Classification of the Bahá'í Sacred Texts[*]

The Universal House of Justice

Your email letter dated 18 June 2001, requesting statistical information relating to the collection and classification of the Sacred Texts, which are housed in the Bahá'í World Centre Archival collection, was received, and we are to reply as follows:

The Bahá'í International Archives holds significantly more Tablets and Bahá'í Holy Writings in its collection now than it did in 1983. For your ease of reference, we provide the following information as an explanation to the data presented in this document. The Archival collection held at the World Centre is divided into three categories, and between these three groups there are varying degrees of overlap. They are as follows:

Authenticated items: Originals or reproductions of Tablets and letters as dispatched to or received by their addressees.

Transcribed items: Secondary copies of Tablets or letters, copied by scribes of varying degrees of reliability, sometimes copied from an authenticated item, sometimes copied from another transcribed item.

Draft copies or Working copies: These include copies prepared by a scribe/secretary for checking prior to preparing the final copy, copies kept by the scribe/secretary or by Shoghi Effendi for later reference.

In light of the information provided above, we are able to inform you that there are some 7,169 original and photocopies of original Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, 15,815 by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and 17,118 letters of Shoghi Effendi. In addition, there are some 98,000 copies of other such Tablets and letters, many of which have not as yet been authenticated.

[*] Response from the Universal House of Justice to an individual.

With regard to the Writings of the Báb, the Archival collection holds approximately 135 original Tablets, and 55 photocopies. We are unable to provide you with any figures for transcribed copies of His Writings since there is not yet a computer inventory of them.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat