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A Worldwide Stage for Sustainable Quality

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Abstract

The first issue of Volume 15 of the *Iranian Journal of Archaeological Studies* (IJAS) is being published at a significant and symbolic moment in its academic trajectory. The journal's official acceptance into the Scopus citation database in autumn 2024, with all articles from 2020 onwards now indexed, marks a turning point in its professional and quality-driven development. This milestone reflects the journal's structural commitment to international evaluation standards, a rigorous and transparent peer review process, and openness to the global archaeological community.This issue includes six research articles by scholars from academic institutions in Iran, India, Kyrgyzstan, and Türkiye, offering notable geographical, methodological, and thematic diversity—from studies on Zoroastrian migration to Gujarat, to astral architectural design in Tabriz; from Urartian settlements in Zulmabad to skeletal variation in Parthian Gilan; from Dalma ceramics in the central Zagros to GIS-based settlement models in mountainous Baluchestan. Despite this thematic diversity, the issue maintains theoretical coherence and reflects emerging concerns in both Iranian and global archaeology.This editorial review qualitatively assesses the current articles, analyses the journal's status in regional and international academic systems, and visualises institutional and methodological diversity through maps and diagrams, ultimately offering a reflective outlook on the future of academic publishing in this field.

Keywords:Editorial, Iranian Archaeology, Scopus Indexing, Academic Quality, Content Analysis, International Publishing.

Article Type: Editorial Note

Introduction

Fifteen years have passed since the inaugural issue of *Iranian Journal of Archaeological Studies* was published. Over this time, the journal has established a respectable standing within the Iranian and regional academic landscapes, grounded in expert peer review, adherence to academic ethics, a focus on quality over quantity, and openness to interdisciplinary approaches. Throughout, our emphasis has remained on "scholarly depth" rather than merely the number of publications, an approach that has enabled IJAS to maintain its disciplinary identity while achieving international visibility.

One of the most notable recent developments has been the journal's official acceptance into the **Scopus** database in autumn 2024 (Figure. 1). This achievement not only indicates editorial compliance with international publishing standards, but also confirms that the journal's peer review and article selection processes in recent years have been executed with rigour, selectivity, and editorial independence.

Significantly, Elsevier's decision to index all IJAS articles published since 2020 means that our previous outputs have also undergone quality assessment, serving as a retrospective validation of the journal's structural and editorial policies.

In today's academic publishing environment, inclusion in indexing databases such as Scopus is more than a technical merit; it signifies adherence to principles of transparency, internationalisation, and qualified double-blind peer review. For the IJAS editorial board, this milestone also entails a renewed commitment: to uphold "quality" as the primary criterion for article selection, alongside promoting

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geographical and interdisciplinary diversity.

The current issue reflects this commitment. The six articles published herein demonstrate a synthesis of data-driven, historically contextualised, and methodologically innovative approaches. These studies:

•Link bioarchaeology and genetics to migration research;

•Apply GIS-based spatial analysis in settlement archaeology;

•Use laboratory techniques (XRF, XRD, petrography) to examine ceramic composition;

•And employ mathematical models to understand traditional architectural patterns.

These methodological directions suggest that archaeology in Iran is evolving, not merely to preserve field data, but to engage with the global momentum toward interdisciplinary research. The IJAS editorial board seeks to provide a platform for such emerging studies and to support their international dissemination. The following sections offer a detailed review of each article in this issue, followed by a broader analytical synthesis of the thematic, geographical, and institutional diversity represented, accompanied by relevant visualisations and maps.

Analytical Overview of the Articles: Geographical, Methodological, and Theoretical Diversity

Zoroastrian Assimilation in India: A Bio-Anthropological Reappraisal

The article by Veena Mushrif-Tripathy from Deccan College, titled *Studies on the Assimilation of Zoroastrians into Indian Society with Special Reference to Sanjan, India: A Review,* is a compelling example of combining genetic, biological, and ethnographic data in archaeological migration studies. Analysing the skeletal remains of over 180 individuals excavated from Dokhama, Gujarat (14th–15th centuries CE), the study reveals patterns of genetic convergence between the migrant Parsi community and indigenous groups. The ancient DNA (aDNA)



Figure. 1: *A combined view reflecting the scholarly status of the Iranian Journal of Archaeological Studies (IJAS):*

Left: the homepage of the official journal website;

Right: the journal's profile page in the Scopus database, indicating its international indexing and academic recognition.

analysis, reportedly the first of its kind in such Indian contexts, confirms the incorporation of maternal indigenous lineages into the Parsi gene pool (Mushrif-Tripathy 2025:7-16). The study presents a model of cultural and biological interaction applicable to other regional research.

Zulmabad Fortress and the Urartian Frontier in Northwestern Iran

The joint article by Nezahat Ceylan, Alpaslan Ceylan, and Oktay Özgül, titled *Zulmabad Fortress and Urartian Presence in North-western Iran*, revisits two decades of fieldwork in East Azerbaijan to recontextualise the Urartian political and military dynamics on their eastern frontier. Through photogrammetry, ceramic typology, and architectural documentation, the authors demonstrate the defensive significance of Zulmabad Fortress within the Urartian geopolitical system (Ceylan *et al*. 2025:17-32). The paper contributes to the broader discourse on cultural boundaries in Iron Age Near Eastern interactions.

