



The British Institute of Persian Studies

Annual Review 2025



Layla and Majnun. Unknown artist. Nasir al-Din Shah Period (1848-1896). Oil on canvas.
Shalva Amiranashvili State Museum of Fine Arts, Georgian National Museum. Inv. N 115.

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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. It is also 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, travel and outreach grants and prizes 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 2025 Annual Review (covering the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025). Following its commitment to save energy and go green, from this issue the Annual Review will only be available in digital format. The Annual Review can be downloaded from the BIPS website.

Governing Council and Office Holders at 31 March 2025

Professor Ali Ansari (President)

Dr Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (Vice President)

Dr Roham Alvandi

Dr Arezou Azad

Dr Warwick Ball (co-opted, February 2025)

Dr Mariano Errichiello (Appointed November 2024)

Mr David Gye

Mr Hossein Hamedani (Honorary Treasurer)

Dr Shabnam Holliday (Research Director)

Professor Andrew J. Newman (Outreach and Development Director)

Dr Evaleila Pesaran (Appointed November 2024)

Professor Cameron Petrie (Editor *IRAN* and *BIPS Archaeological Monograph Series*)

Dr Sarah Stewart (Honorary Secretary)

Dr Saeedreza Talajooy (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:

Dr Lindsay Allen (until November 2024)

Dr Florian Schwartz (co-opted, until November 2024)

Staff

London

Ms Silvia Ferreri (Executive Manager)

Dr Brenden Benjamin (Outreach Assistant)

Tehran

Ms Sima Mohannak (Acting Manager)

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Ahmad Shah Qajar and his Cabinet. Assad-Allah al-Husayni Naqqashi-bashi. c. 1901-1915. Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art.

Letter from the President, Professor Ali Ansari



This year has seen BIPS build on the progress we witnessed last year to restructure our internal processes and management and pursue the strategic goals that we outlined in our review. Internally we have created a Fundraising & Finance Committee, chaired by our Honorary Treasurer, Hossein Hamedani, and including Mariano Errichiello and David Gye. The new committee will provide much needed assistance to our stoic Treasurer and help formulate and systematise a fundraising plan to raise money via both grants and donors.

The Five Year Strategy drawn up last year was approved by both Council and the British Academy and we have sought to turn these ideas into practical realities with the extension of our networks in India and two significant workshops and one conference planned for 2026 dealing with the topics of Zoroastrianism and Mughal India in relation to the Persianate world.

Our plans to expand our digital offering continue and we are especially excited to be partnering with Golha (<https://www.golha.co.uk>) and the extraordinary work that Dr Jane Lewisohn has done to digitise this invaluable archive and make it readily available to the wider public. We are very pleased that the Golha Archive will be hosted by BIPS and that we will be working with Jane to further develop the platform. In addition, this year we began the cataloguing and labelling of our administrative archive – dating back to the foundation of BIPS in 1961 – with the intention of making this available to scholars in due course.

We inaugurated our BIPS Outreach Project Grants to support projects that promote the knowledge of the Persianate world to a non-academic audience, with four excellent applications from leading institutions including Kew Gardens and Sissinghurst. BIPS continues to be the leading charitable organisation supporting research in the Persianate world and our Research Committee continues to review and update the grants that it has available. Please do keep a close eye on the

website for any new schemes and deadlines.

Last and by no means least, we continue with the refurbishment of the Institute in Tehran, maintaining the site as well as proceeding with the digitisation of the Library catalogue. Needless to say, what we thought had been a difficult year in 2024, became much worse in the summer of 2025 and we are particularly grateful to Sima Mohannak and Daneh Kordmahini for keeping the Institute going in what have been exceptionally difficult circumstances.

Professor Ali Ansari
BIPS President
August 2025



Portrait of Fath 'Ali Shah. Probably by Abdullah Khan. c. 1797-1834. Oil on canvas.
Museum no. 707-1876. ©Victoria and Albert Museum.

Research

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

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 May and September.

BIPS supports a broad range of research projects and funds travel for research and conference attendance. This year we have added a new category of grants, the Early Career Researcher (ECR) Conference Grant.

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 ECR 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. 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 and Publications Committee, and their recommendations are then reviewed and ratified by the 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. For more information on our current grant rounds see the BIPS website (bips.ac.uk).

2024-2025 BIPS Grant Awards

During the financial year 2024-2025 BIPS has awarded a total of nineteen 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 2024-2025 the following grants were awarded:

Type of Award	Awardee	UK HEI	Topic	Value
Research	Ferenc Csirkes	University of Birmingham	The Politics of Turkic in Early Modern Iran (PoTiEMI)	£2,200
Research	Mariano Errichiello	SOAS	The Making of Modern Zoroastrianism between Aryanism and Esotericism (ZARYA)	£4,950
Research	Maryam Heydarkhani	University of Oxford	Architecture and Social Role of Qajar Madrasas: An Expanded Perspective	£2,000
Research	Gwendoline Maurer	Cardiff University	ICAANE 14th Conference in Lyon June 2025, Caucasus Through Time Network Team	£1,000
Research	Yousef Moradi	SOAS	Towards an Absolute Dating of the Formation and Abandonment of the City of Jundishapur Using Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL)	£5,000
Research	Amy Richardson	University of Reading	Tracing Transitions and Connecting Communities in the Archaeology of Western Asia (TracT)	£1,800
Research	Eberhard Sauer	University of Edinburgh	The Great Caucasus Wall: a little-known long wall (Caucasus Wall)	£3,804

Type of Award	Awardee	UK HEI	Topic	Value
Research Assistant	Sara Bamdad	De Monfort University	Perceptions of Trans reproductive bodies in social media in Iran	£4,327.50
Research Assistant	Roger Matthews	University of Reading	Animal exploitation in early Neolithic Fars: the evidence from Tol-e Sangi	£3,800
Student Travel	Kamila Akhmedjanova	University of Oxford	A study of Ahmad Danish's place among the 19th-century Persian-speaking intellectual trends	£900
Student Travel	Stefano Cecatiello	UCL	A Typology of Sogdian Cultic Spacrs from the 5th to the 8th Century: Material Culture, Cultic Practices, and Sociopolitical Significance	£900
Student Travel	Brady Hill	University of Cambridge	The Kani Shaie Archaeological Project (KSAP)	£954
Student Travel	Megan Hinks	University of Cambridge	Bitumen before Babylon: Analysing bitumen from ancient Iraq and Iran in the Louvre Museum Collections	£913.97
Student Travel	Sara Makari-Aghdam	University of St Andrews	The Critical Molla - over a hundred years ago	£1,000
Student Travel	Edoardo Marcarini	SOAS	I Want to Remain Persian: Music, Memory and Identity Among Iranian Jews in Israel	£900
Student Travel	Clare Parry	Cardiff Universtiy	Displaying Empire: Imperial Approachs to Power and Identity in Persia and the Near East	£374

Type of Award	Awardee	UK HEI	Topic	Value
Student Travel	Lorane Prevost	University of Oxford	The Transmission of the Classical Radif Outside Iran: Social and Musical Hierarchies	£750
Student Travel	Iqan Shahidghamsari	University of Cambridge	Participation to the ASPS Conference, August 2025	£1,200
Student Travel	Sean Strong	Cardiff Universtiy	Participation to IMC Leeds; Celtic Conference Cardiff; ERAN Research Forum Lille	£777.97

Grant Holders' Workshops

In addition to showcasing the excellent research that BIPS has funded, workshops are an important and integral aspect of BIPS' strategy to support and develop Iranian and Persianate Studies in the UK. Furthermore, the Research and Publications Committee endeavours to take the workshops around the UK. We have had two Grant Holders' workshops since the last Annual Review was published. Reports from all grants can be found on BIPS' website.

On 9-10 July 2024, grant holders met at the University of Cambridge. This workshop was an excellent demonstration of the diverse disciplinary areas of Iranian and Persianate studies in the UK supported by BIPS, with MA students, doctoral candidates and Early Career Researchers presenting alongside established scholars. In addition to supporting researchers at the beginning of their academic journeys, the workshop demonstrated the impact of BIPS funding on larger established projects. For instance, Dr Francesca Leoni, Curator of Islamic art at the Ashmolean Museum, shared how BIPS funding facilitated the exhibition *Images of Authority: Portraiture between Iran and Europe* (<https://www.ashmolean.org/exhibition/images-of-authority-portraits-between-iran-and-europe>). Dr Jane Lewisohn showed how a BIPS Research Grant has contributed, along with other stakeholders, to the Persian and English indexing of the Persian journal *Tehran Musavar*. As a result of this funding, the indexed journals are freely accessible on the Golistan website (https://www.golistan.org/collection/?keyword=&fc4t=&type=Read&sub_type=Journals&fc1=79472&fc2=&fc3=&fc4=).

On 21 November 2024, BIPS grant holders met at the British Academy in London. Once again, the aim was to provide an informal environment for the Iranian and Persianate Studies community, at all stages of the academic careers, to share their research, network and exchange ideas. Among the presentations, Professor Edmund Herzig, University of Oxford, reported on the BIPS funding that contributed to an international conference to mark the 400th anniversary of the capture of Hormuz by the joint forces of Safavid Persia and the British East India Company. Professor Sussan Babaie, Courtauld Institute, presented the research project *Mongol Connections: Re-considering the arts of the Ilkhanate*. This has contributed

to developing Arts of *The Mongol World* exhibition that will be held at the Royal Academy of Arts.

The next three Grant Holders' workshops will be held at the University of Edinburgh on 22-23 May 2025, at the British Academy in London on 20 November 2025 before the BIPS AGM, and at the University of Exeter on 21-22 May 2026. Full details will become available online and in BIPS' newsletters.



Dr Shabnam Holliday
BIPS Research Director

BIPS Flagship Research Projects

Agricultural Sustainability of the Otrar Oasis

2024-25 was the second year of the project to understand how the city of Otrar in southern Kazakhstan functioned agriculturally, the periods in which it thrived, and when and why it declined. This involved a 5-week excavation season between 18 September and 24 October 2024, which was followed by analysis. The excavation focused on various trenches within the abandoned city to provide information about urban occupation and particularly the agricultural basis of the city's economy and survival.

Two main trenches were excavated, with smaller investigations in 11 further trenches across the site. Trench OTR16 is a small mound of occupation located in the eastern suburb of the city. Initial excavations in 2023 indicated that it likely dates to the 12th century or earlier and so had potential to provide crucial pre-Mongol conquest (1220) data from the city. OTR23 is located on a mound next to the main canal which flows through the city's western suburbs. Geophysical survey undertaken in 2023 indicated that there was likely dense occupation in this area, with inhabitants taking advantage of the fresh water flowing into this part of the city. The other trenches primarily targeted canals and fortification systems across the city's suburb, and a small excavation was undertaken in OTR6, a deep trench on Otrar's shahristan.

Dr Katie Campbell
King's College, University of Cambridge

Persian Manuscripts Between East and West: Britain, India and the Circulation of the Persian Literary Heritage

In the second year of the research project, the focus has been on the Delhi Collection of the British Library. Seized by the British after the munity of 1857, this collection contains remnants of the Mughal Imperial Library as well as several collections of prominent individuals in Delhi who had opposed the British. To date it has remained

Persian Manuscripts Between East and West: Britain, India and the Circulation of the Persian Literary Heritage

very little researched, and large parts of the collection are not fully catalogued. The project's research assistant, Mr Ali Shapouran, produced catalogue records for more than 100 manuscripts, making them accessible to a wider public for the first time; these will be published in the online catalogue (fihrist.org). The project's research on the Delhi collection also aimed to ascertain the origins of the manuscripts, which has been a matter of scholarly debate. Hitherto unstudied manuscripts uncovered by the project give new insights into both the origins of the Delhi collection and the cultural life of Delhi, identifying for the first time important individuals whose books it contains, such as the Delhi poet and chief justice Sadr al-Din Azurda.

The project's aims also include studying the British contribution towards the formation of Indian manuscript collections. Particular attention was given to collections in Hyderabad and Kolkata, which both have strong connections to British rule. Research uncovered a number of previously unidentified texts produced for British patrons, most notably a verse history of the mutiny in Persian written by the German mercenary and Persian poet Farsu. Information about some of the project's research findings is presented in various blogs on the project website (<https://persianmanuscripts.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/>).

The project also held a major international conference at the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, in November 2024, on *Persian Manuscripts: Their Significance to Past, Present and Future*. Bringing together scholars from India, Britain, the US and other countries, the conference attracted significant coverage in the Indian press, with articles on it in *The Hindu* and *The Deccan Chronicle*.

