



The British Institute of Persian Studies

Annual Review 2024



Persian flower motifs with animal centres, William De Morgan, late 19th century.
Detail. E.1438-1917. ©Victoria & Albert Museum.

Table of contents

About the British Institute of Persian Studies	4
Governing Council and Office Holders at 31 March 2024	6
Letter from the President, Professor Ali Ansari	8
Thank you note to the outgoing President, Professor Charles Melville	10
Research	12
Iran and Sovereignty project	12
Research, Research Assistant and Travel Grants Programme	13
About the BIPS Grant Programme	13
2023-2024 BIPS Grant Awards	15
BIPS Flagship Research Project	17
Excavating the Archives: David Stronach’s fieldwork at Yarim Tepe and the Malayer Plain	18
Outreach	22
2023-2024 Events	24
Conference <i>Sustainable Water Management: Learning from the Past to Inform the Future</i> . London, March 2024	26
Tehran Institute: Annual Report 2023-2024	27
Publications	28
<i>IRAN LXI.I and LXI.II</i> (2023)	28
Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World Series	30
Archaeological Monograph Series	30
Financial Report	32

About the British Institute of Persian Studies

The British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) continues to be the UK's foremost learned society dedicated to increasing public knowledge and supporting scholarship on Iran and the wider Persianate world, including South and Central Asia. The Persianate world includes territories historically associated with Persian and Iranian culture and language, these areas are, but not limited to Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Transcaucasia, Iraq, the Persian Gulf littoral and South Asia. BIPS is invested in supporting a range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, and subjects include Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, Classics, Cultural Studies, History, Language, Linguistics, Politics, Religious Studies and Sociology.

BIPS is a UK charity and company limited by guarantee, with a self-governing membership organisation, whose members are elected on a three-yearly basis to serve on BIPS Governing Council as trustees of the charity and directors of the company. Most Governing Council members are academics in the field of Persianate studies, but some offer expertise in other areas, as do our co-opted members.

BIPS is one of the British International Research Institutes (BIRI) – a group of research institutes with overseas centres in Europe, Southwest Asia, North and East Africa. The BIRI are financially supported by and headquartered in the British Academy.

BIPS was founded in the UK in 1961 and in Iran in 1963; however the Institute in Tehran remains closed to the public. In the UK, BIPS plays a key role in sustaining the academic vitality and increasing the visibility of the field, by campaigning for greater provision for its study in higher education. BIPS's activities include the biannual awarding of research and travel grants and an extensive programme of workshops, events, lectures, as well as recitals in the UK. BIPS has published its journal, *IRAN*, every year since 1963. It also publishes the *Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World Series* in conjunction with Bloomsbury/I.B. Tauris and the *Archaeological Monograph Series* with Oxbow Books.

BIPS has approximately 270 members from around the world. Our membership year runs January to December, but we welcome new member applications at any time. Member benefits include receipt of our journal, *IRAN*, twice yearly and

discounts on other publications and exclusive access to events, (both BIPS and other institutions). BIPS publishes its Annual Review in the Autumn of each year. This is the 2024 Annual Review (covering the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024). It is sent to all the Institute's members in hard copy and is available to download from the BIPS website.

Governing Council and Office Holders at 31 March 2024

Professor Ali Ansari (President, Appointed November 2023)

Dr Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (Vice President)

Dr Lindsay Allen

Dr Roham Alvandi

Dr Arezou Azad

Mr David Gye (Appointed November 2023)

Mr Hossein Hamedani (Honorary Treasurer)

Dr Shabnam Holliday (Research Director)

Professor Andrew J. Newman (Outreach and Development Director)

Professor Cameron Petrie (Co-editor, IRAN and BIPS Archaeological Monograph Series)

Dr Florian Schwartz (Co-opted)

Dr Sarah Stewart (Honorary Secretary)

Dr Saeedreza Talajooy (Appointed November 2023, Editor Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World Series)

Professor Robert Hillenbrand (Honorary Vice President)

Professor Paul Luft (Honorary Vice President)

Members of Governing Council who left office through the year:

Mrs Narguess Farzad (Honorary Secretary, until June 2023)

Dr Richard McClary (until April 2023)

Professor Charles Melville (President, until November 2023)

Staff

London

Ms Imogen Edwards (Executive Officer, until November 2023)

Ms Silvia Ferreri (General Manager, from December 2023)

Tehran

Ms Sima Mohannak (Acting Manager)

British Institute of Persian Studies

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Residential Palace. Cuneiform inscription on stone anta. From the David Stronach Archive.

Letter from the President, Professor Ali Ansari



Little did I imagine back in 2017 when I handed the reins of the Presidency to my colleague Professor Charles Melville, that I in turn would succeed him for a second stint at the helm in November 2023. I am very grateful to Charles for having steered BIPS through increasingly choppy waters in the years that followed, coping not only with the political difficulties in Iran but the realities of Covid at home.

A key achievement has been to see us through an inspection by the Charity Commission, whose final report – sent to us early in 2024 – while recognising the difficulties of working in Iran, noted that, our activities were ‘wholly’ or ‘mainly compliant, placing us at the top end of the

compliance requirements. It was a clear and emphatic endorsement of our work and operations.

I take over with no little trepidation and excitement at the scale of the task in hand, as well as the opportunities ahead of us. A key part of my own work over 2024 has been the development of a new five-year strategy to take BIPS through to 2029. Working closely with the British Academy, the strategy is intended to stabilise and strengthen us as a proceed through a period of variable funding and continuing uncertainty with respect to Iran.

The strategy has four pillars: the first is to maintain our facilities in Tehran and prepare ourselves for any opportunity that may arise to re-open operations with a view to establishing a working office with a resident Director in the long term. Although this may not appear feasible now, we believe our assets in Tehran are worth maintaining and that we should never lose sight of the possibility of re-activation.

At the same time, we recognise that our work in Iran in the near to medium term will be limited. We intend to expand our reach and field of operations into the wider Persianate world, exploring collaborations and research opportunities in the Caucasus, Central Asia and above all India where a number of us already work on a range of projects from archaeology, through to history and linguistics. At the same, we intend to pivot more firmly to the United Kingdom where we will aim to establish ourselves as the principle professional body for Persianists, supporting

both established researchers but also dedicate ourselves to promoting early career researchers so that the next generation of scholars can secure a firm footing in the higher education sector.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the strategy is the fourth pillar: digitisation, and here we have signed an exciting partnership agreement with Persian Language Online (PLOL), an online education tool for learning Persian which has established itself as one of the premier Persian language teaching tools currently available online. Our aim with this partnership is to enhance and strengthen our online presence. We are in the process of placing our archives online for use by scholars and PLOL will help us extend our digital footprint so that ultimately BIPS will host the most comprehensive database of Persian language, literature, cultural and historical material, including important manuscripts that will be accessible to scholars worldwide. It is an ambitious vision, but we hope, through judicious fundraising and grant applications to make this a reality.

Exciting times lie ahead of us.

Professor Ali Ansari
May 2024

Thank you note to the outgoing President, Professor Charles Melville

Professor Charles Melville ended his term as President on 27th November 2023 after six years in office. He succeeded Professor Ali Ansari on 27th November 2017. During this period, much happened both in Tehran as well as here, and although Charles was President during a difficult and turbulent period, he managed to steer BIPS in the right direction.

In Tehran, we lost our caring and much-admired Manager, Houman Kordmahini, to a long illness in February 2020, but fortunately, his widow, Sima Mohammak has taken over as Assistant Manager. Problems with the Librarian and the outbreak of Covid meant that the Institute hostel and library in Tehran had to close, and there were tense negotiations with lawyers in Tehran about severance pay to the Librarian. At the same time, we were able to move the archaeological material conserved at BIPS since the 1960s and 1970s to the National Museum of Iran in Tehran.

In July 2020, the eminent scholar and first Director of BIPS, Professor David Stronach, passed away in San Francisco. Charles was involved in negotiations with the Stronach family to preserve David's legacy, and his archaeological papers and photographic archive were transferred to the care of Dr Ali Mousavi in UCLA. It is now being scanned and is gradually being handed over to the recently appointed Stronach Fellow in London, Dr Gareth Brereton. Charles was instrumental in establishing this Fellowship. In 2021, Hossein Hamedani was appointed Honorary Treasurer, and his financial and managerial expertise have been a great asset for BIPS.

During this time Charles continued to serve BIPS with dedication and enthusiasm, and always remained optimistic. He actively pursued the development of BIPS activities in Central Asia and India, and he supported new initiatives and projects, such as the digitization of archival material. In the last year of his presidency, Charles and other officers complied with the requests of the Charity Commission to create working policies covering the various aspects of BIPS's activities.

The BIPS Council and members are greatly indebted to Charles for all his efforts during the last six years, which has resulted in BIPS going from strength to strength.

Dr Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis
BIPS Vice President and Honorary Director



Research

The Research programme at BIPS is managed by the Research Committee chaired by **Shabnam Holliday**, Associate Professor in International Relations, University of Plymouth.

Iran and Sovereignty project

Drawing the BIPS Modern Research Project to a close, the *Iran and Sovereignty Project*, led by Dr Shabnam Holliday, is a collaborative interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary project that brings together scholars from the UK, the EU, and the USA in the fields of Archaeology, Cultural Studies, Ancient, Medieval and Modern History, Politics, and International Relations.

On the 6th and 7th of July 2023, the project hosted its second and final workshop at the University of Plymouth. Funded by BIPS, the workshop brought together several researchers who contributed stimulating discussions across the boundaries of disciplines and chronological periods.

The contributors were Shabnam Holliday (University of Plymouth), Ali Ansari (University of St Andrews), Brieg Powel (University of Exeter), Lloyd Llewelyn-Jones (Cardiff University/Prifysgol Caerdydd), Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (British Museum), Saeed Talajooy, (University of St Andrews), Andrew Newman (University of Edinburgh), Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, (University of Pennsylvania), Rowena Abdul Razak (Queen Mary's University London), Robert Steele (Austrian Academy of Sciences), Edward Wastnidge (The Open University), and Asma Abdi (University of Warwick). There are plans for the papers to be published in an edited volume.

Dr Shabnam Holliday

Research, Research Assistant and Travel Grants Programme

About the BIPS Grant Programme

BIPS supports UK-based post-doctoral researchers and UK-based students to carry out humanities and social science research into Iran and the Persianate world, and invites grant applications two times a year, usually in March and July.

BIPS has traditionally supported a broad range of research projects and funded travel for research and conference attendance. This year we have added a new category of grants, the Research Assistant Grants, which have proven to be very popular and opened up a new avenue for funding research.

The Research Grants and Research Assistant Grants, generally up to a maximum of £5,000, can be awarded to applicants who have completed a PhD and hold a research-active position at a UK Higher Educational Institution (HEI). HEIs are usually universities but may also be museums or similar organisations. Research Grants are given for a range of purposes, including fieldwork, archival research and the organisation of conferences, with academic publications as the primary output.

The Research Assistant Grants are designed to allow academics to hire assistants to help develop a research project, allow for the research of an established academic to be supported, with an income to be provided to an early-career scholar or postgraduate student who will conduct the majority of the research.

To qualify for a Travel Grant, applicants must be currently enrolled as a student (undergraduate or postgraduate, including doctoral candidates) at a UK HEI. The awards are limited to £1,200 and are normally awarded to assist with the costs of travel to the Persianate world, in its widest sense, but we may make awards for travel to conferences or to other regions if a strong rationale is made in the application.

All grant applications are assessed by the BIPS Research Committee, and their recommendations are then reviewed and ratified by BIPS Council.