Biological Variation and Sex Estimation in Parthian Gilan

Mohammadreza Eghdami's article, *The Influence of Population Variability on Pelvic Sexual Dimorphism: A Case Study from the Parthian Cemetery,* Liyarsangbon, offers a statistical and population-based assessment of 77 pelvic skeletons from Parthian-period Gilan. The findings challenge the universal applicability of global sex estimation standards, highlighting the need for population-specific frameworks (Eghdami 2025:55-68). The study reinforces the necessity of culturally and environmentally grounded bioarchaeological analyses.

GIS-Based Modelling of Settlement Patterns in Sarbaz

In their joint article, *Structural Analysis of Social Settlement Models within the Ancient Sites of Sarbaz County Based on GIS,* Hossein Sarhaddi Dadian and Mohammad Bamedi apply ecological and spatial theories to classify settlement patterns across northern and southern Sarbaz (southeastern Iran). Their GIS-based analysis reveals distinct temporal and environmental strategies: short-term settlements in mountainous north versus permanent agricultural habitation in the south, spanning from pre-Islamic to post-medieval periods (Sarhaddi-Dadian and Bamedi 2025:33-54). The article offers a replicable model for spatial archaeology in highland regions.

Dalma Ceramics from Tepe Gheshlagh: Intra-Regional Connectivity

In *Laboratory Characterisation of Dalma Period Ceramics from Tepe Gheshlagh,* authors Mehnar Sharifi and Abbas Motarjem employ XRF, XRD, and petrographic techniques to investigate ceramic production during the Dalma period. Their findings indicate the presence of both local and non-local (Ubaid-type) ceramics, suggesting interregional cultural exchanges in the Chalcolithic central Zagros (Sharifi and Motarjem 2025:69-84). The methodological framework is of high value for future studies in ceramic technology.

Mathematical Interpretation of Astral Karbandi Designs

Azita Balali-Oskoyi and Sepideh Sepehriara's paper, *Recognising various Types of Akhtari Karbandi Without the Need for Drawing,* examines the geometric logic behind astral karbandi patterns. By analysing circle divisions and joint intervals, the authors demonstrate how the absence or presence of common divisors defines whether the pattern is continuous, star-shaped, or grid-like (Balali-Oskoyi and Sepehriara 2025:85-94). This study builds a bridge between mathematics and traditional Iranian architecture, enhancing predictive modelling in historical design.

General Analysis of the Issue: Diversity, Synergy, and Future Directions

The current issue of IJAS displays a remarkable diversity of archaeological research, both in thematic content and geographical scope. This includes fieldwork-based case studies, stratigraphic analysis, technological innovation, and theoretical discussions on heritage management. Such diversity fosters synergy among different research approaches and enables wider academic exchange.

An analysis of the author base reveals strengthened international and interdisciplinary collaboration. Contributors in this issue represent academic institutions in Iran, Kyrgyzstan, India, and Türkiye, an international spread visualised in the following Figures (2-4).

This distribution not only underscores the thematic diversity of the current volume but also reflects the journal's growing engagement with a broad range of research fields and international contributors. As shown in Figure 2, the most represented domain is bioarchaeology (33.33%), followed by an equal share (16.67% each) for settlement archaeology, ceramic technology, traditional architecture, and migration studies, demonstrating an interdisciplinary scope that mirrors the journal's expanding academic reach. The authorship landscape (Figure. 3) further illustrates this diversity, with contributions from Iran (4 authors), Kyrgyzstan (2 authors), and one author each from India and Türkiye, marking a clear step toward global scholarly integration. This international collaboration is also geographically contextualised in Figure 4, which combines a regional map displaying both archaeological sites (circles) and the locations of affiliated institutions (stars), accompanied by a summary table detailing article titles, author names, research sites, and thematic focus areas.

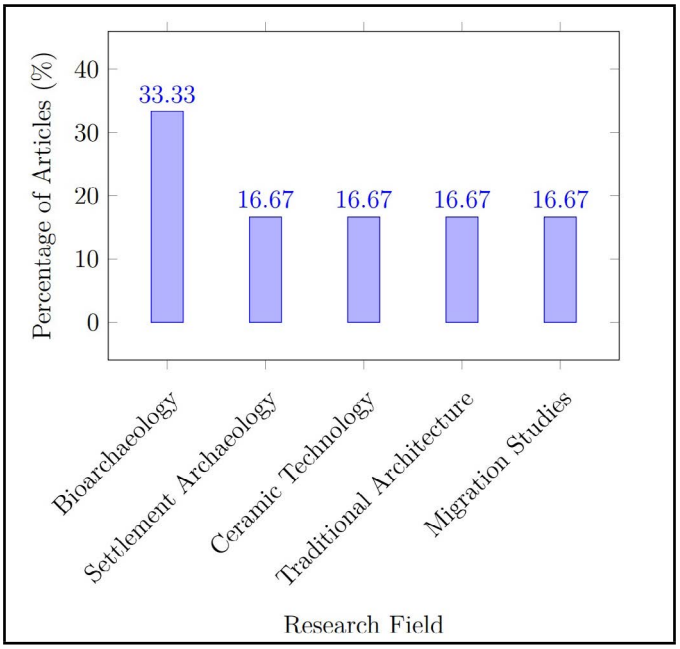


Figure. 2: *Article distribution by research field: bioarchaeology leads, followed by four equally represented disciplines.*

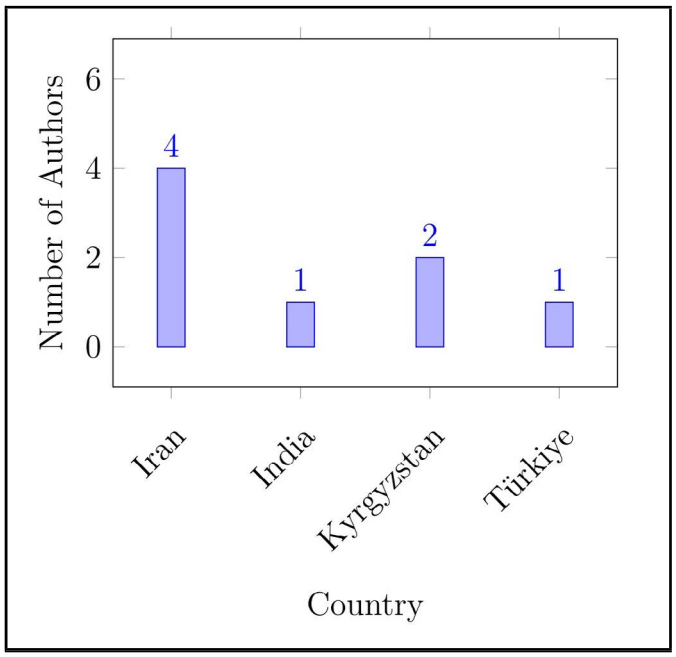
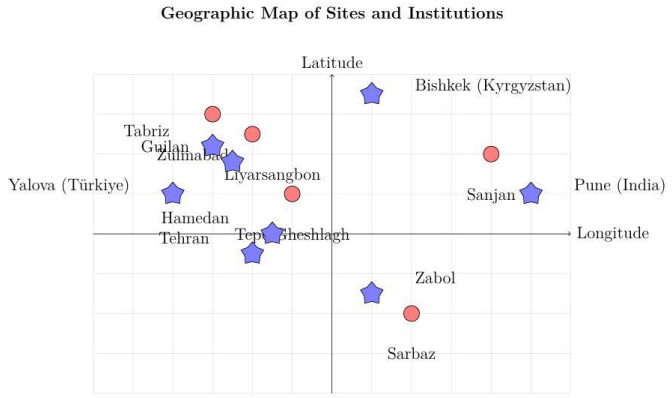


Figure. 3: *Country-wise author count: Iran leads, with contributions also from Kyrgyzstan, India, and Türkiye.*



Article Title	Author(s)	Site	Research Field
Assimilation of Zoroastrians	Veena Mushrif-Tripathy	Sanjan, India	Bioarchaeology, Migration
Zulmabad Fortress	Nezahat Ceylan et al.	Zulmabad, Iran	Settlement Archaeology
Pelvic Sexual Dimorphism	Mohammad Reza Eghdami	Liyarsangbon, Iran	Bioarchaeology
Settlement Models in Sarbaz	Hossein Sarhaddi-Dadian, Mohammad Bamedi	Sarbaz, Iran	Settlement Archaeology
Dalma Ceramics	Mahnaz Sharifi, Abbas Motarjem	Tepe Gheshlagh, Iran	Ceramic Technology
Akhtari Karbandi	Azita Balali Oskoyi, Sepideh Sepehriara	Tabriz, Iran	Traditional Architecture

Figure. 4: *Regional map and summary table showing authors' institutional locations and archaeological research sites in this issue.*

Such integrative perspectives underscore IJAS's growing capacity to function as a regional and international forum for high-quality archaeological discourse. Several articles also reflect future-oriented approaches through the adoption of digital, sustainable, or interdisciplinary frameworks—signalling the maturation of Iranian archaeology as a globally engaged academic field.

Conclusion

As the first issue of IJAS's fifteenth volume, this publication marks a turning point in the journal's commitment to promoting scholarly dialogue on Iranian and regional archaeology. The thematic, geographical, and methodological richness of the current issue reflects the dynamic evolution of archaeological research in the region.

The steady growth in citations, Scopus indexing, and adherence to international standards further position IJAS as a reputable reference for archaeological scholarship across the Middle East, Central Asia, and neighbouring regions. Looking ahead, the editorial team remains committed to enhancing academic structures, attracting interdisciplinary submissions, and encouraging innovative research in digital, ecological, and critical archaeologies—thereby advancing the global conversation on Iranian archaeology.

In conclusion, we express our deep gratitude to all contributors, reviewers, academic and technical editors, and the editorial board members for their continued support. It is hoped that the forthcoming issue will, in its own capacity, pave the way for more constructive scientific dialogues and deeper research in the future.

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