

**Societas Iranologica Europaea**

**Department of Iranian Studies  
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**The Geopolitical Characteristics of Iran's Qajar era from the Viewpoints of Russian Itinerary Writers**

In 19<sup>th</sup> century, Iran gained a significant standing in international system (that had been based on the balance of powers). On one hand, given Iran's strategic position, as a corridor state, powerful countries could not afford to ignore Iran, which, at the time played an important role in competition among great powers. On the other hand, Iran functioned as a buffer state among two intrusive and powerful governments of Russia and England. Iran was neither colony nor independent and it just played the role of a buffer in the breathtaking competition between two superpowers. Moreover, at that time, Iran and Central Asia were involved in a Great game. Russia regarded Iran as an important country in order to damage England's interests in India and Afghanistan. For England, Iran was of utmost significance to curb Russia's interests in the Persian Gulf and prevent other powers' influence on India. In these circumstances, itinerary writers and memoir-writing diplomats played the role of mediator to understand the "other" side. In this paper, the writer has tried to investigate and survey the specifications of Russian Iranology by studying the content of itineraries and memoirs of Russians who traveled to Iran in the era of Qajar reign. Based on three elements, i.e. *corridor state*, *buffer state* and *Great game*; the writer tries to reassess the factors which contributed to Russians' superiority in Iran-Russia ties.