



IRAN, JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PERSIAN STUDIES

IRAN, JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF PERSIAN STUDIES. The British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) was inaugurated in December 1961 in the wake of Queen Elizabeth II's official visit to Iran in March of that year (see [GREAT BRITAIN xiv](#)). The aim was for an Institute which would be based in Tehran and, in distinction from existing British schools and institutes in such places as Rome, Athens, Ankara, and Baghdad, which were concerned solely with the culture and archaeology of the ancient civilizations there, the BIPS was to make its field of interest the whole spectrum of Iran's archaeology, history, and culture, from prehistory through ancient and Islamic Iran to modern times. Co-operation with Iranian scholars, universities, and institutes in research projects was envisaged. The first President of the Institute was Sir Max Mallowan and the first Tehran Director David Stronach, with Brian Spooner as Assistant Director. Through the generosity of such bodies as the British Academy, the Wolfson Trust, and the Iranian Oil Exploration and Producing Company, premises were acquired in Tehran. Archeological investigation, field research, and other associated activities were begun, including, with help from the Gulbenkian Foundation, the collecting together of a reference and research library in the Tehran institute building, one which has at present (2006) ca. 10,000 books and provides an amenity both for



researchers visiting from outside and for indigenous Iranian scholars and students in Tehran, who find books and periodicals published in the West difficult of access.

The constituting of the Institute envisaged an annual journal, and the first volume of *IRAN* appeared in 1963 under the editorship of Laurence Lockhart. In 1967 Georgina Herrmann, of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London, became Editor, joined in 1968 by C. Edmund Bosworth, of Manchester University, as Co-Editor, and an informal division of spheres of interest was made: Herrmann (and, from 1983 to 2005, her successor Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, of the British Museum) has been responsible for archeological material and that pertaining to Iran from Achaemenid times up to the Islamic conquest, whilst Bosworth has been responsible for material on the history and culture of Islamic Iran and Iran in modern times. The aim has always been to maintain a rough balance between the two spheres, aiming at the production of a journal of rigorous academic standard which will have items of interest for those interested in the whole spectrum of Iranian life and achievements. It is also worthy of note that the “Persian Studies” of the Journal’s title has from the outset been very widely interpreted. Within the archeological and early Iranian spheres, coverage has ranged far beyond the political boundaries of present-day Iran into regions where Iranian culture and/or political control extended in the past: into Mesopotamia, eastern Anatolia, the Caucasus, and (notably in the case of Merv) Central Asia. In Islamic times, Persian language and its attendant culture spread far outside Iran, into the Caucasus region, over a large sector of the Middle East, into Central Asia and into much of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, so that articles have figured on aspects of Persian culture such as literature, art, and architecture, and on Persian religious influences in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Muslim India.

Pre-Islamic Iran. From the outset, the archaeology of pre-Islamic Iran has figured prominently. In Volume I, David Stronach published the first preliminary report of the Institute’s flagship excavation at Pasargadae (q.v. at *iranica.com*), the capital of Cyrus the Great. Further preliminary reports about these excavations appeared in Volumes II-III, in advance of the final publication that appeared in 1978. In these early years, the editors made a conscious effort to publish quickly preliminary reports of as many current excavations as possible. Other reports at this time included one on Tall-i Nokhodi, Sirāf, Baba Jan Tepe, and Bampur. These were followed in the early 1970s by Nush-i Jan Tepe and Haftavan Tepe. In addition, the journal



published preliminary reports on a number of non-British excavations, including the French ones at Tureng Tepe, the American ones at Tall-i Iblis and later at Tall-i Malayan, and the Canadian (Royal Ontario Museum) ones at Godin Tepe (q.v.) and Qal'eh Yazdigird.

In this way, *IRAN* established itself as the foremost journal in English for the speedy publication of archeological work in the region, and this was reflected in the appearance in it of a number of seminal articles dealing with problems in Iranian archaeology. Outstanding here were T. Cuyler Young's articles on the chronology of Western Iran in Volume III (1965) and the Iranian migration into the Zagros region in Volume V (1967). From 1967 onwards the journal included a section "Survey of Excavations in Iran" that provided a list and short résumés of excavations and surveys currently taking place there. This section took note of work by Iranian archeologists, and it remained a popular feature of the journal until the reduction of excavations after 1979.

Both before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the journal included studies that were effectively monographs. Thus Louis D. Levine's geographical studies in the Neo-Assyrian Zagros region that appeared in Volumes XI-XII (1973-74) were afterwards published as a monograph by the Royal Ontario Museum. Then in 1983 an entire volume of *IRAN* (XXI) was dedicated to Michael Roaf's study of Sculptures and Sculptors at Persepolis. During the 1980s a number of significant articles dealt with various aspects of Iranian archaeology, such as Roger Moorey's "The Iranian Contribution to Achaemenid Material Culture," in Volume XXIII (1985). Inna Medvedskaya's "Who Destroyed Hasanlu?" in Volume XXVI (1988), sparked off a heated discussion about the dating of H5asanlu (q.v.). As a result, Robert H. Dyson Jr. and Oscar White Muscarella produced a year later a critical response, which discussed the chronology of Hasanlu IV and its historical implications.

