New York stock prices (Barron's average). B. Solar Radiation, inverted, and C. London stock prices, all by months, 1929 (after Garcia-Mata and Shaffner).

Let us turn to the practice of graphical excellence, the efficient communication of complex quantitative ideas. Excellence, nearly always of a multivariate sort, is illustrated here for fundamental graphical designs: data maps, time-series, space-time narrative designs, and relational graphics. These examples serve several purposes, providing a set of high-quality graphics that can be discussed (and sometimes even redrawn) in constructing a theory of data graphics, helping to demonstrate a descriptive terminology, and telling in brief about the history of graphical development. Most of all, we will be able to see just how good statistical graphics can be.

Data Maps

These six maps report the age-adjusted death rate from various types of cancer for the 3,056 counties of the United States. Each map portrays some 21,000 numbers.[1] Only a picture can carry such a volume of data in such a small space. Furthermore, all that data, thanks to the graphic, can be thought about in many different ways at many different levels of analysis—ranging from the contemplation of general overall patterns to the detection of very fine county-by-county detail. To take just a few examples, look at the

[1] Each county's rate is located in two dimensions and, further, at least four numbers would be necessary to reconstruct the size and shape of each county. This yields 7 × 3,056 entries in a data matrix sufficient to reproduce a map.

- high death rates from cancer in the northeast part of the country and around the Great Lakes
- low rates in an east-west band across the middle of the country
- higher rates for men than for women in the south, particularly Louisiana (cancers probably caused by occupational exposure, from working with asbestos in shipyards)
- unusual hot spots, including northern Minnesota and a few counties in Iowa and Nebraska along the Missouri River
- differences in types of cancer by region (for example, the high rates of stomach cancer in the north-central part of the country—probably the result of the consumption of smoked fish by Scandinavians)
- rates in areas where you have lived.

In highest decile, statistically significant

Significantly high, but not in highest decile

In highest decile, but not statistically significant

Not significantly different from U.S. as a whole

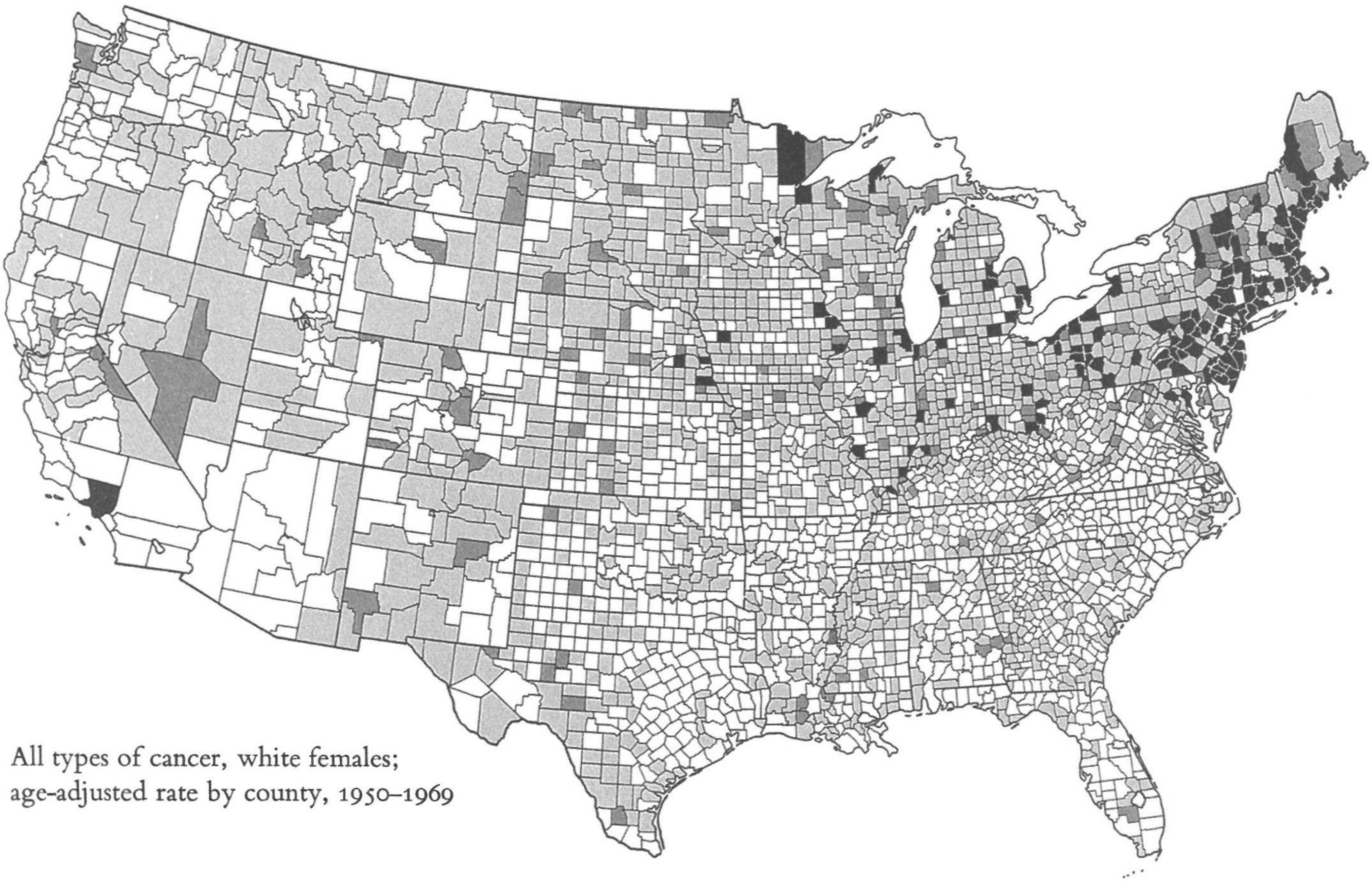
Significantly lower than U.S. as a whole

The maps provide many leads into the causes—and avoidance—of cancer. For example, the authors report:

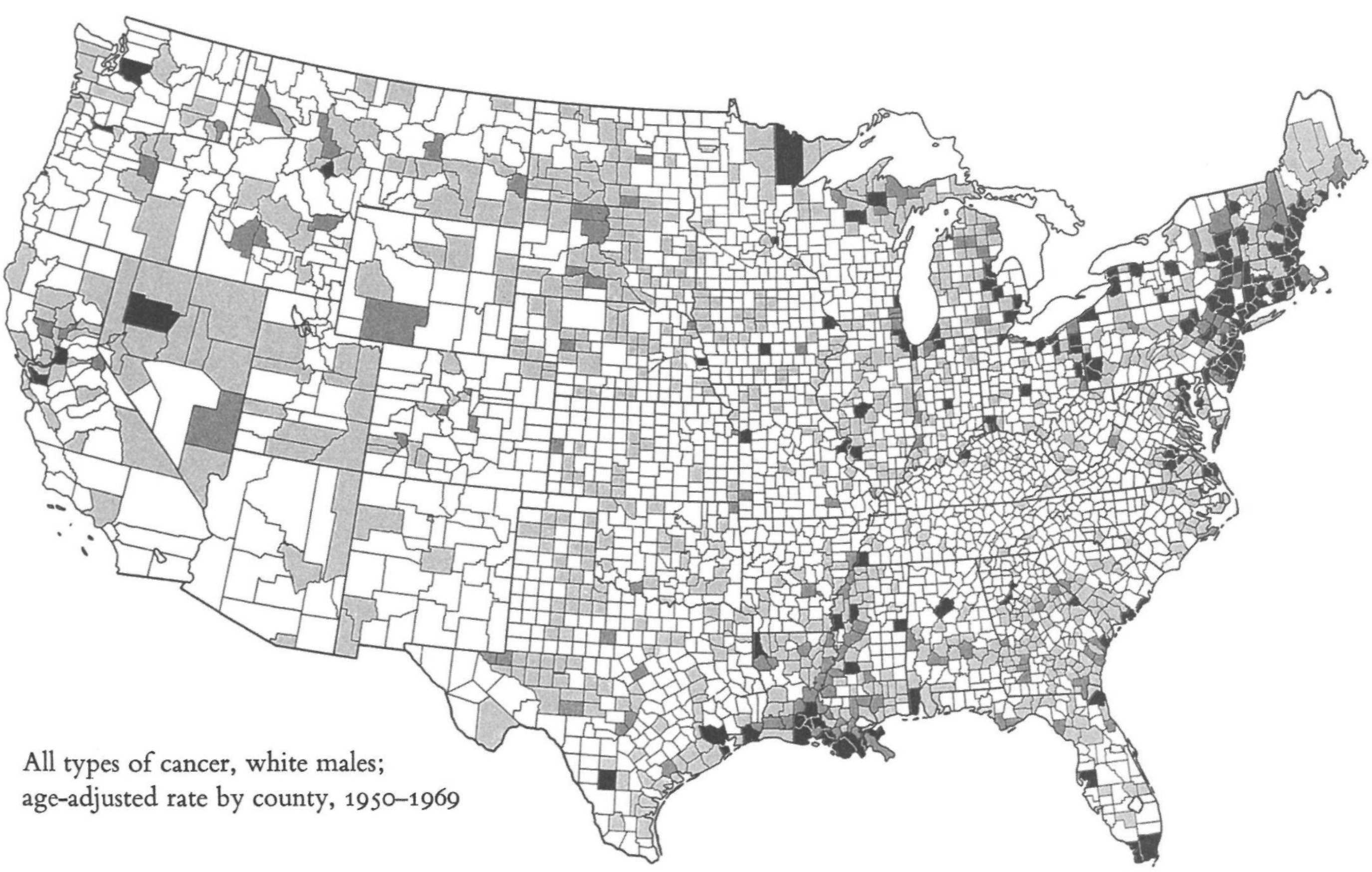
> In certain situations . . . the unusual experience of a county warrants further investigation. For example, Salem County, New Jersey, leads the nation in bladder cancer mortality among white men. We attribute this excess risk to occupational exposures, since about 25 percent of the employed persons in this county work in the chemical industry, particularly the manufacturing of organic chemicals, which may cause bladder tumors. After the finding was communicated to New Jersey health officials, a company in the area reported that at least 330 workers in a single plant had developed bladder cancer during the last 50 years. It is urgent that surveys of cancer risk and programs in cancer control be initiated among workers and former workers in this area.[2]

[2] Robert Hoover, Thomas J. Mason, Frank W. McKay, and Joseph F. Fraumeni, Jr., "Cancer by County: New Resource for Etiologic Clues," *Science*, 189 (September 19, 1975), 1006.

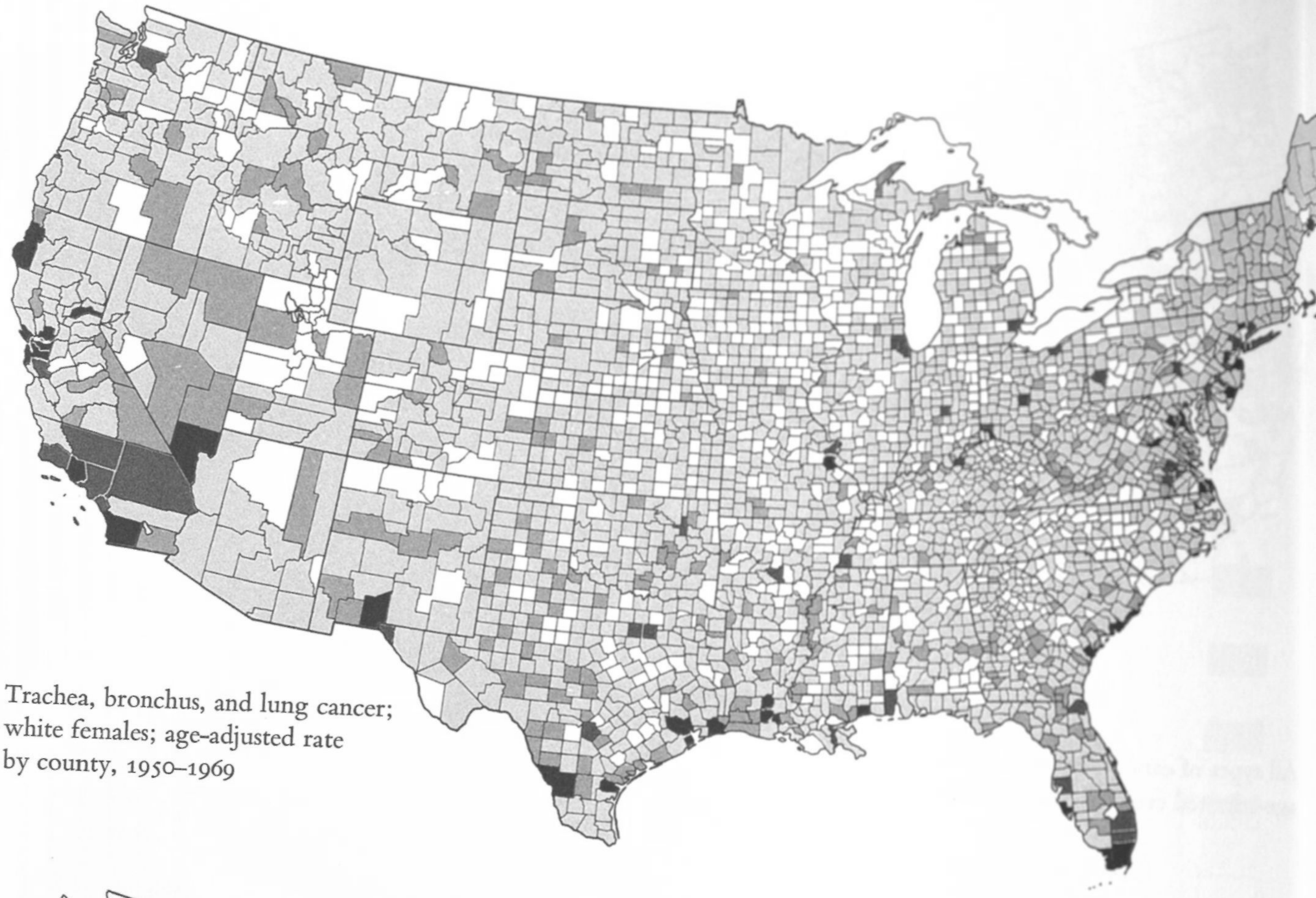
Maps from *Atlas of Cancer Mortality for U.S. Counties: 1950–1969*, by Thomas J. Mason, Frank W. McKay, Robert Hoover, William J. Blot, and Joseph F. Fraumeni, Jr. (Washington, D.C.: Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health, 1975). The six maps shown here were redesigned and redrawn by Lawrence Fahey and Edward Tufte.



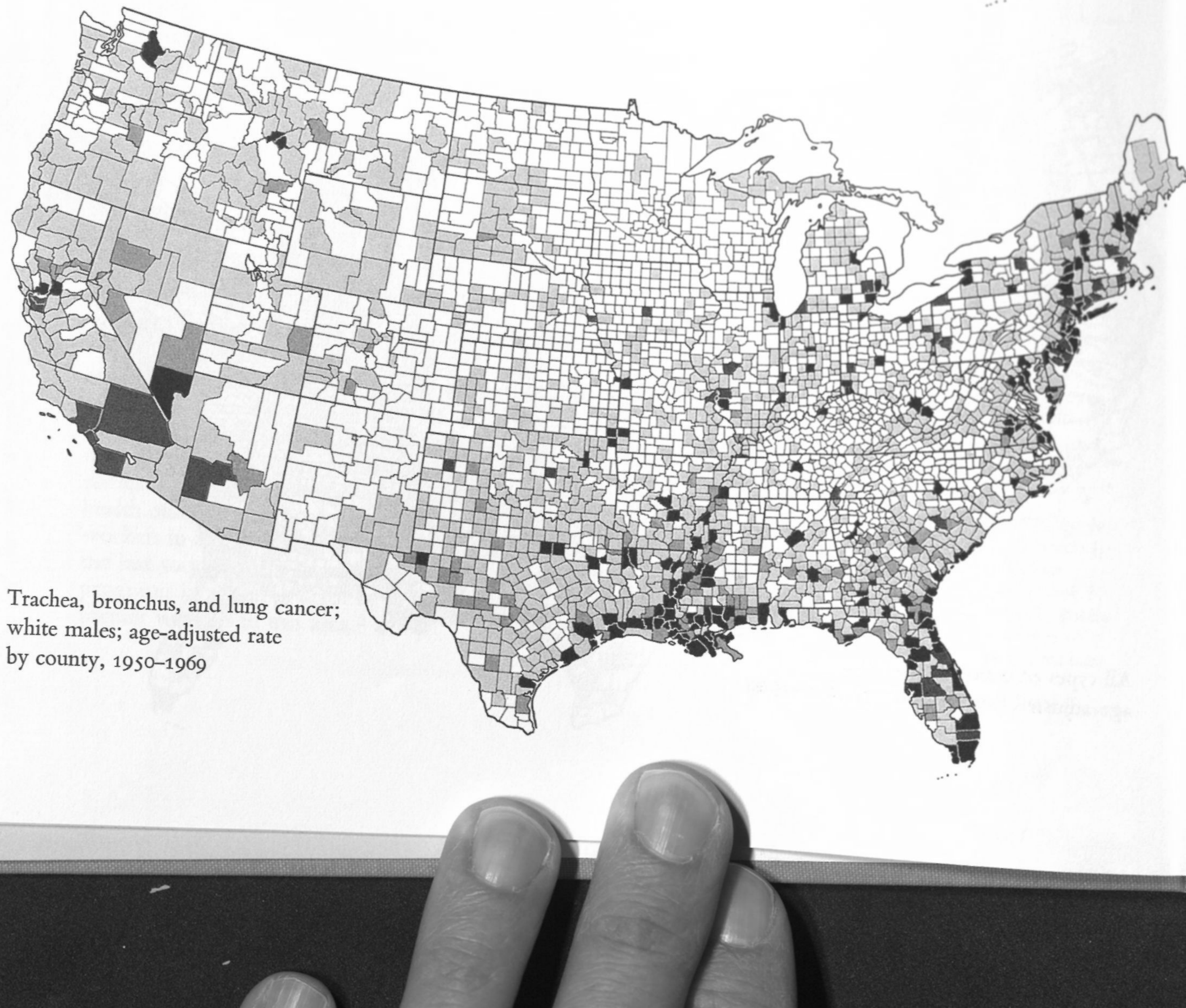
All types of cancer, white females;
age-adjusted rate by county, 1950–1969



