



Lithographed Editions of Firdawsī's Shāhnāmah

Editor: Prof. Dr. Ulrich Marzolph, University of Göttingen



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Persian author Firdawsī's Shāhnāmah, completed at the beginning of the eleventh century C. E., is both a monument of classical Persian literature and of Iranian national identity. While scholarly activities dealing with the work have mostly focused on the establishment of a faithful and reliable text, the numerous "Oriental" editions of the Shāhnāmah have so far not been regarded as deserving attention in their own right. Neither the total number of different editions of the Shāhnāmah ever published nor the exact nature of the known editions has been thoroughly studied.

The first complete edition of the Shāhnāmah - printed in movable type - was prepared by Turner Macan and published in four volumes in Calcutta 1829. Besides this editio princeps, other nineteenth century editions printed in movable type were published by Jules Mohl (Paris 1838-1878) and Johann August Vullers (Leiden 1877-1879), respectively. The vast majority of "Oriental" editions of the Shāhnāmah, however, was printed by way of lithography. Starting with the edition Bombay 1262/1846 some thirty lithographed editions of the Shāhnāmah were published, most of them in Indian cities such as Bombay, Lucknow, and Cawnpore. A total of five lithographed editions were published in Iran up to the large sized edition prepared by order of Husayn Pāshā Khān Amīr Bahādur known as Shāhnāmah-yī Bahādurī (Tehran 1319-1322/1901-1904).

Because of their distinct characteristics, the lithographed editions of the Shāhnāmah are of particular relevance for the study of the work's appreciation in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. First, due to the specific circumstances of lithographic printing, each copy of a given edition is potentially unique. Second, the various editions might differ in wording and might thus offer additional clues for the establishment of the work's text. And third, all of the Shāhnāmah's lithographed editions contain illustrations adding to their popular appeal.

The present collection offers the complete text of a total of thirteen lithographed editions of the Shāhnāmah, including the initially published Indian editions Bombay 1262/1846 and Bombay 1266/1849, the first Iranian edition Tehran 1265-67/1851-53, all four of the ensuing editions published in Iran, and a selection of eight Indian editions published in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Beyond their importance as historically produced texts, some editions are noteworthy for their calligraphy, such as the 1277/1855 Bombay edition prepared by Awliyā' Samī, or the 1307/1889 Tehran edition prepared by Muḥammad-Riḍā Ṣafā "Sulṭān al-kuttāb". Particularly the illustrations in the Iranian editions are quite appealing and have been produced by major artists of the day such as Mirzā 'Alī-Qolī Khuṭī (Tehran 1265-67/1851-53), Ustād Sattār (Tabriz 1275/1858), and Muṣṭafā (Tehran 1307/1889).

PRODUCT INFORMATION

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- Number of fiches: 213
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