The isolation of Iran in the post-1979 period had serious implications for Iranian archeologists in the Western world. Many shifted their attention to Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, so that, in the 1990s, reports of archeological investigations outside the political boundaries of modern Iran frequently appeared. Thus Georgina Herrmann's work at ancient Merv in what is now Turkmenistan was regularly published as "The International Merv Project," and there were also articles on other Central Asian sites such as Gonur Tepe, Ak Tepe, Kampyr Tepe, Nisa, and Kazakli-Yatkan in the Tash Kirman oasis of ancient Chorasmia. Also, with the decrease in foreign archeological activity within Iran, the journal took the opportunity to publish



a series of articles on other aspects of ancient Iranian culture, including studies of Sasanid coins by Malek Iradj Mochiri and Hodge Mehdi Malek, as well as an important series of studies by Ran Zadok on Iranian names in Mesopotamian sources. Two articles contained important information about Persepolitan relief fragments in the British Museum: John Curtis's "A Chariot Scene from Persepolis," in 1998 and, two years later, T. C. Mitchell's "The Persepolis Sculptures in the British Museum."

Towards the end of the 20th century, important discoveries in Iranian archaeology were being made, and Western scholars were gradually invited back to embark on collaborative projects. Hence the editors now introduced into *IRAN* English summaries of articles and reports which had appeared in Persian periodicals, seen in the "Archaeological News from Iran" by Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis and St. John Simpson, which were published in 1997-98 and 2002. By this time, articles by Iranian archeologists themselves were appearing in the journal, including those on the important discovery of Elymaean rock reliefs in Izeh by Ja'far Mehrkiyan in 1997, Kamyar Abdi's excavations in the Islamabad plain of the western central Zagros, and S. M. S. Sajjadi's excavations at Shahr-i Sokhta in 2002. Reports on collaborative projects have included excavations on the Tehran plain by H. Fazeli and R. A. E. Coningham, as well as the reports of Kamyar Abdi and John Alden on the recent excavations in and around Tall-i Malyan in 2004 and 2005.

Islamic period. Within the Islamic and modern fields, the history of Iran has been well represented, from the effects of the Arab invasions on the administrative pattern of Sasanid Iraq and Arab raids into Fārs in the 7th century, through the histories of the dynasties like the Samanids, Ghaznavids, Saljuqs, Safavids, and Qajars to the beginning of modern times, the Constitutional Movement of 1905-09, and the establishment of the Pahlavi monarchy and beyond, with such up-to-date topics appearing as women's football in the Islamic Republic. What might be termed the discovery of Iran by the West has been illumined by articles on the economic and commercial history of the Persian Gulf region and its shores, including the interrelations of English merchants and Persian craftsmen, and Western travelers and diplomats in the 17th century such as the Sherley brothers, Nicholas Wilford, and Viscount Bellomont. For the 19th century, there have been studies on the Napoleonic General Gardane and on the British military mission which his activities in Tehran provoked, that sent under Lt. Col. Joseph D'Arcy in 1810-14, and visitors like J. B. Fraser, Mrs Isabella Bird, the Cambridge scholar



E. G. Browne during his *Wanderjahr* of 1887-88, and the statesman G. N. Curzon (q.v.), whilst movement in the contrary direction has been exemplified by studies of the first Persian diplomatic envoys who traveled to Europe.

The Islamic architecture and epigraphy of this period have been especially well represented, from Saljuq, Timurid, Safavid and Qajar monuments within Iran itself, and Ghaznavid, Ghurid, and Sultanate buildings in the Indo-Afghan borderlands and the subcontinent itself, to recent vernacular buildings of the Iranian countryside. The plastic and visual arts, such as ceramics, metalwork, and miniature painting, and numismatics, have also been covered. A lavish use of illustrations, drawings, and plans has always been a feature of the journal, a usage obviously necessary for archeological description and for the depiction of Islamic objets d'art, for the last of which color plates have been used on occasion. Persian literature as an object of study in itself and as an influence on Western literature and taste has been examined, with treatment of the technical problems of Persian metrics, of literary exponents and critics from the Ghaznavid lyric poets and Hafez (q.v.) to Sayyed Aḥmad Kasravi, and of Western scholars and littérateurs who brought knowledge of Persian achievements back to Europe and the West; the very first article in Vol. I of the Journal was on Edward Fitzgerald (q.v.) as a pioneer translator of 'Omar Ḳayyām's *Robā'iyāt*. Religious life and spirituality have been an inextricable element of Persian culture, and there have been studies on early Ismailism (q.v.) and the journeying of Sufis and pilgrims. The social sciences have been less well represented, although until fieldwork in Iran by foreigners was substantially halted in 1979, ethnological and anthropological studies appeared on such topics as the social organization of the tribes in regions like Fārs, Gorgān and Persian Baluchistan; and 20th-century political trends, movements, and ideas, and such manifestations of them as the translation movement and the Iranian newspaper and journal press have not been neglected.

When the BIPS was founded, it was envisaged that, as well as the journal, there would be a series of Institute monographs dealing with Persian texts, but in the event, only one of these, A. J. Arberry's facsimile edition of the *Homāy-nāma*, actually appeared (in 1963). However, since 2003, there has appeared the Routledge Curzon/BIPS Persian Studies series, beginning with Homa Katouzian, *Iranian History and Politics. The Dialectic of State and Society* (2003); Stephanie Cronin (ed.), *The Making of Modern Iran. State and Society*



under Riza Shah 1921-1941 (2003); and Vanessa Martin (ed.), *Anglo-Iranian Relations since 1800* (2005).