Tools or just Sources? The Maps and Graphics of Charles Joseph Minard (1781-1870)

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During my research I stumbled upon the maps of the French engineer Charles Joseph Minard who is known for his comparative visualization of the movement of Napoleon's troops in the campaign against Russia 1812-1813 and Hannibal's march from Spain to Italy. This and other important works made Minard one of the pioneers in information graphics. I think that especially his map of global emigration in 1859 is not only a great source for Minard's perception of global flows, but it might even offer useful techniques for contemporary historians that want to map circulation. Finally, I discovered also a couple of maps that indicate that Minard was not just interested in global flows, but presupposed national containers as frames for trade movements that actually went beyond nations or states. His map of the movement of trade goods transported by the railway in the French Empire reminds us that such graphics were supposed to serve the use of the state - Minard himself was inspector in the French Administration des Ponts et Chaussées.

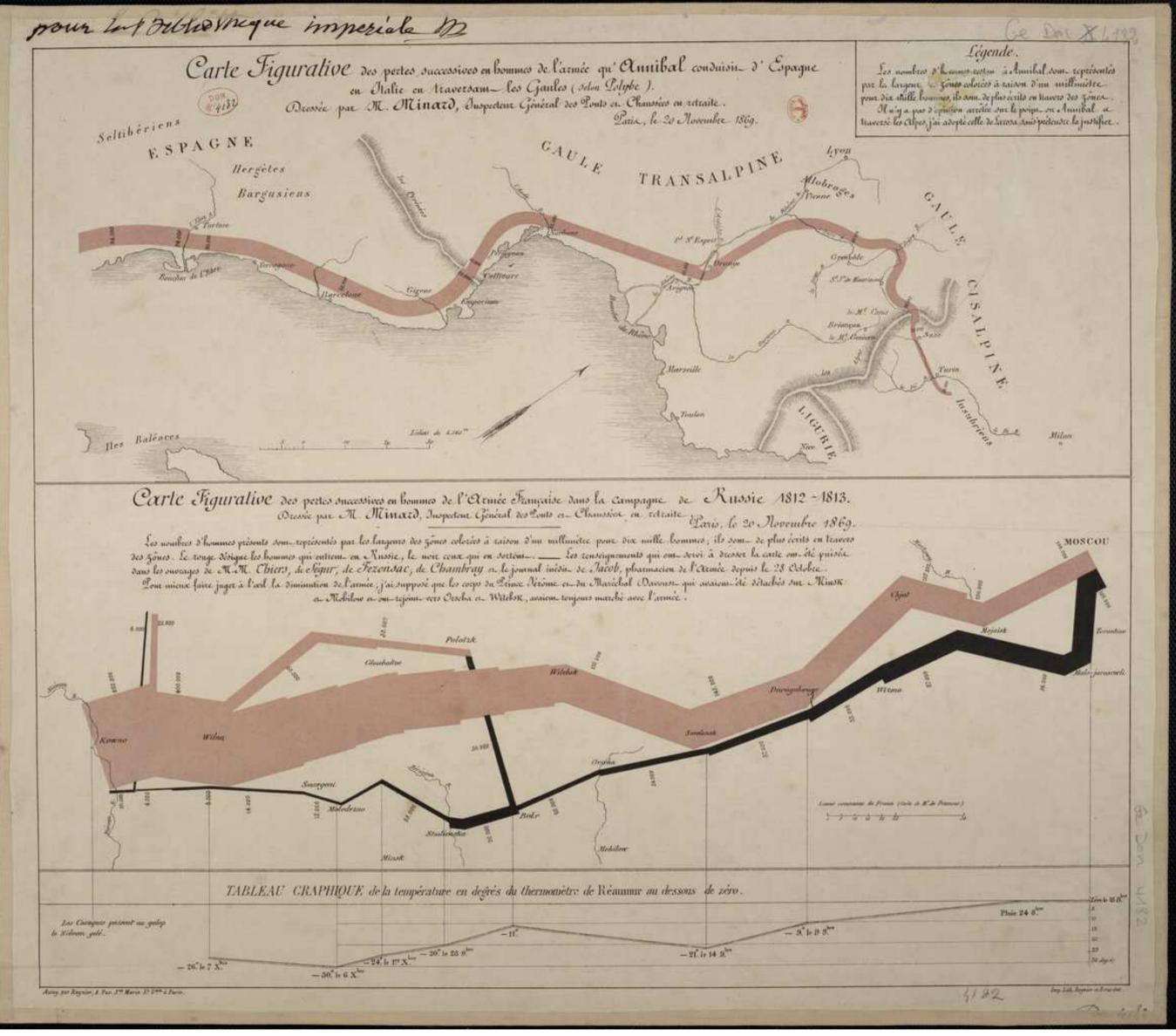
Therefore, we have to encounter his graphics with critical distance and deconstruct the strategies and discourses that had an imprint on the map making. However, Minard's maps remain very interesting and we could discuss at the workshop the question, if they offer tools for historians, or just great sources for 19. century attempts to visualize flowing things and actors.