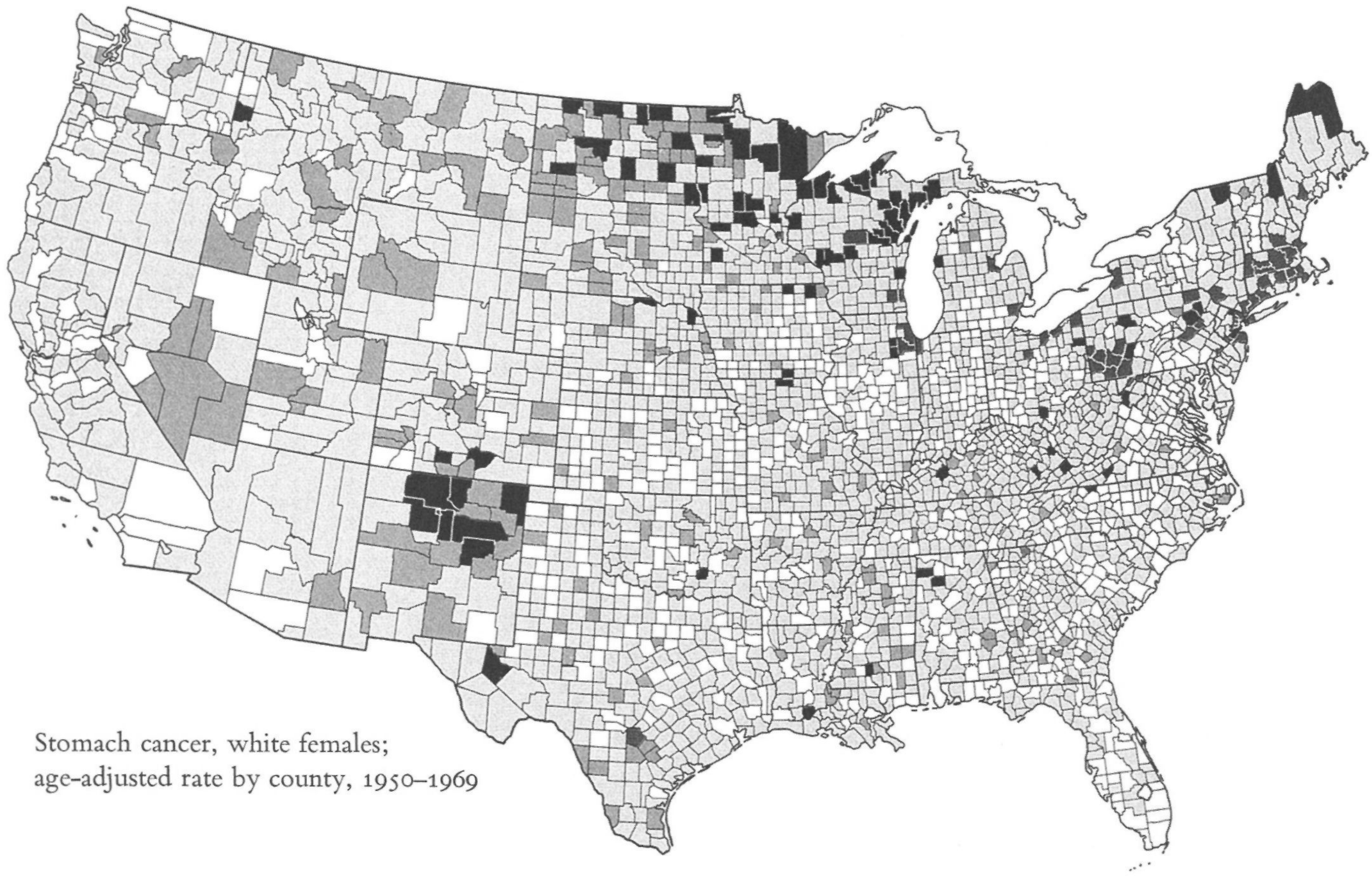
All types of cancer, white males;
age-adjusted rate by county, 1950–1969



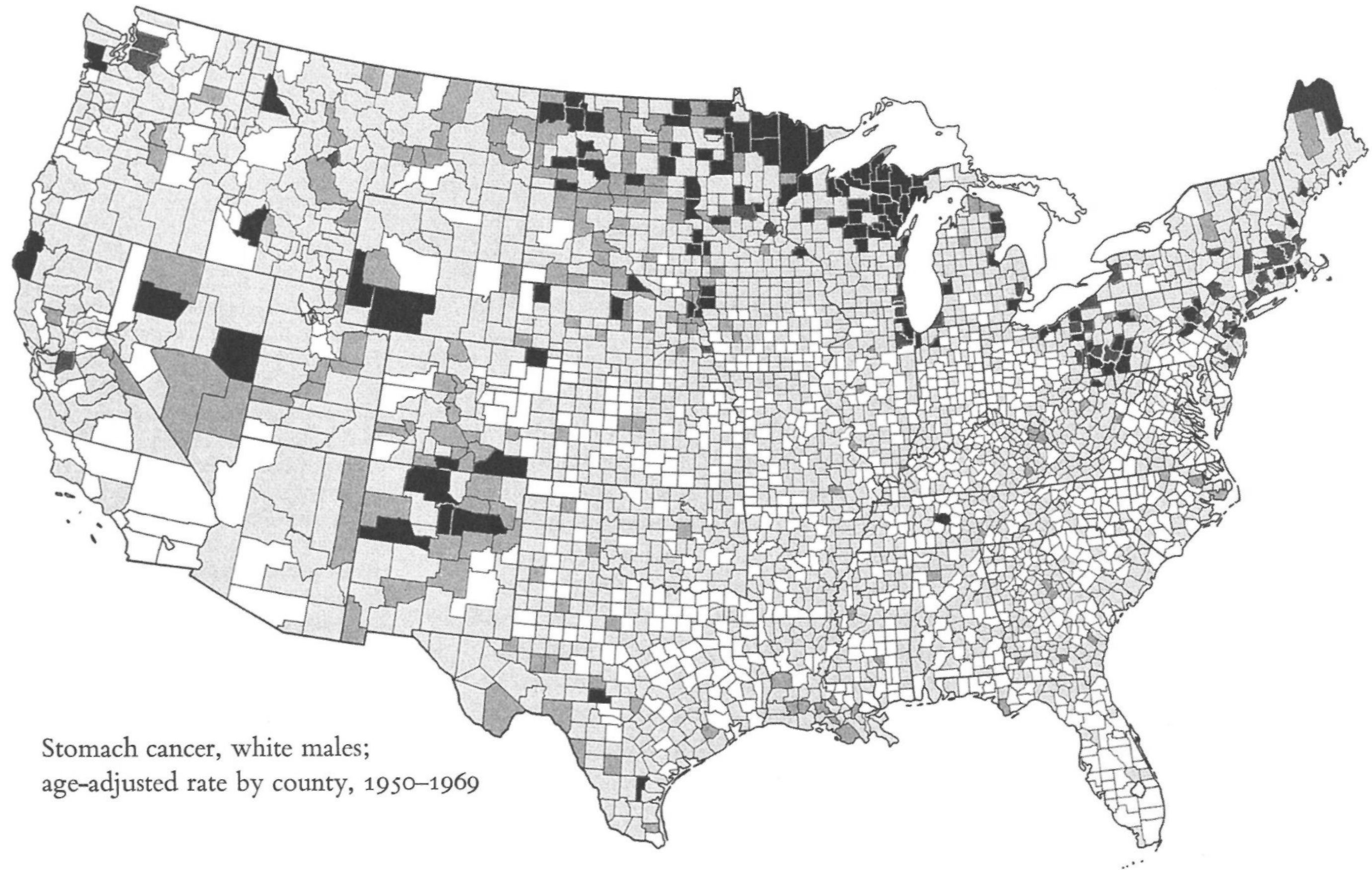
Trachea, bronchus, and lung cancer;
white females; age-adjusted rate
by county, 1950–1969



Trachea, bronchus, and lung cancer;
white males; age-adjusted rate
by county, 1950–1969



Stomach cancer, white females;
age-adjusted rate by county, 1950–1969



Stomach cancer, white males;
age-adjusted rate by county, 1950–1969

The maps repay careful study. Notice how quickly and naturally our attention has been directed toward exploring the substantive content of the data rather than toward questions of methodology and technique. Nonetheless the maps do have their flaws. They wrongly equate the visual importance of each county with its geographic area rather than with the number of people living in the county (or the number of cancer deaths). Our visual impression of the data is entangled with the circumstance of geographic boundaries, shapes, and areas—the chronic problem afflicting shaded-in-area designs of such "blot maps" or "patch maps."

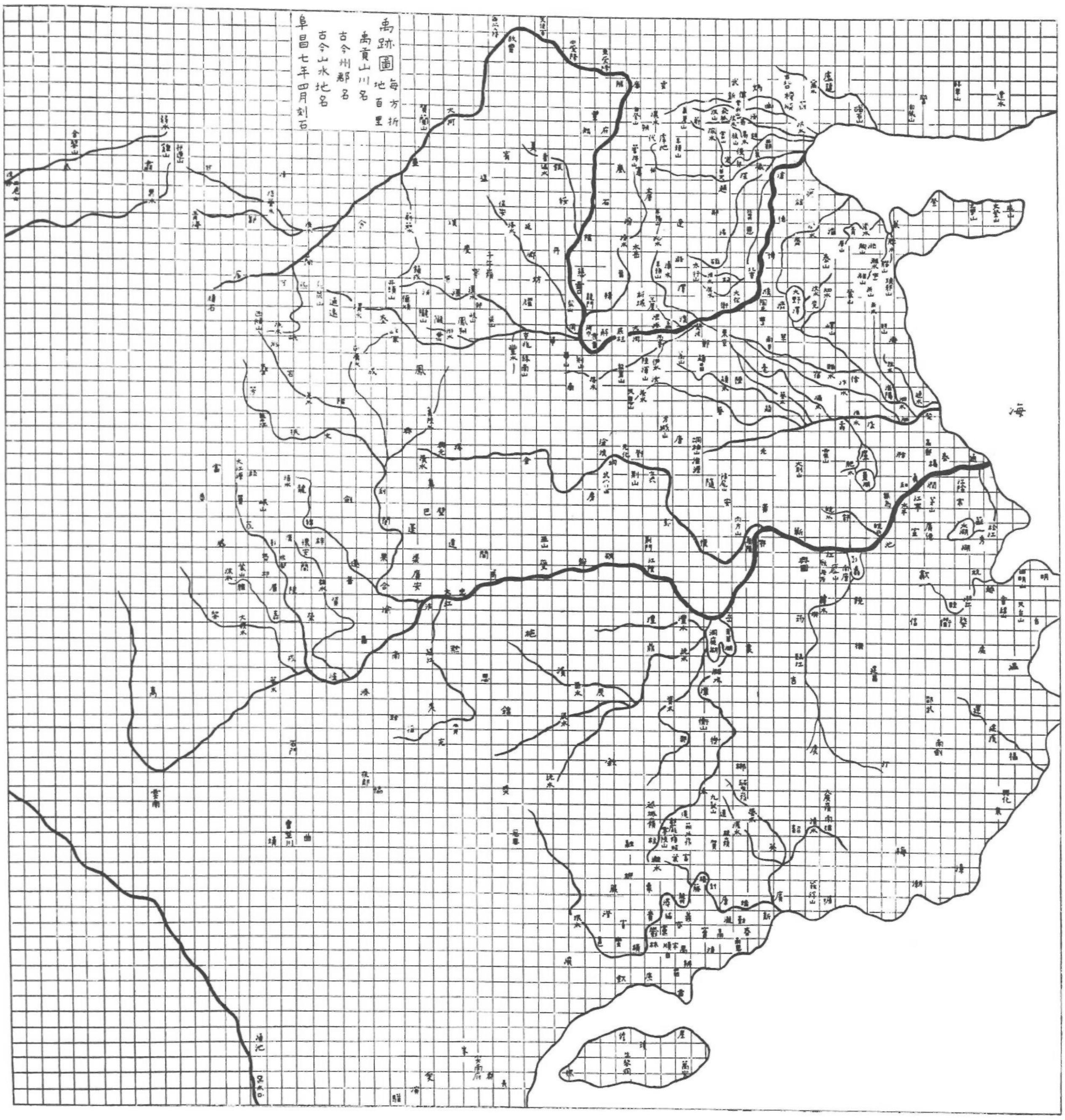
A further shortcoming, a defect of data rather than graphical composition, is that the maps are founded on a suspect data source, death certificate reports on the cause of death. These reports fall under the influence of diagnostic fashions prevailing among doctors and coroners in particular places and times, a troublesome adulterant of the evidence purporting to describe the already sometimes ambiguous matter of the exact bodily site of the primary cancer. Thus part of the regional clustering seen on the maps, as well as some of the hot spots, may reflect varying diagnostic customs and fads along with the actual differences in cancer rates between areas.

Data maps have a curious history. It was not until the seventeenth century that the combination of cartographic and statistical skills required to construct the data map came together, fully 5,000 years after the first geographic maps were drawn on clay tablets. And many highly sophisticated geographic maps were produced centuries before the first map containing any statistical material was drawn.[3] For example, a detailed map with a full grid was engraved during the eleventh century A.D. in China. The Yü Chi Thu (Map of the Tracks of Yü the Great) shown here is described by Joseph Needham as the

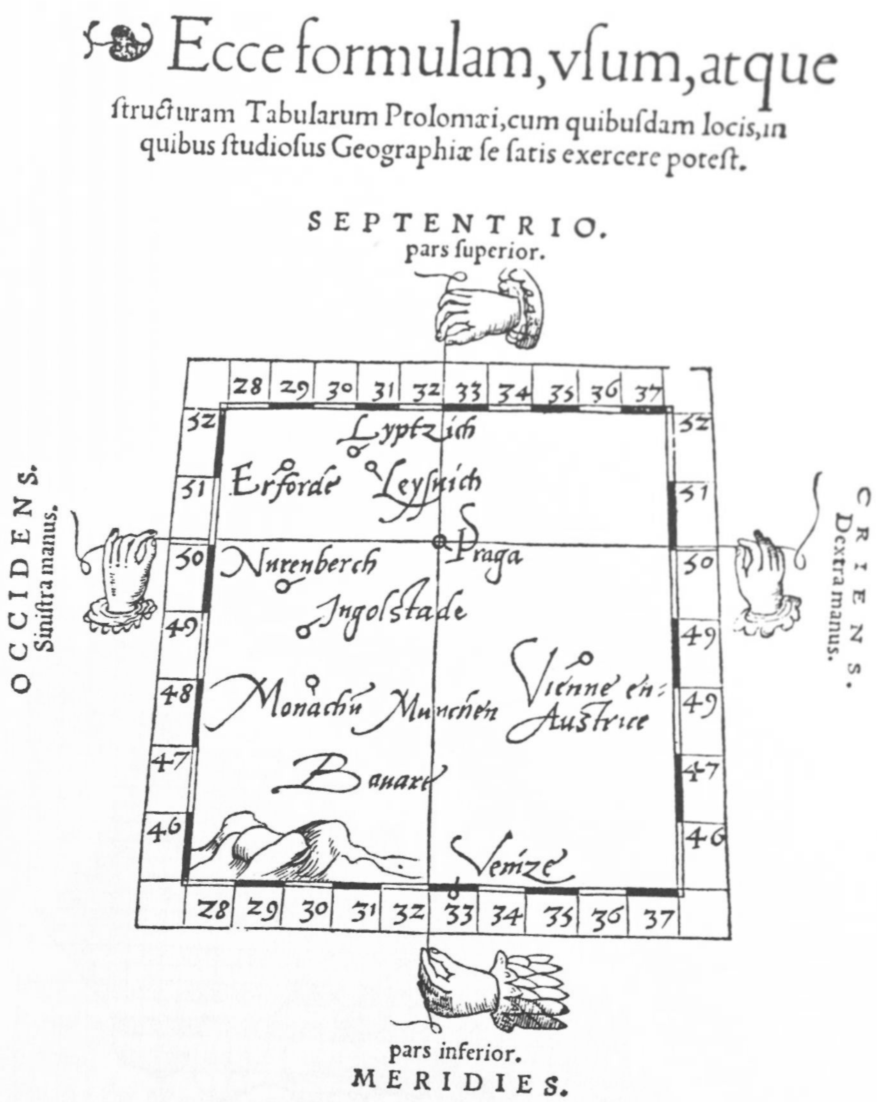
> . . . most remarkable cartographic work of its age in any culture, carved in stone in +1137 but probably dating from before +1100. The scale of the grid is 100 *li* to the division. The coastal outline is relatively firm and the precision of the network of river systems extraordinary. The size of the original, which is now in the Pei Lin Museum at Sian, is about 3 feet square. The name of the geographer is not known. . . . Anyone who compares this map with the contemporary productions of European religious cosmography cannot but be amazed at the extent to which Chinese geography was at that time ahead of the West. . . . There was nothing like it in Europe till the Escorial MS. map of about +1550. . . .[4]

[3] Data maps are usually described as "thematic maps" in cartography. For a thorough account, see Arthur H. Robinson, *Early Thematic Mapping in the History of Cartography* (Chicago, 1982). On the history of statistical graphics, see H. Gray Funkhouser, "Historical Development of the Graphical Representation of Statistical Data," *Osiris*, 3 (November 1937), 269–404; and James R. Beniger and Dorothy L. Robyn, "Quantitative Graphics in Statistics: A Brief History," *American Statistician*, 32 (February 1978), 1–11.

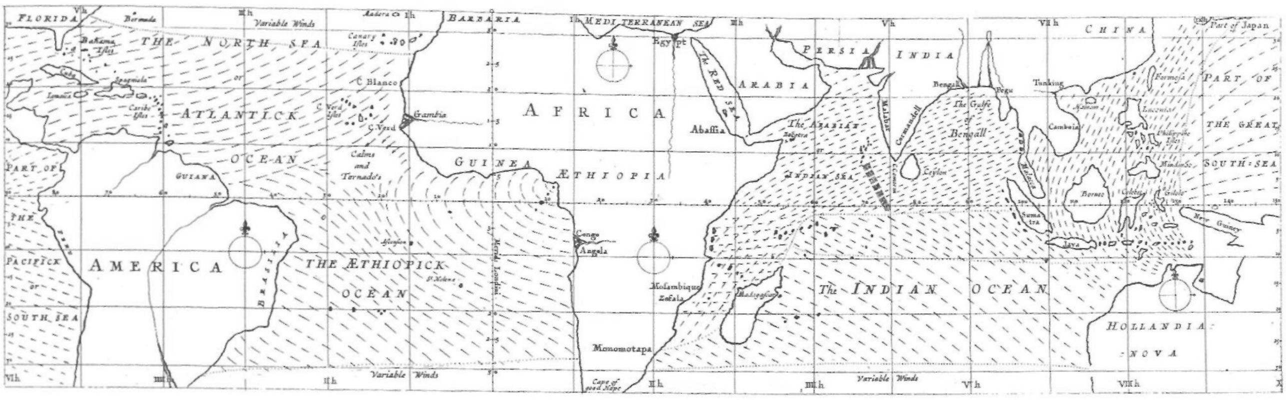
[4] Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge, 1959), vol. 3, 546–547.



E. Chavannes, "Les Deux Plus Anciens Spécimens de la Cartographie Chinoise," *Bulletin de l'École Française de l'Extrême Orient*, 3 (1903), 1–35, Carte B.

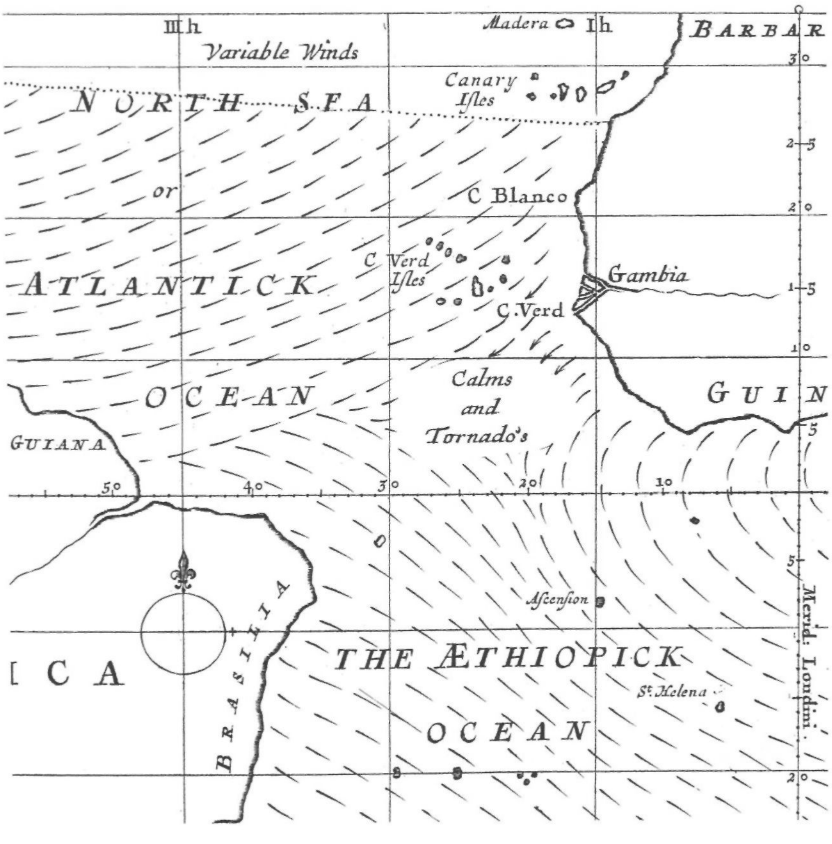


The 1546 edition of *Cosmographia* by Petrus Apianus contained examples of map design that show how very close European cartography by that time had come to achieving statistical graphicacy, even approaching the bivariate scatterplot. But, according to the historical record, no one had yet made the quantitative abstraction of placing a measured quantity on the map's surface at the intersection of the two threads instead of the name of a city, let alone the more difficult abstraction of replacing latitude and longitude with some other dimensions, such as time and money. Indeed, it was not until 1786 that the first economic time-series was plotted.



One of the first data maps was Edmond Halley's 1686 chart showing trade winds and monsoons on a world map.[5] The detailed section below shows the cartographic symbolization; with, as Halley wrote, "... the sharp end of each little stroak pointing out that part of the Horizon, from whence the wind continually comes; and where there are Monsoons the rows of stroaks run alternately backwards and forwards, by which means they are thicker [denser] than elsewhere."

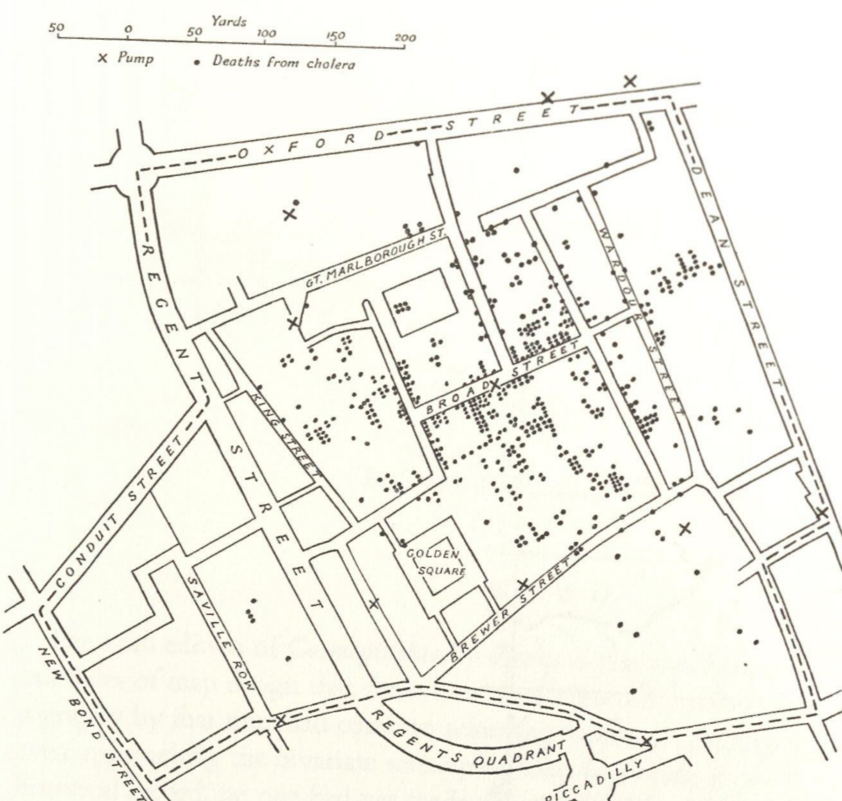
[5] Norman J. W. Thrower, "Edmond Halley as a Thematic Geo-Cartographer," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 59 (December 1969), 652–676.



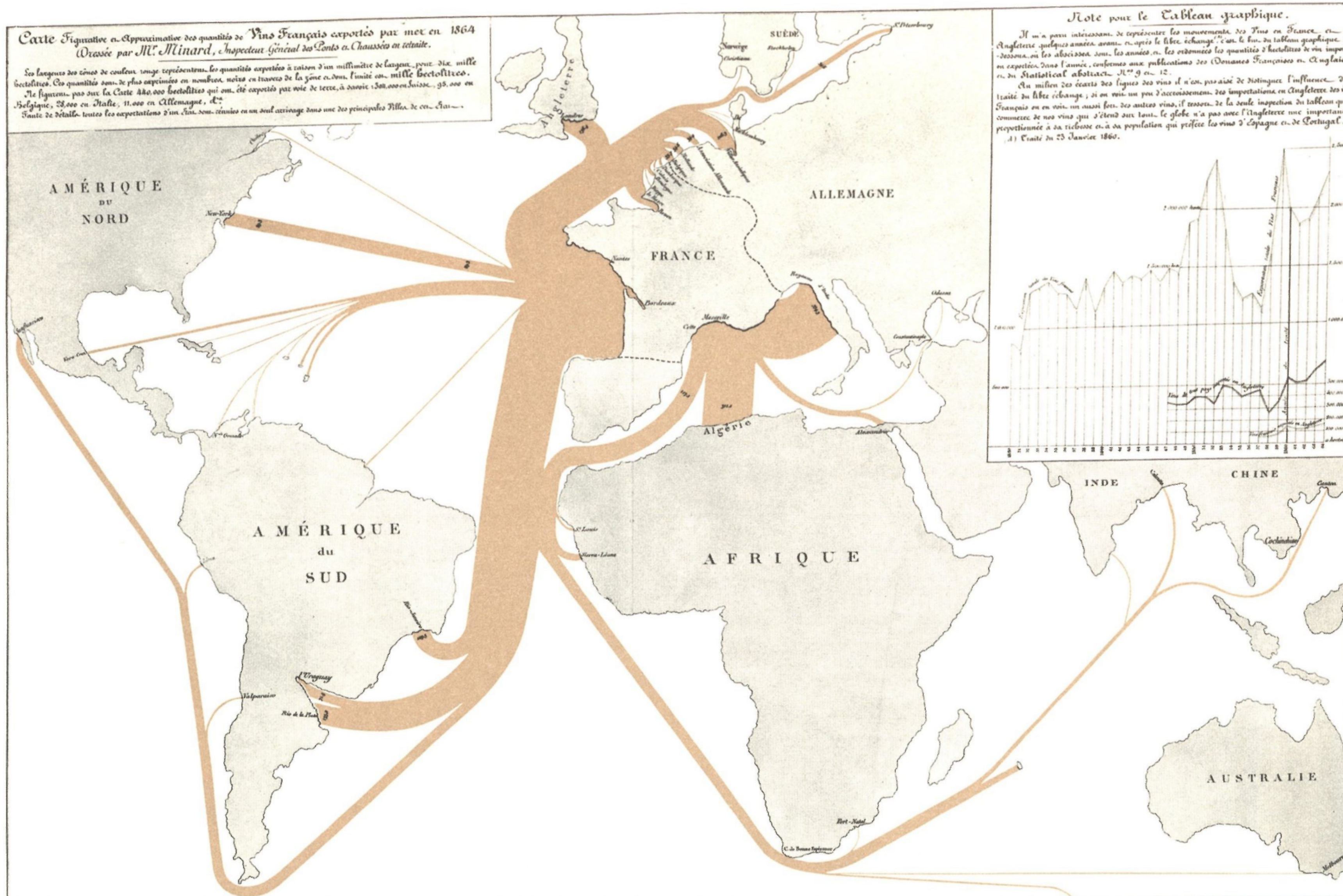
Edmond Halley, "An Historical Account of the Trade Winds, and Monsoons, Observable in the Seas Between and Near the Tropicks; With an Attempt to Assign the Phisical Cause of Said Winds," *Philosophical Transactions*, 183 (1686), 153–168.

An early and most worthy use of a map to chart patterns of disease was the famous dot map of Dr. John Snow, who plotted the location of deaths from cholera in central London for September 1854. Deaths were marked by dots and, in addition, the area's eleven water pumps were located by crosses. Examining the scatter over the surface of the map, Snow observed that cholera occurred almost entirely among those who lived near (and drank from) the Broad Street water pump. He had the handle of the contaminated pump removed, ending the neighborhood epidemic which had taken more than 500 lives.[6] The pump is located at the center of the map, just to the right of the D in BROAD STREET. Of course the link between the pump and the disease might have been revealed by computation and analysis without graphics, with some good luck and hard work. But, here at least, graphical analysis testifies about the data far more efficiently than calculation.

[6] E. W. Gilbert, "Pioneer Maps of Health and Disease in England," *Geographical Journal*, 124 (1958), 172–183. Shown here is a redrawing of John Snow's map. For a reproduction and detailed analysis of the original map, see Edward Tufte, *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative* (Cheshire, Connecticut, 1997), Chapter 2. Ideally, see John Snow, *On the Mode of Communication of Cholera* (London, 1855).



Charles Joseph Minard gave quantity as well as direction to the data measures located on the world map in his portrayal of the 1864 exports of French wine:

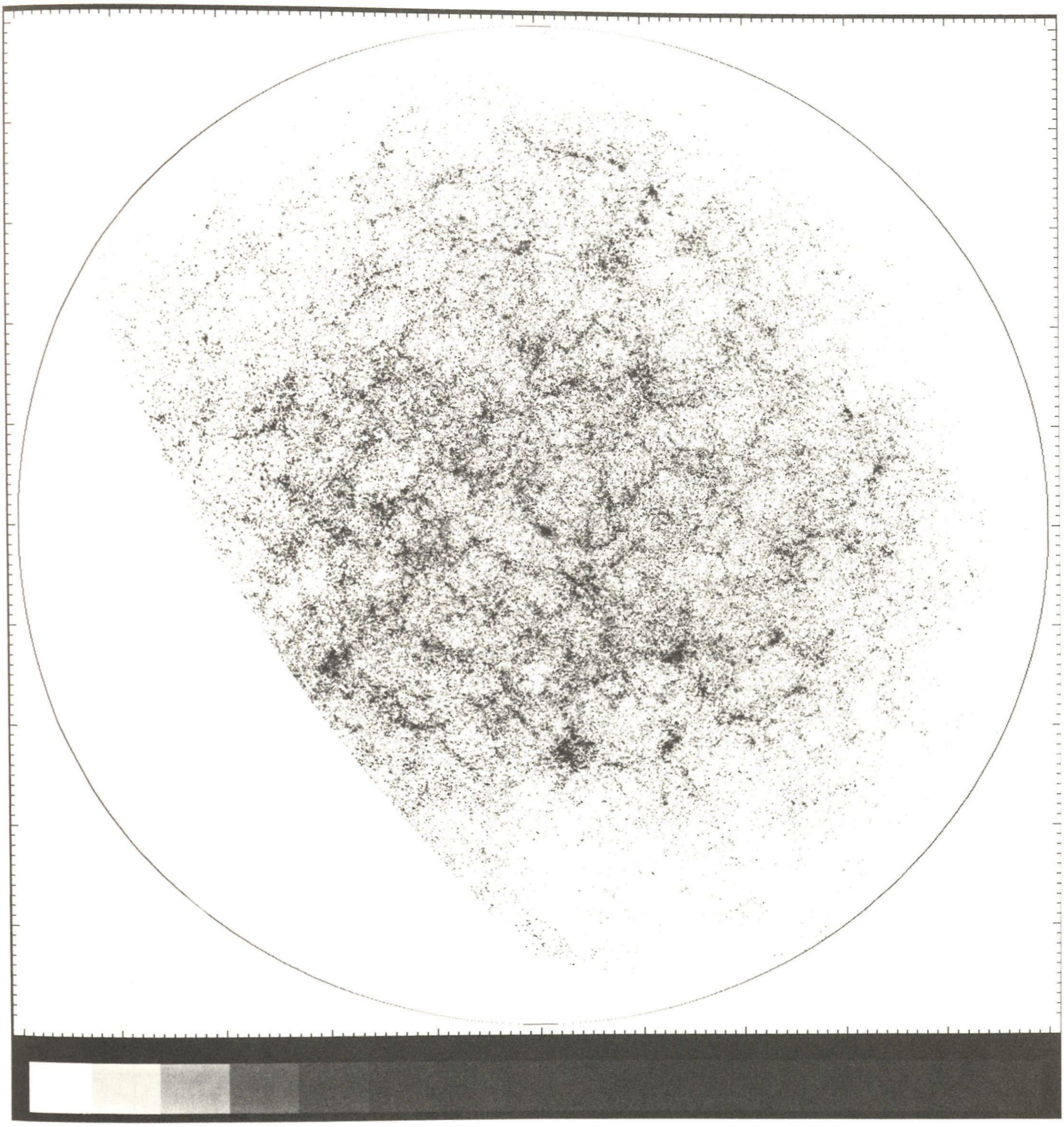


Charles Joseph Minard, *Tableaux Graphiques et Cartes Figuratives de M. Minard*, 1845–1869, a portfolio of his work held by the Bibliothèque de l'École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, Paris.

Computerized cartography and modern photographic techniques have increased the density of information some 5,000-fold in the best of current data maps compared to Halley's pioneering effort. This map shows the distribution of 1.3 million galaxies (including some overlaps) in the northern galactic hemisphere. The map divides the sky into 1,024×2,222 rectangles. The number of galaxies counted in each of the 2,275,328 rectangles is represented by ten gray tones; the darker the tone, the greater the number of galaxies counted. The north galactic pole is at the center. The sharp edge on the left results from the earth blocking the view from the observatory. In the area near the perimeter of the map, the view is obscured by the interstellar dust of the galaxy in which we live (the Milky Way) as the line of sight passes through the flattened disk of our galaxy. The curious texture of local clusters of galaxies seen in this truly new view of the universe was not anticipated by students of galaxies, who had, of course, microscopically examined millions of photographs of galaxies before seeing this macroscopic view. Although the clusters are clearly evident (and accounted for by a theory of galactic origins), the seemingly random filaments may be happenstance. The producers of the map note the "strong temptation to conclude that the galaxies are arranged in a remarkable filamentary pattern on scales of approximately 5° to 15°, but we caution that this visual impression may be misleading because the eye tends to pick out linear patterns even in random noise. Indeed, roughly similar patterns are seen on maps constructed from simulated catalogs where no linear structure has been built in. . . ."[7]

[7] Michael Seldner, B. H. Siebers, Edward J. Groth and P. James E. Peebles, "New Reduction of the Lick Catalog of Galaxies," *Astronomical Journal*, 82 (April 1977), 249–314. See Gillian R. Knapp, "Mining the Heavens: The Sloan Digital Sky Survey," *Sky & Telescope* (August 1997), 40–48; Margaret J. Geller and John P. Huchra, "Mapping the Universe," *Sky & Telescope* (August 1991), 134–139.

The most extensive data maps, such as the cancer atlas and the count of the galaxies, place millions of bits of information on a single page before our eyes. No other method for the display of statistical information is so powerful.



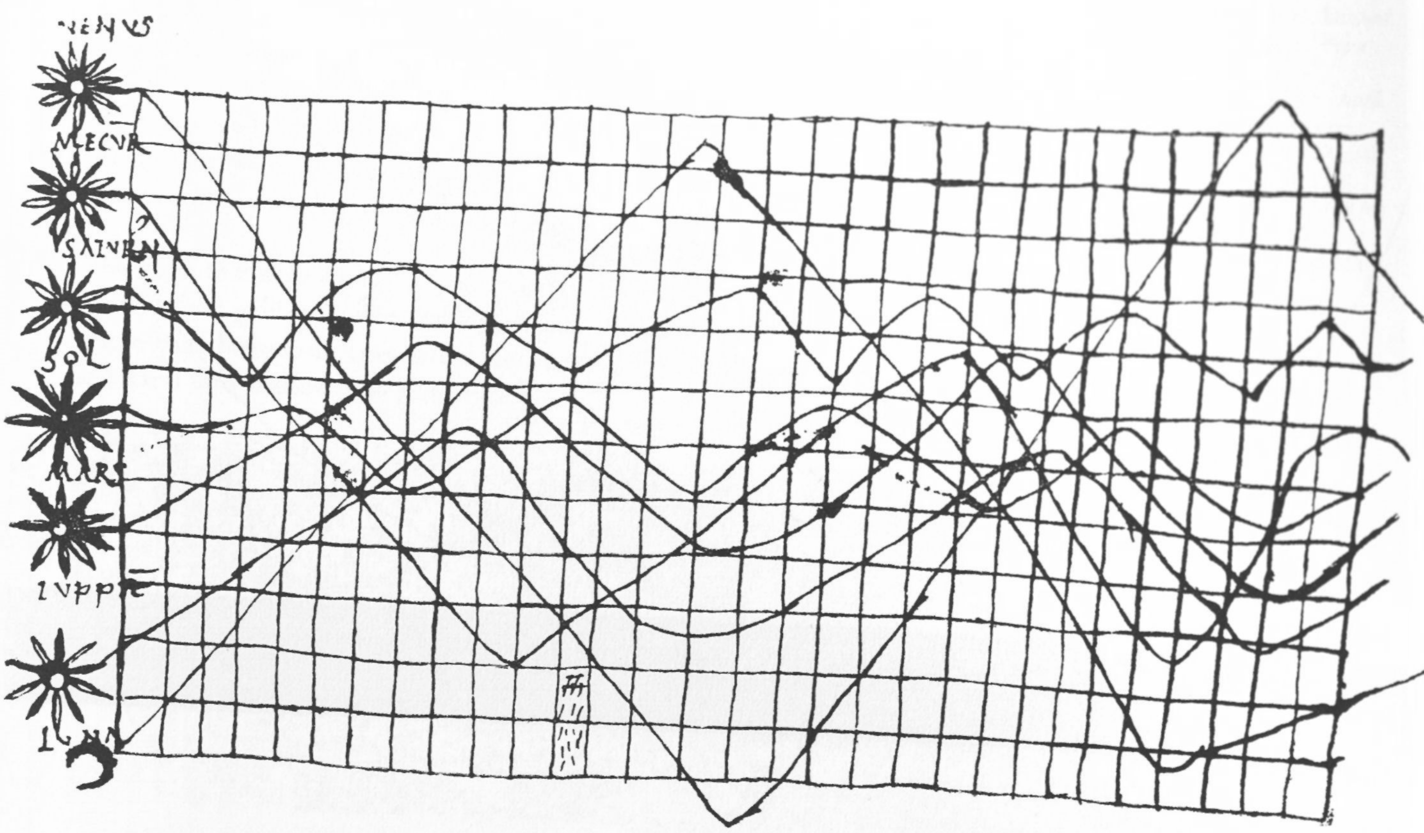
Time-Series

The time-series plot is the most frequently used form of graphic design.[8] With one dimension marching along to the regular rhythm of seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, centuries, or millennia, the natural ordering of the time scale gives this design a strength and efficiency of interpretation found in no other graphic arrangement.

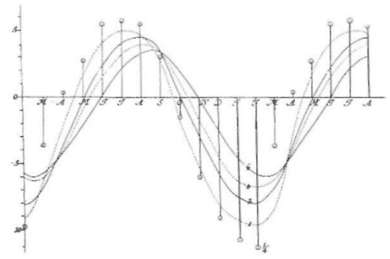
This reputed tenth- (or possibly eleventh-) century illustration of the inclinations of the planetary orbits as a function of time, apparently part of a text for monastery schools, is the oldest known example of an attempt to show changing values graphically. It appears as a mysterious and isolated wonder in the history of data graphics, since the next extant graphic of a plotted time-series shows up some 800 years later. According to Funkhouser, the astronomical content is confused and there are difficulties in reconciling the graph and its accompanying text with the actual movements of the planets. Particularly disconcerting is the wavy path ascribed to the sun.[9] An erasure and correction of a curve occur near the middle of the graph.

[8] A random sample of 4,000 graphics drawn from 15 of the world's newspapers and magazines published from 1974 to 1980 found that more than 75 percent of all the graphics published were time-series. Chapter 3 reports more on this.

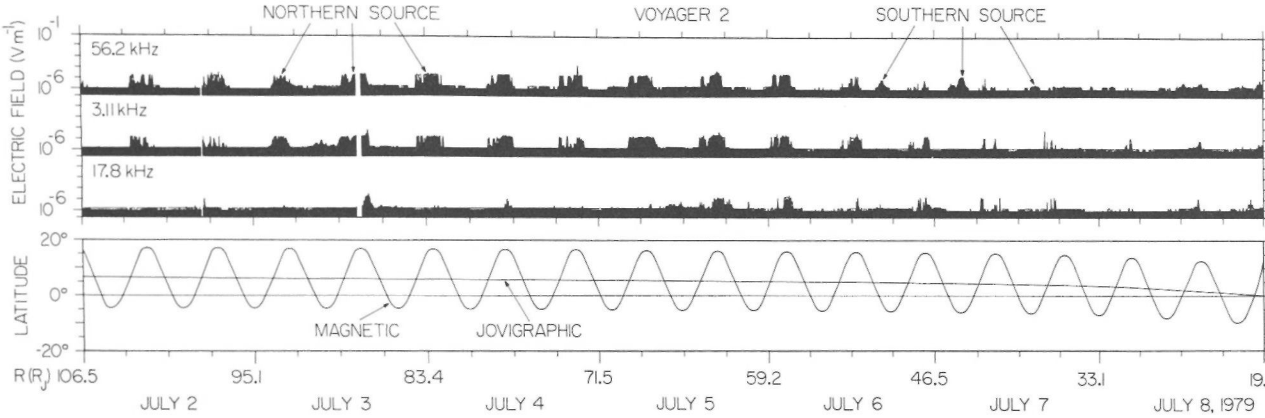
[9] H. Gray Funkhouser, "A Note on a Tenth Century Graph," *Osiris*, 1 (January 1936), 260–262.



It was not until the late 1700s that time-series charts began to appear in scientific writings. This drawing of Johann Heinrich Lambert, one of a long series, shows the periodic variation in soil temperature in relation to the depth under the surface. The greater the depth, the greater the time-lag in temperature responsiveness. Modern graphic designs showing time-series periodicities differ little from those of Lambert, although the data bases are far larger.



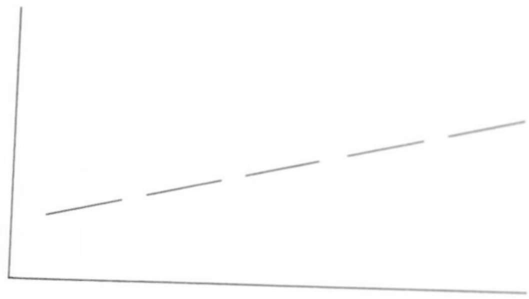
J. H. Lambert, *Pyrometrie* (Berlin, 1779).



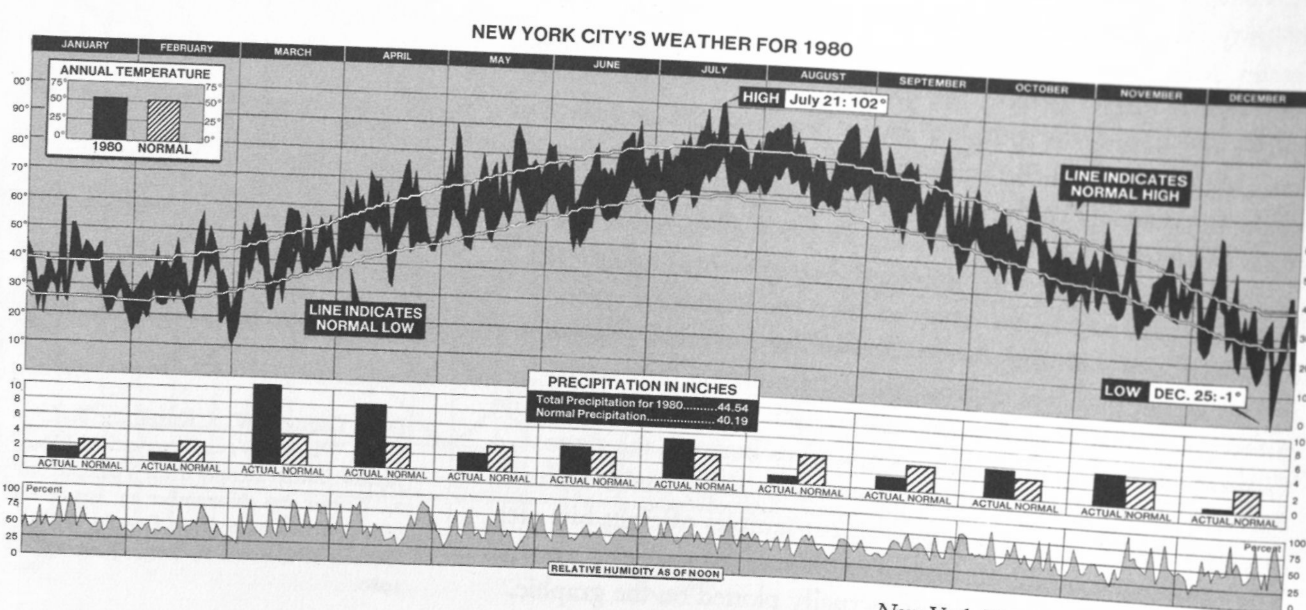
This plot of radio emissions from Jupiter is based on data collected by Voyager 2 in its pass close by the planet in July 1979. The radio intensity increases and decreases in a ten-hour cycle as Jupiter rotates. Maximum intensity occurs when the Jovian north magnetic pole is tipped toward the spacecraft, indicating a northern hemisphere source. A southern source was detected on July 7, as the spacecraft neared the equatorial plane. The horizontal scale shows the distance of the spacecraft from the planet measured in terms of Jupiter radii (R). Note the use of dual labels on the horizontal to indicate both the date and distance from Jupiter. The entire bottom panel also serves to label the horizontal scale, describing the changing orientation of the spacecraft relative to Jupiter as the planet is approached. The multiple time-series enforce not only comparisons within each series over time (as do all time-series plots) but also comparisons between the three different sampled radio bands shown. This richly multivariate display is based on 453,600 instrument samples of eight bits each. The resulting 3.6 million bits were reduced by peak and average processing to the 18,900 points actually plotted on the graphic.

D. A. Gurnett, W. S. Kurth, and F. L. Scarf, "Plasma Wave Observations Near Jupiter: Initial Results from Voyager 2," *Science* 206 (November 23, 1979), 987–991; and letter from Donald A. Gurnett to Edward R. Tufte, June 27, 1980.

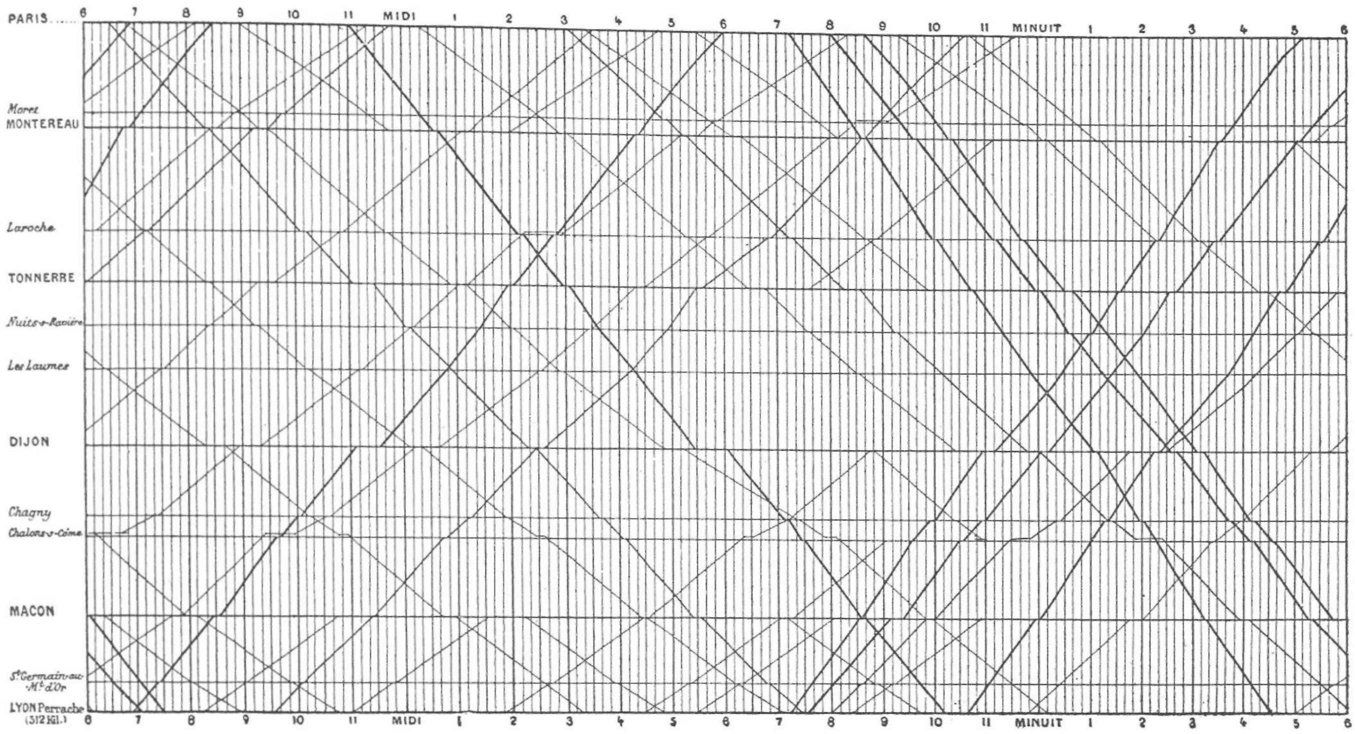
Time-series displays are at their best for big data sets with real variability. Why waste the power of data graphics on simple linear changes,



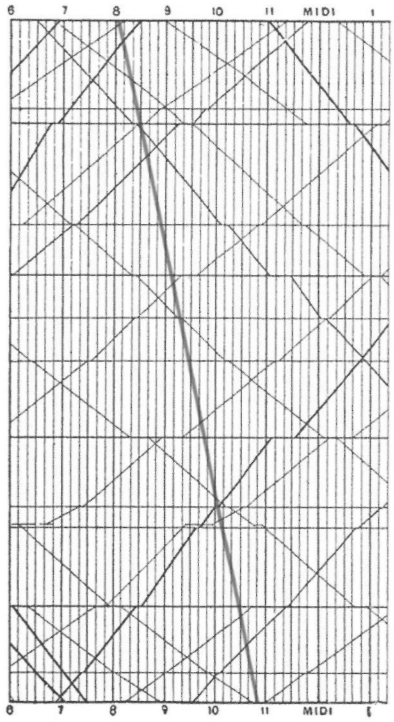
which can usually be better summarized in one or two numbers? Instead, graphics should be reserved for the richer, more complex, more difficult statistical material. This New York City weather summary for 1980 depicts 1,888 numbers. The daily high and low temperatures are shown in relation to the long-run average. The path of the normal temperatures also provides a forecast of expected change over the year; in the middle of February, for instance, New York City residents can look forward to warming at the rate of about 1.5 degrees per week all the way to July, the yearly peak. This distinguished graphic successfully organizes a large collection of numbers, makes comparisons between different parts of the data, and tells a story.



New York Times, January 11, 1981, p. 32.



E. J. Marey, *La méthode graphique* (Paris, 1885), p. 20. The method is attributed to the French engineer, Ibry.



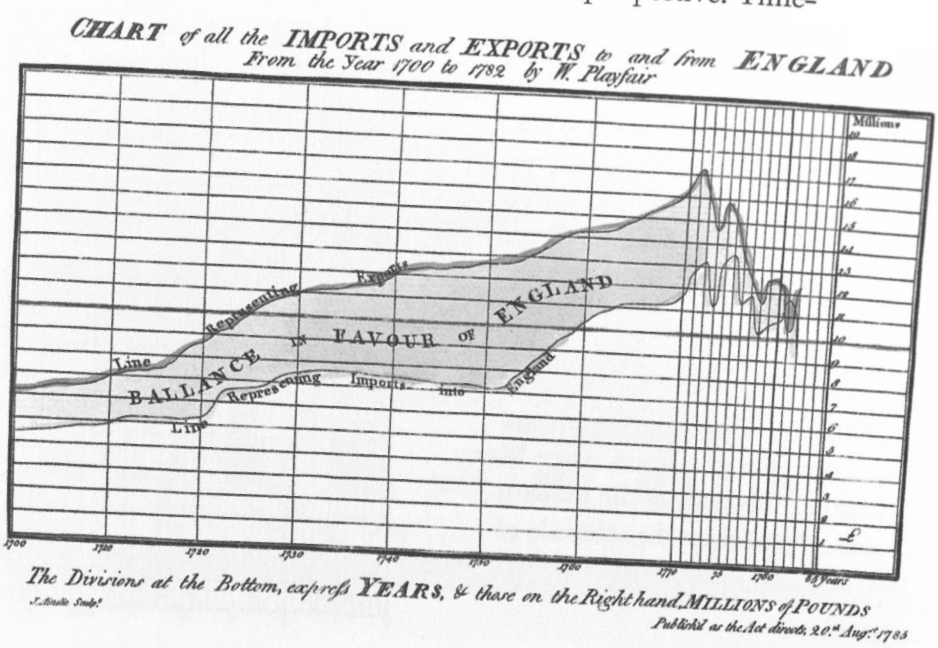
A design with similar strengths is Marey's graphical train schedule for Paris to Lyon in the 1880s. Arrivals and departures from a station are located along the horizontal; length of stop at a station is indicated by the length of the horizontal line. The stations are separated in proportion to their actual distance apart. The slope of the line reflects the speed of the train: the more nearly vertical the line, the faster the train. The intersection of two lines locates the time and place that trains going in opposite directions pass each other.

In 1981 a new express train from Paris to Lyon cut the trip to under three hours, compared to more than nine hours when Marey published the graphical train schedule. The path of the modern TGV (*train à grande vitesse*) is shown, overlaid on the schedule of 100 years before:

The two great inventors of modern graphical designs were J. H. Lambert (1728–1777), a Swiss-German scientist and mathematician, and William Playfair (1759–1823), a Scottish political economist.[10] The first known time-series using economic data was published in Playfair's remarkable book, *The Commercial and Political Atlas* (London, 1786). Note the graphical arithmetic, which shows the shifting balance of trade by the difference between the import and export time-series. Playfair contrasted his new graphical method with the tabular presentation of data:

> Information, that is imperfectly acquired, is generally as imperfectly retained; and a man who has carefully investigated a printed table, finds, when done, that he has only a very faint and partial idea of what he has read; and that like a figure imprinted on sand, is soon totally erased and defaced. The amount of mercantile transactions in money, and of profit or loss, are capable of being as easily represented in drawing, as any part of space, or as the face of a country; though, till now, it has not been attempted. Upon that principle these Charts were made; and, while they give a simple and distinct idea, they are as near perfect accuracy as is any way useful. On inspecting any one of these Charts attentively, a sufficiently distinct impression will be made, to remain unimpaired for a considerable time, and the idea which does remain will be simple and complete, at once including the duration and the amount. [pages 3–4]

For Playfair, graphics were preferable to tables because graphics showed the shape of the data in a comparative perspective. Time-

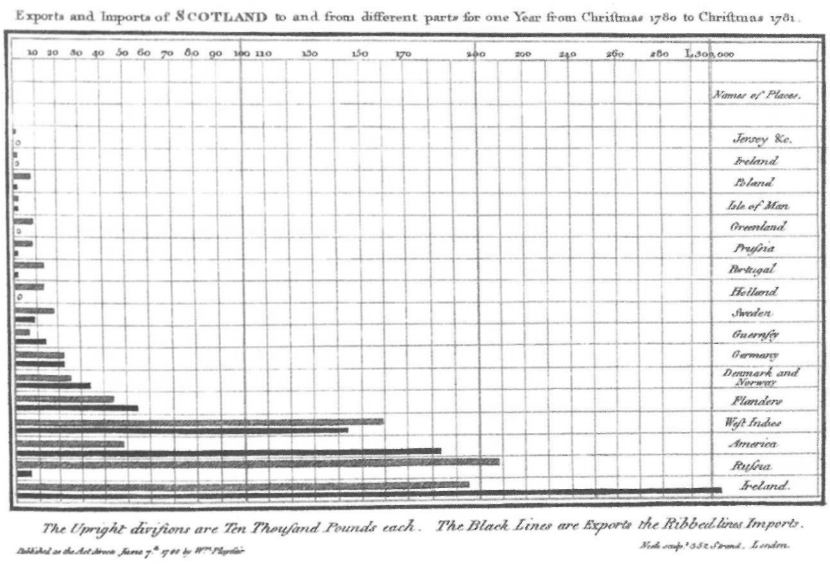


[10] Laura Tilling, "Early Experimental Graphs," *British Journal for the History of Science*, 8 (1975), 193–213.

series plots did this, and all but one of the 44 charts in the first edition of *The Commercial and Political Atlas* were time-series. That one exception is the first known bar chart, which Playfair invented because year-to-year data were missing and he needed a design to portray the one-year data that were available. Nonetheless he was skeptical about his innovation:

> This Chart is different from the others in principle, as it does not comprehend any portion of time, and it is much inferior in utility to those that do; for though it gives the extent of the different branches of trade, it does not compare the same branch of commerce with itself at different periods; nor does it imprint upon the mind that distinct idea, in doing which, the chief advantage of Charts consists: for as it wants the dimension that is formed by duration, there is no shape given to the quantities. [page 101]

He was right: small, noncomparative, highly labeled data sets usually belong in tables.

