



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

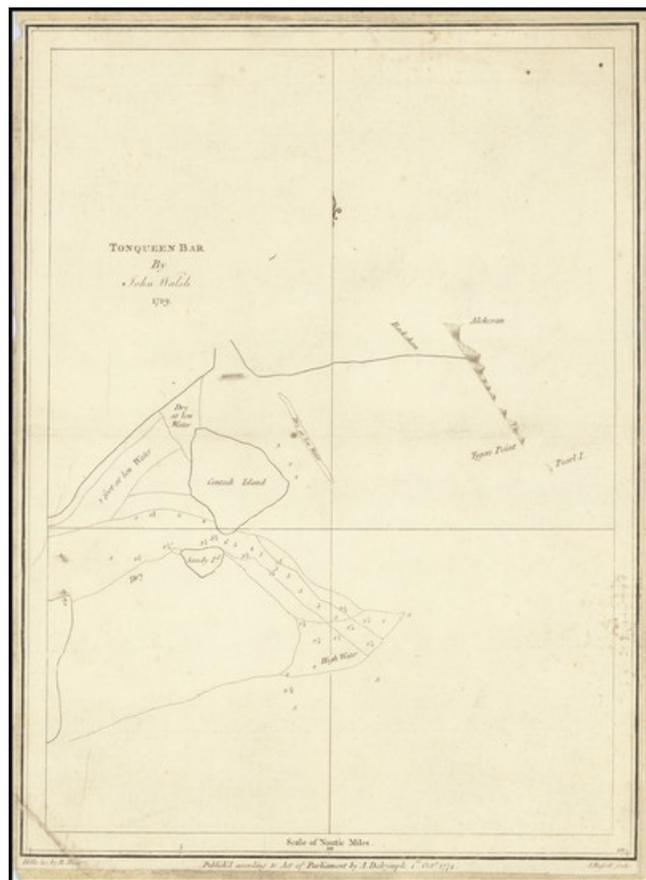
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(Vietnam) Tonqueen Bar By John Walsh 1719. [Thái Bình river system]

Stock#: 66405
Map Maker: Dalrymple
Date: 1775 circa
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG+
Size: 10.3 x 13.5 inches
Price: \$ 950.00



Description:

Striking Chart of the Tonkin Bar in the Gulf of Tonkin

Diagrammatic, focused plan of the Tonkin Bar, based on early eighteenth-century sketches. The chart shows the entrance of the Song Thai Binh and the Song Van-Uc into the Gulf of Tonkin and was published by Alexander Dalrymple, renowned hydrographer of the East Indies.

These two rivers, Song Thai Binh and Song Van-Uc, and their inland channels and canals gave boat access to Tongking ("Eastern Capital", now Hanoi; formerly Cachao in the Portuguese rendering of the native Vietnamese), where the East India Company had a factor and a factory for trade.

The chart is deceptively simple in that it includes much empty space. As Dalrymple explains in the first volume of his important collection of charts, the *General Collection of Nautical Publications*, "Blank Space



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does not denote that there are no Dangers in that Space; but only denotes that the Dangers in such Space are unknown.”

This minimalism follows the manuscript source material it was based on, observations from John Walsh in 1719. It was meant to be used in conjunction with other charts and plans that Dalrymple had also published in order to offer as complete a picture possible of the hydrography of the area then available.

The entrance to the larger river, at left, is obstructed by two islands. The tidal flow means that the areas near these islands and the shore are often dry when the tide is low, as indicated by notes on the chart. The narrow channel to enter the wider gulf is shown in the map with dotted lines and sounding depths. This area remains quite hazardous today, despite dredging.

A series of hills are included to the east, as they would be seen from the river's entrance. An inscription in the bottom left explains that these hills were engraved by B. Henry, while the rest of the chart was done by J. Russell. This points to the specificity of work within chartmaking. Benjamin Henry was an engraver who specialized in hill shading, as seen here. Henry also accompanied Dalrymple on his 1775 trip to Madras, where it is likely he died. John Russell engraved several plans for Dalrymple in his career as a jobbing cartographer and engraver.

The identity of Walsh, however, is more elusive. He was most likely a supercargo on an English East India Company (EIC) vessel. As Dalrymple worked for the EIC at several times in his career, including as their hydrographer, he would have had access to their manuscript charts and journals, as well as his own manuscript collection, which he then compiled and published in various projects.

Publication and states of this chart

This plan was published in 1774, part of Dalrymple's *Plans of Ports in the East Indies*. This work, privately published by subscription, was issued in six installments; the EIC alone subscribed for 100 copies. Each installment featured 12-20 port plans; each plan was accompanied by explanatory texts printed on a separate page. The final installment was issued in April 1775.

This plan was first released in October 1774, in the fourth installment. It was printed with an article by Sir Edmund Halley, Fellow of the Royal Society and renowned astronomer (and mapmaker), that had run in the journal of the Royal Society, the *Philosophical Transactions* (“An account of the course of the tides at Tonqueen in a letter from Mr Francis Davenport, July 15, 1678, with the theory of them, at the Barr of Tonqueen, by the learned Edmund Halley Fellow of the Royal Society”, *PT* 13 (1684): 677-688).

There are four known states of the Tonqueen Bar plan:



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1. Undated with engraved attribution to E. Walsh. Issued in October 1774 with the fourth instalment.
2. Late 1774-early 1775. Has the "Hills by B. Henry" note.
3. Attribution changes to John Walsh and is dated 1719. Made before April 1775.
4. Short lengths of radial line, depending on the crossing of the north-south and east-west engraved lines as their centre, added between the neatline and the solid border. Printed in or after 1779.

The present item is an example of the third state.

Detailed Condition: