

Double-page engraved chart.

THE FIRST COMPLETE CHART OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONTINENT

Carte generale de la Nouvelle Hollande dressee par M. L. Freycinet, Comandant la Goelette le Casuarina, an 1808.

Author
FREYCINET, Louis Claude de Saulses de; and Pierre Francois TARDIEU

Publication date
1811.

Publisher
Imprime par Langlois,

Publication place
Paris,

Physical description
Double-page engraved chart.

Dimensions
497 by 748mm (19.5 by 29.5 inches).

Notes
A fine example of the first complete chart of Australia, showing part of the coast seen by Capt. Ruault Coutance in 1804. The first plate in 'Voyage de decouvertes aux terres australes : historique. Atlas. Deuxieme partie redigee par Mr. L. Freycinet' (1811).

In 1800, Napoleon Bonaparte commissioned captain Nicolas Thomas Baudin (1754–1803) to complete the discovery of Terra Australis. He duly set fort with two ships, ‘Le Geographie’ and ‘Le Naturaliste’, in order to find a strait which supposedly divided the Australian island in two halves. The French zoologist François Auguste Péron (1775–1810), who had studied under the anatomist George Cuvier in Paris, was the naturalist of the expedition, and Louis Claude de Saulses de Freycinet (1779–1842) served as cartographer.

Meanwhile, Matthew Flinders was also attempting a circumnavigation of the Australian Continent, and they met each other in the consequently named “Encounter Bay”. Although Flinders completed the task before Baudin’s expedition, he had the misfortune to be captured and imprisoned for six years at Mauritius on his voyage home, along with his charts and manuscripts. This allowed the French explorers to print their account of the new discoveries before Flinders, and to produce the first complete chart of the Australian continent in 1807.

When Baudin died during the voyage in 1803, Freycinet took over command, much to the relief of all, and brought the expedition back to France. On the return of the expedition, Péron was charged with producing the narrative for publication. However, he died in 1810 before the second volume had been finished, with the result that the work had to be completed by Freycinet.

Bibliography
Literature: Tooley, ‘The Mapping of Australia’, 610.

Provenance

Price: £8000

Inventory reference: 23193

© Daniel Crouch Rare Books Ltd | 2025