

The St. Petersburg 19th Century Orientalist Collection of Materials on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths

Primary and Other Sources

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Introduction

The Russian Empire during the 19th century was highly interested in the current events and political changes which were developing in Persia, especially those events surrounding the appearance of the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths. As we know Persia has always been a strategic concern of Russia's geopolitical interests and this traditional importance, which has been given to Iran has materialized itself in hundreds if not thousands of documents and writings collected by the pre-revolutionary Russian government. Among these materials, which were constantly flowing into the Russian Empire, was information about and original Writings of these two emerging religions. Fortunately this information was supplied regularly and systematized by the Russian diplomats and scholars working in Persia. Among these Russian diplomats were also trained Orientalists, who could rightly ascertain their significance. This paper is a brief introduction to the work and materials collected by these remarkable men.

Prominent Figures

The work of gathering, preserving, identifying, classifying, studying, translating and publishing the materials on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths was conducted by numerous people but the most prominent of these were A.G. Tumanski (1861-1920), both a scholar and a diplomat, and Baron V.R. Rosen (1849-1908), a pure scholar. Some of the other notable figures were scholars like Professor V.A. Zhukovski and B. Dorn, and diplomats F.A. Bakulin, M. Bezobrazoff and M.A. Gamazoff. The latter was the Head of the School of Oriental Languages of the Asian Department of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. A substantial contribution to the collection of manuscripts and especially that of lithographs was made by a prominent scholar, W. A. Ivanow.

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It would be fair to say that Russian scholars became acquainted with the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh before they found out about Bahá'u'lláh Himself.¹ Nevertheless, Russian was the first European language into which the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh were translated. Among these translations, the first and foremost is Tumanski's translation of the *Most Holy Book* by Bahá'u'lláh (see below).

Rosen (1849-1908) must be given special credit for classifying, identifying and describing the manuscripts, and establishing the Russian Geographical Society. He also edited a periodical journal "Notes of the Oriental Department of the Russian (Royal) Archeological Society", known under its abbreviated title ZVORAO (Zapiski Vostochnogo Otdeleniya Rossiyskogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshestva), where his and Tumanski's translations of Bahá'í texts were published. This journal covered a large range of subjects including: history, linguistics, religion, and culture.

Tumanski (1861-1920) was a graduate of the School of Oriental Languages of the Asian Department of the Foreign Affairs Ministry, where he studied languages under M. A. Gamazoff's instruction. He ended his career as a Major-General of the Russian army, but he was also an orientalist (iranologist and turkologist). He knew Persian, Arabic and Turkish. Not much is known about his biography, for he left Russia after the Bolsheviks took over in 1917 and wasn't considered by the ruling regime as one deserving notice. What is known about him is that for a certain period of his life he was in Ashkabad where he came into close contact with the Bahá'í community there and ever since was keenly interested in everything which concerned the Bahá'ís. He died in emigration in the Prince's Islands (near Constantinople). After his death his widow moved to Belgium. His descendents live in that country.²

We know that as early as in 1877, the first part of Writings of Bahá'u'lláh was delivered to Russia's General Consul in (Persian) Azerbaijan by M. Bezobrazoff and addressed to the Library of the Educational Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through M. A. Gamazoff.

Right from the beginning of Rosen's description of the Tablets he discerned the special character of the 29 Epistles as well as distinguished their marked difference from the early Writings of the Báb. This is not surprising when we consider that among his many accomplishments, Rosen is credited with the founding of a new school of Orientalism, which focused on the study of primary sources. His study of the texts led him to the conclusion that "All the Epistles should more or less be considered as revelations"³.

As early as 1877, Rosen describes these 29 Tablets (alwáh), first in Vol. I. of the *Collections Scientifiques* and later in 1908, along with a

number of other Tablets and Epistles by Bahá'u'lláh, in a copious volume titled *Sbornik poslanii Babída Bahau'lláha* (A Volume of Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh, the Bábí). Published by Baron. V/ R. Rosen. St.-Petersburg, 1908. (see below).

Rosen published a detailed description of the manuscripts, often illustrated with large abstracts from the original texts in French, in the *Collections Scientifiques de L'Institute des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires étrangères*. Volumes. 1, 3, and 6,⁴ which was later to become known as the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences. Unfortunately, the materials, which were added to the collection after Rosen's death, are not included in this catalogue.

The Origin of the Bábí and Bahá'í Materials Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences

The majority of Bábí and Bahá'í materials collected during the 19th century ended up in St. Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire⁵. Eventually, these materials were distributed between the following three learning centers: The St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences (formerly the Asiatic Museum), the National Library (formerly the Public Library) and the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State University. The largest of these collections is in the abovementioned St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, which for the most part this paper concerns⁶.

The St. Petersburg 19th Century Orientalist Collection of materials on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths consists of manuscripts, lithographs and published materials. The most significant of these can be divided between the (1) the Writings of the Báb, the Prophet-Founder of the Bábí Faith who was Bahá'u'lláh's Forerunner and (2) the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith.

In this paper I will further distinguish the materials into two broad groups: primary sources (PS) and secondary sources (SS). PS are manuscripts or publications of manuscripts of the Writings (with and without translations), and SS are manuscripts and publications of other materials like eyewitness accounts and historical documents about the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths. The materials are organized in the following manner. First, I list the PS for the Báb, which are unpublished⁷, I then treat the PS for Bahá'u'lláh which are also unpublished. Second, I list the PS for Bahá'u'lláh, which are published. Third, are writings (PS) of Bahá'u'lláh's son – Abdu'l-Bahá. Fourth, are the SS for Bábí and Bahá'í histories.

The majority of the manuscripts below, whether in Persian or Arabic as well as the lithographs belong to the collection of The St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences, therefore, unless otherwise indicated, are to be found in three major catalogues and I have organized my paper starting with the first, second and third respectively. However, whenever it is necessary to specify the first two catalogues I will refer to them by their short titles: *The Concise Persian MS Catalogue* (PMS) and *The Concise Arabic MS Catalogue* (AMS). I also make reference to some materials listed in the *Collections Scientifiques ...* and *A Catalogue of Lithographs in Persian Preserved in the Library of the Oriental Faculty of the St. Petersburg State University*.

Please note that all the manuscripts and lithographs are listed and briefly described according to their language of origin, either Persian or Arabic.

The following are the three principle catalogues to the Collection. The catalogues names are given in Russian, but the catalogue itself is organized according to the works' heading, which is in Persian or Arabic:

- Persidskie i tadjikskiye rukopisi Instituta Vostokovedeniia Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk (A concise catalogue of the manuscripts in Persian, preserved at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences, in two volumes), short name The Concise Persian MS Catalogue (PMS);⁸
- Arabskiye rukopisi Instituta Vostokovedeniia Akademii Nauk SSSR. Kratkii katalog (A concise catalogue of the manuscripts in Arabic, preserved at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences, in two volumes), short name: The Concise Arabic MS Catalogue (AMS);⁹
- Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Leningradskogo otdeleniia Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR (A catalogue of the lithographed books in Persian preserved in the above Branch of the above Institute, in two volumes);¹⁰

Additional resources

- *Collections Scientifiques de L'Institute des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires étrangères* (A detailed description of many materials from the St. Petersburg Collection).

- A small number of the materials belonging to other collections are registered in the specialized catalogues of the related collections, for example:
- Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Vostochnogo otdela nauchnoi biblioteki Leningradslogo gos. universiteta (A catalogue of lithographs in Persian preserved in the Library of the Oriental Faculty of the St. Petersburg State University).¹¹

Review of Materials

We go on now to the review of the materials. The first number in each listing stands for the sequential number in the related Catalogue, while the second number in parenthesis is the code under which the given manuscript or lithograph is registered under.

I. Unpublished lithographs and manuscripts, described or registered in Catalogues

- 1) The Writings of the Báb, the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh (1819-1850)
 - a) The Persian Bayán ('Bayán-i-Farsi')¹² – the major doctrinal work of the Báb. Written in Persian, it comprises 8000 verses and is divided into nine sections called *Vahids* (lit.: 'units'), of 19 chapters each, except for the last which has ten chapters. The Institute has 2 manuscripts of the *Persian Bayán*:
 - i) #392 (A 458)-PMS. The manuscript is a gift to the Institute of Oriental Languages by Russia's General Consul in Astrabad (Northern Iran) F. A. Bakulin, which was delivered on 4 April 1877. The manuscript has a dedication note. It consists of 394 lists and contains 9 *Vahids*. The name of the copyist and the date are not mentioned. This manuscript is described by Baron V. R. Rosen in his *Collections Scientifiques*, Vol. III: Mss. Persans, pp. 4-13. The description is followed by a large extract from the *Persian Bayán*, containing the whole of the first *Vahid*. Baron Rosen also published there a list of the titles of the remaining eight *Vahids* of the Book. This manuscript is also mentioned by B. Dorn: [Mellanges Asiatiques, Vol. VII, 177];
 - ii) #393 (#439)-PMS. Another manuscript of the Persian Bayán, which is also a gift from F. G. Bakulin. This was received on 5 May 1874, as it follows from the note in the manuscript. The manuscript though written in a very clear hand is incomplete. It consists of 98 lists and contains only 7 *Vahids*, without the name of the copyist and the date.

This manuscript is also mentioned by Baron Rosen in his description: *Collections Scientifiques*, Vol. III. Mss. Persans, p. 3.

- b) The Commentary on the Surih of Josef (Qayyúmu'l-Asmá') – the first chapter of which was revealed in the presence of Mullá Husayn (the first to believe in The Báb) on the evening of 22 May 1844. This event marked the Báb's open declaration of His mission. Bahá'u'lláh described the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' as “*the first, greatest, and mightiest of all books*” of the Báb. Written in Arabic it consists of 9300 verses and contains 111 chapters. Each of the chapters, except for the first, has a verse from the Surih of Josef in the Koran and the Báb's commentary on it. A whole chapter is titled “Surih of Josef”.

The Institute has two manuscripts of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'. Both are beautifully performed, written in a clear hand, and in red ink. Neither of them bears the title. However, their identification as being manuscripts of the given work of the Báb is beyond any doubt (see below):

- i) #3169 (ca. 1167)-AMS. It has 158 lists. Not only does it fit into the above description of the content of the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá' (for example, it has on f. 7A a chapter, titled “Surih of Josef”), in addition to that on f. 1b the work is referred to as: “The Best of Stories” (“Ahsanu'l-Qisas”), which, according to E. G. Browne, is but another name for the Qayyúmu'l-Asmá'.¹³ Apart from the copyist's postscript the manuscript contains a few others which all-together provide a clue to the history of the manuscript. It follows from the copyist's postscript that the manuscript was finished in the month of Shawwal of 1297 A.H. (1880 A. D.). Below this there is a postscript by another hand saying: “What the copyist left out is that this noble book was, with God's help, finished by humble, poor, rebellious, [yet] hoping for the Mercy of the Lord, the All-Sufficient, – Muḥammad Mahdi ibn Karbalayi Shah Karam in ...the month of Jumadiu'l-Ula of 1261 of Hijra (1845 A.D.). May the Lord forgive the copyist, the reader and him who will ask God to forgive the copyist”.

As it follows from another postscript (in Russian), the given manuscript is “a copy made from the original, preserved in the Library of Prince 'Alí Quli Mirzá I'tizadu'l-Saltanih, son of Fath 'Alí Shah, [who was] Minister of Education”. It also says that the manuscript was “a gift from I. Grigorovitch, presented on 12 August

1880 – 17 Ramadan 1297 A. H.” Thus, putting together all this information contained in the postscripts, it is fair to conclude that the manuscript dated 1880 was a direct copy of a much earlier manuscript, written in 1845 (only a year after the Báb’s proclamation of his mission in 1844!), made by a copyist named Muḥammad Mahdi ibn Karbalayi Shah Karam.

- ii) #3070 (B 1141)-AMS. Another manuscript of the same Writing, consisting of 252 lists. Unlike the previous MS. this is described in detail by Baron V. R. Rosen in the first volume of his *Collections*...¹⁴ with the publication of a number of extracts. As Baron V. R. Rosen points out, the given MS is without a title, divided into 111 chapters, each beginning with the words: ‘in the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate’ and except for the first chapter contains a verse from the Koranic Surih of Josef. These characteristics, after comparing the text with E. G. Browne’s description of a manuscript of the *Commentary on the Surih of Josef*, enabled Bar. Rosen to identify the work as the famous Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’. In his description he even traced the Koranic verse of each chapter of the Qayyúmu’l-Asmá’ back to the Koran¹⁵.

The manuscript was a gift from M. Bezobrazoff, presented on 4 April 1877. It is undated and has no mention of the copyist.

- c) ‘Two Suras from the Koran of the Báb’. #3071 (C1660) AMS. A manuscript of 52 lists, consisting of 4 texts in Arabic: ff. 1b-24b, 25a-32a, 32a-50b, 50b-52b. In the Concise Arabic MS Catalogue is designated as: Two Suras from the Koran of the Báb. The style of all the four texts is that of divine revelations, therefore they could only proceed out of the pen of either the Báb or Bahá’u’lláh.

The first one can with certainty be identified as the Surih-i-Baqara of the Báb, described by E. G. Browne in the “27 Bábi Manuscripts” (p. 498). The last text mentions the word/name “Bahá” (“the light of Bahá” etc) several times, and also the *ghiyas* and the *mustaghas*.

F.1 has a memorial note from V. A. Zhukovski, a date: 1919; and a number: 82.

- d) Untitled and undated manuscript in Arabic consisting of 87 lists. #3073 (A 923) AMS.

It has a postscript in Russian on the last page, from which it is

clear that the manuscript was obtained by W. A. Ivanow:¹⁶ “Bought in Isfahan 24/11 VII 1910. W. Ivanow”, while a note on the first page probably indicates the year of its joining the collection: 1916.

The manuscript is erroneously registered in the Concise Catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts as the [Kitáb-i-] Íqán by Bahá'u'lláh (*The Book of Certitude*), which indeed it is not. Nor is its author Bahá'u'lláh. There are many reasons to consider the text, divided into verses (numbered in red ink) as being written by the Báb. ‘Zikrulláh’ (‘the remembrance of God’) – one of the titles of the Báb, is often mentioned in the text, while believers are either summoned to believe into ‘zikrulláh’ or defined as believers in him. Apart from that one of the verses says: “*Enter ye the house from the side of the Gate (the Báb) on the great and glorious path*”, while another runs as follows: “*We have already ordained unto you in the Book of Precepts...*”. The latter is a well-known Writing of the Báb, translated into French by M. Compte de Gobineau.

A curious note in Persian, definitely not in the copyist’s hand, on the inner side of the cover not only dispels the last doubt concerning Bahá'u'lláh’s not being the author but also suggests that the text most likely originated before the declaration by Bahá'u'lláh of His Mission: “May God’s mercy and the Prophet’s praise be on the guardian of the book (*hajib-i-kitáb*) and on its other followers: Azal, Bahá’, ‘Abbas Affandi and the rest...”

- e) The Arabic Bayán (National Library); This could be the “Arabic Bayán”, known to be a smaller and less weighty work of the Báb, revealed in the fort of Chihriq, mentioned by E. G. Brown,¹⁷ but definitely not the one translated into French by M. Compte de Gobineau under the title: “The Book of Precepts”¹⁸.
- 2) The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Prophet-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith (1819-1892)
- a) The Book of Certitude (Kitáb-i-Íqán) – A Volume in Persian revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad about two years before His declaration of His Mission. In it Bahá'u'lláh among other things proclaims and substantiates some key principles of the Bahá'í teachings, such as the oneness of God, the progressive revelation etc, explains the station and mission of the Prophet-founders of world religions (manifestations of God’s will), the spiritual meaning of prophecies about the return of Christ, the coming of the Qa'im, presents the essential qualities of the ‘true seeker’ of religious truth.

The Book of Certitude is represented in the collection by a lithograph and 5 manuscripts.

The lithograph was printed in Bombay in 1310 A. H.(1893 A.D.) and is described in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute (code: PsII 164)¹⁹. This is not the same as the undated lithograph described by Baron V. R. Rosen in an article and in the *Collections...*²⁰. However, it fits fully into Baron V. R. Rosen's description of the latter as "being accomplished with utmost care".²¹

Another copy of exactly the same lithographical edition belongs to the Oriental Faculty of the St. Petersburg State University and accordingly registered in its catalogue (code: ¶[-25/4]).²²

The five manuscripts of *The Book of Certitude* which, with the exception of one, are all dated, are registered in the Concise Persian MS Catalogue²³ under the following sequential numbers and codes (after the code we put respectively the date): #277 (A 183) – 1296 A.H. (1878-1879 A.D.); #278 (A 461) – 1299 A.H (1881-1882 A.D.); #279 (A 1592) – 1305 A.H. (1887-1888 A.D.); #280 (B 1143) – undated; #281 (ca. 1168) – 1291 A.H. (1874-1875 A.D.), while B 1143 and A 461 were also described by Baron V. R. Rosen (the former of the two described in detail, illustrated by large extracts of the text).²⁴ I made a comparison of the manuscripts with the lithograph and published the results in a supplement to my academic translation of *The Book of Certitude* into Russian, which came out recently.²⁵ The main conclusion of my research is the following: though the lithograph, on the one hand, and the manuscripts, on the other, do reflect slightly different versions, the differences are very insignificant, and even those few instances which cannot be attributed to the copyist's error, do not have any effect on the meaning of the sentence, much less so on the Book as a whole.

The most beautifully and carefully accomplished are manuscripts A 183 and A 461, made upon a common pattern.

- b) 'Bahá'yíyh'. #384 (ca. 1168-) PMS. This is a volume of 60 lists, registered in the Concise Persian MS Catalogue under the general title: Bahá'yíyh. It contains four short Epistles in Arabic (ff. 1a-2a; 2a-3b; 3b-7a; 7a-13b) and a much longer one in Persian (ff. 13b-60b). Of this latter the above Catalogue says that "the treatise deals with and elaborates on the issues explained in the other Bahá'í work – [the Kitáb-i-

Íqán. It is composed in the form of an epistle”. All the epistles are written in Bahá'u'lláh's style, though only in the one in Persian, which is written in answer to the question “how it was possible for the *Supreme Letters* to be turned into those who were doomed for the bottom of hell (Sajjin)” does Bahá'u'lláh mention His name, Ḥusayn, and refers to the Bayán of the Báb as “[having been] sent down from the Heaven of My previous Manifestation” (f. 16a). The addressee is mentioned by name once – ‘Alí (f. 22b), while there is also one reference to Jinab Siyyid Jawad (f. 26a).

One of the texts makes mention of “this great prison” (f. 7b).

- c) ‘Lawḥ-i-Bábí’. #3072 (A185) AMS. This one page epistle in Arabic, is a text with a beautifully decorated ornament frame, and has an intriguing history. The Epistle is registered in the Concise Arabic MS Catalogue as “Lawḥ-i-Bábí”. It is not described in the *Collections Scientifiques*, probably because it was received after Baron V. R. Rosen's death. It is contained in an envelope with several explanatory notes (in Russian) on separate sheets of paper, enclosed together with the manuscript. The note, written probably by A. G. Tumanski, says that the Epistle “is undoubtedly of Bábí origin”, “obscure in language and mystical in nature”, “is composed in rhymed prose”, “it's author is definitely Bahá'u'lláh”, “containing, quite probably, some historical allusions in the end”, “every second phrase in the Epistle has invariably the refrain: ‘fa subhana rabbi-l-‘ala’”, which “in one instance only is replaced by: ‘fa subhana rabbana-l-‘ala’”. “From the standpoint of its language and style it is most similar to the ‘Alwáḥu-l-Salatin’ and to the ‘Suratu-l-Haykal’”. The author of the note cites certain phrases from this Epistle and the above Tablets to highlight this similarity.

Another, much shorter explanatory note, written by another person, tells us a little about the history of this Epistle in Russia: “Assistant professor Khilinski, uncle of General von ... (a German name, unclearly written) brought from Mashhad (the name of this city is written in Persian) [and] presented as a gift the letter of ... himself”. The name preceding the word “himself” could be read as “Bahá’”. If this assumption is correct, the writer of this note thought the Epistle to be written in Bahá'u'lláh's hand. This impression is confirmed by the logical emphasis on the word “himself” which wouldn't be the case if the words just implied that the Epistle was a work of Bahá'u'lláh.

Also enclosed into the envelope is a visiting card, which says:

“Konstantin Vladimirovitch Khilinski”.

The manuscript was supposedly joined to the Institute MS Collection in the 90's of the XIXth century.

The Epistle itself, written in tiny letters, left no room for doubt that it belonged to Bahá'u'lláh. The author of the note, which I quoted earlier, was absolutely right saying that the epistle was not to be found among the materials, published by Baron V. Rosen or E. G. Browne. It turned out to be the famous Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh: The Tablet of the Holy Mariner (Lawḥ-i-Malláh-i-Quds) in Arabic, revealed on 26 March 1863. When I compared the MS in question with the photo of the manuscript of the same Tablet, preserved in the Bahá'í World Centre (the photo was printed in M. Sours' "The Tablet of the Holy Mariner", both the manuscripts seemed to me written by exactly the same hand. Since the MS in Haifa was written by Abdu'l-Bahá, the MS in St. Petersburg must also have been written by Abdu'l-Bahá. This is my tentative conclusion till it is confirmed by the Research Department of the Bahá'í World Centre. In any case in certain instances its text is closer to the English translation of the Tablet, made by Shoghi Effendi, than that of the MS in Haifa.

- d) Bahá'í prayers in Arabic. #3077 (A 182). It has 164 lists and (F. 1a.) contains an explanatory note by Baron V. R. Rosen: "Brought from Astrabad by L. P. Grigoryev on 1 June [18]92. Signature: V. Rosen".

A paper tag is stuck to f. 1a, which says: V. Rosen. 'A Book of Prayers' (This title is in Arabic).

- e) 'Rasa'il-i-Bábíyyih'. #3078 (A 184) AMS. It has 149 lists. A Volume of Epistles in Arabic and Persian. Some of the texts are similar to prayers. It is registered in the Concise Arabic MS Catalogue under the title: Rasa'il-i-Bábíyyih.

The manuscript is incomplete: the end is missing.

An explanatory note by Baron V. R. Rosen, analogous to the previous MS: "Brought by L. P. Grigoryev from Astrabad in Sept. 1892.

Bahá'u'lláh's authorship of the given volume is beyond any doubt. This is obvious not only from the language and style but also from a reference in one of the texts to the 'Lawḥ-i-Ra'is': Bahá'u'lláh reminds the addressee of the prophecy He made in that Tablet concerning the downfall of the Ottoman Empire:

Look at the kingdom of Rum. For it did not desire war, however, it was desired by the like of you. Therefore its flames were fanned and its inflammation rose. The government and religion grew weak as was witnessed by every fair-minded observer. Its calamities increased until its smoke covered the Land of Mystery (Adrianople) and the surrounding areas, so that what God hath sent down in the 'Lawḥ-i-Ra'is' may appear. Thus, God's command in the Book from God, the All-Protecting, Unchangeable, was fulfilled.

II. Published manuscripts

1) The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

- a) Kitáb-i-Aqdas ("The Most Holy Book") – the major Bahá'í Writing, the importance of it for the Bahá'ís is not limited to just the laws and ordinances set forth in it by Bahá'u'lláh.

In the collection of the Institute there are three manuscripts of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas (*The Most Holy Book*), all the three are preserved in an excellent state. None of them, however, can be identified with the one used by A. G. Tumanski for the publication and translation into Russian of the given Book (See below).

- i) #3073 (A 460). Consists of 45 lists. Dated 1300 A. H. (1882-1883 A.D.), as is indicated in the end of the manuscript. It does not contain the last verse, with the prohibition of the use of opium ("It hath been forbidden you to smoke opium").

The manuscript was described by Bar. V. R. Rosen in *Collections... VI*, pp. 144-145, #246.

The last page has a postscript with a dedication: "This is presented as a gift to his Excellency Matvey Avel'yevitch Gamazoff". Signed: I. Grigorovitch. On 12 July 1888.

A little below a note from M. A. Gamazoff says: "Gamazoff has delivered it to the Library of the School of Oriental Languages on 6 Sept. [18]88". Signed: Gamazoff;

- ii) #3074 (A 975). Consists of 80 lists. The manuscript has the text of the *Most Holy Book* in full (including the last verse).

There is a postscript in Persian in the end: "Has been

collated with special care with the new manuscript on 1 Jamadi 1306 A. H. (1888-1889 A.D.)”.

The last page has a dedication note in Russian: “Is presented as a gift to the Library of the School of Oriental Languages by G. D. Batyushkoff in 1906”.

This (the fact of its joining the collection so late) explains why the given manuscript was not described by Baron V. R. Rosen.

- iii) #3075 (A 497). Consists of 44 lists. Contains the text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas in full. The text of *The Most Holy Book* is followed by a Bahá'í marital prayer on 2 pages (the latter is registered in the Concise Arabic MS Catalogue under a separate sequential number: 3082; the code is the same). The manuscript is undated.

The manuscript bears a stamp: Library of the School of Oriental Languages of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

A dedication note says: “Presented as a gift to the Library of the School of Oriental Languages in 1906”.

The original text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas with Russian translation was preceded by a large and very informative introductory article, dealing among other things with the history of the Bahá'í religion, published by A.G. Tumanski in 1899.

For the history of this translation and publication it is best to quote (in our translation) an extract from A. G. Tumanski's above introductory article: “Finally, the third volume, which included the “Most Holy Book” – the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, which I present now to the reader, was lithographed in 1892 (1308 A. H.) in Bombay, and I received the first copies of it in early November 1893. This was during the time when I was finishing the translation of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas from the manuscript, obtained by me in 1890, consequently, I felt the need to collate its text with the canonical edition of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The present edition is based on the latter [canonical] edition, while the differences between this version and my manuscript are marked: my manuscript version is designated by the letter P”²⁶. Thus, as it follows from this account, A. G. Tumanski first made his translation from his own manuscript, which he then collated with the official edition of the text, sent to him in an lithographed form, making the

latter the basis for his publication of the original text and the final version of his Russian translation of the *Most Holy Book*. As for A. G. Tumanski's own manuscript, which he mentions in the above quote, he also makes reference to its description by Baron V. R. Rosen²⁷. Unfortunately, that reference proved incorrect. So, his manuscript is not registered in any Catalogue, and nothing is known about it as well as about the lithographical edition of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, which he used (see also below).

- b) Among the scholarly publications of Bahá'í original texts a prominent place is occupied by a copious volume of the Tablets and Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh, prepared for publication from different manuscripts by Baron V. R. Rosen, whose sudden death interrupted this work and did not allow him to carry the project through.²⁸ Its publication, however, was accomplished by Baron V. R. Rosen's college – P. Kokovtseff, who supplied the Volume with an introduction, which he humbly titled: "Instead of Introduction". In the Introduction he provided us with some important clues to the history of the Volume and its sources.

Thus, we find out from the Introduction, that the texts, included into the Volume, were drawn from two manuscripts. One of them (under the code B1142, see its description below) attracted Baron V. R. Rosen's attention back in 1877, when, making a description of the newly obtained manuscripts, he for the first time became closely familiar with the Writings of the Central figures of the new religion. The above manuscript, presented by M. Bezobrazoff, consisted of 29 Tablets in Arabic by a writer, named Huseyn [Huseyn 'Alí Nuri = Bahá'u'lláh], who was at the time unknown to Baron V. R. Rosen. One should bear in mind, that as A. G. Tumanski rightly pointed out, the knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings preceded the knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh himself in Russian academic circles (see above). Therefore, it took a great effort on Baron V. R. Rosen's part to identify the author of these Tablets and Epistles. Among the latter there was one (N 20), untitled, as all the others and addressed to the kings, which was later identified to be the *Tablet of Kings* or the *Suriy-i-Muluk*. Its comparison with another manuscript, namely that of the *Commentary on the Surih of Josef* (see above) by the Báb, enabled Baron V. R. Rosen to make a provisional but none the less correct conclusion that the author of the Epistle in question 'could in no way be the

Báb himself, as long as the preceding manuscript [i.e. the *Commentary on the Surih of Josef*] really proceeded out of the pen of the reformer [i.e. the Báb].²⁹ Later the Library of the Educational Department of Oriental Languages received a new group of writings (MS code: A 459, old code: 247, see its description below), among which Baron V. R. Rosen discovered another copy of the same Tablet N 20 of the earlier manuscript. This time the text was titled: 'Suriy-i-Muluk' (*Tablet of Kings*). This wondrous find enabled Baron V. R. Rosen to identify the author of the Tablet as Bahá'u'lláh, in spite of E. G. Browne's opinion, thinking at the time otherwise. Later E. G. Browne, a prominent scholar of Babism had to agree with Baron V. R. Rosen's brilliant arguments³⁰ and even reproduce them in English in his article.³¹

This also prompted Baron V. R. Rosen to publish the whole manuscript with all the 29 Tablets and Epistles by Bahá'u'lláh in Arabic. The latter occupy the first half of the Volume (the text of the *Tablet of Kings* was published from both the manuscripts, see below), while the second half of the book presents 34 other Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh, including the *Tablet of Nasir* (Lawḥ-i-Nasir), from Baron V. R. Rosen's own manuscript, which makes the total number of the texts in the Volume — 63. This latter manuscript, belonging to Baron V. R. Rosen, unfortunately is not yet found. All we know about it is that it was dated 9 Sha'ban [12]97 A. H. (17 July 1880) and contained 34 Epistles, half of which were in Persian, half in Arabic. The manuscript was untitled, Bahá'u'lláh's authorship of the Epistles was confirmed by the cryptogram 152 at the end of the manuscript, which equals the numerical value of the name *Bahá'*, according to the *abjad* system. This was also figured out by Baron V. R. Rosen. P. Kokovtseff, who accomplished the publication of the Volume, after Baron V. R. Rosen's death, points out that the manuscript was given to him for temporary use, owing to Prof. Zhukovski's help. To conclude, thus, before obtaining a titled copy of the *Tablet of Kings*, Baron V. R. Rosen by using convincing arguments, such as the cryptogram 152 = Bahá', similarities of passages between the *Tablet of Kings* and the *Epistle to the Queen of England*, from the Alwáḥu-l-Salatin and etc., already proved that the author of the *Tablet of Kings* was Bahá'u'lláh.

Baron V. R. Rosen also published in full some other Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh (see below).

- c) Untitled work. #3079 (B 1142) AMS. This is a volume of 29 Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh in Arabic. These form the first part of Baron V. R. Rosen's published Volume, previously referred to.³² The manuscript consists of 72 lists and includes the Suratu'l Muluk (the beginning on f. 36b).

The manuscript is partial: the last Epistle (#29) is incomplete.

It has a memorial note on the first page half in Russian half in French: "Don de Mr. Bezobrazov" (Mr. Bezobrazoff's gift).

The manuscript is described in detail by Baron V. R. Rosen [*Collections Scientifiques*, Vol. I, pp. 191-212)], who also quotes the beginning of each Epistle under the same number as in the published volume [ibid, pp. 200-212].

- d) Untitled manuscript. #3079 (A 459) AMS. This is a manuscript consisting of 182 lists. Each text in the volume is preceded by the cryptogram 152 (indicating the name: Bahá'[u'lláh]) in red ink.

The volume includes the Suratu'l Muluk (its dating in the Concise Arabic MS Catalogue is wrong), the title of which appears on the margin in red ink (f. 1b); the Suratu'l-Haykal, including the Alwáhu-l-Salatin (ff. 40a-154a); the Lawh-i-Ra'is (ff. 154a-166a) and some other Epistles, published by Baron V. R. Rosen in the *Collections Scientifiques*, VI, pp. 145-243.

The manuscript is beautiful and written in an excellent hand. It is preserved in a very good state.

The last page has a note in Russian: "I am granting it as a gift to his Excellency Matvey Aveyevitch Gamazoff. [Signature:] Grigorovitch, 12 July 1888".

Another note below says:

"The Library of the Educational Department, Sept. [18]88. [Signature:] Gamazoff".

- e) Untitled manuscript. #3676 (B 1144) PMS. The manuscript, consisting of 11 lists, contains Writings of Bahá'u'lláh in Persian: Lawh-i-Maqsud (ff. 1b-9b), and two Epistles on the occasion of the tragic events in Ashkhabad, one addressed to Abdu'l-Karim (ff. 9b-10b), the other – to 'the friends in [different] lands' (ff. 10b-11b). The latter were published in the original and Russian translation by A.

G. Tumanski [A. G. Tumanski. 'Dwa poslednikh Bábidskikh otkroveniia'³³ in *Memoires de l'Academie imperiale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg*, Vol. 6, 1891. St.-Petersburg, 1892, pp. 317-321]. The texts of the Epistles were also reproduced in the original by Baron V. R. Rosen in his description [*Collections...*, VI, pp. 248-250]. The Lawḥ-i-Maqsud was not published in full, but was fully described by Baron V. R. Rosen, who illustrated his description by large extracts of the text from the manuscript [*Collections...*, VI, p. 245].

The manuscript is in an excellent state. The Lawḥ-i-Maqsud is titled, the Epistles are untitled, for which reason they are not mentioned in the Catalogues.

- f) 'Alwáh' #433 (Ps II163). A lithographical volume of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh: *The Tablet of Effulgences* (Lawḥ-i-Tajalliyát), *The Tablet of Splendours* (Lawḥ-i-'Ishraqát), *The Tablet of Ornaments* (Lawḥ-i-Tarazát), *The Tablet of the Words of Paradise* (Lawḥ-i-Kalimát-i-Firdawsiyih). It is registered in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute as: Alwáh — revelations of Bahá'u'lláh (code: Ps II 163).³⁴ The date and place of its publication are unknown.

It is highly doubtful that the Volume could serve as an original source for A. G. Tumanski's published edition of the same Tablets as supplements to the *Most Holy Book* (see below).

2) Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá 35 (all lithographs)

- a) The Secret of Divine Civilization. There are two copies of this lithograph in St. Petersburg: one in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, the other — in the State University:
- i) #434 (Hd II267). Registered in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute under its Arabic/Persian title: *Asrar al-Ghaybiyya li Asbab al-Madaniyya*.³⁶ Printed in Bombay in 1299 A.H. (1882 A.D.)
 - ii) #168 (O II 1871). Another copy of the same edition. Registered in the Catalogue of the lithographs in Persian in the Library of the Oriental Faculty of the St.

Petersburg State University under its Arabic/Persian title.³⁷

- b) A Traveller's Narrative.³⁸ There are three copies of this lithograph in St. Petersburg: two in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, the third – in the State University:
- i) #435 (Ps II 172). Registered in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute under its Persian title: *Maqalih-i-Shaxsi Sayyah ki dar tafsil-i-qaziyyih-i-Báb nivishtih ast*.³⁹ Printed in Bombay in 1308 A. H. (1890 A.D.).
 - ii) #437 (Pk 637). Another edition of the same writing. Registered in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute.⁴⁰ Printed in 1335 A. H. (1917 AD)
 - iii) #169 (X II 294, ¶-23/2⁴¹ – double coding). Another copy of the same edition. Registered in the Catalogue of the lithographs in Persian in the Library of the Oriental Faculty of the St. Petersburg State University under its Persian title.⁴²

III. Secondary sources of the history of the Bábí and the Bahá'í Faiths and for other related issues

- 1) #3351 (ca. 1885) - PMS "The Book of Astrabad, Mazinadaran, Gilan, Simnan, Damghan and other [places]".

Ff. 55a-58b of this manuscript contain an account of the events related to the Bábí movement in the Mazindaran and neighboring areas. The account has a distinct anti-Bábí flavor. On ff. 55a,b one finds what could be a direct quote from famous Ṭáhirih (Qurratu'l 'Ayn).

The manuscript is described by B. Dorn in the *Melanges Asiatiques*, Vol. IV, p. 199, N 12.

- 2) #495 (B 1145) – PMS. The New History (*Tarikh-i-Jadid*) by Mírzá Ḥusayn Hamadani.⁴³ A manuscript of 110 lists. The text is incomplete: it ends on f. 110b.

The manuscript is described by Baron V. R. Rosen in *Collections...* VI, p. 244. The work itself is dealt with by A. G. Tumanski in his article.⁴⁴

- 3) #441 (Hd II 255). The lithograph is registered in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute under its Arabic/Persian title: *Dala'il al-'Irfan fi Zuhur al-Hujja wa-l-Tibyan*.⁴⁵ The author is Hajj Mírzá Haydar 'Alí Isfahani. Printed in Bombay in 1312-1313 A. H. (1895 A.D.).

This a treatise on the appearance of the Mahdi, who is identified by the author with the Báb.

The treatise was written in 1310 A. H.(1892-1893 A.D.).

- 4) #440 (Ps I 98). The lithograph is registered in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute under its Persian title: *Asas-i-Tarikh-i-Jadid*) by Mírzá Ḥasan b. Muḥammad-Taqi Taliqani.⁴⁶

The lithograph was supposedly printed in Iran. The place and time of its publication are not mentioned.

As it follows from the added note on the cover of the book it was sent by the author to V. A. Zhukovski, through someone named Shubin, in 1915.

- 5) This manuscript merits a longer description, it is registered in the Concise Persian MS Catalogue under the code: B 1146, sequential number: 383, title: *Bahá'iyih*. It consists of only 5 lists and contains 5 short texts in Persian:

- a) A piece of poetry in honor of his majesty the Russian emperor. The unknown poet, who composed this poetry, consisting of 72 verses, expresses his appreciation to the emperor for the secure life Bahá'ís could lead in Russia;
- b) Two poetical pieces, consisting of 19 verses each, by a writer, whose pseudonym was either Ruhani or Ruha;
- c) A piece of a purely religious verse by an unknown poet;
- d) A note on the Bahá'í law on heritage and the division of a Bahá'í year into 19 months;

This has an added note at the end, saying that it was composed on the request of A.G. Tumanski in 1308 A.H.;

- e) A note on the chronology of some important events in the Bábí and Bahá'í history, with an explanation of the Bahá'í calendar.

It should be noted, that though the explanatory part was written on the request of A.G. Tumanski by some knowledgeable Bahá'í, maybe A. F. Gulpaygani, this *Risalih*

shouldn't be confused with the *Risalih-i-Iskandariyyih*, consisting of 35 pages, written by A. F. Gulpaygani for A. G. Tumanski and mentioned by the latter in the above article.

The manuscript is described in detail by Baron V. R. Rosen in the *Collections...*, VI, pp. 251-252 (#250).

- 6) #442 (Pu 174). The lithograph is registered in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute under its Persian title: *Burhan-i-Lami'*.⁴⁷ Its author is Abu-l-Fadl Gulpaygani. Written in 1330 A. H. (1911 A.D.) in Syria. Printed in Chicago (Press of Bahá'í News) with the English translation and a portrait of Abdu'l-Bahá.

This is a polemic work in answer to the article by protestant missionary Peter Z. Easton, published in the magazine: "Evangelical Christendom".

- 7) 'Majmu'ih'. #3853 (A 716) PMS. A manuscript of 18 lists with poetry in Persian, registered in the Concise Persian MS Catalogue under the title: *Majmu'ih*. The above catalogue describes it in the following way: "The volume contains two short *masnavis*, a fragment of a *masnavi* and two *qasidas*. The first [*masnavi*] has 182 verses, the second – 212 verses. The manuscript is dated 20 Sha'ban 1270 A. H. (1853-1854 A.D.). Probably, this *masnavi* is titled 'Saha'if'".

This dating is obviously derived from the added note on the last page (f. 18b), written in a hand different from the poetical text itself. The note, addressing "God's people", calls on them to peruse and know the worth of "these pages" (*saha'if*, *varaqa*t), for, it says, "the day of the greatest testimony is close (*yawm-i-shahadat-i-akbar nazdik ast*)". It also mentions the day on which the manuscript was finished: Thursday, the twentieth day of the month of Sha'ban, year 127 ?. The last figure seems to be missing or at least not to be clearly seen. It looks to us highly unlikely that the year 1270 A.H., corresponding to 1853-1854 A.D. could be the correct date. The main theme of the poetry in the volume is bringing glad tidings of and rejoicing at [the revelation] of Bahá, whose "visible countenance has arisen" and who "has torn asunder the veils". These metaphors as well as the subject itself are more relevant to the time after the declaration by Bahá'u'lláh of his Mission in 1279 A.H (1863 A.D).

Some verses are preceded by introductory notes and admonishments.

Attached to the manuscript is a sheet of paper enclosed in an

envelope, with a prayer to be said during the washing of the hands. The sheet is signed (in Persian): "A scribe...of Abdu'l-Bahá Ḥusayn". The word, immediately following 'scribe', which could be an epithet, is unclear.

The year of the manuscript joining the collection is mentioned in another note: 1917.

- 8) #443 (Pu 10). This is a lithographical volume of Tablets (Lawḥ) of Bahá'u'lláh, compiled by Siyyid Jalal b. Hazrat Sina. The volume is without a title. Printed in Tashkent in 1336 A. H.(1918 A.D.) by the "Idarih-i-Vahdat". Registered in the Catalogue of Lithographed books in Persian in the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Oriental Institute.⁴⁸
- 9) #170 (¶-23/4).⁴⁹ The lithograph is registered in the Catalogue of the lithographs in Persian in the Library of the Oriental Faculty of the St. Petersburg State University under its Persian title: 'Akka'-i-Firgh.⁵⁰ Printed in 1311 A. H.(1894 A.D.) supposedly in Bombay.

This is a treatise by an anonymous Bahá'í writer concerning Islam and the contemporary world. Performed in Mishkin-Qalam's hand.

Unfortunately some of the earlier published manuscripts or those used for publications in pre-revolutionary Russia have not been found. This is the case of most manuscripts in A. G. Tumanski's or Baron V. R. Rosen's private possessions. That such manuscripts did exist we know from the fact of their being published or mentioned in different publications. Below is a list of these publications:

- a) Bahá'u'lláh's epistle: Lawḥ-i-bisharát (*The Good Tidings Epistle*), published by Baron V. R. Rosen [Baron V. R. Rosen. Poslaniye Blagiye Vesti – in *Memoires de l'Academie imperiale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg*, Vol. VII. Saint-Petersburg, 1893, pp. 183-192].
- b) The manuscript of Bahá'u'lláh's epistles in Arabic, included by Baron V. R. Rosen into the published Volume of Epistles. The manuscript is mentioned in the introduction to the Volume (see above).
- c) A. G. Tumanski's manuscript of the *Most Holy Book* (Kitáb-i-Aqdas), which he used together with the lithographical version for the publication of the original text and its Russian translation (see above). The lithograph is not found either.
- d) The Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, published by A. G. Tumanski as Supplements to the *Most Holy Book*:
 - i) *The Tablet of 'Alí* (Lawḥ-i-'Alí) – Suppl. 1;

- ii) *The Tablet: The Simplest of Essence* (Lawḥ-i-Basitu'l-Haqq) – Suppl. 2;
 - iii) *The Tablet of Splendours* (Lawḥ-i-Ishraqát)⁵¹ – Suppl. 3;
 - iv) *The Tablet of Ornaments* (Lawḥ-i-Tarazát) – Suppl. 3;
 - v) *The Tablet of Effulgences* (Lawḥ-i-Tajalliyát)⁵² – Suppl. 3;
 - vi) *The Tablet of the Words of Paradise* (Lawḥ-i-Kalimat-i-Firdawsiiyyih)⁵³ – Suppl. 3
- e) *The Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh*, published by A. G. Tumanski under the title: *Kitáb-i-Ahdí* (The Book of My Testament) [A. G. Tumanski. *Posledneye Slovo Bahá'ulli* (Bahá'u'lláh's Last Word) – in: *Memoires de l'Academie imperiale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg*, Vol. VII. Saint-Petersburg, 1893, pp. 193-203].
- f) Certain texts from F. A. Bakulin's archive, including one attributed to the Báb. These materials were published by V. A. Zhukovski in his article: V. A. Zhukovski. *Rossiyski imperatorski konsul F. A. Bakulin v istorii izucheniya Bábízma* (Russian Imperial Consul F. A. Bakulin in the History of the Bábí Studies) – in: *Memoires de l'Academie imperiale des sciences de St. Petersburg* Vol. XXIV. Petrograd, 1917, pp. 33-90.
- g) *The Jani History* (Tarikh-i-Jani) manuscript, owned by A. G. Tumanski, with an episode missing in E. G. Browne's manuscript of the same work. The episode describes how Bahá'u'lláh volunteered to take upon Himself the blows intended for His younger half-brother Mírzá Yahya to save the latter from flogging when they were both arrested. The episode with a reference to this manuscript was published by A. G. Tumanski in his article: A. G. Tumanski. *K Voprosu ob avtorakh istoriyi Bábídov izvestnoy pod imenem Tarikh-i-Manukchi ili Tarikh-i-Jadid* (On the question of the authorship of the History of the Bábí's known as Tarikh-i-Manukchi or Tarikh-i-Jadid – *Zapiski...*, edited by Baron V. R. Rosen. Vol. VIII. Saint-Petersburg, 1844, pp. 33-45.

Conclusion

The main imperative of Russian pre-Revolutionary scholars, who observed the advents of both the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths was to deeply study and comprehend these new phenomena. The rich collection of materials, which they brought together were all accumulated during the decades prior to the Bolshevik take over in 1917. Pre-Revolutionary scholars should also be recognized for their scientific approach, which contributed greatly to the value of their research and

publications and have preserved their significance up to this very day. Unfortunately, this balanced scientific approach to Religious Studies was replaced with an extremely political one during Soviet times. Religion in general was considered “the opium of the people” and it could only be approached in a highly biased and negative manner, so the conclusion to be arrived at in the course of a scholarly study was predetermined from the beginning. These circumstances detracted a lot from the motivation of scholars interested in the subject, since a thorough research of any original material on religion lost much of its significance, while at the same time the publication of primary sources became useless. Consequently, starting in 1918 these materials were practically ignored. This doesn't mean that they were not taken proper care of. On the contrary, in the all of the learning centers of the former Soviet Union, manuscripts and lithographs, regardless of their content, had always been provided with the best conditions possible for their preservation. In general, the situation regarding scientific research started to change in the late 80s and early 90s. Now much can be done in the field of Religious Studies in general and that of Bábí and Bahá'í studies in particular, so this collection will be of great importance to contemporary and future scholars.

NOTES

- ¹ Thus, A. G. Tumanski wrote: “Our knowledge of the Writings of Bahá'u'láh preceded that of himself and his reform” (A. G. Tumanski, *Kitábe Akdes. Svyashenneyshaya kniga sovremennykh babidov. (The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book of the present-day Bábí's. Text, Translation, Introduction, Supplements), Memoires de l'Academie imperiale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg, VIII Serie, Vol. 3. (St.-Petersburg: Royal Academy of sciences, 1899), XXVII-XXVIII).*
- ² This information was kindly shared with us by O. F. Akimushkin.
- ³ “toutes les lettres devaient etre considerees plus ou moins comme des revelations” (M. M. Günzburg, V. Rosen, B. Dorn, K. Patkanov, J. Tchoubinof. *Collections Scientifiques de L'Institute des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Vol. I (St.-Petersburg: Imperimerie de l'Academie imperiale des sciences, 1877), 192),* see also A. G. Tumanski *ibid*, XXVII.
- ⁴ The full title: *Collections Scientifiques de L'Institute des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires étrangères. Les Manuscrits Arabes. Décrits par M. M. Günzburg, V. Rosen, B. Dorn, K. Patkanov, J. Tchoubinof. VI, fasc.2. St.-Petersbourg, 1891. Vol. III. Les Manuscrits Persans, décrits par Le Baron Victor Rosen. S. Petersbourg, 1886, p. 1-51; Vol.VI. Les Manuscrits Arabes, 1891, p. 141-255.*
- ⁵ Between Peter the Great's reign in the mid 16th century until the rise of Soviet communism in the 20th century, when it was transferred back to Moscow.

- ⁶ I thank Dr. O. Akimushkin from the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies for his assistance in my work on these materials and Dr. S. Zabihi from the Research Department of the UHJ for his useful critical comments on this article.
- ⁷ What we imply by ‘published’ here is not the Writings as such, most of which as part of Bahá’í Scripture are published now in many languages, but that the text of a given manuscript or another of the same Writing was published or used for a scholarly publication of Bahá’í Texts in pre-Revolutionary Russia.
- ⁸ O. F. Akimushkin (et al.), *Persidskie i tadzikiye rukopisi Instituta Vostokovedeniia Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk: (kratkii alfavitnyi katalog)/; pod redaktsiei N. D. Miklukho-Maklaia; korrigenda i addenda O. F. Akimushkin, 2 vols, 2 ed. (New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1998).*
- ⁹ A. B. Khalidov, ed., *Arabskiye rukopisi Instituta Vostokovedeniia Akademii Nauk SSSR: Kratkii katalog, 2 vols. (Moskow: Nauka, 1986).*
- ¹⁰ O. P. Shcheglova . *Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Leningradskogo otdeleniia Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR, 2 vols. (Moskow: Nauka, 1975).*
- ¹¹ O. P. Shcheglova. *Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Vostochnogo otdela nauchnoi biblioteki Leningradskogo gos. universiteta. (Moskow: Nauka, 1989).*
- ¹² Bayán lit. means ‘explanation, exposition, utterance’.
- ¹³ Thus, E. G. Browne writes: “Ahsanu’l-Kisas, another name for the Báb’s Commentary on the Sura-I-Yusuf, also called Kayyumu’l-Asma” (E. G. Browne, trans., *Tárikh-i-Jadíd: The new History of the Báb. 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893), 2:398, (n 5).* See also E. G. Browne. Catalogue and Description of 27 Bábí MSS in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 11. (London: 1892), 261-268, 699-701;*
- ¹⁴ M. M. Günzburg, V. Rosen, B. Dorn, K. Patkanov, J. Tchoubinof, *Collections Scientifiques, 1: 179-191.*
- ¹⁵ In chapter 53 (f. 111b) verses 52 and 53 of the given Surih are quoted, in chapter 54 (f. 113b) – also verse 53, in chapter 81 (f. 176b) – verses 80 и 81, in chapter 103 (f. 229b) – part of verse 103 and in chapter 104 – the end of verse 103 and verse 104.
- ¹⁶ W. A. Ivanow – a prominent Russian scholar, expert on the Persian Language and dialects as well as on Ismailism, who spent most of his life in emigration.
- ¹⁷ See E. G. Browne, *The Bábís of Persia* in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, New Series. (London: W.H. Allen & CO, 1889), 21: 921;* E. G. Browne, trans., and ed., *A Traveller’s Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb. 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), 2: 345-346.*
- ¹⁸ See M. compte de Gobineau, *Les religions et les philosophies dans l’Asie centrale, 3^e édit., (Paris: 1900);* E. G. Browne, *ibid, 2: 203.*

- ¹⁹ See O. P. Shcheglova, *Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Leningradskogo otdeleniia Instituta vostokovedeniia*, 1: 213.
- ²⁰ See V. R. Rosen *Novii Bábidskiye rukopisi... (New Bábi Manuscripts ...)*, #461 in *Memoires de l'Academie imperiale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg*, IV. (St.-Petersburg: Royal Academy of Sciences, 1889); M. M. Günzburg, V. Rosen, B. Dorn, K. Patkanov, J. Tchoubinof, *Collections Scientifiques*, 6:144.
- ²¹ “d'une execution tres soignée”.
- ²² See O. P. Shcheglova, *Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Vostochnogo otdela nauchnoi biblioteki Leningradskogo gos. Universiteta*, 93.
- ²³ O. P. Shcheglova, *Persidskie i tadzikiye rukopisi Instituta Vostokovedeniia Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk*, 1: 66-67.
- ²⁴ For the former see M. M. Günzburg, V. Rosen, B. Dorn, K. Patkanov, J. Tchoubinof, *Collections Scientifiques*, 3: 32-51, for the latter – *Ibid*, 6:143.
- ²⁵ Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán* (“The Book of Certitude”): An academic translation from the original Persian into Russian, with an introduction, commentaries and a textological supplement by Y. A. Ioannesyán (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoye Vostokovedeniye, 2001).
- ²⁶ A. G. Tumanski, *Kitábe Akdes*, XXVII-XXVIII.
- ²⁷ M. M. Günzburg, V. Rosen, B. Dorn, K. Patkanov, J. Tchoubinof, *Collections Scientifiques*, 6: 243.
- ²⁸ See V. R. Rosen, compiler, *Sbornik poslanii babida Baháulláha (A Volume of Epistles of Bahá'u'lláh, the Bábi)*. (St.-Petersburg: Royal Academy of Sciences, 1908).
- The Volume is available at least in two libraries: the library of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences and the library of the State University in Kazan (The Tatarstan Republic of the Russian Federation). We owe the information about the Volume in the University of Kazan to F. L. Sharifullina.
- ²⁹ “cet auteur toutefois ne saurait aucunement etre le Bab lui-meme, pourvu que le manuscrit precedent provienne reellement de la plume du reformateur” (M. M. Günzburg, V. Rosen, B. Dorn, K. Patkanov, J. Tchoubinof, *Collections Scientifiques*, 1: 191).
- ³⁰ See *ibid*, 6:145-149.
- ³¹ See E. G. Browne, *Some Remarks on the Bábi Textes* edited by Baron Victor Rosen in Vols. I and VI of the *Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales de Saint-Petersbourg* in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*. (London: published by the Society, 1892), 269, 273 (footnote).
- ³² See V. R. Rosen, *Sbornik poslanii babida Baháulláha*, 1-82.
- ³³ The title is translated as “Two Recent Bábi Revelations”.

- ³⁴ See O. P. Shcheglova, Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Leningradskogo otdeleniia Instituta vostokovedeniia, 1: 213.
- ³⁵ Abdu'l-Bahá, outside the Bahá'í community also known as Abbas Effendi (1844-1921) – Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son. In the Kitáb-i-Ahdí (Book of the Covenant) Bahá'u'lláh named Abdu'l-Bahá as his successor and the authorized Interpreter of his Writings.
- ³⁶ See O. P. Shcheglova, *ibid*, 1: 213-214.
- ³⁷ See O. P. Shcheglova, Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Vostochnogo otdela nauchnoi biblioteki Leningradslogo gos. Universiteta, 93.
- ³⁸ See E. G. Browne, trans., and ed., *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb*, 2 vols.
- ³⁹ See O. P. Shcheglova, Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Leningradskogo otdeleniia Instituta vostokovedeniia, 1: 214.
- ⁴⁰ See O. P. Shcheglova, *ibid*.
- ⁴¹ The first letter of the second code is Cyrillic.
- ⁴² See O. P. Shcheglova, Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Vostochnogo otdela nauchnoi biblioteki Leningradslogo gos. Universiteta, 93.
- ⁴³ See E. G. Browne, trans., *Tárikh-i-Jadíd: The new History of the Báb*. 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893).
- ⁴⁴ A. G. Tumanski. K Voprosu ob avtorakh istoriyi babidov izvestnoy pod imenem Tarikh-i-Manukchi ili Tarikh-i-Jadid (On the question of the authorship of the History of the Bábí's known as Tarikh-i-Manukchi or Tarikh-i-Jadid – in Memoires de l'Academie imperiale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg, ed. Baron V. R. Rosen, 8: 33-45.
- ⁴⁵ See O. P. Shcheglova, Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Leningradskogo otdeleniia Instituta vostokovedeniia, 1: 216.
- ⁴⁶ See O. P. Shcheglova, *ibid*, 1: 215.
- ⁴⁷ See O. P. Shcheglova, *ibid*, 1: 216.
- ⁴⁸ See O. P. Shcheglova, *ibid*, 1: 216.
- ⁴⁹ The letter of the code is in Cyrillic.
- ⁵⁰ See O. P. Shcheglova. Katalog litografirovannykh knig na Persidskom iazyke v sobranii Vostochnogo otdela nauchnoi biblioteki Leningradslogo gos. Universiteta, 94.
- ⁵¹ This Tablet was addressed to Jalil-i-Khu'I (W. Momen. *A Basic Bahá'í Dictionary* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1989), 122.
- ⁵² This Tablet was revealed in honor of Ustad 'Alí-Akbar, a martyr of Yazd (W. Momen, *ibid*, 221).
- ⁵³ This Tablet was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in honor of Haji Mírzá Haydar-'Alí (W. Momen, *ibid*, 126).