

International Conference on Bahá'í Libraries and Archives

Landegg, 2-4 January 2003

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Report on the First International Conference on Bahá'í Libraries and Archives
Landegg International University,
2-4 January 2003

The historic First International Conference on Bahá'í Libraries and Archives was attended by 31 individuals from 16 countries who came together to share their experiences, to learn about best practices in Bahá'í libraries and archives, and to begin developing a structure for world interaction among those who handle and organize Bahá'í library and archival materials. The conference was convened by Landegg International University and Barbara Geisey, the University's visiting librarian.

The conference opened with a wide-ranging keynote address by William P. Collins, former director of the Bahá'í World Centre Library and currently at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. The address, entitled "Challenges and Myths: Making Libraries and Archives Relevant in the Bahá'í Community", provided observations on the process of establishing functioning Bahá'í libraries and archives, key challenges ahead that will need attention after the conference, and some of the "myths" that may bedevil us along the way. Solutions to these problems will come from consultation and the involvement of other colleagues not present at the conference.

Friday morning, 3 January, began with a session on a number of themes. Dr. Graham Hassall of Landegg University surveyed current developments in Bahá'í archives and libraries. Louise Mould, the current director of the Bahá'í World Centre Library, discussed the origins, development, collections and current challenges of the Bahá'í world's premier library. Pauline Tuttle, from Canada, reviewed indigenous audio-visual collections and archival development from an ethnomusicological perspective.

The following session reviewed case studies of the establishment of libraries. Jan Jasion from France proposed minimum standards and requirements necessary for the establishment of national Bahá'í libraries. Masoud Rowshan presented an overview of the development of Australia's national Bahá'í library and made proposals for developing the library further. Guido Cooreman of Belgium presented a case study of the establishment of that country's Bahá'í library, which is unlike the others covered in the conference because it also serves as a lending library for the community.

The third session of the day was dedicated to case studies in the establishment of archives. Anita Graves, archivist for the National Spiritual Assembly of Cyprus, reviewed the results of her survey on the present state of Bahá'í archives in Europe, which showed the significant challenges facing the continent's Bahá'í institutions. She also shared a paper by Necati Alkan on the Bábí and Bahá'í religions in Ottoman Turkish sources, detailing some of the treasures hidden in Ottoman archives. Margaret Anderson followed with an overview of the Australian Bahá'í archive and its use of non-Bahá'í professional consultants to establish their archival program on a sound basis. Australia's is a very good illustration of how Bahá'í institutions with no professional resources within the community might go about setting up their archives. Günter Maltz discussed the practical methods for arranging and housing the German Bahá'í archives. Virginia R. da Costa, a trained archivist and the sole attendee from Latin America, provided a portrait of the establishment and current state of the national Bahá'í archives in Brazil, which faces many environmental challenges

There were two sessions on 4 January. The first was a panel, moderated by William Collins, on the issue of intellectual control, i.e. cataloguing, classification, description and indexing. J. Michael Kafes described the current efforts to complete and computerize Marian Lippitt's "Worlds of God" index, a means of analyzing and indexing implicit subject content in the Bahá'í Writings. Peter Wise presented a simple classification used in the Irish Bahá'í Bookshop based on categories in Eunice Braun's *A Reader's Guide: The Development of Bahá'í Literature in English* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1986). Paul Gerard, a library cataloguer and classification expert from Australia, has spent several years developing a complete revision of the religion (200) section of the Dewey Decimal Classification. The resulting classification schedule eliminates the current Dewey bias toward Christianity and treats all religions equitably. The classification also provides sufficient depth for all religions, including the Bahá'í Faith, so that Bahá'í libraries have a means of treating all religions in a Bahá'í manner and of cataloguing a specialized Bahá'í collection. Follow-up discussion revolved around relative merits of choosing to follow the Bahá'í World Centre Library's classification based upon the Library of Congress, the revised Dewey 200s classification by Mr. Gerard, or one of the other classifications that has been developed. There was also considerable discussing about the inadequacies of simple keyword searching of the Writings, and the importance of subject analysis like that being conducted for the "Worlds of God" project.

The final presentation session of the conference covered issues in collection development. Dr. Moojan Momen spoke on the challenges facing the Afnan Library, a privately managed research library in the United Kingdom that has also been designated a depository library for U.K. Bahá'í publications. Ailsa Hedley, archivist and records manager at the Bahá'í World Centre, explained the relationship of records management to archives. Richard Hollinger, an archivist from the United States, outlined the problems and challenges posed for archives by electronic communications such as e-mail. Dharlene Valeda of Canada discussed electronic online libraries, specifically the "Bahá'í Academics Resource Library" developed by Jonah Winters (<http://www.bahai-library.org>). Jonah inters himself prepared a brief statement about the origins, development and future directions of the resource library.

Landegg international University has offered to put the conference papers on the Landegg Web site at <http://www.landegg.edu/main.cfm?SID=438>, and presenters are encouraged to see that their papers are sent to Dr. Graham Hassall ghassall@landegg.edu.

This historic conference was also a working conference that brought together national Bahá'í archivists from Switzerland, Germany, Australia, Brazil and elsewhere, as well as a national Bahá'í librarians from Belgium and a Bahá'í school librarian from the Townshend School in the Czech Republic.

As part of the work of the conference, the attendees consulted during two evening sessions on specific steps that could be taken to carry forward the momentum of consultation and development generated by the conference. The group made two important decisions. The first decision was to form a working group composed of Michael Bernhard (Bahá'í World Centre), Parvine Foughi (Bahá'í World Centre), Ailsa Hedley (Bahá'í World Centre), Richard Hollinger (U.S.), Jan Jasion (France), Günter Maltz (Germany), Dharlene Valeda (Canada), and Peter Wise (Ireland) to

- Articulate basic standards and requirements for establishing Bahá'í libraries and archives at various levels, which can be shared with Bahá'í institutions, communities and interested individuals
- Develop a training plan for professional and volunteer staff in Bahá'í libraries and archives, and for the Bahá'í institutions that oversee those libraries and archives

The second decision was to form a “World Association to Promote Bahá'í Libraries and Archives” (tentative name). William Collins was selected as its first president, with Ailsa Hedley and Dharlene Valeda as additional board members. These officers will develop a draft charter for approval, coordinate the efforts of the Working Group, prepare plans to handle membership, and plan further development of the association's communications methods, e.g. e-mail group, revised web site, and a regular news vehicle such as *Scriptum* (<http://www.bcca.org/librarians/Scriptum/>). Additional working groups or projects will be discussed, including the desirability of a world Bahá'í bibliography.

The attendees hopes to meet again in 12 to 18 months to exchange further information, review progress, and make additional substantive decisions. Details will be forthcoming.

Further information about the Association can be obtained from William Collins (wcollins2@cox.net), or in due course from the revised web site for the association at <http://www.bcca.org/librarians>.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
BAHÁ'Í LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

LANDEGG INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
2-4 JANUARY 2003

Thursday 2nd January

- 7.30PM – 7.45PM Conference opening - Graham Hassall and Barbara Geisey
- 7.45PM-9.00PM William Collins - Myths and Challenges: Making Libraries and Archives Relevant in the Bahá'í Community
- 9.00PM-9.15PM Visit to LIU library

Friday 3rd January

- 9.00AM – 9.15AM ✓ Bahá'í libraries and archives: a survey of current developments
Graham Hassall
- 9.15AM – 9.45AM ✓ Louise Mould - The Bahá'í World Centre Library
- 9.45AM-10.30AM ✓ Pauline Tuttle - Issues of Reciprocity and Ethics in Indigenous Audio-Visual Collections and Archival Development: An Ethnomusicological Perspective
- 10.30AM – 11.00AM Break

The establishment of libraries: case studies

- 11.00AM – 11.45AM ✓ Jan Jasion - Minimum requirements and standards necessary to establish National Baha'i Libraries
- 11.45AM-12.30PM Masoud Rowshan - Developing a National Baha'i Library In Australia: Overview, challenges and strategies towards achieving the goal
- 12.30PM – 2.00PM Lunch
- 2.00PM – 2.45PM Guido Cooreman - Case Study: establishing the Bahá'í library of Belgium

The establishment of archives: case studies

- 2.45PM – 3.30PM Anita Graves - The Present State of Bahá'í Archives in Europe
- 3.30PM – 4.00PM Break
- 4.00PM – 4.45PM Margaret Anderson - The National Bahá'í Archive of Australia
- 4.45PM - 5.30PM Gunter Maltz - The National Bahá'í Archives of Germany
- 5.30PM – 6.00PM Virgínia R. da Costa - The National Bahá'í Archives of Brazil
- 6.30PM Conference Dinner
- 8.00 PM Informal Discussion on Conference themes

Saturday 4th January

Issues in cataloguing, classification, description and indexing

Moderator: William Collins

9.00AM – 9.10AM	William Collins – introduction to panel
9.10AM-9.50AM	J. Michael Kafes - Marian Lippitt's 'Worlds of God' Index
9.50AM – 10.30AM	Peter Wise - Irish Bahá'í Bookshop Classification
10.30AM – 11.00AM	Break
11.00AM – 11.40M	Paul Gerard - A Dewey Phoenix Schedule
11.45AM-12.30PM	William Collins – Bahá'í Classification Issues and discussion
12.30PM – 2.00PM	Lunch

Issues in collection development

2.00PM – 2.45PM	Moojan Momen - The Afnan Library
2.45PM – 3.30PM	Ailsa Hedley - An Introduction to Records Management and its Relationship to Bahá'í Archives
3.30PM – 4.00PM	Break
4.00PM – 4.45PM	Richard Hollinger - The use of electronic communications and its potential impact on archives
4.45PM - 5.30PM	Dharlene Valeda - Electronic Libraries
5.30PM-6.30PM	Consultation: where to now?