Professor Andrew Peacock
University of St Andrews

The David Stronach Archives and the Malayer-Jowkar Survey of 1977-78

David Stronach OBE FSA (b.1931–d.2020) was a leading figure in the field of Iranian archaeology and founding director of the British Institute of Persian Studies. David left behind an extensive archive accumulated throughout his long and varied career, including a wealth of unpublished material relating to his pioneering excavations in Iran as director of the BIPS Tehran Institute. The Stronach archives are currently held at UCLA in California where they undergo digitisation. The digitised files are then sent to the UK to be reviewed and catalogued, with the eventual aim of making the digitised archive freely available online via a BIPS hosted website. A key part of the process is to identify material for publication. Following the last update, a final report on David's early excavations at Yarim Tepe on the Gorgan Plain (1960-62) is now complete and awaiting publication. Attention is now focused on publishing the results of an archaeological survey of the Malayer-Jowkar Plain in the Central Zagros range in Western Iran, conducted between 1977 and 1978.

Having completed the Institute's flagship excavations at Pasargadae with David as director, the BIPS Governing Council proposed a new fieldwork project at the early Islamic port city of Siraf, located in the province of Bushehr. David Stronach expressed his reluctance to direct the Siraf excavations being that Islamic period archaeology did not align with his research interests or expertise. He desired instead to investigate archaeological sites in the region of Hamadan with his colleague T. Cuyler Young, a proposal that was not particularly well received by Council Chair Sir Max Mallowan. Nevertheless, in March 1965 David and T. Cyler Young set off in a Landrover to identify archaeological mounds in the Malayer plain, taking a route north from Malayer



to Hamadan. Their attention was soon drawn to a prominent mound located in the plain, the size of which suggested a natural feature. Looking through binoculars, they could just make out what appeared to be a substantial deposit of soft earth on the summit of this rocky outcrop, which brought to mind the hilltop citadel of

Ziwiye recently excavated by Robert H. Dyson. Their suspicions were confirmed as they reached the summit of the mound, which was covered by crumbled mudbrick deposits and a quantity of fine buff ware pottery that could be dated to the seventh century BCE.

Excavations at the site, which was called Tappeh Nush-i Jan, commenced in 1967 following approval from the BIPS Governing Council and the Iranian Archaeological Service.

The site proved to be an important Median and Parthian period settlement, which was excavated by David and his team between 1967 and 1977. Rising to a height of thirty-six meters above the surrounding plain, the mound comprises a natural shale outcrop, with various ancient structures having been built atop its summit.

Five excavation seasons revealed several substantial buildings and a perimeter wall dating to the Median period. The surviving Median structures were remarkably well-preserved, having been carefully infilled with stone and mudbrick before being abandoned. Following the closure of the Median settlement, the site was briefly occupied by a Parthian village. Several notable Median period structures



The mound of Baba Kamal on the Malayer-Jowkar plain. From the David Stronach Archive.

were excavated, including the standing remains of a temple complete with a well-preserved fire altar, a fort featuring massive buttressed and recessed walls, and an elaborately decorated columned hall.



During the 1977 and 1978 seasons at Nush-i Jan, David initiated an archaeological survey of the surrounding region, covering the Malayer-Jowkar plain, which was to be directed by Rosalind Howell. The survey had two general objectives. The first was to provide a contemporary local context for the Median occupation of Nush-i Jan and its monumental building complex. The second was to broadly document and interpret settlement patterns on the Malayer-Jowkar Plain from the earliest periods up to the present day.

The survey area was approximately 2000km² in extent, which was divided into a 5km² grid. Over 8 weeks during the 1977 and 1978 seasons at Nush-i Jan, the project team covered an area

of 450km² through intensive vehicle survey. Some 250km² of the valley floor and 400km² of the upland valley was not surveyed being that the project was cut short by the Iranian Revolution.

Nevertheless, 270 archaeological sites were recorded, ranging from the Late Neolithic up the 20th Century CE. A geomorphological survey of the plain was also commissioned to help interpret patterns of settlement over time.

Recording an archaeological site on the Malayer-Jowkar Plain. From the David Stronach Archive.

Due to the upheaval caused by the revolution, the results of the Malayer-Jowkar survey remain unpublished. In the years that followed some of the data has unfortunately been lost. Nevertheless, enough material survives today to justify its publication, which would be of great benefit to archaeologists working in the region. Drawing on the available site catalogues, pottery drawings, survey maps and geomorphological data, it is anticipated that a final report on the Malayer-Jowkar survey will soon be made available as part of Nush-i Jan publication series.

