

Engraved map with hand colouring, in Farsi.

THE OCTOPUS IN PERSIAN

[A Persian caricature map based on Fred Rose's 'Octopus' map of 1877].

Author
[after ROSE, Frederick William]

Publication date
[c1880].

Publisher

Publication place

Physical description
Engraved map with hand colouring, in Farsi.

Dimensions
420 by 645mm. (16.5 by 25.5 inches).

Notes
A previously unrecorded Persian serio-comic map issued around 1880 in Iran.

The octopus map is a copy of Fred Rose's 'Serio Comic War Map', published in 1887 in response to the Balkan Crises. It shows imperial Russia as a menacing octopus, reaching out into Europe, forgetting the lesson learned during the Crimean War: although not the first to use the octopus to represent a power-hungry state, Rose's map popularised it in propaganda maps from then on. The map appears to be a copy of a French variant, as a Farsi inscription at the bottom reads "Replica of a

map which was published and illustrated in Paris". This may explain the variations from Rose's original; for example, France is shown as Marianne in Phrygian cap holding a scroll with a heart rather than as Marshal MacMahon, suggesting an Iranian sympathy with France. It therefore no longer attracts the attention of Germany as in the Rose map; Germany looks east towards Russia instead.

At the time this map was printed, Persia was ruled by Naser al-Din Shah Qajar. Naser al-Din's reign saw conflict with both Britain and Russia; the Anglo-Persian War from 1856-7 forced him to renounce the Persian claim on the city of Herat, and Russia has conquered Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in 1881. Those within Iran were aware that the Qajar dynasty was financially dependent on both countries, even as Naser al-Din tried to regain power over Persian territories and exploit the enmity between them. This pair of maps was clearly issued together, and were intended to illustrate and satirize conflicting perspectives of the political atmosphere in Europe for an educated Iranian elite.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 24177

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