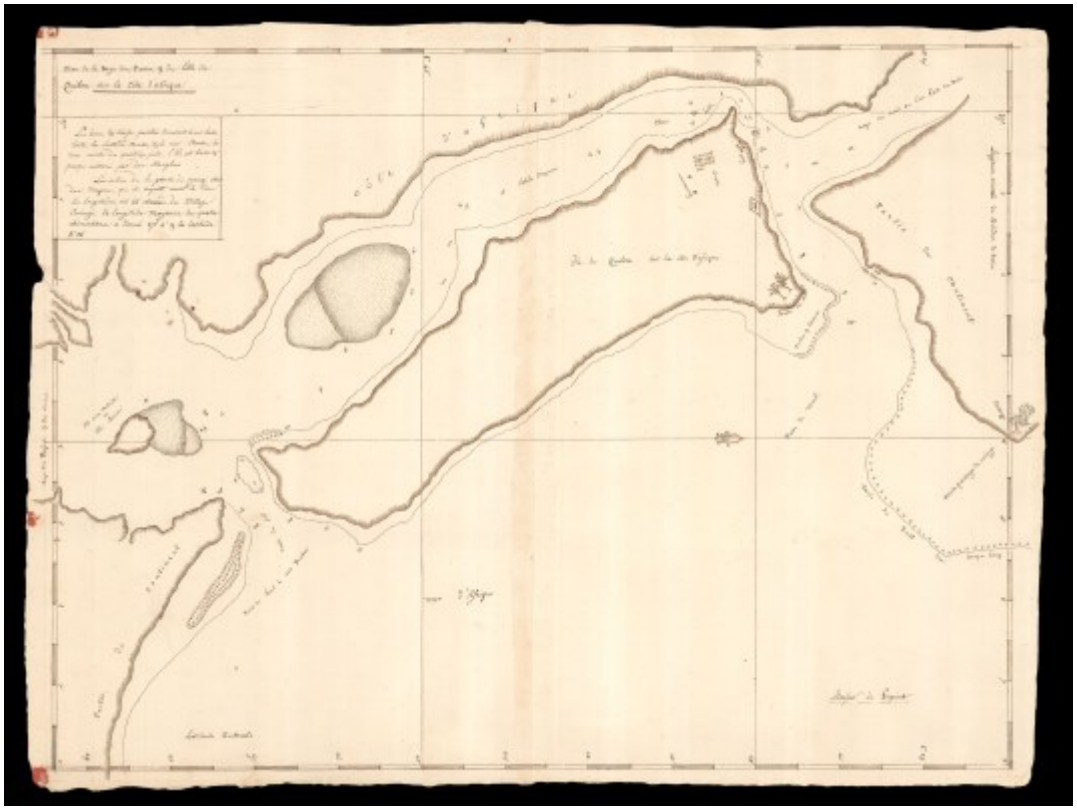


Fair copy manuscript chart, pen and ink on laid paper watermarked “Annonay” (before 1799).

“...THE ISLAND IS LOW AND ALMOST SURROUNDED BY MANGROVES”

Plan de la Baye Des Passes & de l’Isle de Quiloa sur la Cote d’afrique.

Author
DEPOT DE LA MARINE

Publication date
c1789].

Publisher
Depot de la Marine,

Publication place
[Paris,

Physical description
Fair copy manuscript chart, pen and ink on laid paper watermarked “Annonay” (before 1799).

Dimensions
525 by 705mm (20.75 by 27.75 inches).

Notes
An exceptionally detailed, and apparently unpublished chart of the island of Quiloa, now Kilwa Kisiwani, and surrounding islands and roads, off the coast of Tanzania, East Africa. From the Freycinet family archive, this is a fair copy of an original manuscript map, probably prepared by the Depot de la Marine. The map is inscribed on the front and back “Monsieur de Freycinet”, and may have been prepared for Henri Freycinet, who served as governor of the, not-so-distant, Île Bourbon

(Reunion Island) from 1821 to 1826.

The map contains a note, stating that: “The banks and dotted reefs are exposed at low water are all thick and thin, the sea rises fourteen feet, the island is low and almost surrounded by mangroves. The trees at Point Curingi are Mapou [kapok], which are visible before the land. The longitudes were observed from the village of Curingi”.

Alexander Dalrymple published a similar chart, ‘Plan of the Bays and Islands of Quiloa on the East Coast of Africa… From a French MS’ (May 31st. 1789), although it is not nearly as detailed.

Kilwa Kisiwani has been an important trading post for at least 2,000 years, and makes an appearance as such in Ptolemy’s ‘Geographia’. From “the eleventh century the sultans of Kilwa grew rich from control of the gold trade. Gold was mined at Great Zimbabwe far off in the interior, and carried by caravan and then by boat to Fatimid Cairo, passing through Kilwa on its way north. Kilwa grew in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and is mentioned by several early chroniclers. The most significant standing ruins from this period are the Great Mosque and the Palace at Husuni Kubwa. The palace was unrivaled in East Africa for its architectural sophistication and splendor. Founded in the fourteenth century, the Great Mosque was, up until the sixteenth century, the largest mosque in sub- Saharan Africa. In 1498, the Portuguese arrived in East Africa and quickly asserted control over the region’s trade. They built a fort at the edge of the town, which was completed in 1505” (World Monuments Fund online). The period between 1771 and 1784, when this chart was probably drawn, was dominated by “a new singleness of purpose by all concerned parties and by the beginnings of serious French activity north of Cape Delgado [East Africa], which was the northern limit of Portuguese influence” (Alpers).

Bibliography
See Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Cartes et plans, GE SH 18 PF 212 DIV 10 P 4 D.

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

Price: £5000

Inventory reference: 22741

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