International Conference on Bahá'í Libraries and Archives
2-4 January 2003

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Email copies of Proc. manual & plan.

Bill Collins

**Challenges and Myths:
Making Libraries and Archives Relevant in the Bahá'í Community**

Keynote Address

Conference on Bahá'í Libraries and Archives

Landegg International University, 2-4 January 2003

Abstract: Using examples from the establishment of the Bahá'í World Centre's Library and Archives, and surveying the types of questions and service demands made upon them, I will deal with several of the challenges and fallacies that Baha'i information professionals will have to deal with in order to ensure that Baha'i libraries and archives are relevant to the Baha'i community.

It is rather humbling to find myself delivering the keynote address at the first ever Conference on Bahá'í Libraries and Archives. I suddenly realized that I am considered by some to be the Grand Old Man of Bahá'í librarianship. A friend introduced me at a talk in Haifa one time by quoting John Watson's description of Sherlock Holmes: "He had an education in how to look things up that has seldom, if ever, been equalled." It would be tempting to think of the thirteen years I spent setting up the Bahá'í World Centre Library as a time of gaining wisdom, but the old adage about growing older and wiser appears to be reduced to growing older. When my wife and I relocated to Haifa in 1977 to take up service at the Bahá'í World Centre, it felt as though I knew a lot about librarianship. Certainly, I was fortunate that every bit of my four years of professional experience had given me essential tools and methods for dealing with the problems found at the Bahá'í World Centre. As time has gone on, I now find myself with many more questions than answers. Learning about and asking those questions have been important developments in my own growth. If that is wisdom, then maybe I have some.

I. INTRODUCTION

We are at a historic first – a conference in which Bahá'í librarians and archivists have come together to share their experiences and to learn from each other. What we do here will, with virtual certainty, have an influence on where Bahá'í archives and libraries go from here. What I hope to present in this keynote address are: observations on the process of establishing functioning Bahá'í libraries and archives; key challenges ahead that will need our attention during and after the conference; and some of the fallacies that may bedevil us on the way. Solutions to the problems we face will come from your consultation and the involvement of other colleagues not present at this conference.

II. PROCESS

Great institutions and movements start from humble beginnings, like seeds that grow into seedlings, then plants, and finally into trees. There are no shortcuts. Bahá'í libraries and archives are going through the same process.

When the first manuscript of the Báb's writings was written down in 1844, and the first newspaper article on the Bahá'í Faith appeared in 1845, Bahá'í libraries and archives were already needed in principle. Their creation was much longer in coming. Believers transcribed and collected manuscripts of the sacred texts; individuals collected Bahá'í books and other reference resources in personal collections. In an abstract sense, these personal collections were archives and libraries. But in another sense, a personal collection does not an archives or a library make. Another level of order is necessary to house, organize, preserve, share, interpret and disseminate the hidden treasures in these sources. It was Shoghi Effendi who set the foundation for Bahá'í libraries and archives by systematically including them in the environs of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* and the *Hazíratu'l-Quds*.¹ He wrote to National Spiritual Assemblies about archives and the kinds of records that should be preserved in them: Tablets, relics, photographs, institutional records, personal papers and diaries, etc. His attention to libraries was more

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), 339.

limited, but he set certain important precedents when he required in the 1930s that Bahá'í institutions and publishers deposit five copies of every publication with the Bahá'í World Centre – possibly the only international non-governmental depository system in the world.

There have been attempts to create libraries and archives nationally and locally. The United States Bahá'í Publishing Trust and Bahá'í Distribution Service set up a system of local “librarians” (later “publications representatives”) who could purchase Bahá'í books at a discount, sell them at the regular price, and use the profits to build a local library collection. With few exceptions, however, until the 1970s, people with little or no library and archival training oversaw libraries and archives at all levels. The city of Peoria, Illinois was possibly the sole exception, where a librarian built a sizeable circulating library of Bahá'í books for the local community. It was probably the first Bahá'í library anywhere to be listed in standard reference works on libraries.

Organizational sophistication for Bahá'í libraries and archives took an evolutionary leap when professionally trained believers were first hired to build collections of books and archival materials into functioning institutions. Roger Dahl, Archivist for the U.S. National Bahá'í Archives, was probably the first professional archivist hired full time by a Bahá'í institution. He not only created a Bahá'í archives, but also began to build and organize the U.S. National Bahá'í Library. My wife Rachel and I were very likely the first professional librarians called to build a Bahá'í library at either the national or international level. We arrived at the Bahá'í World Centre in 1977 and found a largely unorganized, uninventoried scattering of books located in several offices in Haifa, with many items stored without climate control in a hot outbuilding and in a damp former cistern. The offices in which the librarians worked leaked in the rain and we used large plastic sheets to protect the books. The one thing that saved us from discouragement was the development of a vision, and the knowledge that we could work systematically through all of the logistical and organizational problems to create a real functioning library.

I want to stress vision as an essential prerequisite for the development of our professions within the Bahá'í community. Our initial vision at the World Centre was this: "The Bahá'í World Centre Library will acquire, organize, and provide reference to the world's most comprehensive collection of published resources on the Bahá'í Faith and its antecedents, in all languages and formats." The Universal House of Justice then recruited archivists in 1980, founded a Department of Library and Archives Services in 1982, and moved the collections and growing staff into the Seat of the Universal House of Justice at the very end of that same year.

Notice that the World Centre and the U.S. National Center have had different organizational approaches. At the World Centre, the library came first, and operates independently from, but in consultation with, the archives. At the U.S. National Center, the archives came first, with the library remaining part of the archives and under its control.

For Britain, the development of a national library came through a personal bequest. H. M. Balyuzi amassed a large personal collection of Bahá'í-related books, periodicals, articles and manuscripts. Upon his death, he left this collection to the National Spiritual Assembly of the U.K., which named it the Afnan Library. The National Spiritual Assembly has designated the Afnan Library as the U.K. National Bahá'í Library, and has required deposit of U.K. Bahá'í publishers' books in the library. Until properly housed, staffed, organized, catalogued and preserved, the Afnan Library remains a personal collection owned by an institution.

Every Bahá'í institution faces this organizational issue of where to locate the library and archival functions, how they relate to each other, and what their primary functions are to be in relation to the institutions and the wider community. The two professions do not have precisely the same educational requirements and do not use the same principles of organization and storage. How far can an archivist go in managing a library, or a librarian in managing archives? Although many tools are commonly used in both, the nature of the materials is different, and the professional concepts and

vocabulary can be very different. It is usually the librarians who want to see these two areas of information management in close proximity. Are there any particular relationships between Bahá'í libraries and archives that have worked better than others?

A. WIDER VISION

With all these questions, it is no easy task to move ourselves toward a mature and systematic approach to the development of libraries and archives. We inevitably deal with the competing demands of the universal and the local, the tension between the center and the periphery, centralization and decentralization, standardization and individual solutions.

We Bahá'ís who are in these professions need to develop a wider vision than the one that guides the individual library or archives in which we labour. This wider vision has to draw us forward into a future that goes beyond the struggles of individual archival and library institutions to the larger question of making these professions relevant to the Bahá'í world now and in the future. In 1987, the Universal House of Justice gave a mandate for the International Bahá'í Library as the central depository of publications on the Bahá'í Faith and an essential resource to provide international Bahá'í institutions with information on other topics. It goes on to state:

“In future decades its functions must grow, it will serve as an active centre for knowledge in all fields, and it will become the kernel of great institutions of scientific investigation and discovery.”²

This vision views the library as broader than a department of the Bahá'í World Centre. It is the central coordinator for many institutions, not least of which may be a network of Bahá'í libraries and research centers around the world. We may wish to begin laying the groundwork here for such a network.

² Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'í world, 31 August 1987.

When the Universal House of Justice articulated its vision of the Bahá'í International Archives in that same letter, it did not state that the archives were at the center of an international network. Yet we can extrapolate that an international archival institution will have some overall coordinating and educational role in the Bahá'í World.

In a number of places, I have drawn parallels between the International Bahá'í Library and Archives in their finished institutional form, and the great classical Library of Alexandria.³ The Alexandrina, as it has been called, was part of the Museion (hence the modern word “museum”), the guardians of which were the nine Muses. This comparison is apt for the library and archives professionals here, because the Museion had manuscript scrolls as its collection – a medium perfect for both archives and libraries. Large numbers of resident and visiting scholars used those scrolls. The collection was intended to be universal, just as that available in the International Bahá'í Library should be, by whatever means the requisite knowledge content can be made available. What is our vision for the future of our professions in the Bahá'í Faith and in the wider world? Do we understand that the International Archives and International Library are among those “world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions”⁴ destined to operate from the World Centre? What does that mean for the decisions we make today?

B. TIMELY ACTIVITIES

The vision far outstrips our numbers, resources and abilities. In the Bahá'í writings there is a recurring concept of “timeliness” – that things can only be done in their proper time and sequence. Some steps are timely, some are not. But which ones? The following come to mind.

³ See William P. Collins, “The International Baha'i Library and the Library of Alexandria,” *Scriptum*, no.5 (July-Dec. 1996), <http://www.bcca.org/librarians/Scriptum/5.htm>

⁴ Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America: Selected Letters and Cablegrams Addressed to the Bahá'í's of North America 1932-1946* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1947), 32.

Network or Association

There has been a loose communications network for Bahá'í librarians and archivists since 1995, initiated by me at the suggestion of the Universal House of Justice. Attempts to get Bahá'í librarians together at professional meetings have proved abortive. Some network contacts asked why there should be a network of Bahá'í librarians and archivists at all. Some were fearful that it would be dominated and "run" by North Americans. The result is that we have not been talking to each other regularly about what we can offer and what we need. Is it time for something more formal? If the answer is yes, under what auspices should it function?

Standards

All professions operate with sets of standards. Bahá'í libraries and archives have few written standards regarding the minimum requirements for the setting up of national and local libraries, although the International Archives and the U.S. National Bahá'í Archives have printed some guidelines.⁵ We could profitably take some time to develop a basic understanding of what those standards are, and then communicate them to the Bahá'í national and local institutions, all of which are approaching the day when they will have to create libraries and archives.

Training

The institutions, Baha'I librarians and archivists, and untrained volunteers require training and educational programs so that they can (1) make sensible decisions about establishing archives and libraries, and organize them to the largest benefit of the Baha'I community [see Challenges: Human Resources below].

⁵ National Archives Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, *Guidelines for Bahá'í Archives* (Wilmette, Ill. National Bahá'í Archives, 1983); Bahá'í World Centre, Archives Office, *Bahá'í Archives: Preserving and Safeguarding the Sacred Texts* ([Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre], 1993), and *Bahá'í Archives: The Memory of a Worldwide Community* (Haifa : Bahá'í World Centre, 1998).

III. CHALLENGES

There are some serious challenges that we face, some of which all Bahá'í enterprises face, and some of which are unique to the archival and library worlds.

A. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Libraries and archives face the practical question of obtaining sufficient funding to do their work. This has been no less true at the Bahá'í World Centre than in any national Bahá'í office or local Bahá'í community. We may long for the day when events will “reinforce a thousandfold the numerical strength as well as the material power and the spiritual authority of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh,”⁶ but in the here and now, most funds go to sustaining programs for expansion efforts, consolidation, and community administration. Given limited resources in the Baha'i funds, how many resources should be devoted to libraries and archives? What steps should archivists and librarians take to ensure that their work is on the view screen of their respective institutions? How can limited dollars be stretched to do the most good for libraries and archives? Would it be possible to gain institutional commitment to dedicate a percentage of national or local budgets to libraries and archives? I do not see these financial questions addressed explicitly in the titles of papers to be presented here, but the question of financing will require some consultation if we are to come up with solutions for this perennial problem.

B. HUMAN RESOURCES

The library and archives professions have been in a slow decline since the rapid rise of the internet and the tendency for people to enter the career of information management in the corporate context, rather than to study librarianship and the archival arts in their historical and public service contexts. Many students and adults are more

⁶ Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith: Messages to America, 1947-1957* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1965), 117.

comfortable getting their “information” from the Internet, without the intermediary of people who know how to find what is relevant to inquirers’ requests and who can assist the inquirers to sort out the value of what they find. How many university and college professors receive papers with citations from the online satire magazine *The Onion*, as though its articles were credible reports of fact? We are fighting a tremendous uphill battle against the common tendency to mistake words for information, information for knowledge, and knowledge for wisdom. How are we to find the next generation of Bahá’í archivists and librarians and enlarge their number? Even if we convince Bahá’ís to enter our professions, how do we go beyond the professional training to instill a willingness to serve in a Bahá’í capacity? The majority of the currently available Bahá’í librarians would be needed to staff the existing Bahá’í libraries with career professionals, yet many are understandably reluctant to relocate for Bahá’í service at the international or national centers or to accept the income limitations that come with such service. Can we draw the non-Bahá’í members of our professions into commitment to the Faith, or encourage Bahá’í librarians and archivists to give serious consideration to Bahá’í service? This recruitment problem is, by the way, a reflection of a general recruitment problem faced by the Bahá’í World Centre, the U.S. Bahá’í National Center, and most national Bahá’í centers. Should we establish a training program for certain aspects of librarianship (e.g. cataloguing) via existing educational programs in Bahá’í schools, the Wilmette Institute, or Landegg International University? What would such workshops look like?

One step would be to accept that we are not going to obtain fully trained professionals, and that we should also develop programs to train technicians in limited aspects of library and archival professions. In the early 1990s, I was a consultant at Bosch Bahá’í School in Santa Cruz, Calif. The school has an actively used library, and had determined to use the World Centre Library’s classification system. The staff, all of them eager part-time staff or volunteers, did not understand how to organize the library. Bosch flew me out for a long weekend where the three staff had all day training sessions in how to assign classification numbers and solve various practical problems in labeling the books in their collection. I also convinced them to spend a couple hundred dollars for

a bibliographic program called ProCite, which could be used to catalogue their materials, and then supplied them with a reference copy of my Bahá'í bibliography in the ProCite format. My understanding is that they have continued to be well organized and have a well-organized library collection. But followup is required, sine a single training session does not lead to continued library development. Two other U.S. schools have volunteers, one of them a librarian whom I have advised, the other a book collector. Bahá'í institutions are faced with the difficulty of accepting some volunteers in positions because they appear to fit. I have observed that it is a never-ending source of problems to have a reference librarian attempt to catalogue and arrange a library or archives; or to have a photographer agree to organize an archives; or to have an untrained bibliophile be in charge of a library; or to have a picture framer perform preservation work. This is what we Americans call "close, but no cigar" – the person may be in a profession that appears related, but the training and personality pertaining to that profession do not prepare the person for what a librarian or archivist needs to do. So training programs should teach trainees to do what they can and not to attempt what is beyond their abilities.

C. EDUCATING BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS

There are two levels of problem that a Bahá'í institution may face. One level is knowing that it wants to organize and/or staff a library or archives, but not how to get people with the right education and abilities to assist them. The second level of problem is when an institution knows not the first thing about why an archives or library would be useful. Both pose an ongoing educational challenge. Without clear-headed and articulate archival and library professionals to provide advice and guidance, institutions may either do nothing about their archives and libraries, or do the wrong things with the ones that they have.

The moment there were librarians and archivists at the Bahá'í World Centre, they had to embark on a long and continuing campaign to explain what they could do and to establish a reputation for professionalism and sound decision-making. This sometimes

meant advising abandonment of courses of action taken by previous untrained individuals, and recommending pursuit of new courses of action. It often would take some time to convince the institutions to implement these changes. In the normal course of organizational development, it would sometimes mean the librarians and archivists had to help departments that had previously handled the library or archival materials to relinquish control.

Part of this educational process involves teaching the community that librarians are not booksellers, and that archives are not composed primarily of newspaper clippings glued into scrapbooks. How are we going to educate Bahá'í institutions, communities and individuals about the importance of archives and libraries and what they contain? Bahá'í libraries and archives are not independently funded entities that can decide to undertake such a campaign; it must, at this time, be funded as part of a Bahá'í institution's decision to do so. Part of the institutions' education, therefore, has to be done in advance to pave the way for a larger educational program.

In an earlier teaching plan, the Universal House of Justice called specifically for lending libraries to be developed in certain south Asian countries. I do not know how successful these were. The Bahá'í World Centre received requests for assistance, usually as a brief question: "Please advise us about your cataloguing system and how to apply it." Those asking how to set up a lending library lacked the basic knowledge that would have enabled the World Centre Library to respond in a way that would make it a relatively simple task. Our letters were lengthy because we were explaining the difference between cataloguing and subject access, what a basic cataloguing code is, why the World Centre had not imposed a standard on the entire Bahá'í world, and why their expectation of an easy answer in a letter was unrealistic. The educational task is thus compounded by the need to start at a very basic level and build up understanding. Can we create basic how-to guides for setting up libraries and archives, keep them updated, and make them widely available? Can we set up a network of Bahá'í librarians and archivists who will act as consultants to Bahá'í institutions?

Preserving Unique Records

Part of this educational process involves archivists' ongoing struggle to acquire and preserve unique institutional records and personal papers before they are lost forever. Individuals, who owned sacred Tablets or letters from the Guardian, lost the originals to theft or disaster, or after their deaths, had their letters destroyed by ignorant relatives. There are too many examples of old communities which decline and lose their Assemblies, leaving institutional papers in the hands of a single individual who has neither the understanding nor the will to take the necessary steps to see that they go to the National Bahá'í Archives. Far too many historically important Bahá'ís have died without a will, and since they had no Bahá'í relatives, their personal papers and books were destroyed, broken up, or sold at exorbitant prices on Ebay. There are also historical examples of Bahá'í relatives and friends "protecting" the reputation of a deceased believer by destroying the papers and letters that they are not comfortable with.