At the time of taking their grant, successful applicants must be members of BIPS.

Award holders must provide a financial report, for internal use, and a short narrative report that will be uploaded to the BIPS website. A requirement for all grant holders is to present their research at a BIPS workshop. The first Grant Holders' Workshop since Covid was held at the University of Plymouth on 8 July 2023. This was a fantastic opportunity for grant holders to share their research funded by BIPS and to meet others in the Iranian and Persianate Studies community.

For more information on our current grant rounds see the BIPS website (bips.ac.uk).



BIPS Grant Holders' Workshop 2023 in Plymouth.

2023-2024 BIPS Grant Awards

During the financial year 2023-2024 BIPS has awarded a total of twelve Research, Research Assistant, and Student Travel grants, which have supported important research projects. These cover a broad chronological span and a variety of disciplines.

In the financial year 2023-2024 the following grants were awarded:

Type of Award	Awardee	UK HEI	Topic	Value
Research	Andrea Corsi	University of York	Documenting the Stucco Collection and Archives from Whitehouse's Siraf Excavations (1966-1973) at the British Museum	£4,000
Research	Mariano Errichiello	SOAS University of London	The Religious Persianate in Africa: Trading Religions Meeting in the Global South (ZORAFRIKA)	£2,700
Research	Claudia Glatz	University of Glasgow	Archaeologies of a Borderland: The Sirwan/ Upper Diyala Region during the Parthian, Sasanian, and Islamic Periods	£4,000
Research	Charles Melville	University of Cambridge	Round Table at the Biruni Institute in Tashkent	£1,112
Research	Adam Sammut	University of York	Conference panel: "Half the World Away: Cultural Circulations between Isfahan and the Early Modern Low Countries". Historians of Netherlandish Art Conference (HNA), London and Cambridge, 10-13 July 2024.	£1,000

Research	Rustam Shukurov	University of St Andrews	Workshop: 'Izz al-Din Kaykawus II and his time (1240s–1280s)	£1,683
Research Assistant	Roger Matthews	University of Reading	Seeds of change: analysis of archaeobotanical remains from prehistoric sites on the Caspian shores of Iran	£4,995
Student Travel	Natalie Boyd	University of Wales	The Hasanlu Ivories viewed through a New Materialist lens	£1,200
Student Travel	Marc Czarnuszewicz	University of St Andrews	The game of kings at the Ghaznavid court: an examination of the Shatranj-nama MSS held at the Biruni Institute, Tashkent	£700
Student Travel	Brady Hill	University of Cambridge	The Kani Shaie Archaeological Project (KSAP)	£900
Student Travel	Christos Nikolaou	University of Cambridge	Rural life in a changing world: new light on economic development and inequality in Central Asia under the Kushan Empire	£800
Student Travel	Iqan Shahidighamsari	University of Cambridge	The notion of decline in the writings of two prominent Iranian intellectuals, namely Fardid and Al-e Ahmad	£1,200

Dr Shabnam Holliday
BIPS Research Director

BIPS Flagship Research Project

Persian Manuscripts between East and West: Britain, India and the Circulation of the Persianate Literary Heritage. The project, led by Prof Andrew Peacock at the University of St Andrews, explores British engagement with Persian manuscripts culture. The project was kick started with its first workshop held at the Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge, on 3 November 2023, with 13 talks presenting new research about Persian manuscript collections in the UK. The full programme can be viewed online (www.bips.ac.uk/project/flagship-project-peacock). The event was open to the public, and attracted a full house, showing the considerable interest in the topic. This workshop was very useful in shaping the research agenda for the future.

Agricultural Sustainability of the Otrar Oasis. This project, led by Dr Katie Campbell (King's College, University of Cambridge), investigates the reasons for population decline in Otrar Oasis in southern Kazakhstan and its agricultural economy. In the first year of the project, a five-week long excavation and survey season was completed in September and October 2023. The team consisted of Dr Katie Campbell, Serik Akylbek (Archeoservice, Otrar State Archaeological Museum), Dr Davit Naskidashvili (Tbilisi State University), Dr Karl Smith (University of Oxford), Ali Seraliyev (L.N. Gumilyov, Eurasian National University, Astana), Shinaz Almazuly (Archeoservice, Otrar State Archaeological Museum) and students Vova Kenkadze, Vazha Chitaia (TSU) and Dinara Akylbek (Shymkent University). The team was joined by James Thomas (University of Lincoln) who came to do soil salinity sampling at the site of Otrar and across the oasis. The focus of the work was Otrar-tobe, the main urban site in the oasis, and its extensive suburbs.

The main areas excavated included a substantial kiln which was found to be producing unglazed pottery in approximately the 14th century. Extensive samples were taken from the lining and fill of the kiln to understand more about its use and date.

Sites in the northern and eastern part of the suburbs were also investigated. A small trench was excavated in the northern suburb, which contained occupation evidence dating from approximately the 10th-12th century, including a drainage pipe made from reused pots. The trench in the eastern suburb contained buildings dating to a similar period, and we hope to excavate these further in 2024.

Excavating the Archives: David Stronach's fieldwork at Yarim Tepe and the Malayer Plain

David Stronach OBE FSA (1931 - 2020) was a pioneering archaeologist and founding Director of the British Institute of Persian Studies. His extensive archives, which are currently being digitised and published by BIPS, contains a wealth of material accumulated throughout David's long and varied career, particularly his early excavations in Iran. The purpose of the project is to make this archive available online and in print, starting with the publication of his excavations at the site of Yarim Tepe.

In 1960, during his appointment as the British Academy's Archaeological Attaché in Tehran, David directed excavations at the mound of Yarim Tepe, a site located on the fertile Gorgan Plain, which at the time was relatively unexplored by archaeologists. The mound itself is modest in size, rising some 20 meters above the surrounding plain, and is situated on the bank of the Kara Su River, which had cut into the south face of the mound. This cut effectively provided a natural section from the top of the mound down to virgin soil, which attracted David to the site. Over the course of just two field seasons in 1960 and 1962, David and his team could delineate an archaeological sequence that spanned the Late Neolithic through to the Iron Age. One of the main objectives of the project was to outline a pottery sequence for the site and collect C14 samples, all of which would help establish a regional chronology for the Gorgan Plain.



Despite best intentions, however, the excavations at Yarim Tepe remain largely unpublished. Two concise summary reports were made available, the first of these being an article published in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* by Vaughn Crawford, which was written for a general audience. The second publication was a short article written by David for the book *Excavations in Iran. The British Contribution*. Fortunately, the bulk of the excavation records were kept by David

in his home office, stored together in two file boxes and several drawing tubes. This material was audited, reorganised and catalogued before being digitised in preparation for the planned publication.

Given the wealth of unpublished data for Yarim Tepe found in the archive it was decided that the material was best published as a final report in monograph form. Moreover, in light of new excavations by Iranian archaeologists working in the Gorgan Plain, the results of the excavations at Yarim Tepe could then be reevaluated against this new research. To date, a draft of the monograph text and accompanying illustrations, which includes hundreds of reworked site plans and pottery drawings, is now completed and will be prepared for publication.

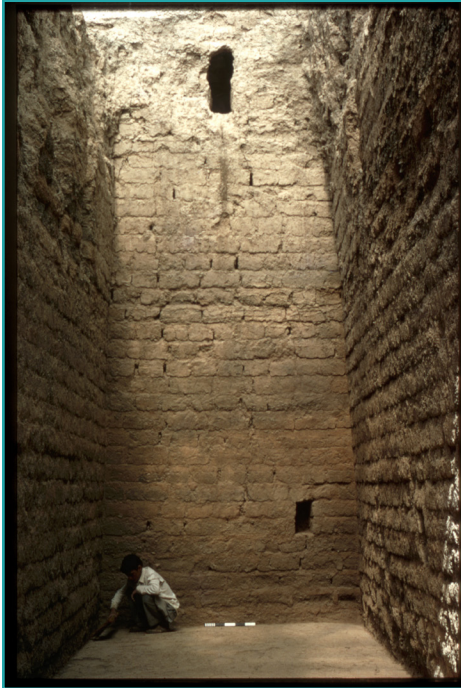


Once the Yarim Tepe monograph is submitted for review, work will then commence on publishing an archaeological survey of the Malayer Plain conducted in 1977 and 1978. This took place during David's excavations at Nush-i Jan, and is an extension of an earlier survey of the surrounding region by David and T Cuyler Young in 1965. Nush-i Jan proved to be an important Median and Parthian period settlement, which was excavated over five field seasons between 1967 and 1977. This site is located some 60 kilometres south of Hamadan in the alluvial Malayer plain of the central Zagros

range in western Iran. The mound itself, which rises to a maximum height of 36 meters above the surrounding plain, is natural, with various structures being built atop a high, rocky shale outcrop. Excavation of the site revealed a remarkable series of buildings and a perimeter wall dating to the Median period. The buildings

Aerial photographs of Yarim Tepe showing south face cut by the Kara Su River and location of the excavation trenches. From the David Stronach Archive.

themselves were remarkably well preserved, with the remains of walls left standing many meters high with features such as doorways, windows and even ceilings left intact. This rare state of preservation resulted from the careful infilling of standing



structures with stone and mudbrick before being deserted, perhaps marking the ritual abandonment of the site. Nush-i Jan was then resettled briefly when a Parthian village was established on the mound.

The results of the excavations at Nush-i Jan are relatively well published, with three preliminary reports in the journal *Iran* and two significant monographs covering the architectural remains of the Median period as well as the excavated small finds. Additional planned volumes, however, included the 1977-78 survey of the surrounding Malayer plain. The archival material pertaining to this survey includes detailed maps, a catalogue of the sites identified, photographs of archaeological mounds and remains, and illustrations of the pottery collected. Together, this material documents the remains of hundreds of archaeological

sites located on the Malayer plain that date between the Neolithic and Islamic periods. In collaboration with the original participants of the 1977-78 survey, work will now commence on this archive, the publication of which will reveal patterns of human settlement in the region over thousands of years.

Dr Gareth Brereton
Stronach Research Fellow



Top: Bronze Age Pottery from Yarim Tepe. From the David Stronach Archive.
Bottom: The Malayer plain as viewed from the mound of Nush-i Jan.

Outreach

As the accompanying data shows, this past year BIPS' social media footprint only continued its expansion. Both our YouTube and Instagram presence experienced especially notable growth; the former almost nearly doubled its followers' numbers and the latter more than doubled its numbers. Ms Silvia Ferreri continued to lead this process.

Our monthly webinars offered talks on such topics as Persian poetry and historiography, mission hospitals in Persia and British India, digitisation of historical archives, and modern Iranian films.

Also with the assistance of Ms Ferreri, our Student Newsletter published 37 issues over the year. The Newsletter contains news of events, publications, job postings and other academic announcements. Past issues can be viewed in the Newsletter Archive page on the BIPS website.

We partnered in organising events with the British Museum, the Iran Society, the University of York, Sissinghurst Castle, the British School at Athens and the British Institute at Ankara. The latter two are, as BIPS, among the eight British International Research Institutes (BIRI).

In collaboration with the British Museum, BIPS organised a private visit of the exhibition *Luxury and Power: Persia to Greece* for which BIPS also provided financial support leading to the creation of a series of traditional garments. More at this link: www.britishmuseum.org/blog/long-live-king-kings-accession-ritual-ancient-persia. This event was open to members only and it was complemented by a public lecture on Zoom given by Dr James Fraser, curator of the exhibition, and Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, who aided to its creation.

BIPS' partnership with the University of York continues with the organization of the annual Bruce Wannell Memorial Lecture that took place in June 2023, as part of the York Festival of Ideas.

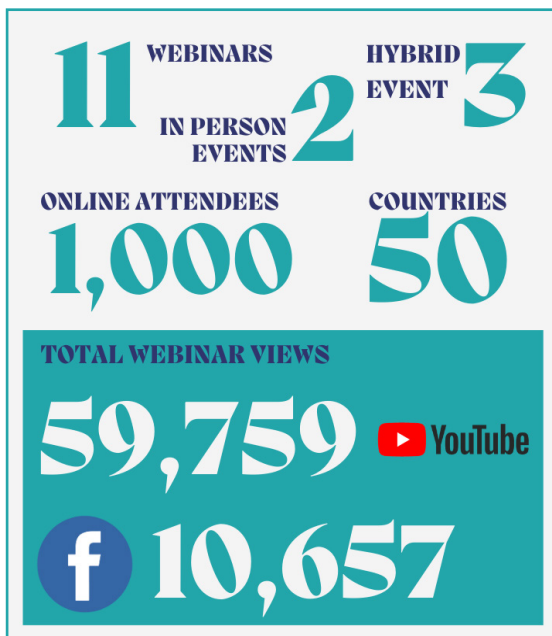
BIPS established a new partnership with Sissinghurst Castle (National Trust), co-sponsoring with the Iran Society the exhibition *A Persian Paradise: Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson in Iran 1925-1927*. The exhibition opened in October 2023 and it was originally schedule to close in March 2024, but it was extended until the end of May 2024.

This year, BIPS co-organised two conferences. The first in July 2023, with the British Institute at Ankara, on *Jalal al-Din Rumi and his Legacy: Religion, Literature and Culture between Medieval Anatolia and the Persianate World* (www.bips.ac.uk/event/jalal-al-din-rumi-and-his-legacy/), the second in March 2024 in collaboration with all the BIRIs on Sustainable Water Management: Learning from the Past to Inform the Future (www.bips.ac.uk/event/sustainable-water-management/).

A full list of all BIPS' events over the period is included in the table at the end of this report and full information about the events can be found on the BIPS website.

BIPS continues working on the digitisation of its archives, and work is underway for the creation of the online platform that will ultimately host the digitised material. More information on the digitisation of the Stronach Archive is given by Dr Gareth Brereton, BIPS Stronach Fellow, on pp. 18-21.

In addition, BIPS is also involved in a larger BIRI-wide digitisation collaborative project that will lead to the creation of an online platform linking together the archives of the institutes involved. The project just entered its third year and activities kick-started with a workshop, in February 2024, organised in collaboration with the British School at Athens on the topic of digital storytelling and linked open-data.



Professor Andrew Newman
BIPS Outreach and Development Director

BIPS Events in 2023-2024

During the financial year 2023-2024 BIPS hosted and co-hosted a total of fifteen events, including a members only event at the British Museum and a conference co-organised with the British Institute at Ankara.

In the financial year 2023-2024 the following events took place:

20 March 2024	Reformulation of the Ideals of Heroism in Bahram Beyzaie's Dramatic Worlds	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Saeed Talajooy; chaired by Andrew Newman
15-16 March 2024	Sustainable Water Management: Learning from the Past to Inform the Future	[Conference co-organised by the British International Research Institutes] In person event at the British Academy, London
7 February 2024	Persian Historiography across Empires	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Sholeh Quinn; chaired by Andrew Newman
17 January 2024	Persian Poetry on the High Seas: Migration and the Making of an Early Modern World Literature	On-line (via Zoom) talk by James White; chaired by Andrew Newman
6 December 2023	Uncovering Dr Hans E. Wulff Collection: A Life Contribution to the Study of Iran and Iranian Studies	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Pedram Khosronejad; chaired by Andrew Newman
27 November 2023	Empire, Sultanate, and the Boundaries of the Persianate World in South Asia	[BIPS AGM Lecture 2023] In person event at the British Academy, London. Lecture by Roy Fischel, introduced by Charles Melville
18 October 2023	The Reunification of Iran and the Reign of Aqa Muhammad Shah Qajar	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Maziar Behrooz; chaired by Andrew Newman

6 September 2023	Excavating the Archives: David Stronach's fieldwork in Iran with the British Institute for Persian Studies	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Gareth Brereton; chaired by Andrew Newman
19 July 2023	Private tour of the exhibition Luxury and Power: Persia to Greece	[Members only event co-organised by BIPS and the British School in Athens (BSA)] In person event at the British Museum, London, with James Fraser and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
12 July 2023	Treasures of Herat: Two Timurid Khamsah of Nazami Manuscripts	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Barbara Brend chaired by Andrew Newman
6 July 2023	Jalal al-Din Rumi and his Legacy: Religion, Literature and Culture between Medieval Anatolia and the Persianate World, 13th-14th Centuries	[Conference co-organised by BIPS and the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA)] In person event at the BIAA, Ankara
13 June 2023	Open Sesame: Ancient Persia and the Greek Imagination	On-line (via Zoom) talk by James Fraser and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
8 June 2023	Rumi and the Masnavi: Talk and Recitation	[BIPS sponsored event] In person event at the York Festival of Ideas with Alan Williams, Seyed Ali Jaber, and the Hamdel Ensemble
31 May 2023	Feeling Mission Hospitals in Persia and British India	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Sara Honarmand Ebrahimi; chaired by Andrew Newman
18 May 2023	"You're Fired": A Comparison of Roman and Sassanian Military Careers	[Organised by the Iran Society and BIPS] In person event at the Army & Navy Club; talk by Sean Strong
19 April 2023	The Hunt as Erotic and Military Training in Early New Persian Poetry	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Domenico Ingenito; chaired by Andrew Newman

Conference Sustainable Water Management: Learning from the Past to Inform the Future. London, March 2024



The British International Research Institutes (BIRI), of which BIPS is part, co-organised a conference on the *Sustainable Water Management: Learning from the Past to Inform the Future*. The conference was held at the British Academy in London on 15 and 16 March 2024.

The conference stems from the *Sustainable Water Management Initiative*, a multi-disciplinary, inter-regional project that brings together specialists in disciplines ranging from archaeology to environmental science, history, engineering and social science, to work together to understand how climate change impacts water availability and to seek solutions to the scarcity of water based

on local experiences and historical and traditional practices with a view to ensure sustainability, economic viability and knowledge transfer.

BIPS Trustee, Prof Cameron Petrie, and Iqtedar Alam, delivered a paper on *Learnings from a Mughal waterscape: modelling and evaluating Shahjahanabad's hydrological landscape*.

Dr Hassan Moradi of the National Museum of Iran presented a paper titled: *Harnessing Water Resources in Arid Landscapes: A Case Study of the Neyriz Plain, Fars Province, Iran*.

Dr Nahal Khorrami, Özyeğin University, presented a paper on *Water and urban tissues: The Qanat system and the formation process of Yazd, Iran*.

The programme of the event is available on the BIPS website (www.bips.ac.uk/event/sustainable-water-management/).

Tehran Institute: Annual Report 2023-24

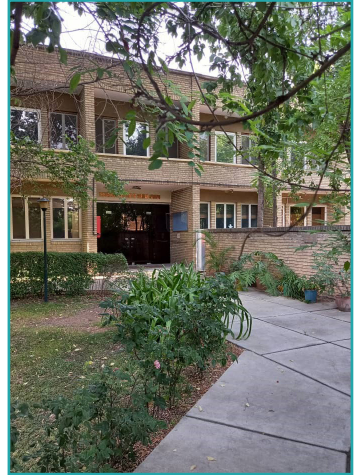
We are pleased to report that the BIPS building in Tehran is being kept in good repair and the hostel and the Library remain an important resource.

In the BIPS compound in Tehran there was a series of building repair works including replacing paving stones all around the Institute and reinforcing the walls and fences on the north, west and south sides. This has been overseen by our Assistant Manager Mrs Sima Mohannak. A teacher from the adjacent French School stayed in the hostel renting a room throughout the period April 2023-March 2024.

We have explored the possibility of reopening the Library and are contemplating updating the Library software and hiring a Librarian on a part-time basis to catalogue books that have arrived at BIPS but have not been catalogue since COVID and the departure of the Librarian. We have been negotiating with Pars Azarakhsh, a software company, to undertake this work.

Our intention is to create an online catalogue available to everyone interested in Persian studies both in Iran and around the world.

We are most grateful to Mrs Sima Mohannak, and also Danesh Kordmahini , for managing the building so conscientiously and effectively.



Dr Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis
BIPS Vice President and Honorary Director

Publications

BIPS has continued to be busy with publications with three new volumes published in the Persian Studies Series and the Archaeological Monograph Series. Each year, a new volume of its journal *IRAN* is published (in two issues, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn). BIPS members receive a hard copy by post as a benefit of membership. An online version is available to members through BIPS's website.

IRAN LXI.I and LXI.II (2023)

In 2023-24, *IRAN* was edited by Professor Cameron Petrie who is a Trustee of BIPS. The journal is peer reviewed with an international editorial board. It also receives assistance from BIPS Trustees and Honorary Vice Presidents in reviewing submitted articles. For 62 years *IRAN* has maintained an international reputation for publishing significant academic articles on all aspects of Persianate study (except for modern politics). This year, paper topics spanned from the archaeology of the fifth millennium BC, through the Achaemenid period, and on up to the early 12th century. In addition to the two issues of the journal that are published in hard copy each year, articles are also available online. Submissions are made online and the guidelines are available on the BIPS's website. *IRAN* has received over 60 submissions in 2024, and already has fifty articles accepted for publication that will appear online in the coming months.

LXI.I

Ali Khayani and Kamal Aldin Niknami, <i>More Early Bronze Age Seal Impressions from Chogha Maran, Western Central Zagros</i>	p.1-14
Yasmina Wicks, <i>Probing the Margins in Search of Elamite Children</i>	p.15-35
Davide Salaris, <i>The Equestrian Relief of Hung-e Azhdar: A Historical Memory for the Dynastic Lineages of Elymais</i>	p.36-58
Esmail Sharahi, Hossein Sedighian and Meisam Nikzad, <i>Excavation at Tayhaq - A Subterranean Rock-Cut Architecture Complex in Khomein, Markazi Province, Iran</i>	p.59-74
Saeed Amirhajloo and Hossein Sedighian, <i>Recent Archaeological Research in South Iran: Excavation at the Old City of Sirjan (The Site of Qal'eh Sang)</i>	p.75-93

Marc Czarnuszewicz, <i>Challenging Narratives of “Missionary” Isma‘ilism in Buyid Iran: Reconsidering the Sira of al Mu‘ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi through Socio-economic Contextualisation</i>	p.94-114
Denis Hermann and Fabrizio Speziale, <i>Scientific Knowledge and Religious Milieu in Qajar Iran: Negotiating Muslim and European Renaissance Medicine in the Subtleties of Healing</i>	p.115-129
Kioumars Ghereghlou, <i>A Forgotten Money Heist: The 1746 Mission of Nadir Shah’s Chief Merchant in Russian Revisited</i>	p.130-147

LXII.II

Nasir Eskandari, François Desset, Mojgan Shafiee, Meysam Shahsavari, Salman Anjamrouz, Irene Caldana, Ali Daneshi, Ali Shahdadi and Massimo Vidale, <i>Preliminary Report on Survey of Hajjiabad-Varamin, a Site of the Konar Sandal Settlement Network (Jiroft, Kerman, Iran)</i>	p.149-176
Salah Salimi, Mostafa Dehpahlavan and John MacGinnis, <i>A Survey of Parthian Pithos Cemeteries on the Western Bank of the Little Zab River, Sardasht Region, Northwest Iran</i>	p.177-195
Tobias Jones, <i>The Objects of Loyalty in the Early Modern Mongol Empire (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)</i>	p.196-220
Sara Mirahmadi, <i>Legitimising the Khan: Rashid al-Din’s Ideological Project from a Literary Aspect</i>	p.221-234
Ana Marija Grbanovic, <i>Lost and Found: The Ilkhanid Tiles of the Pir-i Bakran Mausoleum (Linjan, Isfahan)</i>	p.235-254
Michael Hope, <i>The Political Configuration of Late Ilkhanid Iran: A Case Study of the Chubaniid Amirate (738-758/1337-1357)</i>	p. 255-271
Shafique N. Virani, <i>An Old Man, a Garden, and an Assembly of Assassins: Legends and Realities of the Nizari Ismaili Muslims</i>	p. 272-284
Philip Henning Grobrien, <i>Modernity, Borders and Maps: Iran’s Ability to Advocate for its Borders During the Reign of Naser al-Din Shah</i>	p. 285-298

Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World Series

BIPS solidified its cooperation with Bloomsbury/IB Tauris for the publication of its book series 'Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World'. In February 2024, Dr Saeedreza Talajooy, from the University of St Andrews, took over the role of editor of the series and put together a new editorial board. BIPS would like to thank the former editor, Prof Andrew Peacock, for his valuable work.

The volume *Genealogical History in the Persianate World*, edited by Jo-Ann Gross and Daniel Beben is due for publication in July 2025. Two other manuscripts are currently being reviewed for publication in this series.

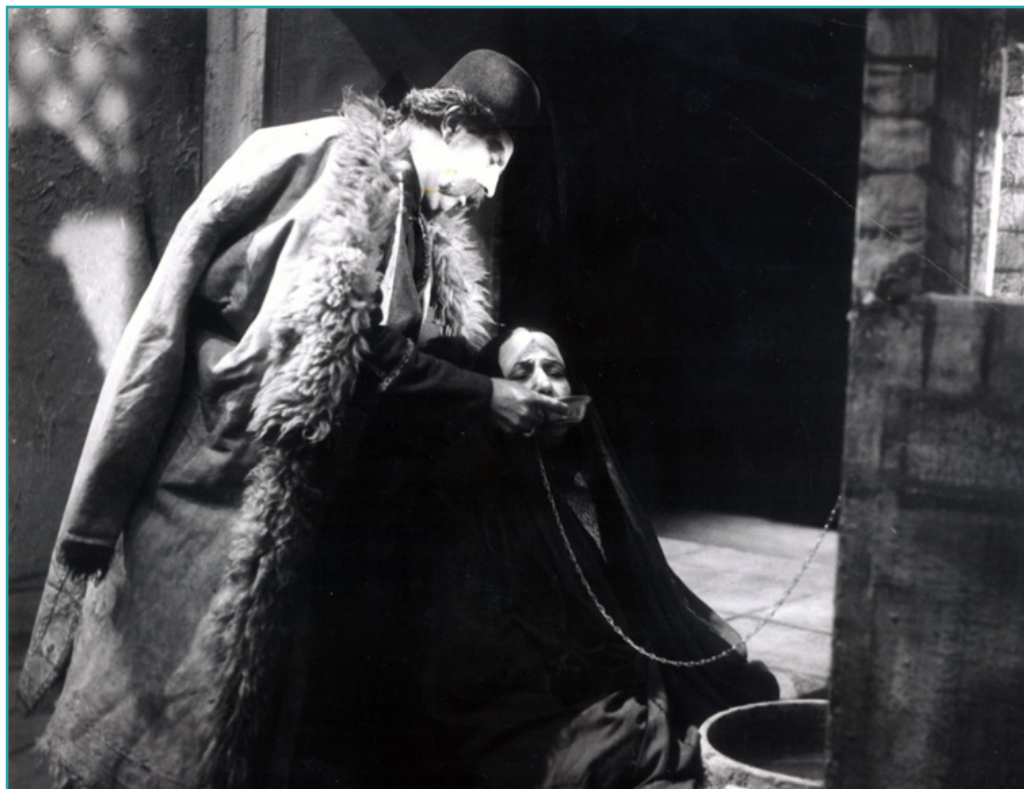
The latest publications in the series are Saeed Talajooy's edited volume *The Plays and Films of Bahram Beyzaie: Origins, Forms and Functions* (February 2024) and Nahid Assemi's monograph *Piety and Politics in Qajar Iran: The Takkiyya Mu'avin al-Mulk in Kermanshah* (July 2024).

Archaeological Monograph Series

The Archaeological Monograph Series was established in 2009 as a joint publishing venture between the BIPS and Oxbow Books to create a venue for the publication of archaeological research, particularly the results of large scale surveys and excavations. The series is edited by Prof. Cameron Petrie.

The eighth volume, by Seth M. N. Priestman and Derek Kennet entitled *Sasanian and Islamic Settlement and Ceramics in Southern Iran (4th to 17th Century AD): The Williamson Collection Project* was published in 2023, and presents the results of fieldwork, research and analysis that has been supported by BIPS since the 1970s. It is available for order from Oxbow Books.

Editorial work is being completed on the ninth volume, edited by Cameron A. Petrie, Barbara Helwing and Helen Taylor, and entitled *A New Look at Old Routes in Western Asia: Rethinking Iran in the fifth millennium BC*, which is planned to appear in 2025.



Abbas Javanmard as Pahlevān Akbar and Roqyeh Chehrazad as Mother (1965).

Financial Report

The year 2023-24 witnessed significant changes to the administration of The British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) with the appointment of a new President and a new General Manager.

We are grateful to Professor Charles Melville, who after six years of tireless service took a well earned rest and handed over the reins to Professor Ali Ansari in partnership with Dr Sarkhosh Curtis as Vice President and Honorary Director. Silvia Ferreri, who was previously our Outreach Assistant, was appointed as General Manager.

