



# Annual Report

November 2023 – November 2024

## Overview

The past year has seen BRAIS deliver another hugely successful Annual Conference at the University of Leeds which attracted a large and diverse cohort of scholars from across the UK and beyond. The Association awarded its annual Prize in the Study of Islam and the Muslim World for the ninth time in 2024, with the winning submission by Dr Raashid S. Goyal offering masterful analysis of 'War and Law in the First Islamic Polity'. 2023/24 proved a slightly more challenging year financially with higher than usual costs incurred in the delivery of the annual conference as well as additional costs borne by BRAIS relating to the Prize. Nonetheless, BRAIS remains in very good financial health, with membership numbers sustaining across the year. We look forward with great anticipation to our 2025 conference which will be hosted by the University of Cambridge, and commit to providing added value to our membership through a variety of additional programmes and initiatives in the year to come. BRAIS continued to express its solidarity for the people of Palestine with a special session at our annual conference reflecting on the continued genocide being committed against Palestinians by the state of Israel.

## BRAIS 2024 at the University of Leeds

Having delivered our 2022 and 2023 conferences in Edinburgh and London respectively, it was a pleasure to host BRAIS 2024 in the north of England in the stunning surroundings of Cloth Hall Court, University of Leeds.

The conference featured 31 panels in total, with an additional evening panel reflecting on 'Academic (Un)Freedom in the University' in light of concerning events of the past year in universities across the country as students and staff have responded to the horrors unfolding in Palestine. Our sincere thanks to Professor Salman Sayyid (University of Leeds), Dr Maryam Kashani (University of Illinois) and Dr Sharaiz Chaudhry (University of Edinburgh) who contributed to this important panel.

This year, we were honoured to welcome two exceptional keynote speakers: Professor Tahera Qutbuddin (Abdulaziz Saud AlBabtain Laudian Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford) opened the conference with a majestic overview of her new book 'Nahj al-Balāghah, The Wisdom and Eloquence of 'Alī', and Professor Stefan Weber (Director of the Pergamon Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin), who brought the conference to a close with a fascinating reflection on the process of refurbishing and remodelling the Berlin Museum's unapparelled Islamic art collection.

[www.brais.ac.uk](http://www.brais.ac.uk) • [brais@ed.ac.uk](mailto:brais@ed.ac.uk)

The British Association for Islamic Studies is a Registered Charity: 1196378

Registered address: The Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, 68 Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6JF

Administrative address: The Alwaleed Centre, 16 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LD

BRAIS would like to offer its sincere thanks to everyone who made the conference such a success. We are particularly indebted to the staff at Cloth Hall Court, University of Leeds, who took such good care of our delegates and helped make our two days in Leeds so memorable.

We are now excited to look ahead to BRAIS 2025, which will be hosted by the University of Cambridge in the historic surroundings of the Old Divinity School, St John's College on Monday 30 June and Tuesday 1 July.

## **2024 BRAIS Prize in the Study of Islam and the Muslim World**

2024 saw the BRAIS Prize go from strength-to-strength with an exceptionally strong body of submissions coming in from across the world. As ever, submissions were reviewed by experts in the field, before a final decision was made by the Prize Committee.

We were delighted to announce that the 2024 BRAIS Prize in the Study of Islam and the Muslim World was awarded to Dr Raashid Goyal (Cornell University) for his submission 'War and Law in the First Islamic Polity: Arabness, Emigration, and the Dhimma of God and His Messenger'. We offer our sincere congratulations to Dr Goyal, and look forward to welcoming him to BRAIS 2025, where he will offer an overview of his thesis as part of our conference programme.

Administering the Prize takes a tremendous amount of work and we would like to offer heartfelt thanks to the Prize Chair, Dr Saeko Yazaki, and the Prize Coordinator, Adam Ramadhan, who worked tirelessly to make sure the process went smoothly. We would also like to thank the Prize Committee for their major contribution to the Prize, as well as all those scholars who kindly agreed to read and review our submissions. The Prize is a true team effort and we really cannot thank everyone enough for their commitment.

## **BRAIS Trustees Strategy Day: January 2024, University of Leeds**

BRIAS Trustees try to meet at least once a year for a full day reflecting on the mission, vision and objectives of BRAIS. This year, Trustees met together at the University of Leeds to reflect on BRAIS's successes, and consider the Association's role in the years to come. The genocide in Palestine was a primary point of discussion, with Trustees agreeing that BRAIS should play more of a role in advocating for academic colleagues in Palestine and take the lead in initiatives which engage Islamic Studies with essential questions of justice, resistance, academic freedom and law in light of the ongoing ethnic cleansing and genocide. We hope to launch a number of initiatives in 2025, and would be very grateful to hear from colleagues who might wish to be involved in BRAIS's work on this issue.

## **Governance**

BRAIS is managed by a team of six Trustees who are appointed via a vote of the membership. The current BRAIS Trustees are as follows:

- Chair: Dr Fozia Bora (University of Leeds)
- Treasurer: Dr Haroon Sidat (Cardiff University)
- Secretary: Mr Thomas Lea (University of Edinburgh)

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- Equality and Diversity Officer: Dr Alyaa Ebbiary (Lancaster University)
- Communications Officer: Dr Usaama Al-Azami (Leiden University)
- Events Officer: Dr Jaan Islam

All Trustees have agreed to continue in their roles into next year, so there will be no vote for new Trustees at the next AGM.

Over the last three years, BRAIS has received essential support from Dr Sharaiz Chaudhry who has been working parttime as BRAIS's Project Coordinator. Sharaiz has brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the role, helping us deliver three exceptional conferences, and becoming a core part of the team since taking up the role. Sharaiz recently passed his viva and accepted a new fulltime role with 'Friends of Al-Aqsa'. He therefore decided to step down from his role at BRAIS in order to focus on this essential new role. Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank Sharaiz for everything he has done during his time with us and we wish him all the very best in the next chapter of his career.

## BRAIS Council

BRAIS Trustees would like to express their sincere thanks to the BRAIS Council who have continued to offer essential advice and support over the past year. We are delighted that Professor Sarah Savant (Aga Khan University) has agreed to join our Council, pending ratification at our AGM on 14 January.

## Membership

The success of our 2023 Annual Conference meant that we saw a rise in memberships across the year which is very positive. Current membership numbers are as follows:

Full Members	105
Associate Members	66
Student Members	122
	<hr/>
	293

BRAIS Trustees would like to offer their heartfelt thanks to all members for their consistent support of the Association over the course of the last year. We look forward to working hard on your behalf in the years to come.

## Finance

As noted above, 2023/24 was a challenging financial year for BRAIS, with our conference costing significantly more than it has in previous years. BRAIS also paid the prize fund to both the 2023 and 2024 BRAIS Prize winners in this financial year, which meant that our payments significantly surpassed our receipts across the year. Luckily, BRAIS has been prudent over the last decade and we therefore continue to hold a large surplus which we aim to build back over the course of the next financial year. Cash reserves are as follows, with a full Statement of Accounts circulated ahead of our AGM:

Cash reserves as of 16 November 2023: £31,666

Cash reserves as of 15 November 2024: £22,928

Report compiled by Thomas Lea, Secretary of the British Association for Islamic Studies.



Thomas Lea  
December 2025



Receipts and payments accounts			
For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	16/11/2023		15/11/2024



Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Membership subscriptions	4,855	-	-	4,855	
2022 Conference delegate fees	11,300	-	-	11,300	
2022 Confernece Publisher Exhibition income	2,250	-	-	2,250	
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>18,405</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,405</b>	<b>21,439</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>18,405</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,405</b>	<b>21,439</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>18,405</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,405</b>	<b>21,439</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
2024 Confernece Venue + Catering	15,500	-	-	15,500	
BRAIS 2024 Keynote costs	2,553	-	-	2,553	
BRAIS 2024 Confernece Materials/Equipment	186	-	-	186	
2022 Conference Bursaries	1,100	-	-	1,100	
Trustee Expenses (conference and away day)	1,044	-	-	1,044	
Council Dinner	420			420	
Projects Coordinator fee	3,309	-	-	3,309	
Bank charges	57			57	
BRAIS Prize Honoraria	217			217	
BRAIS Prize Coordinator	500			500	
BRAIS Prize 2023 Winner Payment	1,003			1,003	
BRAIS Prize 2024 Payment	1,003			1,003	
TRS-UK Subscription	250			250	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>27,143</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27,143</b>	<b>21,964</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>27,143</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,964</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>27,143</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>21,964</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>- 8,738</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>525</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>31,666</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>		
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>22,928</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>31,666</b>

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds			-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	22,928	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities				
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Haroon Sidat	19/12/2024
	Thomas Lea	19/12/2024