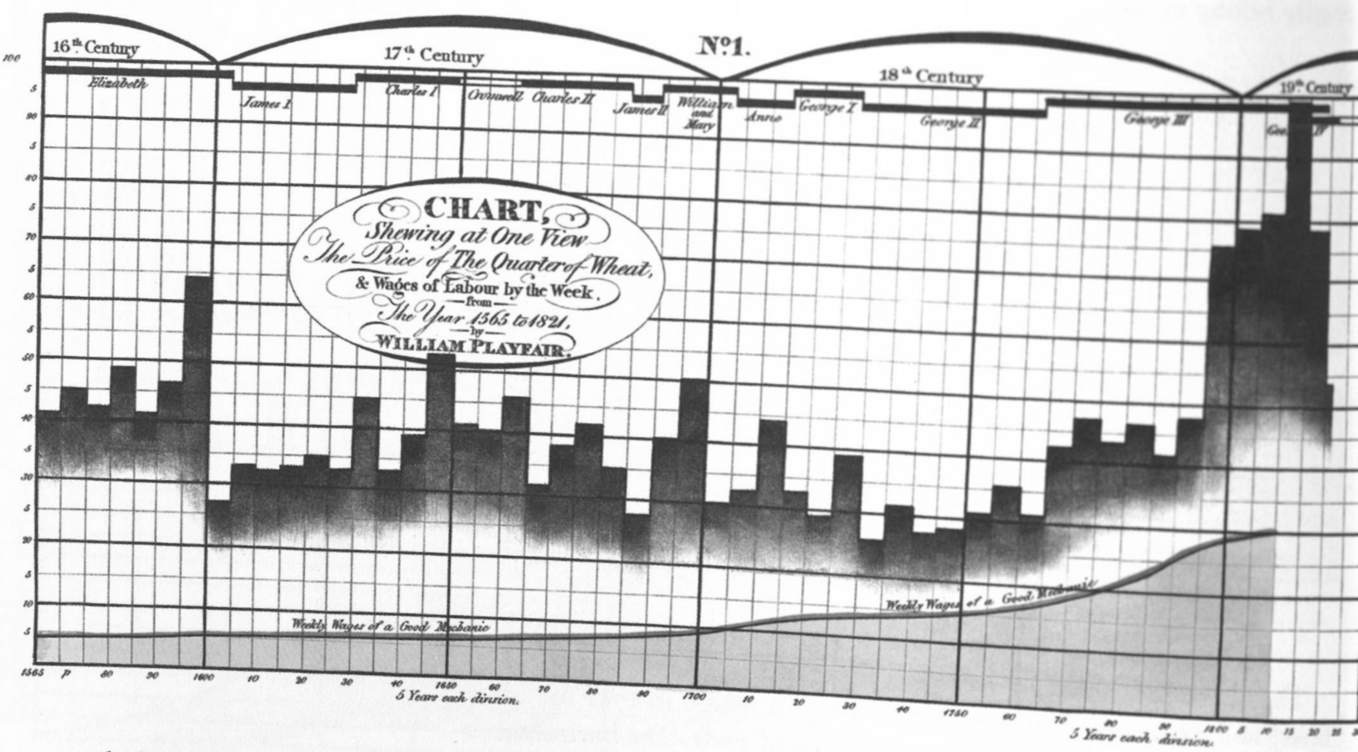


The chart does show, at any rate, the imports (cross-hatched lines) and exports (solid lines) to and from Scotland in 1781 for 17 countries, which are ordered by volume of trade. The horizontal scale is at the top, possibly to make it more convenient to see in plotting the points by hand. Zero values are nicely indicated both by the absence of a bar and by a "o." The horizontal scale mistakenly repeats "200." In nearly all his charts, Playfair placed the labels for the vertical scale on the right side of the page (suggesting that he plotted the data points using his left hand).

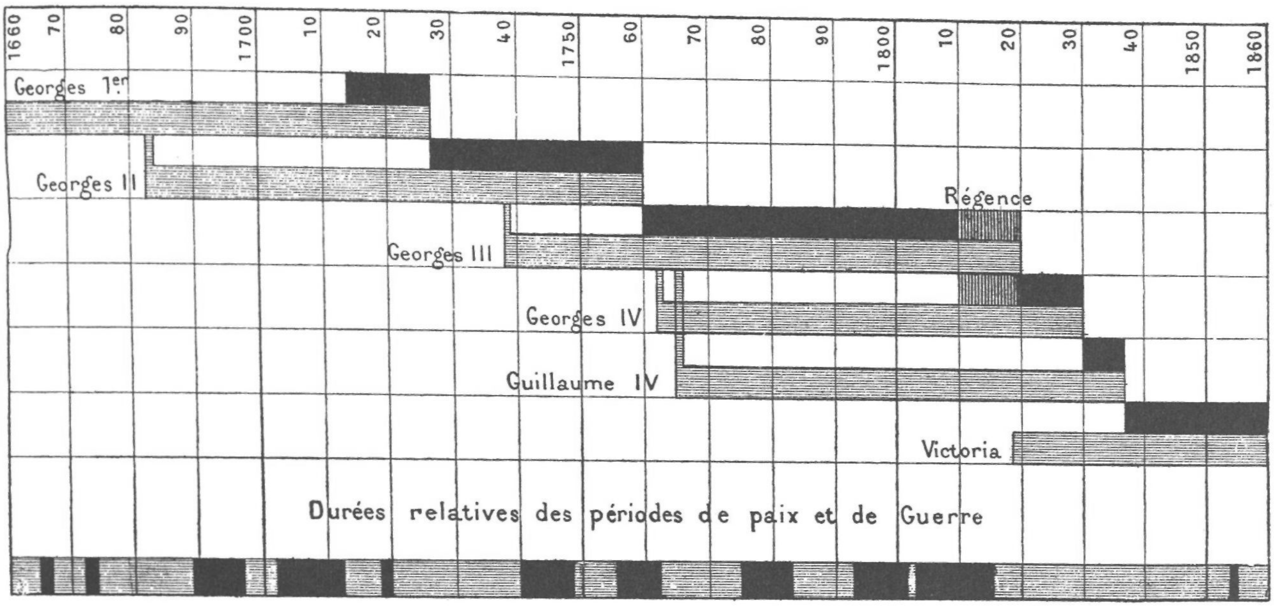
Playfair's last book addressed the question whether the price of wheat had increased relative to wages. In his *Letter on our agricultural distresses, their causes and remedies; accompanied with tables and copper-plate charts shewing and comparing the prices of wheat, bread and labour, from 1565 to 1821*, Playfair wrote:

> You have before you, my Lords and Gentlemen, a chart of the prices of wheat for 250 years, made from official returns; on the same plate I have traced a line representing, as nearly as I can, the wages of good mechanics, such as smiths, masons, and carpenters, in order to compare the proportion between them and the price of wheat at every different period. . . . the main fact deserving of consideration is, that never at any former period was wheat so cheap, in proportion to mechanical labour, as it is at the present time. . . . [pages 29–31]

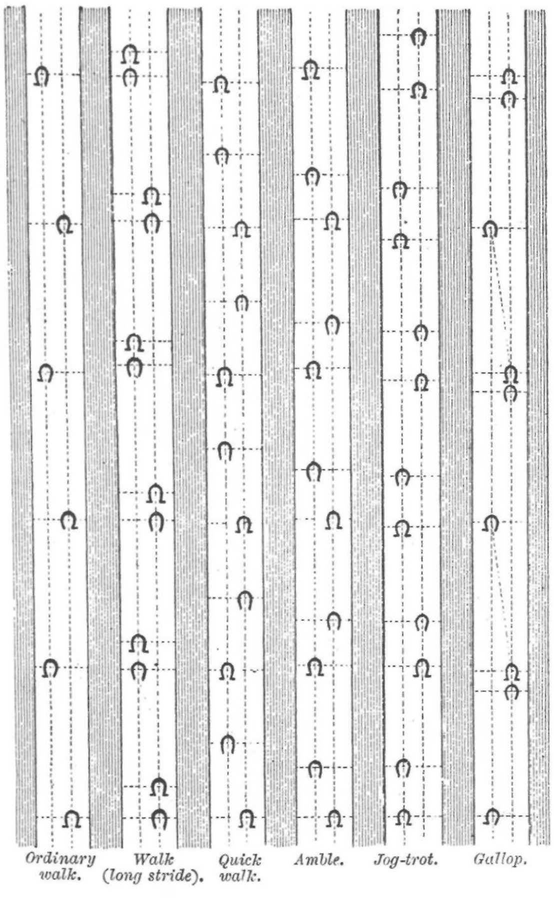
Here Playfair plotted three parallel time-series: prices, wages, and the reigns of British kings and queens.



The history and genealogy of royalty was long a graphical favorite. This superb construction of E. J. Marey brings together several sets of facts about English rulers into a time-series that conveys a sense of the march of history. Marey (1830–1904) also pioneered the development of graphical methods in human and animal physiology, including studies of horses moving at different paces,

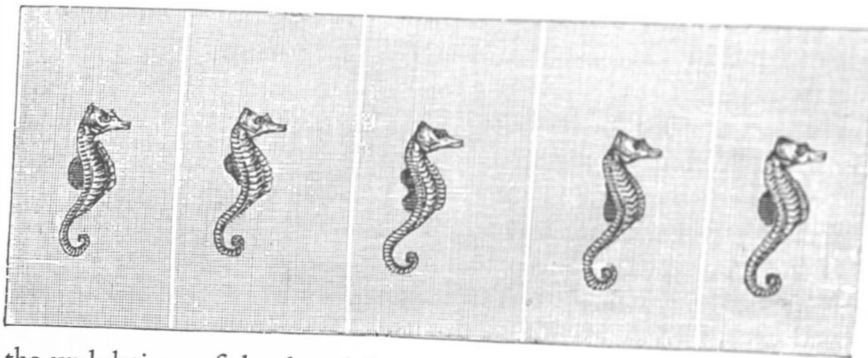


E. J. Marey, *La Méthode Graphique* (Paris, 1885), p. 6.

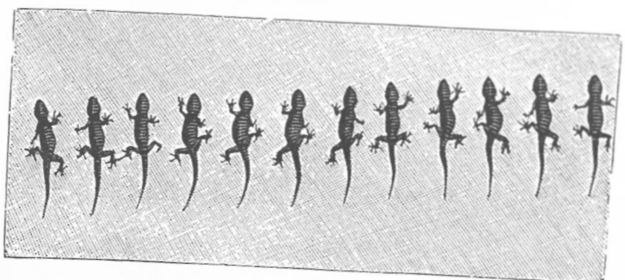


E. J. Marey, *Movement* (London, 1895). Beginning with the tracks of the horse, the time-series are from pages 191, 224, 222, 265, 60, and 61.

the movement of a starfish turning itself over (read images from the bottom upwards),

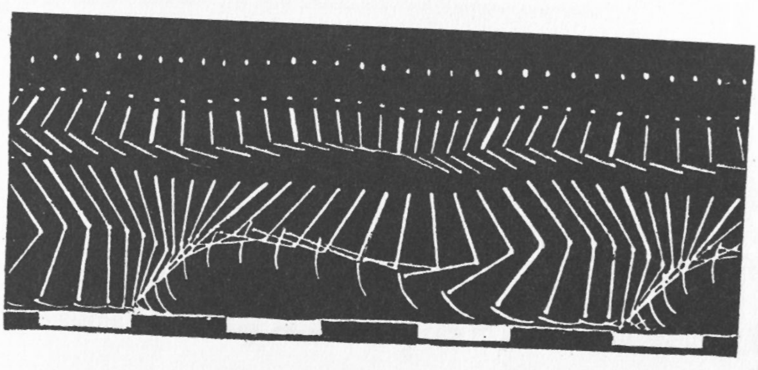


the undulations of the dorsal fin of a descending sea-horse,

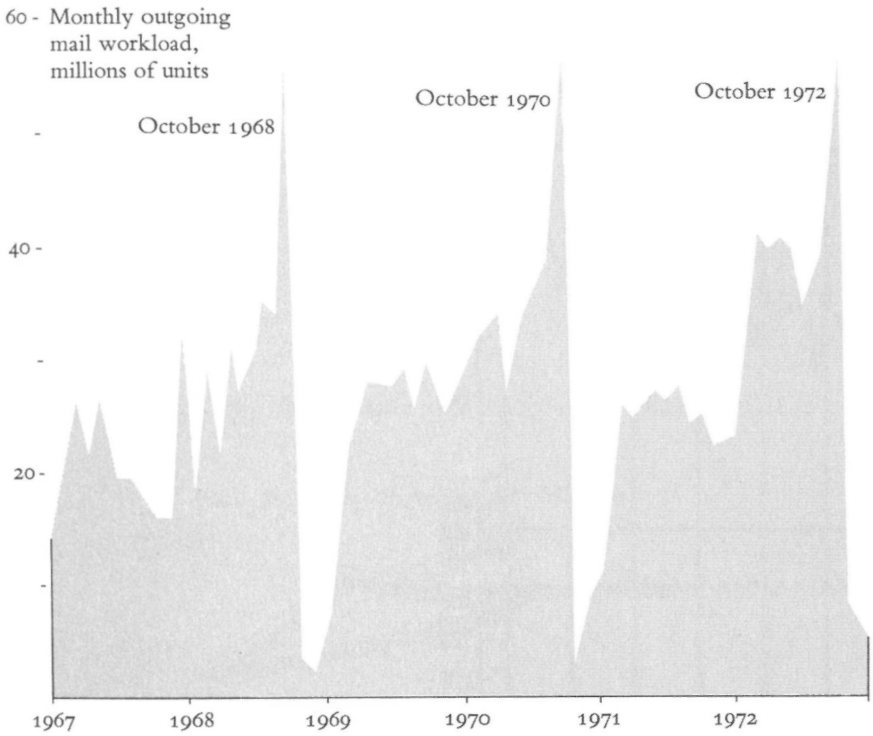


as well as the advance of the gecko.

Marey's man in black velvet, photographed in stick-figure images, became the time-series forerunner of Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*.



The problem with time-series is that the simple passage of time is not a good explanatory variable: descriptive chronology is not causal explanation. There are occasional exceptions, especially when there is a clear mechanism that drives the Y-variable. This time-series does testify about causality: the outgoing mail of the U.S. House of Representatives peaks every two years, just before the election day:



The graphic is worth at least 700 words, the number used in a news report describing how incumbent representatives exploit their free mailing privileges to advance their re-election campaigns:

FRANKED MAIL TIE TO VOTING SHOWN

Testimony Finds the Volume Rises Before Elections

WASHINGTON, June 1 (AP)—New court testimony and documents show that much of the mail Congress sends at taxpayer expense is tied directly to the re-election campaigns of Senate and House members. According to material filed in a lawsuit in Federal Court:

¶Senate Republicans put two direct-mail experts on the public payroll to advise them on how to use their free mailing privileges to get votes.

¶An election manual prepared for Senate Democrats refers to newsletters as a "free forum," and sets up a timetable for sending them as an integral part of a model re-election campaign.

¶Senator John G. Tower, Republican of Texas, mailed more than 800,000 special-interest letters at taxpayer expense as part of his 1972 re-election effort and received campaign volunteer offers and donations in response.

¶Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York, gave written approval in 1973 for a tax-paid mail program intended to better his image and pay off at the polls. He focused his mail on areas where he needed votes.

¶The volume of "official" Congressional mail rises in election years and peaks just before the general election.

None of this activity necessarily violates any law or regulation, since Congress has wide discretion in the use of tax-paid mail. Congress gave itself the right to send official mail at Government expense at the founding of the republic, and only Congress polices against abuses of the free mailings.

Complaints of political use of the free-mailing privilege, called the franking privilege, are heard every election year. Recently, however, the volume and cost of franked mail has multiplied. A new Federal law will limit what out-of-office challengers can spend to unseat incumbents.

In 1972, Congress passed a law prohibiting mass franked mailings within 28 days before an election. The sponsor of that legislation, Representative Morris K. Udall, Democrat of Arizona, said in an interview that further changes were needed to curtail political abuse of the frank.

Mr. Udall urged a 60-day pre-election cutoff for mass mailings and said he favored closing a loophole that recently allowed defeated Representative Frank M. Clark, Democrat of Pennsylvania, to send a franked newsletter to his old constituents after he had left office. Mr. Clark is seeking to regain his old post.

Practice Documented

Seldom has the political use of franked mail been so well documented as in recent testimony and documents filed in a Federal Court by Common Cause, the lobby group, which is suing for an end to tax-financed mass mailings by Congress.

For example, Joyce P. Baker, a political mail specialist, said in a 1973 job proposal that she wanted to set up direct-mail programs for Republican Senators using franked mail.

"The purpose of such a program is to help an incumbent Senator get re-elected," she said.

She was put on the Senate payroll at $18,810 a year in 1973 and 1974 and testified that during that time she aided Republican Senators Robert J. Dole of Kansas, Peter H. Dominick of Colorado, Charles McC. Mathias Jr. of Maryland

Another political mail specialist, Lee W. MacGregor, wrote a proposal for the use of franked mail by his chief, Senator Javits, in 1973.

"The over-all objective of the franked mail program can be to get the recipient of the mail to identify positively with a particular stand you have taken or a bill you have introduced; the kind of identification that can be translated into a vote at the polls on election day" Mr. MacGregor said.

Mr. Javits was out of the country and could not be reached. His administrative assistant, Donald Kellerman, defended the use of franked mail.

"It is a standard device to let voters, not voters but citizens, know what the Senator is doing here in Washington, he said.

Senator Tower's use of franked mail in his 1972 campaign was documented by memorandums.

Tom Loeffler, a high-ranking campaign aide, wrote in a memorandum dated Oct. 27, 1972, that during the campaign Senator Tower had sent "31 special interest letters totaling approximately 803,333 franked mailings."

