THE LIMNER COMPANY



EDWARD NASH (1778 - 1821)

Portrait miniature of Ghazi-ud-Din Haidar (1769–1827), Nawab of Awadh (Oudh)

Circa: After 1801

After 1801

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory registration number: XUH35JZB

Engraved gilt-metal mount

Oval, 30 mm (1 $^{1}/_{8}$ inches) high

This portrait of the Nawab of Awadh (Oudh) mimics the smaller portraits painted by John Smart in India for other rulers, including miniatures produced of Portrait of Muhammad 'Ali Khan, Nawab of Arcot and Prince of the Carnatic (1718-1795), that Smart made for ring settings.[1]

Edward Nash sailed to India on the 'Hercules', arriving in Bombay in May 1801, returning to England on the 'Dover Castle' in July 1810. As Ghazi-ud-Din Haidar became ruler in 1814, it seems that Nash portrayed him prior to his ascendance. The oil painter Robert Home (1752–1834) became court artist in 1814, continuing in this role until his retirement in 1828 and designing a diamond-studded crown for his royal master, which can be seen in many portraits. [2]

On the death of his father, Ghazi-ud-Din Haidar became the last nawab wazir Nawab of Awadh (Oudh) (ruling 1814-1818) and the first King of Oudh (ruling 1818-1827).

The Nawabs of Oudh had a record of patronising European artists, and a taste for western extravagances that often threatened to bankrupt the state. Ghazi-ud-din Haidar’s uncle, Asaf-ud-Daula,

spent lavishly on jewels and trinkets, and employed, amongst others, John Zoffany.[3] It is said that other artists working for Asaf-ud-Daula had great difficulty ever completing group portraits of the court, on account of the Nawab regularly beheading his ministers. In contrast, Ghazi-ud-din Haidar appears to have been a fairly benign ruler, content merely to enjoy the trappings of power and the attentions of British artists. Sir Edward Paget, the British army's commander in chief in India, observed that he was 'an extremely good and kind hearted man, but like myself preferring anything and everything to his business. Accordingly, instead of attending to affairs of State, he spends his time in boat-building and house-building, in turning, in printing, in collecting European and especially English commodities of all sorts, descriptions and kinds, and, in short, idling.' The Louvre Abu-dhabi holds a painting of Ghazi Al-Din Haidar entertaining British guests, likely Mordaunt Ricketts, then representative of the East India Company in Lucknow, accompanied by his wife Charlotte, commissioned after his reign but representative of his cosmopolitan court.

[1] See Sotheby's, London, 3 July 2013, lot 159.

[2] For an example of Home's portraits of the Nawab of Oudh see Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, accession number BATVG : P : 1937.15.

[3] Asaf-ud-Daula is depicted in Zoffany's most celebrated Indian painting, 'Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match' [Tate Britain], which depicts the loose morals and extravagance of the Oudh court.