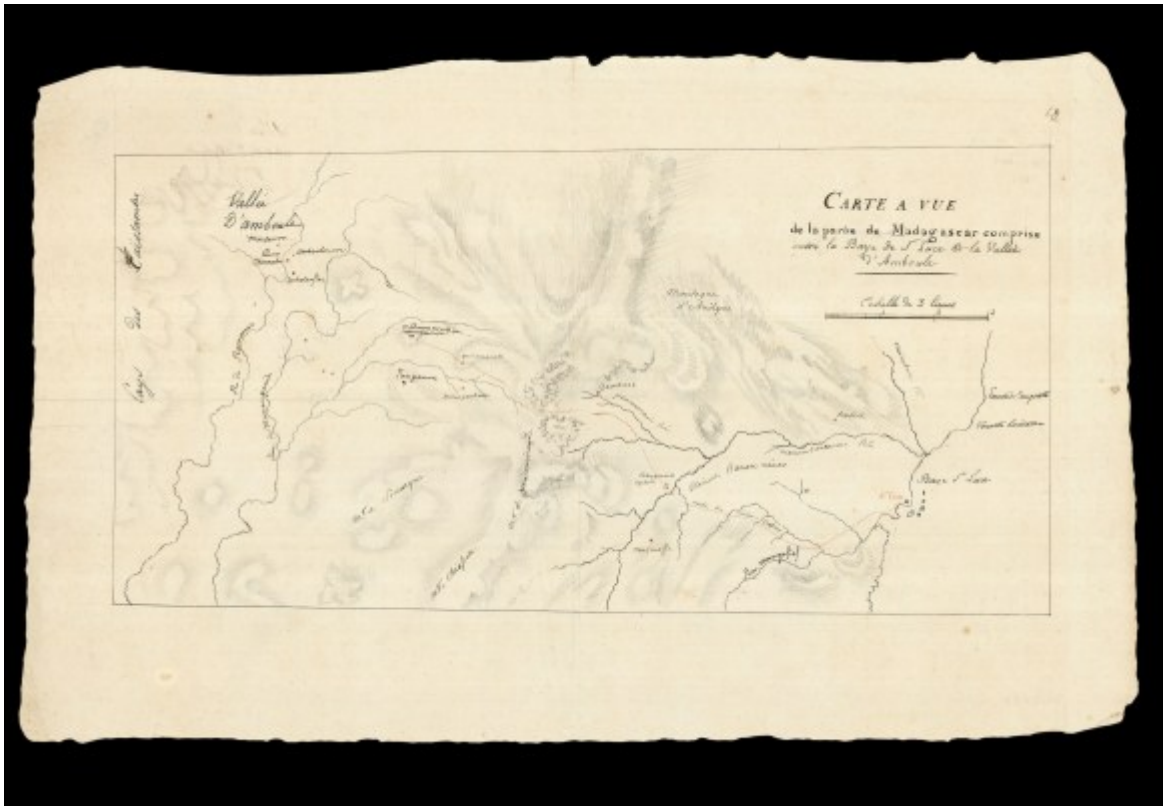


Fair copy manuscript chart, pen and black ink, and graphite, on laid paper with no discernible watermark.

THE ONLY HOPE FOR SURVIVAL FOR THE FRENCH ISLANDS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Carte a le Vue Madagascar, comprise entre la Baye de St. Luce et la Valee D'Amboule.

Author
DEPOT DE LA MARINE; after Jean-Baptiste LISLET-GEOFFROY

Publication date
c1788].

Publisher

Publication place
[Paris,

Physical description
Fair copy manuscript chart, pen and black ink, and graphite, on laid paper with no discernible watermark.

Dimensions
340 by 550mm (13.5 by 21.75 inches).

Notes
Based on the original manuscript map drawn for the Service hydrographique de la marine consacrée aux côtes méridionales de l'île de Madagascar, by Lislet-Geoffroy, now in the BnF. It shows "Le route de Lislet Geoffroy", from the Baye de St. Luce to the summit of Mount Iancourvironde, and

beyond to Ambouleoueve. The verso is inscribed: “Plan de la Valle d’Amboule par M. Lislet-Geoffroy”.

The chart may have been prepared for Henri Freycinet, who served as governor of the, not-so-distant, Île Bourbon (Reunion Island) from 1821 to 1826. Agricultural production of the two French islands in the Indian Ocean (Île de France and Île de Bourbon) barely supported their populations, so imports from Madagascar, which had so far restisted colonisation, provided the only hope for the survival of the French colonies.

Henri Freycinet (1777-1840) was just sixteen years old when he enlisted in the French Revolutionary Navy in 1794. He distinguished himself aboard the ‘Heureux’, and was promoted to Enseign in 1796. However, the true making of him, and his younger brother Louis, was when they were both appointed to the Baudin expedition to “les terres australes”, in 1800; Henri aboard the ‘Géographe’, and his brother, aboard the ‘Naturaliste’. Together they were responsible for charting large swathes of the Western Australian coastline and Tasmania.

On returning to France in 1804, Henri was placed in command of the ‘Phaeton’. Initially patrolling the North Sea, his flotilla sailed for the Caribbean in 1805. By early 1806 they had reached Cayenne. On the 25th of March the ‘Phaeton’ was returning to Santo Domingo when it encountered the British ‘Reindeer’. In the ensuing skirmish, Henri was injured in the leg. The following day, the ‘Phaeton’ was again spotted, this time by the British vessel, the ‘Pique’, and another skirmish was soon underway. Again, Henri was injured, this time by being shot in the left shoulder, but more significantly by losing his right arm to a canon ball. The ‘Phaeton’ surrendered, Henri was taken prisoner, and to Jamaica, but by the 12th of June he was back in Santo Domingo, as part of a prisoner exchange.

In July of 1808, Henri was promoted to “capitaine de frégate”, and in 1809, took command of the ‘Elisa’. In November of 1810, while Henri was attempting to sail from Le Havre meet the main French fleet at Cherbourg, the ‘Elisa’ ran aground and came under heavy British fire, ultimately foundering on rocks between Tatihou Island and Reville, near La Hougue. Henri was court-martialed, but acquitted, and never commanded an official vessel again.

However, after the restoration of the monarchy in 1814, Henri embarked on a second career, as a colonial administrator: firstly of the Isle de Bourbon, now Reunion, from 1821 to 1827; then of French Guiana, from 1827 to 1829, during which he was promoted to Rear-Admiral, and Baron; and lastly of Martinique, from 1829 to 1830. He died in Rochefort, Charente-Maritime, in southwest France, in 1840.

The mapmaker
Jean-Baptist Lislet-Geoffroy (1755-1836) was born on the French island colony of Réunion, east of Madagascar, the illegitimate son of Jean-Baptiste Geoffroy, and Niama a freed slave. In 1772, at the tender age of 16, he accompanied the French naturalist Philibert Commerson to the erupting volcano at Piton Bert, Réunion, as local guide and herbalist, and painted a rather famous watercolor of the scene. Soon afterwards Lislet-Geoffroy moved to Madagascar, where he became student apprentice to Bernard Boudin de Tromelin, with whom he served throughout the Anglo-French War (1778-1783). From 1780 he trained as a cartographer, and was eventually commissioned to map Madagascar, followed in 1794 by the Seychelles. In 1786, Lislet-Geoffroy was elected to the Royal Academy of Sciences (Paris) as a corresponding member. His chart of Madagascar, ‘Carte réduite des îles de France et de La Réunion’ was first published in 1797, and then in English in 1819 by Aaron Arrowsmith.

Depot de la Marine

This anonymous manuscript chart was probably prepared by the Dépôt de la Marine, known more formally as the Dépôt des cartes et plans de la Marine, the central charting institution of France. The centralization of hydrography in France began in earnest when Jean-Baptiste Colbert became First Minister of France in 1661. Under his watch, the first Royal School of Hydrography began operating, as did the first survey of France's coasts (1670-1689).

The Dépôt itself began as the central deposit of charts for the French Navy. In 1720, the Navy consolidated its collection with those government materials covering the colonies, creating a single large repository of navigation. By 1737, the Dépôt was creating its own original charts and, from 1750, they participated in scientific expeditions to determine the accurate calculation of longitude.

In 1773, the Dépôt received a monopoly over the composition, production, and distribution of navigational materials, solidifying their place as the main producer of geographic knowledge in France. Dépôt-approved charts were distributed to official warehouses in port cities and sold by authorized merchants. The charts were of the highest quality, as many of France's premier mapmakers worked at the Dépôt in the eighteenth century, including Philippe Bauche, Jacques-Nicolas Bellin, Rigobert Bonne, Jean Nicolas Buache, and Charles-François Beautemps-Beaupré.

Bibliography
See Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Cartes et plans, GE SH 18 PF 216 DIV 4 P 6 D

Provenance
Provenance
1. Louis Henri de Saulces de Freycinet;
2. Freycinet family archives

Price:

Inventory reference: 22672

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