You find below the following sources:

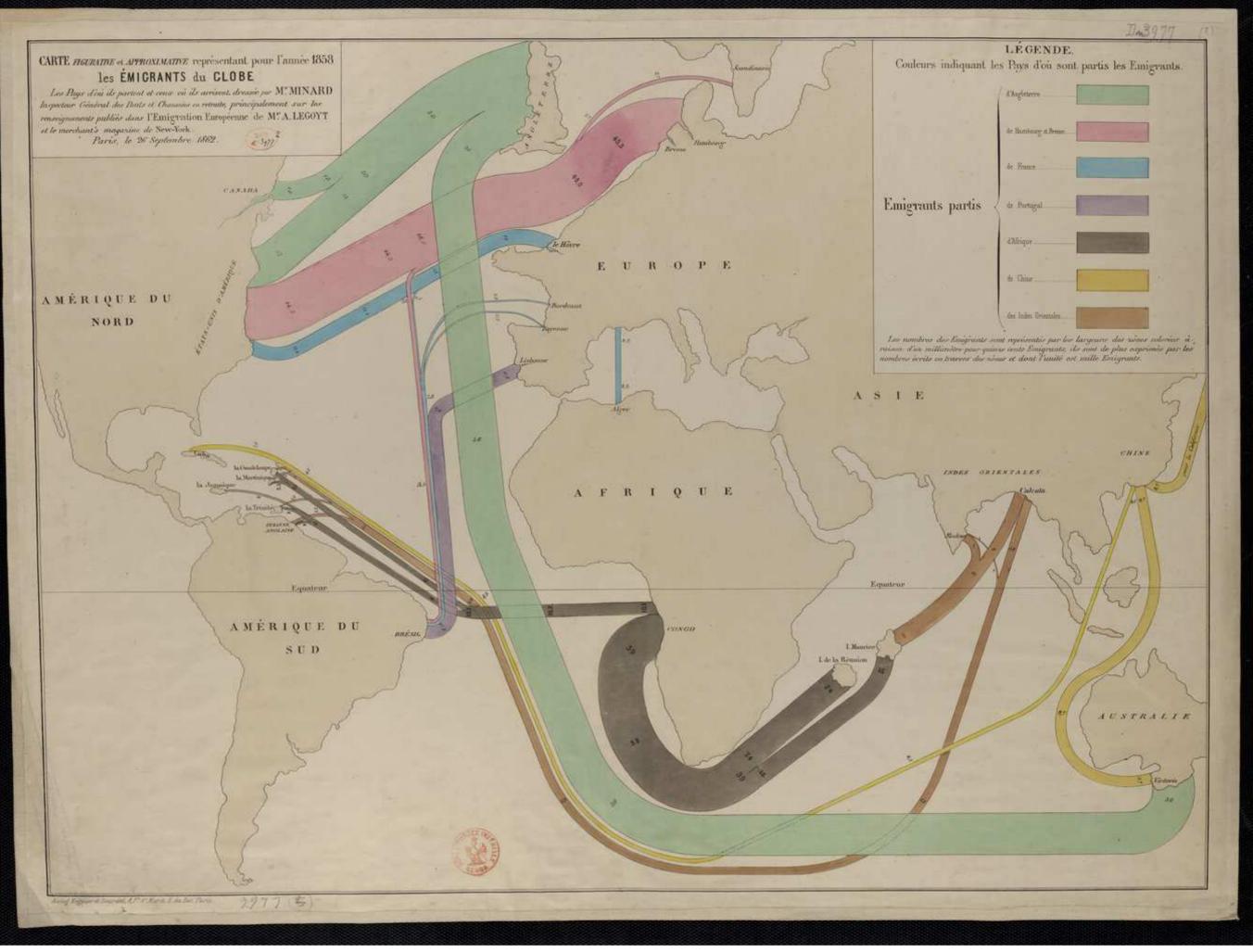
1. "Carte figurative des pertes successives en hommes de l'armée française dans la Campagne de Russie 1812-13 (comparées à celle d'Hannibal durant la 2èmee Guerre Punique) / Minard. Régnier & Dourdet. 1869."

3. "Carte figurative et approximative représentant pour l'année 1858 les émigrants du globe / Minard. Régnier et Dourdet. 1862."

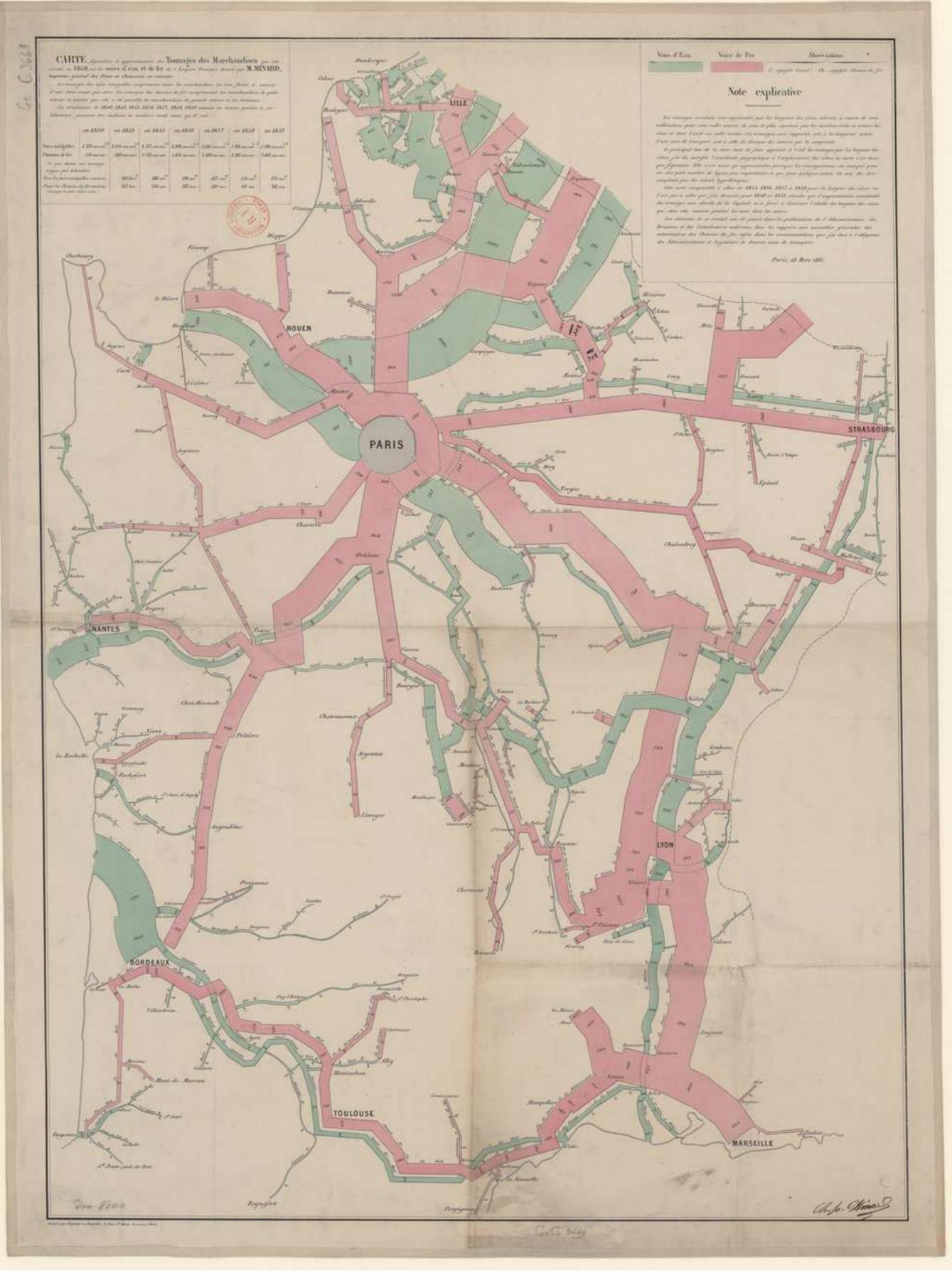
3. "Carte figurative et approximative des tonnages des marchandises qui ont circulé en 1859 sur les voies d'eau et de fer de l'Empire français / dressée par M. Minard, (28 mars 1861). [1861]."



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