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- 1 Less than ten years after his invasion of Egypt, in 1807 Napoleon played the Oriental card again in his struggle against Great Britain and sent a military mission led by Gen. Gardane to Persia, with the aim of paving the way for an overland invasion of India and, above all, gathering information on the lands to be crossed by the expeditionary force. The article is divided in a brief introduction, several sections devoted to the description of one or more Persian provinces, and a conclusion: the Author presents a sort of summary of the information (partly still unpublished) provided by the different members of the Gardane mission (one of whom was not a Frenchman but the Italian aristocrat, Capt. Carlo Bianchi d'Adda of the Royal Engineers of the Kingdom of Italy). Eventually, the members of the mission agreed that an invasion was not feasible (owing to geographical distance, climate, logistical and

political problems, the poor state of roads and health conditions) and that Persia could not become a viable ally on account of its military and political conditions. However, although Napoleon's project failed before starting, the Gardane mission retains its importance for modern scholars, since it provided a systematic political, social, economic and geographic survey of Persia during the early Qajar period and on the eve of the Great Game. That these reports might be helpful outside scholarly circles as well is suggested by words such as those of Capt. Truilhier, who admitted that "it was difficult for him to evaluate what would be better for the eradication of anarchy in Afghanistan" (p. 241).

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Thèmes : 4.2.1. Safavides et Qâjârs

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