Professor Melville oversaw the Charity Commission's review of BIPS which gave our operations a clean bill of health subject to refinements which were implemented with regard to Policy documents on a range of activities which are now reviewed annually.

BIPS spent 49% of its income on grants, 21% on Outreach and Publications and 30% on governance and establishment overheads. The Flagship projects that had been launched in the previous year were also formally awarded and inaugurated in the year. BIPS maximises the impact of the grants by providing relatively small grants to each applicant to help grow the Persianate Studies community. The feedback from our grantee workshops is very positive. It indicates that whilst BIPS' grants are the main source of funding in some cases, in many instances, BIPS' funding is a vital part of enabling and facilitating larger projects nationally and globally. Furthermore these grants are also essential for growing the Iranian and Persianate Studies communities because of the support provided to Early Career Researchers.

Our digitisation project has continued with the digitisation of the Stronach and Hillenbrand archives and a more ambitious digitisation programme in collaboration with the other BIRIs is one of the four central pillars of our new strategy - BIPS 2030 - which will be agreed by the end of 2024. An important aspect of our strategy going forward is collaborations, and we have already agreed a partnership with Persian Language Online.

We commissioned a consultant to help us develop a fundraising strategy. This has provided a detailed landscape of fundraising opportunities which we will apply

to in stages from 2024-25. We will use the external funding to develop our digital platform and position BIPS as the primary digital resource for Persian and Iranian studies in the United Kingdom. With respect to the facilities in Tehran, while we remain closed to the public we are taking the opportunity of this down time to begin the digital cataloguing of our library collection. The Acting Manager and Assistant Managers, Sima Mohannak and Daneh Kordmahini, continue to do excellent work in maintaining the facilities in anticipating of a reopening of our activities.

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PERSIAN STUDIES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 Total	2023 Total Restated
		£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM:					
Donations and legacies					
Donations	-	199	50	249	421
Grants from Government and other public bodies	2	-	221,008	221,008	196,750
Other grants		-	2,000	2,000	6000
Charitable activities					
Subscriptions		8,789	-	8,789	9,353
Publication sales		7,644	-	7,644	3,683
Hostel income		6,000	-	6,000	4,200
Investments					
Bank interest		1,356	-	1,356	748
Income from investments		5,087	-	5,087	2,902
Financial income					
Foreign exchange gain	3(b)	2,759	-	2,759	-
TOTAL INCOME		31,834	223,058	254,892	254,057

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PERSIAN STUDIES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Charitable activities					
Grants and scholarships	3(a)/(c)	5,361	116,504	121,865	118,007
Workshops and lectures	3(a)	-	27,534	27,534	600
Book publication costs	3(a)	-	6,000	6,000	5,000
Office costs		8,040	27,652	35,692	33,515
Financial costs	3(b)	136	-	136	1,195
Journal expenses	3(a)	-	5,540	5,540	3,998
Outreach	3(d)	-	41,519	41,519	37,170
Conferences	3(a)	-	-	-	4,693
Establishment and maintenance		8,642	13,952	22,594	19,647
Other					
Computer support		-	-	-	-
Examination and accountancy	3(e)	3,310	-	3,310	2,700
Management		6,258	-	6,258	5,195
Legal expenses		7,352	-	7,352	5,766
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		39,099	238,701	277,800	237,486
NET INCOMING/ (OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE RECOGNISED GAINS					
		(7,625)	(15,643)	(22,908)	(13,429)
TRANSFERS					
		-	-	-	-
GAINS/(LOSSES) ON INVESTMENTS – UNREALISED					
		3,531	-	3,531	(2,036)
NET MOVEMENTS IN FUNDS		(3,734)	(15,643)	(19,377)	(15,465)

TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD	244,022	48,468	292,490	307,955
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	240,288	32,825	273,113	292,490

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PERSIAN STUDIES
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets:					
Leasehold Property	4	-	-	-	-
Other Tangible Assets	4	47,533		47,533	
		<u>47,533</u>		<u>47,533</u>	
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	5	2,038		33,026	
Investments	7	44,414		44,883	
Cash in hand and at bank		223,402		221,718	
		<u>273,854</u>		<u>299,627</u>	
CREDITORS: within 1 year					
Creditors	6	48,274		54,670	
		<u>48,274</u>		<u>54,670</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			225,580		244,957
NET ASSETS			<u>273,113</u>		<u>292,490</u>
FINANCED BY:					
Unrestricted Funds:	12(a)(b)				
General Fund			214,858		213,231
Designated Funds			25,430		30,791
Restricted Funds:	12(a)(c)				
Conference Fund			1,265		1,265
Bahari Foundation Fund			2,000		2,000
Advanced Language Training Fund			13,260		13,260
Basic Grant			-		-
Persian Language Online			10,000		-
Bruce Wannell's Fund			50		25,693
Digitisation Fund			6,250		6,250
TOTAL FUNDS			<u>273,113</u>		<u>292,490</u>



Persian flower motifs with animal centres, William De Morgan, late 19th century.
Detail. E.1438-1917. ©Victoria & Albert Museum.



MEMBERSHIP

Membership of BIPS is open to all, and we welcome new members. BIPS organises an extensive programme of talks, conferences and workshops throughout the year in the UK and overseas. It publishes its journal *IRAN* twice a year and occasional books in its Persian Studies Series or Archaeological Monograph Series. Becoming a member is your chance to support our work and contribute to our efforts to broaden appreciation of the cultural heritage of the Persianate world.

Membership runs from January to December, but new members can apply any time of the year. We offer four types of membership: Student (£20 a year); Corresponding (£30 a year - for non-UK members); Full (£40 a year) and Fellow (£50 a year for academics). Membership renewals or applications can be made via our website: www.bips.ac.uk/join-us/

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