



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match at Lucknow [Key Image]

**Stock#:** 86563  
**Map Maker:** Zoffany  
**Date:** 1794 circa  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** See Description  
**Size:** 13.75 x 9.25 inches  
**Price:** \$ 875.00



### Description:

#### ***Key Image for One of the Defining Images of 18th-Century Colonial Life in India.***

Rare key engraving for Johann Zoffany and Richard Earlom's masterwork 1792 mezzotint *Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match*.

The key is scarce, this being the first time we have seen it in commerce. Several examples can be found at major art museums, especially in the U.K. and U.S.

The key labels and names 19 people in attendance at the match, as follows:

1. Asof a Dowla, Nabob Vizier
2. The Nabob, Salar Jung
3. Hafeen Rezza Khaun
4. Coll. Martin
5. Coll. Mordaunt
6. Coll. Polier
7. Mr. Wombwell
8. Mr. Wheeler
9. Mr. Johnson
10. Lieut Pigot
11. Lieut Golding
12. Mr. Taylor



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### Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match at Lucknow [Key Image]

13. Mr. Orr
14. Mr. Gregory
15. Mr. Humphry
16. Mr. Zoffanij
17. Cock Fighter to Coll. Mordaunt.
18. Do. to the Nabob Vizier.
19. Do. to Mr. Gregory.

The album leaf on which the print is mounted also includes an 1803 letterpress page from a periodical lamenting the practice of cock-fighting and mentioning its popularity in Sumatra and contested and waning popularity in Great Britain.

#### Context

The central figure of the picture, other than perhaps the cockfight itself, is the Nawab of Oudh, who is presented in a strange and somewhat buffoonish manner. The Nawab was held in very low regard by his British contemporaries, probably in large part because of his well-documented homosexuality. The man's proclivities are strongly hinted at in Zoffany's image, as he longingly looks towards Colonel Mordaunt (the thin man whose hand almost touches the Nawab's) with a hint of an erection, said to be much more obvious after the original painting's recent cleaning. In a letter from one of the painting's sitters to another, Claude Martin (a famous French colonial and Company School paintings collector) wrote to Ozias Humphrey commenting on Colonel Mordaunt's relationship with the Nawab:

*Colonel Mordaunt is now at the vizier's court, hunting, fighting cocks and doing all he can to please the Nabob in the expectation of being paid the large sums due to him by the Prince... although the Prince has dark and sinister intentions, but I fear much of his success, as the vizier is not much willing to pay his debts particularly to Europeans for what I know of his character I think it such that if one could read in his heart then one would perceive it loaded with many dark and sinister intentions and as you know those that compose his court you then ought to know what man he is. A man that delight in Elephant and Cocks fighting would delight in something worse if he feared nothing.*

In this context, the Nawab's sexual arousal may have been a joke on the part of Warren Hastings. The combination of cockfighting (which even at the end of the 18th century was seen as lowbrow entertainment) and the allusions to proscribed sexuality, combine for a louche undercurrent that is far more than immediately meets the eye.

Zoffany included himself in the picture; he is the figure at right sitting and holding a brush while staring



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**Colonel Mordaunt's Cock Match at Lucknow [Key Image]**

straight at the viewer.

**Detailed Condition:**

Line engraving cut down and half-mounted on a sheet of slightly later paper, folding out to show the whole image. The key cut down (with loss of imprint line) and mounted on the same sheet. Letterpress sheet lamenting cock-fighting is mounted on the same album page.