Dr Gareth Brereton
David Stronach Research Fellow



Damage caused by quarrying at the mound of Baba Kamal. From the David Stronach Archive.

Outreach

The accompanying data shows that BIPS increased its social media footprint over last year. This included a doubling of our Facebook views and growth in our YouTube presence of some 7000. Our Instagram reach averaged 425 per post.

Our monthly webinars included talks on such diverse topics as music making in Iran from the 15th through the early 20th century, the notion of empire in the early Qajar period, controversies surrounding the rise of the Achaemenid empire, the Takkiyya Mu'avin al-Mulk in Kermanshah, the use of early plant remains to understand transmission of farming eastwards through Iran into Asia, and James Baillie Fraser's *The Kuzzilbash*.

With the assistance of Dr Brenden Benjamin, our Outreach Assistant, the BIPS Student Newsletter, now three years old, published 48 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 (<https://www.bips.ac.uk/newsletter-archive/>).

In February of 2025, at the British Academy, Susan Stronge delivered a lecture to highlight the exhibition *The Great Mughals: Art, Architecture, and Opulence*, which ran from November 2024 through May 2025 at the V&A, London. Susan Stronge recently retired as a Senior Curator in the Asian Department of the V&A and is now an Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the museum's Research Department.

In November 2024, we also hosted Dr Robert Steele who delivered the BIPS 2024 AGM Lecture, titled *Examining the origins of Iran's political and cultural ties with Africa under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi*. The lecture was delivered in person at the BA to an audience of over 60 BIPS members and was also streamed online via Zoom.

BIPS' partnership with the University of York continued with the organization of the annual Bruce Wannell Memorial Lecture that took place in June 2024, as part of the York Festival of Ideas.

BIPS hosted two Grant Holders' Workshops: in July in Cambridge and in November in London. The workshops were an excellent opportunity to appreciate the breadth of the research supported by the Institute and a chance to create new connections

and avenues for further collaboration.

A full list of all BIPS' events over the period is included in the table on page 26-27 of this report and full information about the events can be found on the BIPS website. Some 1100 attendees from 50 countries attended all these events.

This year BIPS introduced the **Outreach Project Grant**, which supports outreach projects that promote the knowledge of the Persianate world among a non-academic audience. Projects can range from exhibitions to workshops, lecture series and events for the general public, must have a clear outreach goal and be geared towards audiences which do not normally have access to scholarship on the Persianate world. Applicants must be affiliated to (not necessarily employed by) a UK-based university, institute of higher education, a UK museum or a registered charity.



BIPS will usually be inviting applications for this scheme once a year in November. Awards are limited to £2,000. The next call will open in November 2025 and notice will be given through the website, mailing list and usual social media channels. Further information on the Grant, and the application form, may be found at: <https://www.bips.ac.uk/outreach-project-grants/>.

Professor Andrew Newman
BIPS Outreach and Development Director

BIPS Events in 2024-2025

During the financial year 2024-2025 BIPS hosted and co-hosted a total of fourteen events, including a members only event at the British Academy and a funding workshop co-organised with fellow BIRIs.

In the financial year 2024-2025 the following events took place:

26 March 2025	Book Launch: <i>Karbala in the Ta'ziyeh Episode, Shi'i Devotional Drama in Iran</i>	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Lucy Deacon; chaired by Andrew Newman
27 February 2025	<i>The Great Mughals: Art Architecture, and Opulence at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London</i>	In person event at the British Academy, London. Lecture by Susan Stronge; chaired by Ali Ansari
26 February 2025	Book Launch: <i>The I.B. Tauris Handbok of Iranian Cinema</i>	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Maryam Ghorbankarimi, Michelle Langford, Zahra Khosroshahi, Laudan Nooshin, Lindsey Moore, Kaveh Abbasian, Max Bledstein, and Mattias Wittmann; chaired by Andrew Newman
29 January 2024	Using early plant remains to understand transmission of farming eastwards through Iran into Asia	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Hannah Caroe; chaired by Andrew Newman
4 December 2024	Making Music in Iran from the 15th to the Early 20th Century	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Amir Hosein Poorjavady; chaired by Andrew Newman
21 November 2024	Examining the origins of Iran's political and cultural ties with Africa under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi	BIPS AGM Lecture Hybrid event at the British Academy, London and online (via Zoom). Lecture by Robert Steele; chaired by Ali Ansari

16 October 2024	A Persian Paradise: Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson in Iran 1925-1927	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Nicci Obholzer; chaired by Andrew Newman
3 October 2024	Funding Opportunities for Researchers in Middle Eastern Studies at the British International Research Institutes (BIRI): BIAA, BIPS, BISI, and CBRL	On-line (via Zoom) information session led by Shabnam Holliday (BIPS), Peter Cherry (BIAA), Martyn Weeds (BIAA), Kamal Badreshany (CBRL), Rosalind Wade (BISI), and Robert Steele
25 September 2024	Making and Remaking Empire in Qajar Iran	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Assef Ashraf; chaired by Andrew Newman
17 July 2024	The Persian Romance in a Global Middle Ages	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Cameron Cross; chaired by Andrew Newman
19 June 2024	Historical Controversies Involving the Rise of the Achaemenid Empire	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Reza Zarghamee; chaired by Andrew Newman
3 June 2024	The Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan	[Co-organised by BIPS and the University of York] In person event at the York Festival of Ideas. Lecture by Mossadeq Khalili
22 May 2024	Fifty Shades of Collecting: Jean Pozzi and his Islamic Collection	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Negar Habibi; chaired by Andrew Newman
3 April 2024	Staging Piety: The Takkiya Mu'avin al-Mulk in Kermanshah	On-line (via Zoom) talk by Nahid Massoumeh Assemi; chaired by Andrew Newman

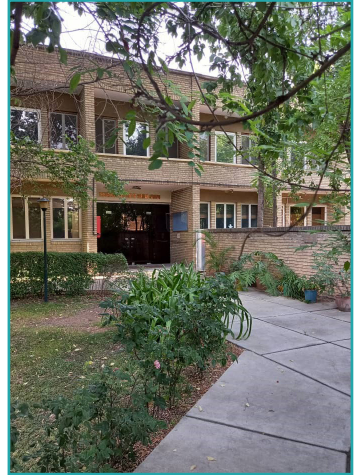
2024-2025 BIPS Outreach Grants

In the financial year 2024-2025 the BIPS Outreach Committee awarded funding to support the following projects:

Awardee	Institution	Topic	Amount
Kiri Ross-Jones	Kew Gardens	Growing Connections; Bringing Kew Gardens' Persian archives to new communities	£1,000
Karl Singporewala	SOAS	Stars, Scale, and the Sace	£1,000
Nicci Obholzer	Sissinghurst Castle (National Trust)	Sissinghurst Nowruz Celebrations	£643.80
Katherine Ives	Lauderdale House	Nowruz Cultural Festival	£500

Tehran Institute: Annual Report 2024-25

Much necessary building work and repairs have been undertaken in Tehran. This is not surprising when we take into account that the Institute's building and the Director's house were built in 1976, almost fifty years ago. In Iran there is generally a reluctance to repair any building which is more than thirty years old unless it's an antique. It is usually knocked down and rebuilt, but the splendid BIPS buildings are still standing and being looked after by our dedicated team of Mrs Sima Mohannak and Ms Daneh Kordmahini. Repair works have focused on the maintenance of the buildings, including the gardener's house, dealing with water leaks and roof repairs, and in addition, the boundary walls and fences have been secured.



At the same time, we have been looking into improving the Institute library and providing online access to the important collection of books. The first step is to acquire a software that is compatible both in Iran and outside and can help us create an online catalogue. We have regularly acquired new journals and recently published books, so that the library is reasonably up-to-date, and an important resource.

Dr Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis
BIPS Vice President and Honorary Director

Publications

BIPS has continued to be busy with five new volumes that will be published in the *Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World 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 the BIPS website.

IRAN LXII.I and LXII.II (2024)

In 2024-25, *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 63 years *IRAN* has maintained an international reputation for publishing significant academic articles on all aspects of Persianate studies (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. Submissions are made online through the publisher's website.

LXII.I

Ali Bahadori and Negin Miri, <i>The So-called Achaemenid Capitals and the Problem of Royal Court Residence</i>	p.1-31
E. Hemati Azandaryani, L. Gregoratti, Y. Mohammadifar, and Hamid Didari, <i>Myad Mishan: A Newly Found Parthian Bas-Relief in the Alvand Range, Hamadan, Western Iran</i>	p.32-41
Leila Khosravi, <i>New Archaeological Excavations of the Jahangir and Gowriyeh Manor Houses in the West of the Sassanid Empire</i>	p.42-61
Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina, <i>Purity and Polemics: Zoroastrian Women's Bodies as Sites of Difference and Contestation in Early Islamic Iran</i>	p.62-78
Edoardo Paolo Ferrari, <i>From Soil to Domes: Vernacular Architecture and Construction Techniques in Esfahak, South Khurasan</i>	p.79-102
Moslem Mishmastnehi, <i>Technological Heritage of Persian Windmills</i>	p.103-119

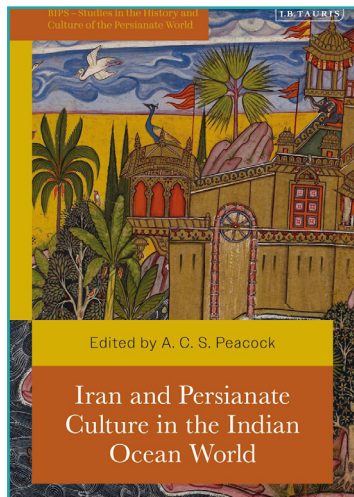
András Barati, <i>Change and Continuity: Safavid Administration in Eighteenth-century Iran</i>	p.120-129
Mehdi Mousavi, 'Abbas Mirza: A Counternarrative	p.130-145

LXII.II

Abbas Moghaddam and Elnaz Rashidian, <i>Visiting Tol-e Tahmachi, a Fifth Millennium BCE Settlement in the Persian Gulf Littoral, Southwest Iran</i>	p.147-167
Sheler Amelirad and Behroz Khanmohamadi, <i>Typological Study of Metal Pins in Northwest Iran based on the Bayazid Abad (Bayazi Awa) Archaeological Assemblage</i>	p.168-193
Mostafa Dehpahlavan and Zahra Alinezhad, <i>The Cylinder Seals of Qareh Tepe in Sagzabad, Iron Age II and III</i>	p.194-208
Mohsen Javeri and Majid Montazer Zohouri, <i>Vigol and Harāskān Fire Temple: Archaeological Evidence about the Veneration of Fire in the Centre of the Iranian Plateau During the Sasanian Period</i>	p.209-219
Shahram Jalilian and Touraj Daryaei, <i>The Image of the Sasanian King in the Perso-Arabic Historical Tradition</i>	p.220-235
Esmail Sangari, Zohreh Noori, Amirhossein Moghaddas, Aliakbar Abbasi and Reza Dehghani, <i>The Iconography of Dancers and Their Garments on Sasanid Silver Vessels (Case Study: Four Silver Vessels with Four Different Features)</i>	p.236-245
Michael Shenkar, <i>The So-Called "Fravašis" and the "Heaven and Hell" Paintings, and the Cult of Nana in Panjikent</i>	p. 246-262
Moujan Matin, <i>A Medieval Stonepaste Ceramic Production Site in Moshkin Tepe, Iran: Ceramics, Wasters, and Manufacturing Equipment</i>	p. 263-277
Philip Henning Grobier, <i>The Origins and Intentions of the Anglo-Persian Agreement 1919: A Reassessment</i>	p. 278-293

Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World Series

Reflecting the British Institute of Persian Studies' role in stimulating and promoting research into all aspects of Persian and Iranian studies, the BIPS *Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World* series exists to provide an outlet for the work conducted in this field and welcomes proposals for book length publications in the form of research monographs, conference proceedings or other edited volumes. This series is particularly ready to serve as a vehicle for publishing research undertaken with the support and sponsorship of BIPS and arising out of one of its research programmes.



The series is edited by Dr Saeedreza Talajooy, University of St Andrews, and is produced in partnership with Bloomsbury/I.B. Tauris .

The latest publication in the series is the anthology, edited by Professor Andrew Peacock, University of St Andrews, *Iran and Persianate Culture in the Indian Ocean World* (February 2025).

Archaeological Monograph Series

The BIPS *Archaeological Monograph Series* was established in 2009 as a joint publishing venture between 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 Professor Cameron Petrie, University of Cambridge.



Underglaze-painted bottle. Qajar Iran. Nineteenth century. Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.

Financial Report

The year 2024-25 has seen us pursue the various pillars of our strategic plan which will see us through to 2030. We are in the process of rethinking the structure of our grant awards with greater focus on early career researchers providing necessary seed money to allow them to initiate projects which can in time secure further grant money. With our flagship programmes – which ran over three years – coming to an end, we are in the process of replacing our flagship research projects with a single BIPS Fellow which will allow us to support researchers from abroad who wish to come to the UK for a brief period to conduct research. Last year we inaugurated our BIPS Outreach Project Grants to support projects that promote the knowledge of the Persianate world to a non-academic audience, with four excellent applications from leading institutions including Kew Gardens and Sissinghurst.

Our India networking and digitisation pillars continue to develop at pace with major collaborations due to take place with two institutional Indian partners in 2026 on the topics of Zoroastrianism and Mughal India in relation to the Persianate world. We continue to grow our digital offering with partnerships with Persian Language Online and the Golha platform both of which provide resources to the public for free.

The digitisation platform has been configured and we have made significant progress in review and digitisation of Stronach and other archives. This has been achieved in collaborative work with the other Research Institutes (BIRIs) funded by the British Academy and the Archaeological Data Service in York. The objectives are developing in-house expertise and guidelines and good practices which constitute the standards for modern digital archives, including compilation of a comprehensive user guide to BIPS digital platform. The next phase is data completion, cleansing and the migration of the archives onto the platform.

BIPS also collaborated with the BIRIs in production of two digital stories, one on the contributions of women to the work of the institutes in their early days and the other on the early history of the institutes, which identified the wealth of information preserved by the archives, the links between the BIRIs, and the opportunities provided by the digitisation of the archives for wider public access to the information and research of the archives.

The Stronach Fellow has made remarkable progress, and the records of the Yarim Tepe excavations have been digitised and a volume prepared for publication. It is currently being peer reviewed. Great progress has also been made with the record of the Nush-i Jan (Malayer-Jowkar Plain) Survey. They have been digitised and a full publication, with catalogue, which includes the sites, is now in the course of preparation. This report has been eagerly awaited by the scholarly community, and will make a substantial contribution to knowledge.

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PERSIAN STUDIES

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025 Total	2024 Total
		£	£	£	£
INCOME FROM:					
Donations and legacies	2	260	277,313	277,573	223,257
Charitable activities	3	17,255	-	17,255	22,432
Investment income	4	6,497	-	6,497	6,443
Total Income		24,012	277,313	301,325	252,132
EXPENDITURE ON:					
Charitable activities	5	26,153	262,380	288,533	277,799
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		26,153	262,380	288,533	277,799
Net gains/(losses) on investments	9	(1,449)	-	(1,449)	3,531
NET INCOME/ (EXPENDITURE)		(3,590)	14,993	11,343	(22,136)
OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES:					
Other gains/(losses)	11	(1,561)	-	(1,561)	2,759
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	6	(5,151)	14,933	9,782	(19,377)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS:					
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		240,288	32,825	273,113	292,490
FUND BALANCES AT 31 MARCH 2025		235,137	47,758	282,895	273,113

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

THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PERSIAN STUDIES
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025		2024	
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets:	12		47,533		47,533
COIF Investments	13		46,965		-
			<u>94,498</u>		<u>47,533</u>
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	14	8,200		2,040	
Investments	15	-		48,414	
Cash at bank and in hand		327,874		223,400	
		<u>336,074</u>		<u>273,854</u>	
CREDITORS (amounts due falling within one year)	16	(147,677)		(48,274)	
			<u>188,397</u>		<u>225,580</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS					
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			282,895		273,113
The Funds of the charity					
Restricted Income Funds	18		47,748		32,825
Unrestricted Funds	19		235,137		240,288
			<u>282,895</u>		<u>273,113</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 22 October 2025.



Dancer with castanets. Unknown artist. Iran. Early nineteenth century. Oil on canvas. Shalva Amirnashvili Museum of Fine Arts, Inv. N 858.



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 (£40 a year - for non-UK members); Full (£50 a year) and Fellow (£60 a year for academics). Membership renewals or applications can be made via our website: www.bips.ac.uk/join-us/

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