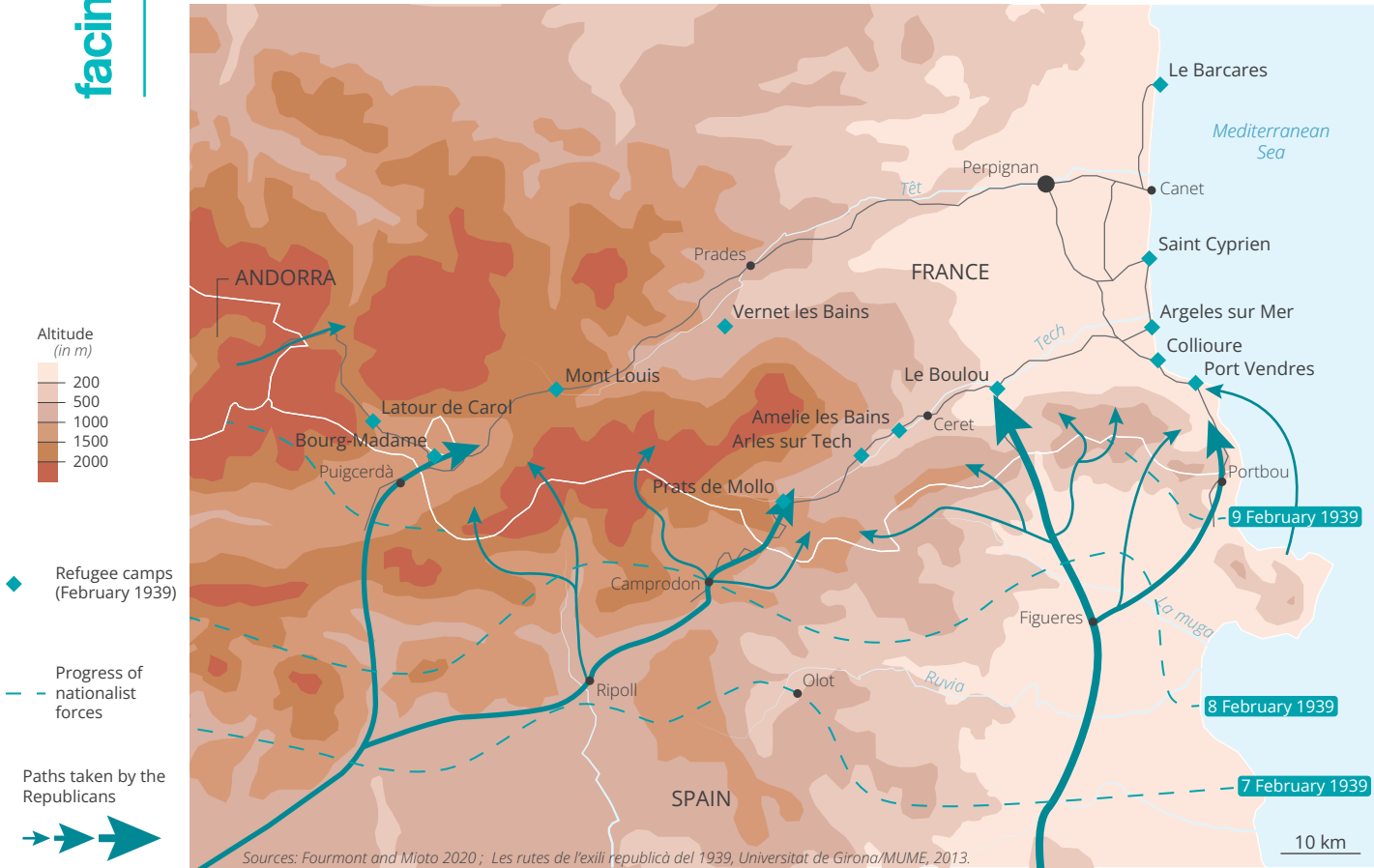


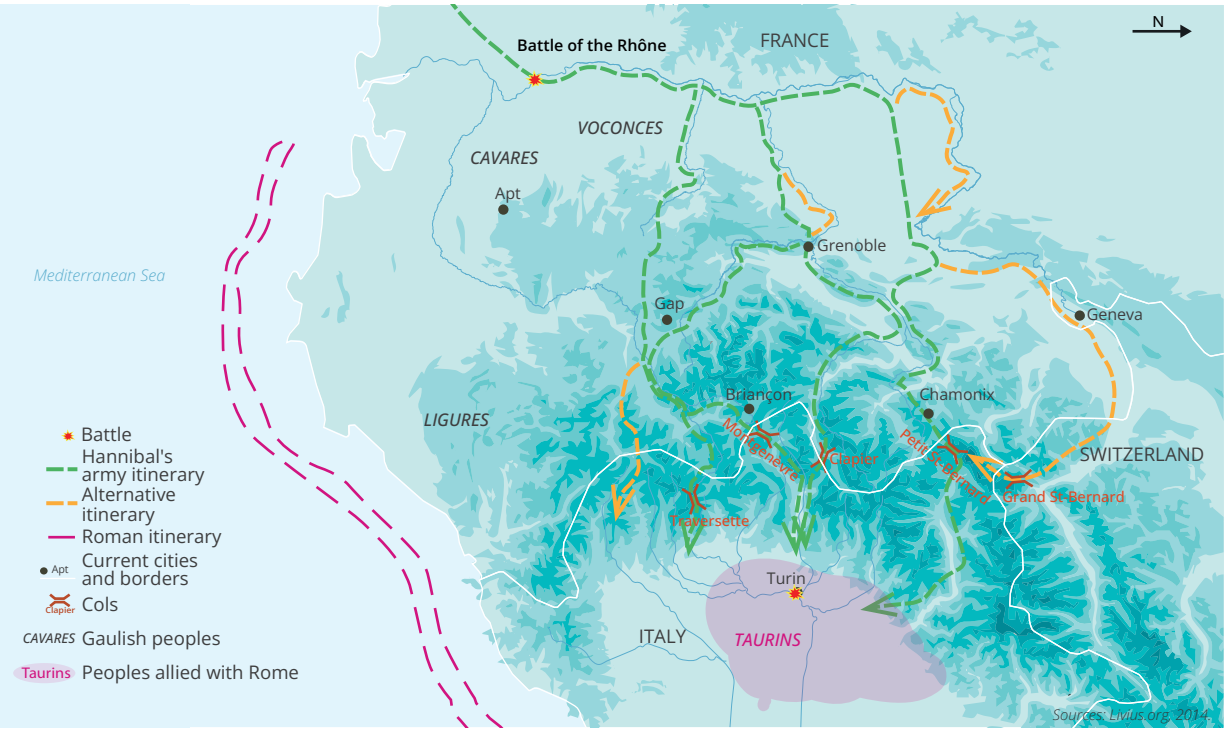
The Spanish Retirada in the Pyrenees in February 1939



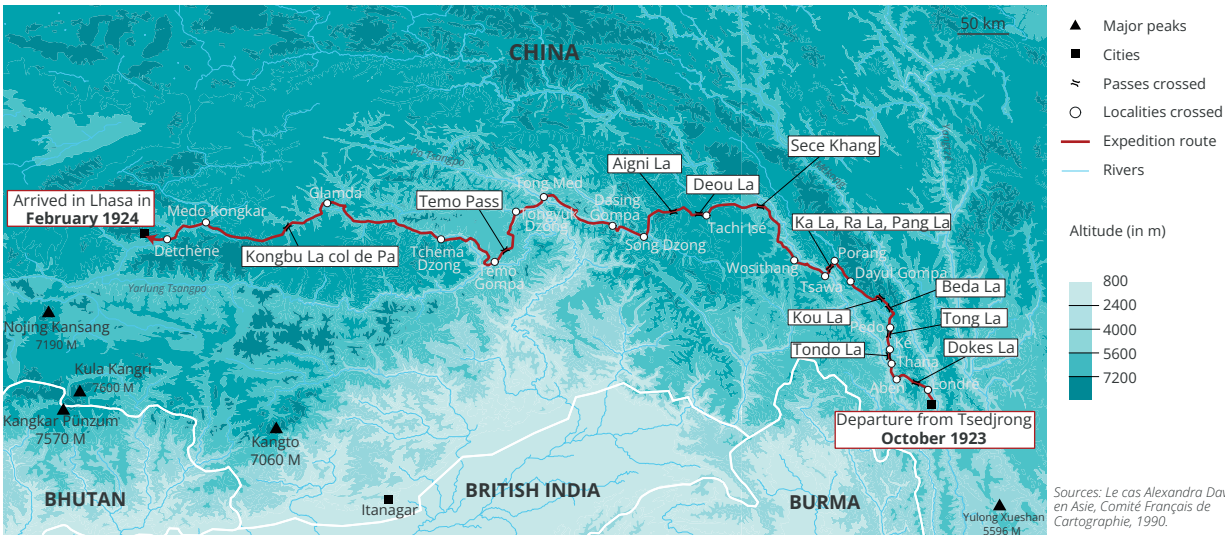
In 1939, Franco's nationalist forces took control of Spain, putting an end to the Spanish Republic. Faced with this threat hundreds of thousands of Republicans, including soldiers, activists, and civilians, fled to France to escape Franco's repression. Public opinion in France was split over the exodus, but the Daladier government eventually opened the border to Spanish civilians on January 28th and to soldiers after surrendering their weapons on February 5. However, this led to family separations, with women, children and the elderly sent to different regions in France, and men placed in hastily organised concentration camps. About 500,000 people crossed the border, but thousands lost their lives due to harsh conditions.

Hannibal's passage through the Alps

Carthaginian General Hannibal Barca undertook a daring action during the Second Punic War around 218 BC. Bypassing Roman defenses located in the western Alps, Hannibal aimed to attack Rome from the north. Leading an army primarily composed of infantry, cavalry, and war elephants, Hannibal navigated through narrow mountain passes, steep trails, and extreme weather conditions. One of the most famous segments of this journey was the successful crossing of the western Alps with elephants, highlighting Hannibal's tactical ingenuity in overcoming natural obstacles such as snow-covered passes. However, this passage came at a cost, with Hannibal losing a significant portion of his troops, including elephants, due to the challenges encountered in the mountains.



Alexandra David-Néel's arrival in Lhasa



Alexandra David-Néel, born in 1868, was a Franco-Belgian explorer, writer, orientalist, and Buddhist. In 1924, aged 55, she became the first Western woman to reach Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet, dressed as a beggar to evade restrictions. She lived there for several years and studied Tibetan

Buddhism. Upon her return to France, she continued to write and publish books. Alexandra David-Néel's work and explorations in Tibet played an essential role in the Western study of Buddhist culture.