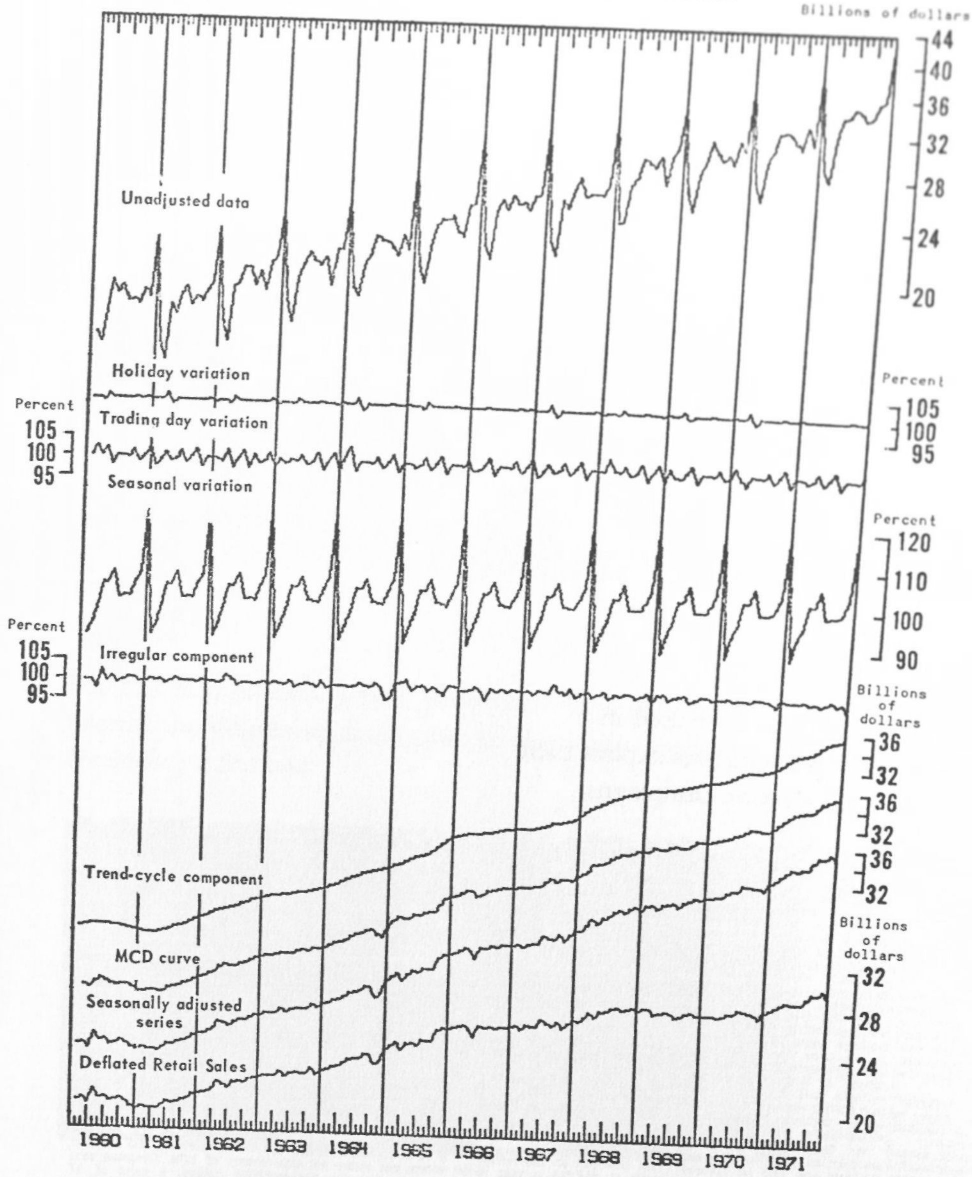
Mr. Tower was not available for comment. His administrative assistant, Elwin Skiles, said the Senator's use of franked mail in 1972 was within the law, and he defended the free-mailing privileges.

Postal Service figures show that in the 12 months before November, 1973, Congress sent 222.9 million franked pieces of mail. But in the next 12 months, covering the election season of 1974, Congress sent 350.6 million, a jump of 57 per cent about what's happening," Mr. Skiles said.

Time-series plots can be moved toward causal explanation by smuggling additional variables into the graphic design. For example, this decomposition of economic data, arraying 1,296 numbers, breaks out the top series into seasonal and trading-day fluctuations (which dominate short-term changes) to reveal the long-run trend adjusted for inflation. (Note a significant defect in the design, however: the vertical grid conceals the height of the December peaks.) The next step would be to bring in additional variables to explain the transformed and improved series at the bottom.[11]

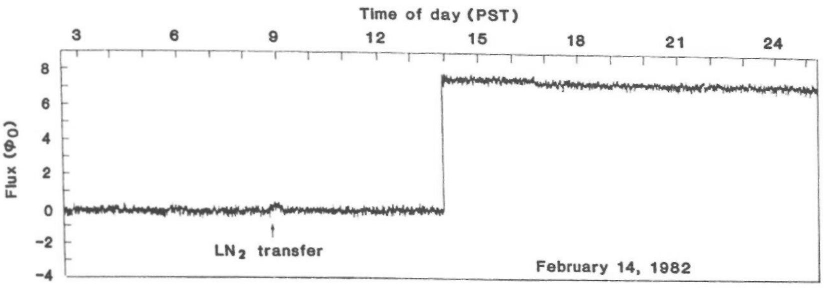
[11] See William S. Cleveland and Irma Terpenning, "Graphical Methods for Seasonal Adjustment," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 77 (Mar 1982), 52–62.

Systematic and Irregular Components of Total Retail Sales, United States



Julius Shiskin, "Measuring Current Eco nomic Fluctuations," *Statistical Reporter* (July 1973), p. 3.

Finally, a vivid design (with appropriate data) is the before-after time-series:

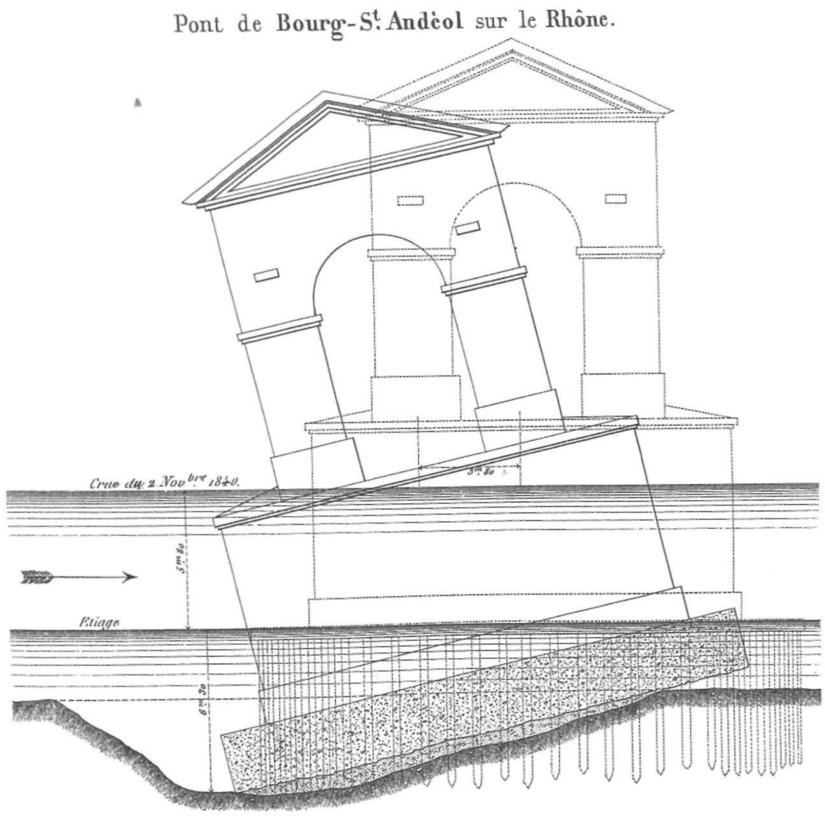


A monopole?

Cabrera's candidate monopole signal looms over a disturbance caused by a liquid nitrogen transfer earlier in the day. The jump in magnetic flux through the superconducting detector loop (or equivalently, the jump in the loop's supercurrent) is just the right magnitude to be a monopole. Moreover, the current remained stable for many hours afterward.

M. Mitchell Waldrop, "In Search of the Magnetic Monopole," *Science* (June 4, 1982), p. 1087.

And before and after the collapse of a bridge on the Rhône in 1840:



Charles Joseph Minard, "De la Chute des Ponts dans les grandes Crues," (October 24, 1856), Figure 3, in Minard, *Collection de ses brochures* (Paris, 1821–1869), held by the Bibliothèque de l'École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, Paris.

Narrative Graphics of Space and Time

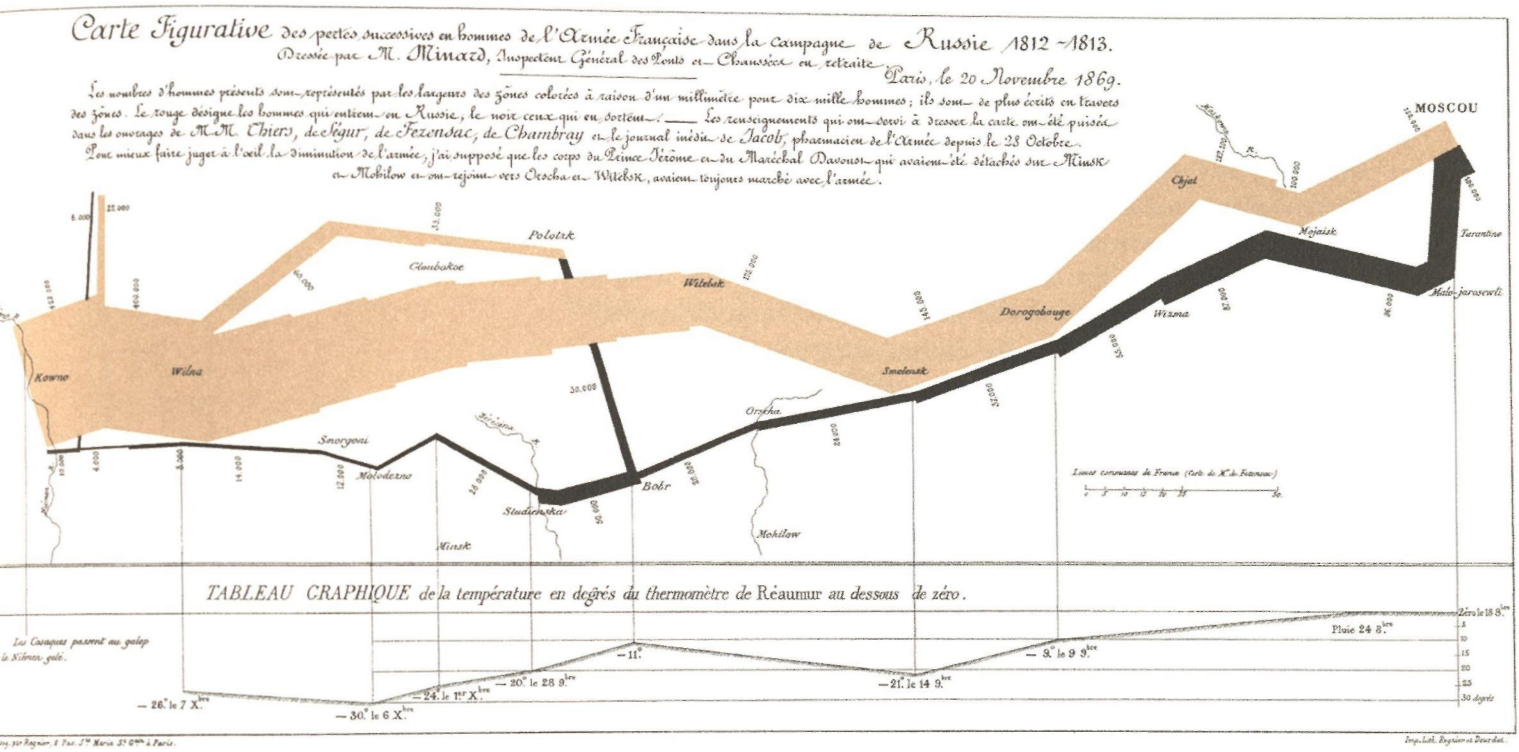
An especially effective device for enhancing the explanatory power of time-series displays is to add spatial dimensions to the design of the graphic, so that the data are moving over space (in two or three dimensions) as well as over time. Three excellent space-time-story graphics illustrate here how multivariate complexity can be subtly integrated into graphical architecture, integrated so gently and unobtrusively that viewers are hardly aware that they are looking into a world of four or five dimensions. Occasionally graphics are belligerently multivariate, advertising the technique rather than the data. But not these three.

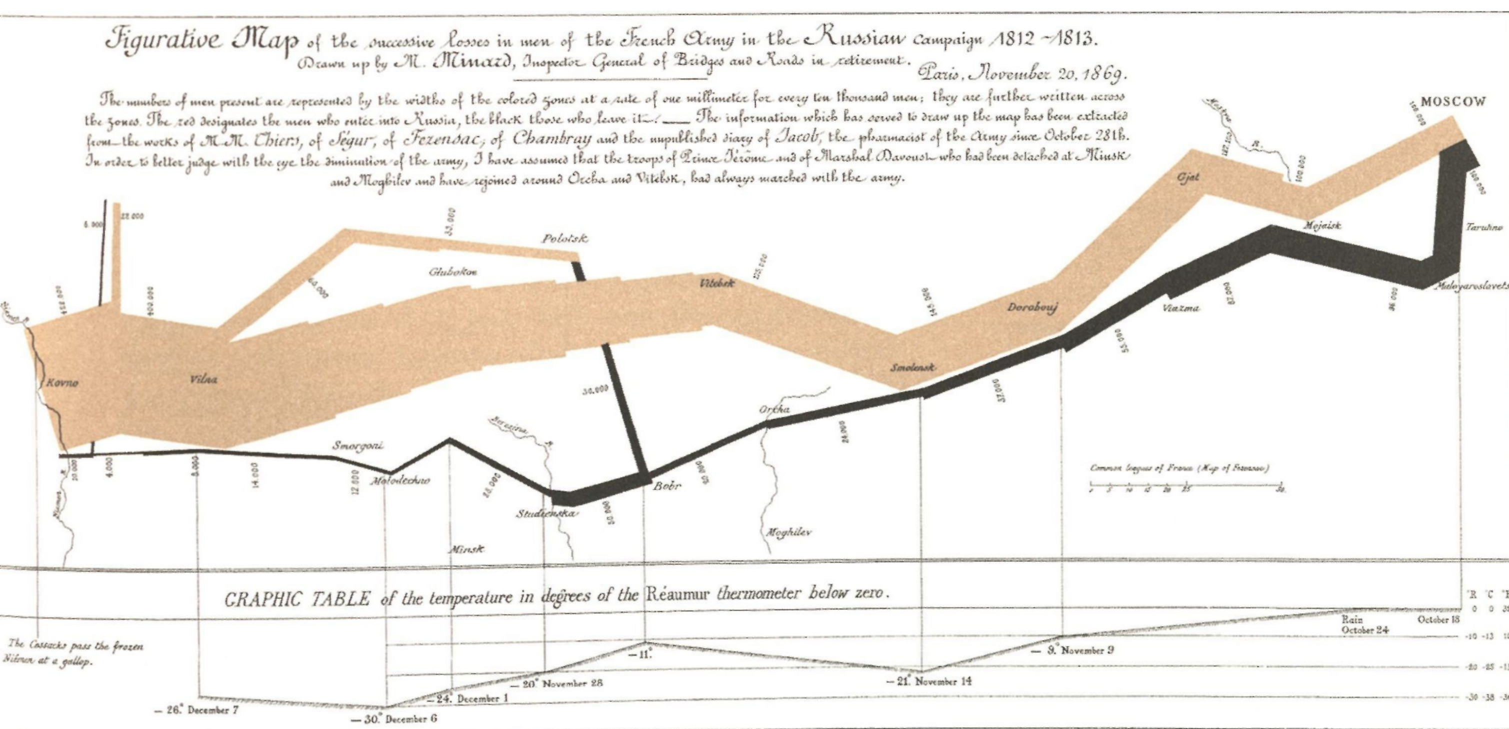
The first is the classic of Charles Joseph Minard (1781–1870), the French engineer, which shows the terrible fate of Napoleon's army in Russia. Described by E. J. Marey as seeming to defy the pen of the historian by its brutal eloquence,[12] this combination of data map and time-series, drawn in 1869, portrays a sequence of devastating losses suffered in Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812. Beginning at left on the Polish-Russian border near the Niemen River, the thick tan flow-line shows the size of the Grand Army (422,000) as it invaded Russia in June 1812. The width of this band indicates the size of the army at each place on the map. In September, the army reached Moscow, which was by then sacked and deserted, with 100,000 men. The path of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow is depicted by the darker, lower band, which is linked to a temperature scale and dates at the bottom of the chart. It was a bitterly cold winter, and many froze on the march out of Russia. As the graphic shows, the crossing of the Berezina River was a disaster, and the army finally struggled back into Poland with only 10,000 men remaining. Also shown are the movements of auxiliary troops, as they sought to protect the rear and the flank of the advancing army. Minard's graphic tells a rich, coherent story with its multivariate data, far more enlightening than just a single number bouncing along over time. *Six* variables are plotted: the size of the army, its location on a two-dimensional surface, direction of the army's movement, and temperature on various dates during the retreat from Moscow. At upper right we see Minard's French original, which was printed as a two-color lithograph in the form of a small poster. And at lower right, our English translation.

It may well be the best statistical graphic ever drawn.

[12] E. J. Marey, *La méthode graphique* (Paris, 1885), p. 73. For more on Min[ard] see Arthur H. Robinson, "The Them[atic] Maps of Charles Joseph Minard," *Im[ago] Mundi*, 21 (1967), 95–108.

Upper image from Charles Joseph Minard, *Tableaux Graphiques et Cartes Figuratives de M. Minard, 1845–1869*, Bibliothèque de l'École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, Paris, item 28 (62 by 25 cm, or 25 by 10 in English translation by Dawn Finley and redrawing by Elaine Morse, completed August 2002.

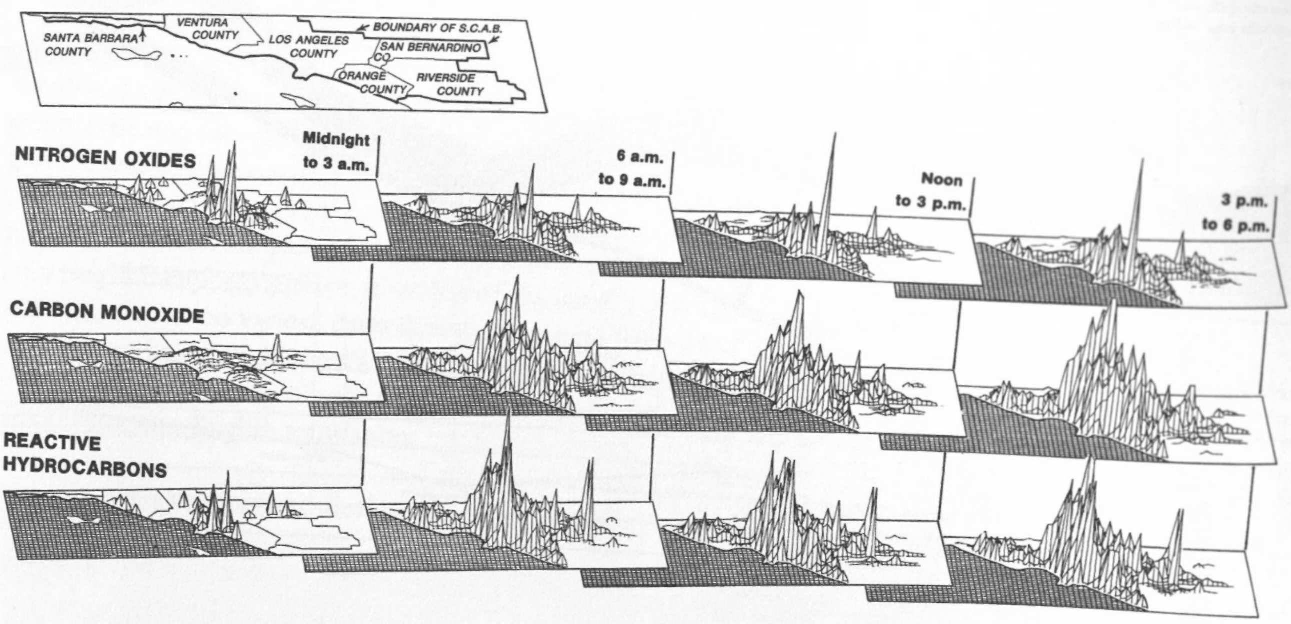

Carte Figurative des pertes successives en hommes de l'Armée Française dans la campagne de Russie 1812–1813.
Dressée par M. Minard, Inspecteur Général des Ponts et Chaussées en retraite.
Paris, le 20 Novembre 1869.
Les nombres d'hommes présents sont représentés par les largeurs des zones colorées à raison d'un millimètre pour dix mille hommes; ils sont de plus écrits en travers des zones. Le rouge désigne les hommes qui entrent en Russie, le noir ceux qui en sortent. — Les renseignements qui ont servi à dresser la carte ont été puisés dans les ouvrages de M.M. Thiers, de Ségur, de Fezensac, de Chambray et le journal inédit de Jacob, pharmacien de l'Armée depuis le 28 Octobre.
Pour mieux faire juger à l'œil la diminution de l'armée, j'ai supposé que les corps du Prince Jérôme et du Maréchal Davoust qui avaient été détachés sur Minsk et Mohilow et ont rejoint vers Orscha et Witebsk, avaient toujours marché avec l'armée.
MOSCOU
Kowno
Wilna
Glubokoe
Polotzk
Witebsk
Smolensk
Dorogobouge
Wizma
Gjat
Mojaisk
Tarantino
Malo-jarosewli
Orscha
Mohilow
Bobr
Studienska
Minsk
Molodezno
Smorgoni
422.000
400.000
60.000
33.000
175.000
145.000
100.000
30.000
4.000
10.000
12.000
14.000
TABLEAU GRAPHIQUE de la température en degrés du thermomètre de Réaumur au dessous de zéro.
Les Cosaques passent au galop le Niémen gelé.
Zéro le 18 8.bre
Pluie 24 8.bre
— 3.° le 9 9.bre
— 21.° le 14 9.bre
— 11.°
— 20.° le 28 9.bre
— 24.° le 1.er X.bre
— 30.° le 6 X.bre
— 26.° le 7 X.bre


Figurative Map of the successive losses in men of the French Army in the Russian campaign 1812–1813.
Drawn up by M. Minard, Inspector General of Bridges and Roads in retirement.
Paris, November 20, 1869.
The numbers of men present are represented by the widths of the colored zones at a rate of one millimeter for every ten thousand men; they are further written across the zones. The red designates the men who enter into Russia, the black those who leave it. — The information which has served to draw up the map has been extracted from the works of M.M. Thiers, of Ségur, of Fezensac, of Chambray and the unpublished diary of Jacob, the pharmacist of the Army since October 28th.
In order to better judge with the eye the diminution of the army, I have assumed that the troops of Prince Jérôme and of Marshal Davoust who had been detached at Minsk and Mogbilev and have rejoined around Orcha and Vitebsk, had always marched with the army.
MOSCOW
Kovno
Vilna
Glubokoe
Polotsk
Vitebsk
Smolensk
Dorogobouj
Viazma
Gjat
Mojaisk
Tarutino
Malo-jaroslavets
Orcha
Moghilev
Bobr
Studienska
Minsk
Molodetchno
Smorgoni
Common leagues of France (Map of Fezensac)
GRAPHIC TABLE of the temperature in degrees of the Réaumur thermometer below zero.
The Cossacks pass the frozen Niémen at a gallop.
Rain October 24
October 18
— 9.° November 9
— 21.° November 14
— 11.°
— 20.° November 28
— 24.° December 1
— 30.° December 6
— 26.° December 7

The next time-space graphic, drawn by a computer, displays the levels of three air pollutants located over a two-dimensional surface (six counties in southern California) at four times during the day. Nitrogen oxides (top row) are emitted by power plants, refineries, and vehicles. Refineries along the coast and Kaiser Steel's Fontana plant produce the post-midnight peaks shown in the first panel; traffic and power plants (with their heavy daytime demand) send levels up during the day. Carbon monoxide (second row) is low after midnight except out at the steel plant; morning traffic then begins to generate each day's ocean of carbon monoxide, with the greatest concentration at the convergence of five freeways in downtown Los Angeles. Reactive hydrocarbons (third row), like nitrogen oxides, come from refineries after midnight and then increase with traffic during the day. Each of the 12 time-space-pollutant slices summarizes pollutants for 2,400 spatial locations (2,400 squares five kilometers on a side). Thus 28,800 pollutant readings are shown, except for those masked by peaks.

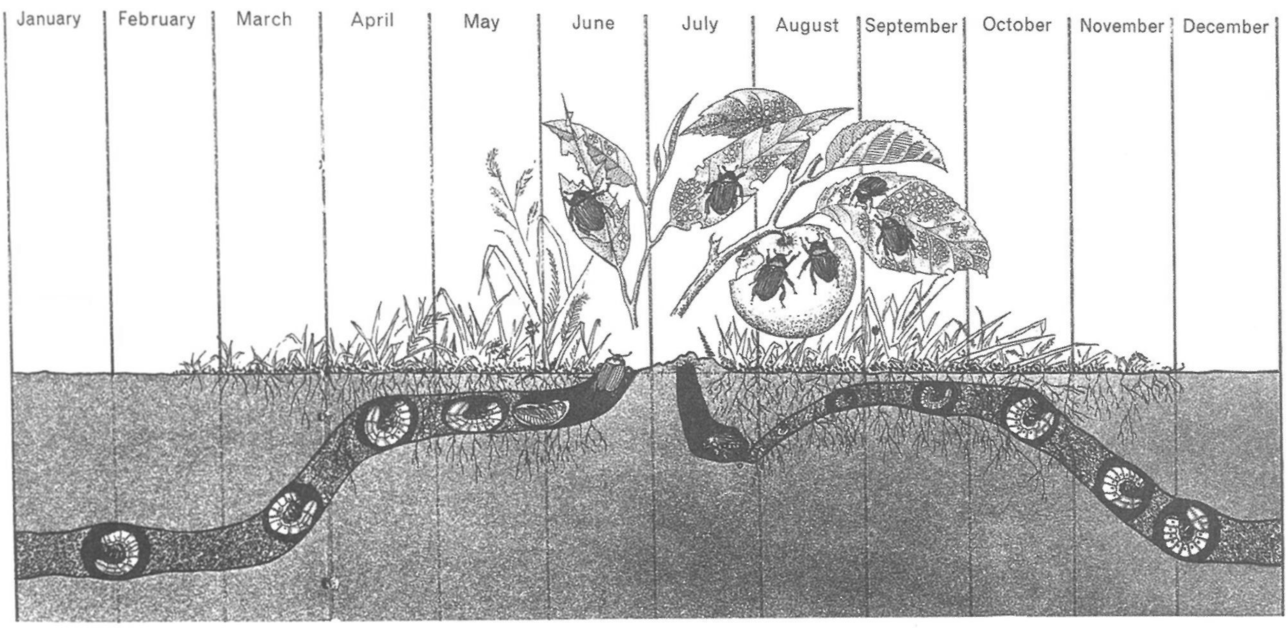
The air pollution display is a *small multiple*. The same graphical design structure is repeated for each of the twelve slices or multiples. Small multiples are economical: once viewers understand the design of one slice, they have immediate access to the data in all the other slices. Thus, as the eye moves from one slice to the next, the constancy of the design allows the viewer to focus on changes in the data rather than on changes in graphical design.

Los Angeles Times, July 22, 1979; ba
on work of Gregory J. McRae, Cali
fornia Institute of Technology.



Our third example of a space-time-story graphic ingeniously mixes space and time on the horizontal axis. This design moves well beyond the conventional time-series because of its clever plotting field, with location relative to the ground surface on the vertical axis and time/space on the horizontal. The life cycle of the Japanese beetle is shown.

L. Hugh Newman, *Man and Insects* (London, 1965), pp. 104–105.

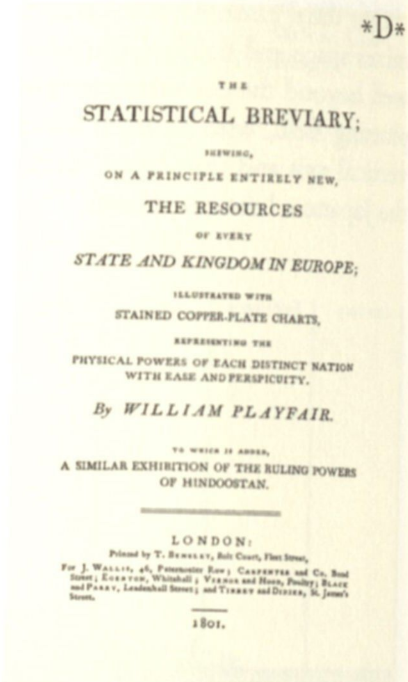


More Abstract Designs: Relational Graphics

The invention of data graphics required replacing the latitude-longitude coordinates of the map with more abstract measures not based on geographical analogy. Moving from maps to statistical graphics was a big step, and thousands of years passed before this step was taken by Lambert, Playfair, and others in the eighteenth century. Even so, analogies to the physical world served as the conceptual basis for early time-series. Playfair repeatedly compared his charts to maps and, in the preface to the first edition of *The Commercial and Political Atlas*, argued that his charts corresponded to a physical realization of the data:

> Suppose the money we pay in any one year for the expence of the Navy were in guineas, and that these guineas were laid down upon a large table in a straight line, and touching each other, and those paid next year were laid down in another

straight line, and the same continued for a number of years: these lines would be of different lengths, as there were fewer or more guineas; and they would make a shape, the dimensions of which would agree exactly with the amount of the sums; and the value of a guinea would be represented by the part of space which it covered. The Charts are exactly this upon a small scale, and one division represents the breadth or value of ten thousand or an hundred thousand guineas as marked, with the same exactness that a square inch upon a map may represent a square mile of country. And they, therefore, are a representation of the real money laid down in different lines, as it was originally paid away. [pages iii–iv]


D

THE
STATISTICAL BREVIARY;
SHEWING,
ON A PRINCIPLE ENTIRELY NEW,
THE RESOURCES
OF EVERY
STATE AND KINGDOM IN EUROPE;
ILLUSTRATED WITH
STAINED COPPER-PLATE CHARTS,
REPRESENTING THE
PHYSICAL POWERS OF EACH DISTINCT NATION WITH EASE AND PERSPICUITY.

By WILLIAM PLAYFAIR.

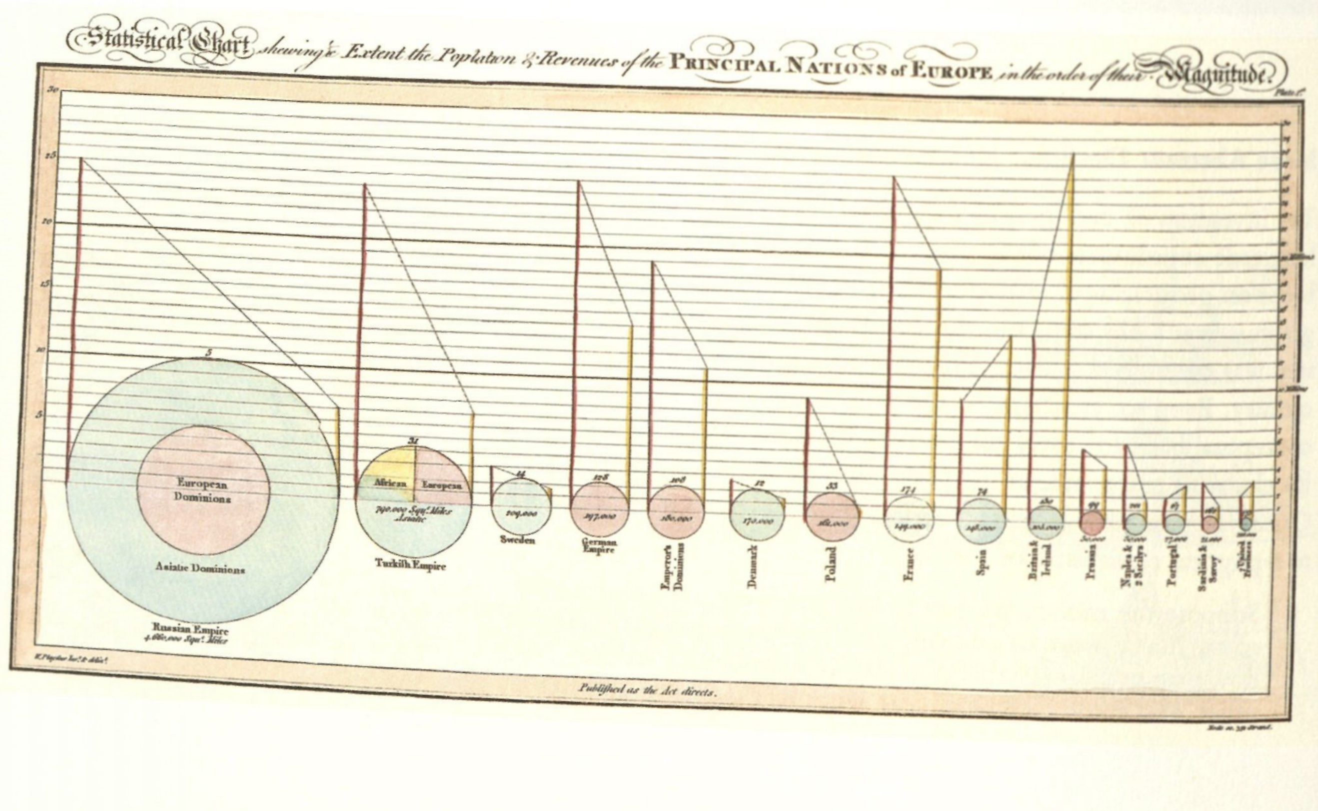
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A SIMILAR EXHIBITION OF THE RULING POWERS OF HINDOOSTAN.

LONDON:
Printed by T. Bensley, Bolt Court, Fleet Street,
For J. Wallis, 46, Paternoster Row; Carpenter and Co. Bond Street; Egerton, Whitehall; Vernor and Hood, Poultry; Black and Parry, Leadenhall Street; and Tibbet and Didier, St. James's Street.

1801.

Fifteen years later in *The Statistical Breviary*, his most theoretical book about graphics, Playfair broke free of analogies to the physical world and drew graphics as designs-in-themselves.

One of four plates in *The Statistical Breviary*, this graphic is distinguished by its multivariate data, the use of area to depict quantity, and the pie chart—in apparently the first application of these devices. The circle represents the area of each country; the line on the left, the population in millions read on the vertical scales; the line on the right, the revenue (taxes) collected in millions of pounds sterling read also on the vertical scale; and the "dotted lines drawn between the population and revenue, are merely intended to connect together the lines belonging to the same country. The ascent



of those lines being from right to left, or from left to right, shews whether in proportion to its population the country is burdened with heavy taxes or otherwise" (pages 13–14). The slope of the dotted line is uninformative, since it is dependent on the diameter of the circle as well as the height of the two verticals. However, the sign of the slope does make sense, taking Playfair to his familiar point about what he regarded as excessive taxation in Britain (sixth circle from the right, with the slope running opposite to most countries). Playfair was enthusiastic about the multivariate arrangement because it fostered comparisons:

> The author of this work applied the use of lines to matters of commerce and finance about fifteen years ago, with great success. His mode was generally approved of as not only facilitating, but rendering those studies more clear, and retained more easily by the memory. The present charts are in like manner intended to aid statistical studies, by shewing to the eye the sizes of different countries represented by similar forms, for where forms are not similar, the eye cannot compare them easily nor accurately. From this circumstance it happens, that we have a more accurate idea of the sizes of the planets, which are spheres, than of the nations of Europe which we see on the maps, all of which are irregular forms in themselves as well as unlike to each other. Size, Population, and Revenue, are the three principal objects of attention upon the general scale of statistical studies, whether we are actuated by curiosity or interest; I have therefore represented these three objects in one view. . . . [page 15]

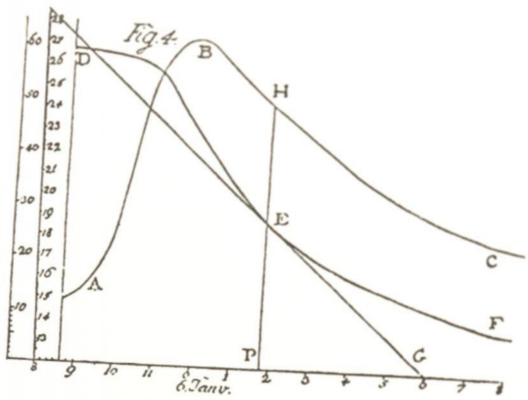
But here Playfair had a forerunner—and one who thought more clearly about the abstract problems of graphical design than did Playfair, who lacked mathematical skills. A most remarkable and explicit early theoretical statement advancing the general (non-analogical) relational graphic was made by J. H. Lambert in 1765, 35 years before *The Statistical Breviary*:

> We have in general two variable quantities, x, y, which will be collated with one another by observation, so that we can determine for each value of x, which may be considered as an abscissa, the corresponding ordinate y. Were the experiments or observations completely accurate, these ordinates would give a number of points through which a straight or curved line should be drawn. But as this is not so, the line deviates to a greater or lesser extent from the observational points. It must therefore be drawn in such a way that it comes as near as possible to its true position and goes, as it were, through the middle of the given points.[13]

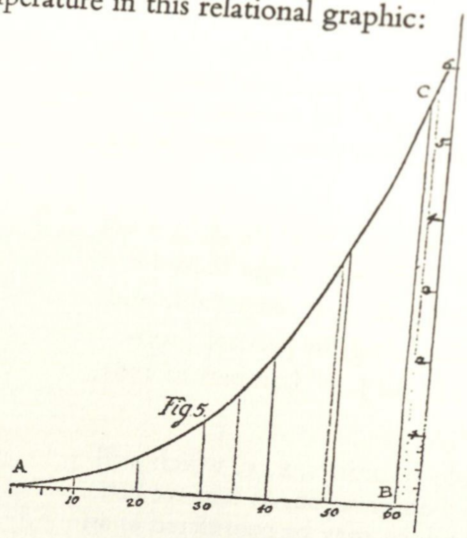
[13] Johann Heinrich Lambert, *Beyträge zum Gebrauche der Mathematik und deren Anwendung* (Berlin, 1765), as quoted in Laura Tilling, "Early Experimental Graphs," *British Journal for the History of Science*, 8 (1975), 204–205.

Lambert drew a graphical derivation of the evaporation rate of water as a function of temperature, according to Tilling. The analysis begins with two time-series: DEF, showing the decreasing height of water in a capillary tube as a function of time, and ABC, the temperature. The slope of the curve DEF is then taken (note the tangent DEG) at a number of places, yielding the rate of evaporation:

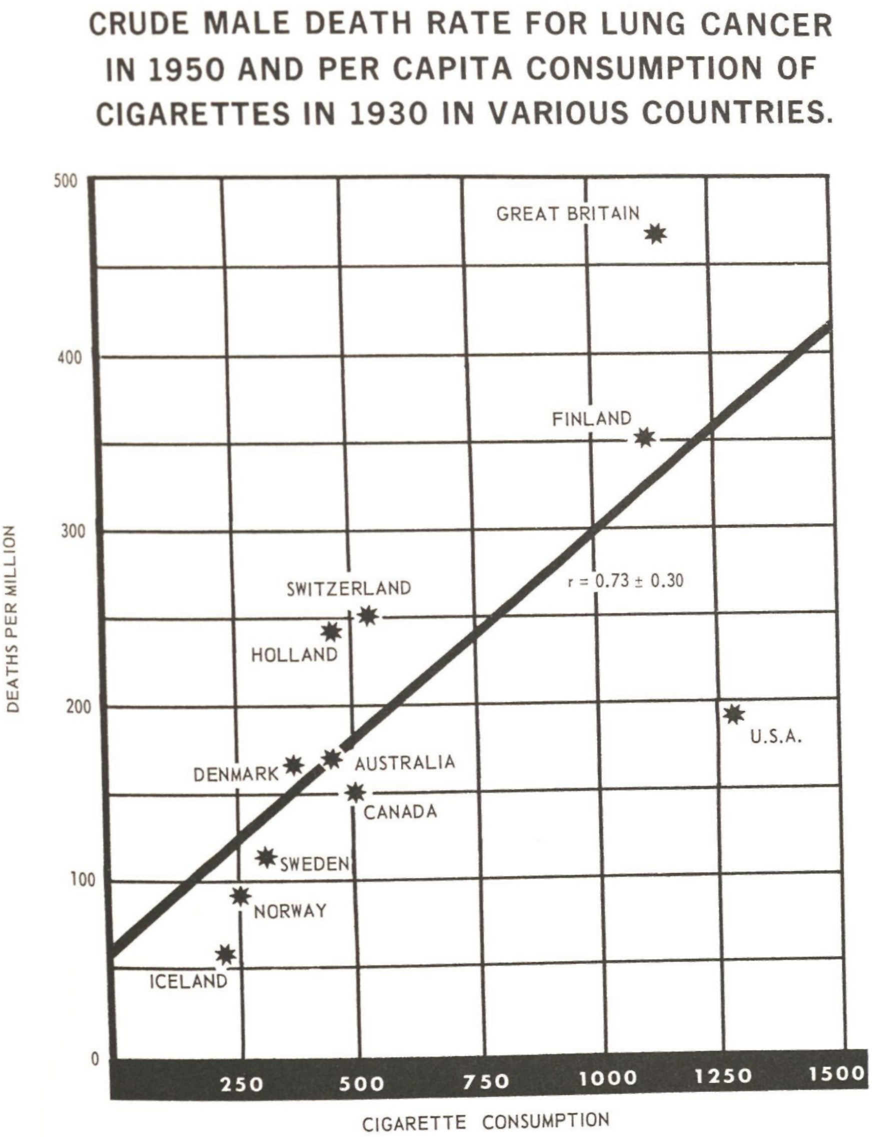
J. H. Lambert, "Essai d'hygrométrie ou sur la mesure de l'humidité," *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles Lettres . . . 1769* (Berlin, 1771), plate 1, facing p. 126; from Tilling's article.



To complete the graphical calculus, the measured rate is plotted against the corresponding temperature in this relational graphic:



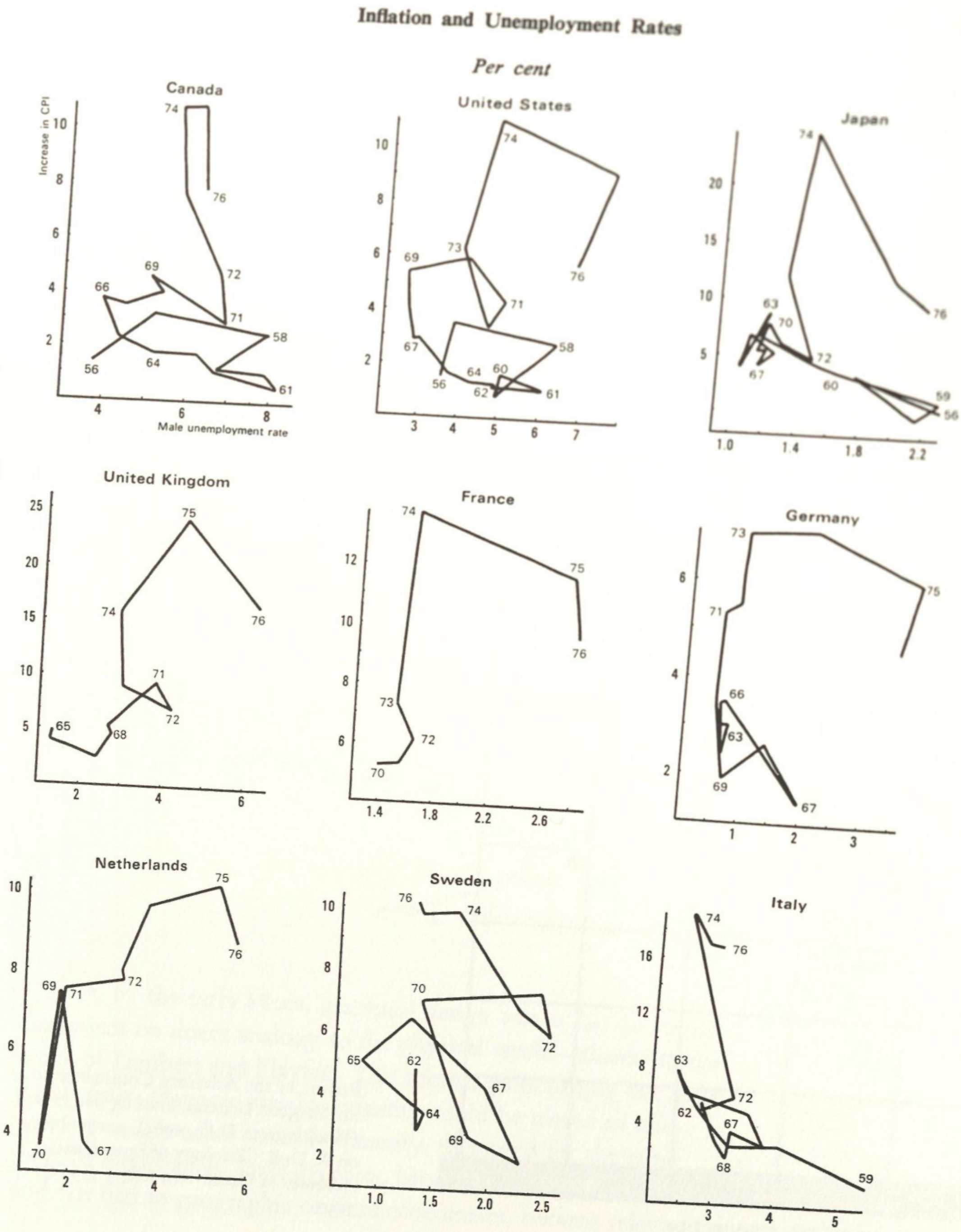
Thus, by the early 1800s, graphical design was at last no longer dependent on direct analogy to the physical world—thanks to the work of Lambert and Playfair. This meant, quite simply but quite profoundly, that any variable quantity could be placed in relationship to any other variable quantity, measured for the same units of observation. Data graphics, because they were relational and not tied to geographic or time coordinates, became relevant to all quantitative inquiry. Indeed, in modern scientific literature, about 40 percent of published graphics have a relational form, with two or more variables (none of which are latitude, longitude, or time). This is no accident, since the relational graphic—in its barest form, the scatterplot and its variants—is the greatest of all graphical designs. It links at least two variables, encouraging and even imploring the viewer to assess the possible causal relationship between the plotted variables. It confronts causal theories that X causes Y with empirical evidence as to the actual relationship between X and Y, as in the case of the relationship between lung cancer and smoking:



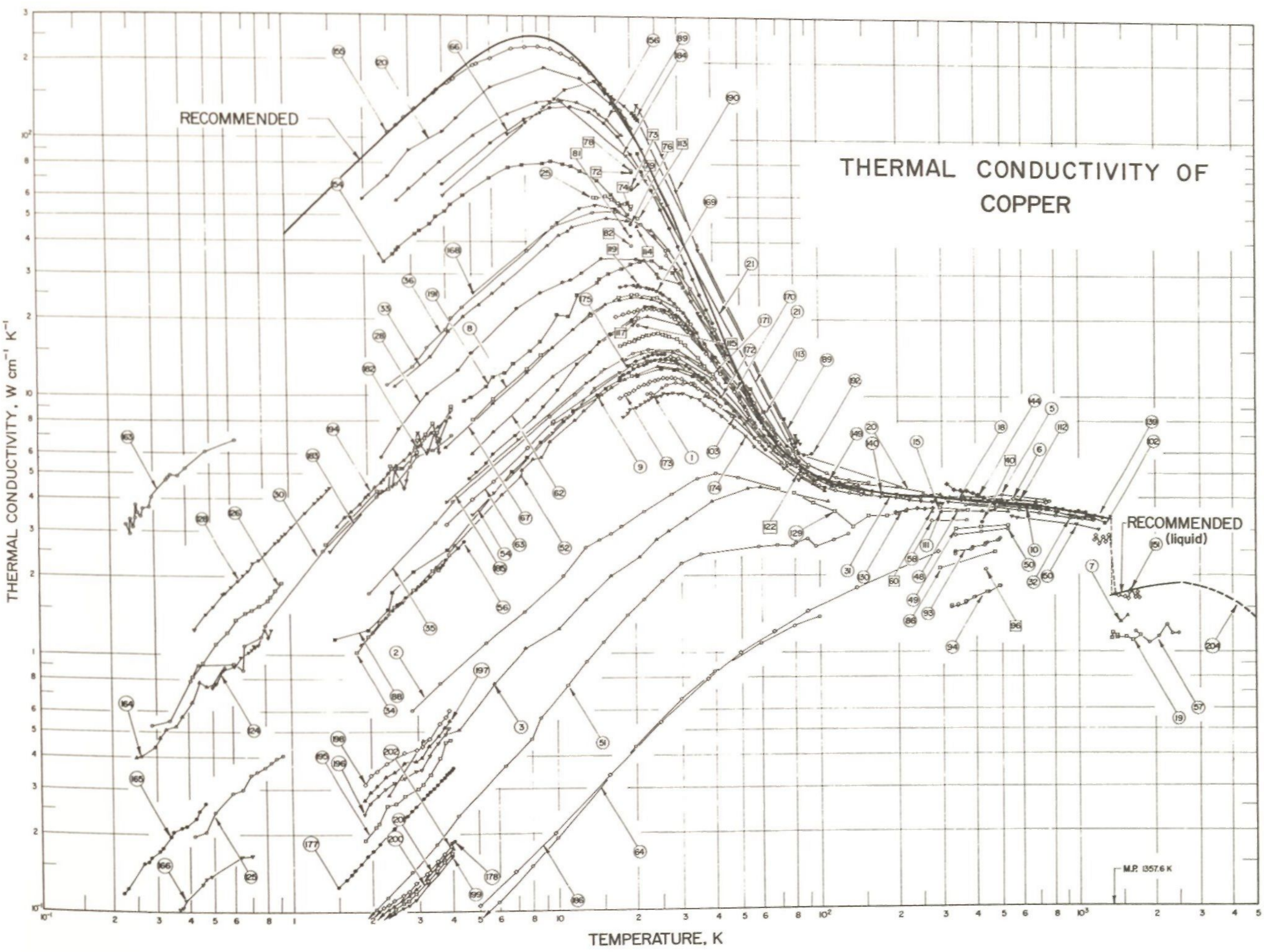
Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General, *Smoking and Health* (Washington, D.C., 1964), p. 176; based on R. Doll, "Etiology of Lung Cancer," *Advances in Cancer Research*, 3 (1955), 1–50.

These small-multiple relational graphs show unemployment and inflation over time in "Phillips curve" plots for nine countries, demonstrating the collapse of what was once thought to be an inverse relationship between the variables.

Paul McCracken, et al., *Towards Full Employment and Price Stability* (Paris, 1977), p. 106.



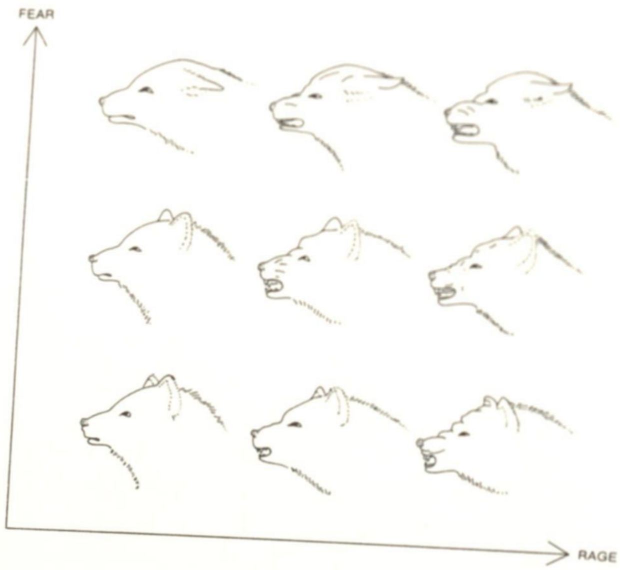
Theory and measured observations diverge in the physical sciences, also. Here the relationship between temperature and the thermal conductivity of copper is assessed in a series of measurements from different laboratories. The connected points are from a single publication, cited by an identification number. The very different answers reported in the published literature result mainly from impurities in the samples of copper. Note how effectively the graphic organizes a vast amount of data, recording findings of hundreds of studies on a single page and, at the same time, enforcing comparisons of the varying results.



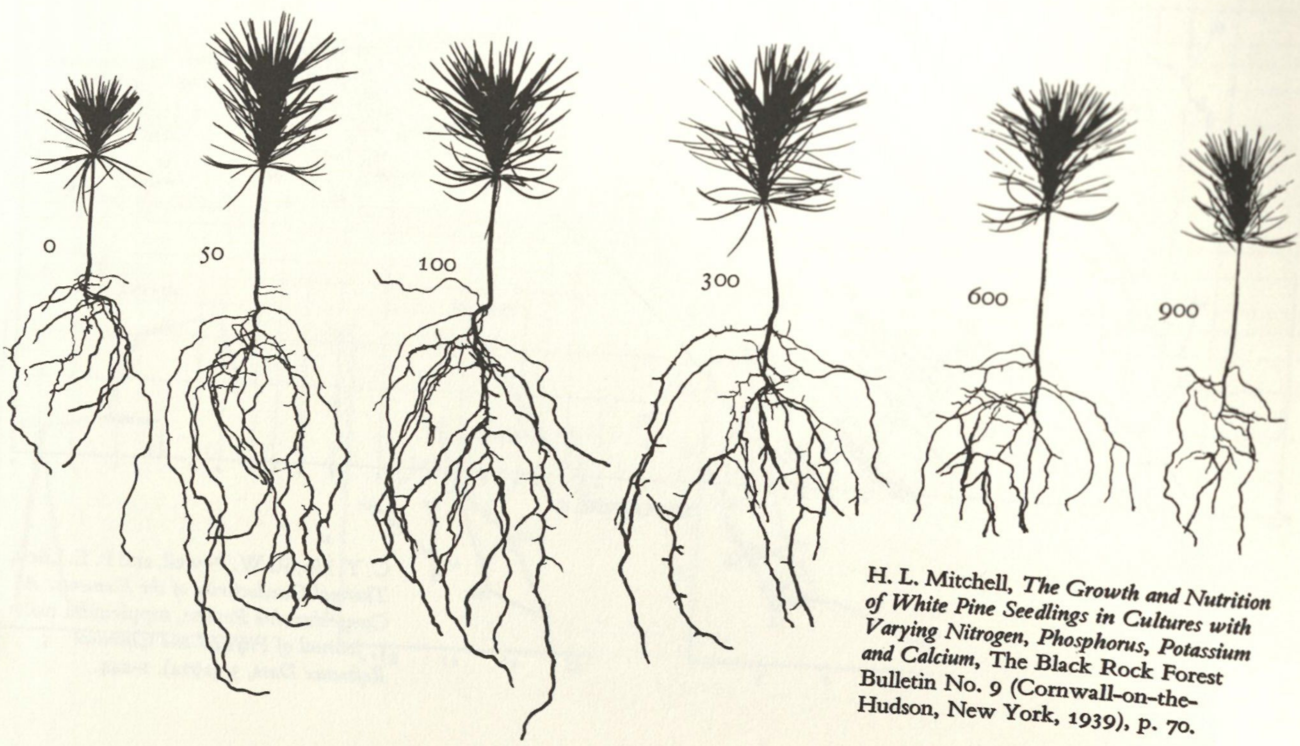
C. Y. Ho, R. W. Powell, and P. E. Liley, *Thermal Conductivity of the Elements: A Comprehensive Review*, supplement no. 1, *Journal of Physical and Chemical Reference Data*, 3 (1974), 1–244.

Finally, two relational designs of a different sort—wherein the data points are themselves data. Here the effect of two variables interacting is portrayed by the faces on the plotting field:

E. C. Zeeman, "Catastrophe Theory," *Scientific American*, 234 (April 1976), based on Konrad Z. Lorenz, *King Solomon's Ring* (New York, 1952).



And similarly, the varying sizes of white pine seedlings after growing for one season in sand containing different amounts of calcium, in parts per million in nutrient-sand cultures:



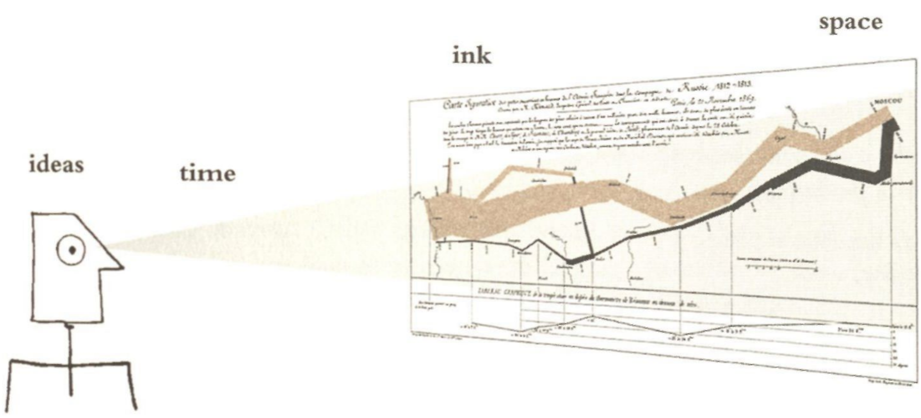
H. L. Mitchell, *The Growth and Nutrition of White Pine Seedlings in Cultures with Varying Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium and Calcium*, The Black Rock Forest Bulletin No. 9 (Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, New York, 1939), p. 70.

Principles of Graphical Excellence

Graphical excellence is the well-designed presentation of interesting data—a matter of *substance*, of *statistics*, and of *design*.

Graphical excellence consists of complex ideas communicated with clarity, precision, and efficiency.

Graphical excellence is that which gives to the viewer the greatest number of ideas in the shortest time with the least ink in the smallest space.



Graphical excellence is nearly always multivariate.

And graphical excellence requires telling the truth about the data.