The U.S. National Bahá'í Archives has a manual for archives that was once in print, and that the Archives now photocopies for inquiring assemblies.⁷ It also carries out an ongoing but modest educational campaign in *The American Bahá'í*, the U.S. Bahá'í newspaper. Do we need a compilation of writings on archives and libraries, with a few pointers about institutional and personal records, the organizing of libraries, and the like? Who will edit and write it, and who will publish it?

D. DIGITIZATION AND ELECTRONIC ISSUES

Nothing is more timely or misunderstood than the whole arena of collecting digital works, archiving web sites, making electronic resources available online, digitizing existing collections, and appraising electronic works. Digital works are simply an extension of media, just as when libraries in the past added photographs, tapes, films, compact discs, etc. There is no question that increased digital storage capacity, the

⁷ National Archives Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, *Guidelines for Bahá'í Archives* (Wilmette, Ill. National Bahá'í Archives, 1983).

production of electronic versions of works, the growth of international information networks, and the influence of the internet have made possible a vast world of possibilities for acquiring content for libraries and making that content available in new ways.

- Digital works. Good examples of such works are online newsletters and articles that are published on the Internet only. Should libraries print them out and add them to their collections? Or add only the digital object to their collections? Should the library add the digital form even when a separate hard copy format exists? The World Centre Library has had the foresight to create the position of Electronic Files Librarian to focus on the downloading and storage of online Bahá'í periodicals, articles, and books, and selected web sites.
- Bahá'í web sites. These are gold mines of useful information as well as a snapshot of the Bahá'í community among a certain portion of the world's population at a given time. There is no question that archiving of Bahá'í web sites should be performed. Approaches for collecting materials from the Web can be divided into two categories, bulk and selective collection. Bulk collecting is entirely automated; selective collecting is managed by librarians who select, index and organize materials of particular value. The basic unit of preservation is a Web site, typically consisting of many files. (The boundaries of individual sites may be hard to define.) Regular snapshots are taken of each site and retained. Thus, a library will preserve a sequence of snapshots for each site. With both bulk and selective collecting, the actual downloading and storing of the files can be carried out automatically. Who will do it? What kinds of software work best for this purpose? Will we collect selectively regarding specific events, or comprehensively? Which web sites will be archived?⁸

⁸ For information on the Library of Congress's Minerva Project to archive selected events from the web, see <http://www.loc.gov/minerva/>.

- Making resources available online. Once digital resources are obtained, there arises the significant issue of making such content available. Digital content comes with built-in copyright issues. In the United States, the concept of “fair use” for educational purposes comes into play when materials are available in a library, but the moment the library is providing access to digital files to a larger public, the issue becomes murkier. The digital environment continues to have a significant impact on intellectual property, and the battles are only now being joined. The serious legal difficulties of file-swapping services such as Napster and the new peer-to-peer networks should serve as a warning regarding the potential ramifications of intellectual property, especially when it is economically important property. The information technology world, and many Bahá’ís, believes that intellectual property should generally be free and up for grabs. This, however, would be a disincentive to creativity because it makes creative work economically unrewarding. Theft of copyrighted songs via such networks has caused a double-digit percentage decline in compact disc sales in the U.S., which represents billions of dollars of lost income, not just for record companies, but for all of the artists and technicians who create, perform and record the music, develop liner notes and artwork, create advertising, and the like. What is the balance that libraries and archives should strike regarding copyrighted content in their collections?
- Digitizing existing collections. This is the process of taking words and images on paper, sounds on vinyl discs and tape, moving images on 35 mm. film, and turning them into electronic binary code. It is the transfer of analog content to digital formats. Almost no Baha’i libraries have done this, and even large countries’ national libraries have only made limited headway.⁹ It is an expensive proposition in equipment, labor, and copyright considerations, to name a few of the problems. There is no question that someone should make high quality digital images of tablets and letters of the Central Figures, the Guardian, and the House

⁹ The Library of Congress, for instance, has digitized, in a decade, 7.5 million items out of a collection of more than 120 million. The physical collection grows by several million items every year. The number of items acquired outstrips the number digitized.

of Justice. The World Centre Archives has already created digital text of original scriptures and interpretation, which can be free-text, searched. But digital images of the actual manuscripts are not yet prepared, and these are as important as having the intellectual content itself.

- Appraising electronic works. Archivists use the appraisal process to decide whether records have permanent value and thus should be preserved. The same is true of records that exist only electronically. Already we are at a point where many documents are created and stored only in electronic form. The problems with electronic records are (1) the storage media are not long-lasting; (2) hardware and software change so quickly that within a short time you have electronic files that cannot be read. To retain the files long term, you have to keep migrating files to each new generation of hardware and software, or find a format that can be read regardless of hardware and software. It is possible to have the creators of electronic records identify their importance so that the archivist's work is made easier, but the technological problems remain. Paper, for all its limitations, remains a remarkably good storage medium in terms of its longevity, its flexibility, and ease of reading.

E. REFERENCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE ISSUES

When I looked at this conference's program and studied the questions that several colleagues sent to me, I was surprised that the question of reference and public service went largely unmentioned. By public service here, I mean service to the particular "public" that an individual archives or library has been mandated to serve. Observation tells me that there are three large issues in this arena.

The first is knowledge of the corpus of Bahá'í literature and information resources. At least on the library side, those who enter reference or public service librarianship are primarily oriented to people, and are often not strongly oriented toward exhaustive knowledge in a particular corpus of literature. Bahá'í public service

librarians, however, will be called upon to deepen their familiarity with many Bahá'í resources in many languages if they are to serve their users well. There are relatively few people who are truly well versed in the contents of Bahá'í literature and the history of Bahá'í publishing. What can we do to teach practicing Bahá'í archivists and librarians the landscape of the resources available?

The second is a well-developed knowledge of Bahá'í history generally and of the Bahá'í community where the library or archives is operating. Reference librarians or archivists cannot know how to make proper selections of books and manuscripts, answer various questions, and do additional research, if they lack this basic familiarity with history.

The third issue is that of doing research in published, archival and electronic collections. Those in public service positions need a basic knowledge of the structure of intellectual content in cataloguing, archival description, and electronic databases. There are a number of types of search that can be conducted based on the structure of the resources being searched.

Metadata: the high-level data about a collection, book, periodical, archival collection or item.

Text: The actual text of the particular item. Searched by free text, we can only find the words that actually occur in the text, but we cannot access the larger concepts that the words may be conveying unless the terms for the larger concept are present in the text.¹⁰

Subject access: This requires human intervention to create and associate certain subject terms with the content of the item, so that inquirers can find all items that deal with a specific subject, no matter whether the text itself actually uses the word for the subject. Subject vocabulary is either uncontrolled or controlled. Uncontrolled vocabulary consists

¹⁰ Thus some Tablets may refer to the Supreme Tribunal, but not include the words LAW, COURT, or INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE. We would want such access to find the subject that is within the collection of words that make up the text.

of subject terms assigned to a particular text without standardization of terms. Controlled vocabulary consists of subject terms that are strictly assigned with only one term for a given concept, and cross-referencing all synonyms to the chosen term.

Each type of access requires slightly different expertise to create, and for each the search result is different.

F. NETWORKING

The Bahá'í libraries and librarians, archives and archivists, would be better served if they could draw on their collective strengths. We are not networked. We have no ongoing mechanisms for consultation or for accessing the catalogues and accessions records of other Bahá'í library and archival institutions. Could we coordinate strategies for acquisition and preservation of certain categories of records? Should there be certain institutions designated to collect certain media (e.g. audio-visual), with other institutions freed from the expense of that particular medium?

What will our libraries' relationship be with various countries' national libraries in the future? Should we look to a time when national libraries collect large amounts of Bahá'í material? Would that in any way decrease the need for specialized Bahá'í libraries?

Sharing Records and Resources

A significant element of networking is the sharing of records and pooling of resources. The biggest demand from Bahá'í libraries around the world is that the World Centre Library make its catalogue accessible online, for the practical reason that access to the catalogue will make possible the copying of records without the need to have trained individuals to catalogue and classify the Bahá'í materials. This is being worked on, and I hope that representatives of the World Centre Library who are here can tell us when we may expect some kind of access to be available. There are two things that render open

access to the World Centre records difficult: first, there are confidentiality limits on some collections held in the library; second, the automated cataloguing system is not an off-the-shelf commercial system matched to current Z39.50 standards for access to bibliographic data. The library system was developed in-house in the mid-1980s – ahead of its time then, but now out of step with commercially available systems.

Then there is the question of interlibrary loans. To what extent can or will Bahá'í libraries engage in interlibrary loans? It depends on the type of library. The Bahá'í World Centre Library has a collection filled with unique, rare, scarce, and unusual items. It also has a relatively complete collection of all editions and printings of Bahá'í publications. It maintains close control of these “archived” publications, which comprise a large portion of the collections. There is very limited lending at the World Centre itself, and then only of certain items and only to institutions and offices, not to individuals. National Bahá'í libraries are going to have some similar, though fewer, such limitations. Most local Bahá'í libraries will be formed as lending libraries for their communities. Although these are the most likely candidates to loan their books, it is probably not their books that people will want to borrow from a distance, but rather the very same unusual, rare or scarce items that are held in the major Bahá'í libraries at the national and international level. In the United States, the Library of Congress has a policy that it is an interlibrary lender only as the Library of last resort when no other library can “lend” the item. Today, this usually involves the Library supplying a microfiche, microfilm, or photocopy, rather than the actual item itself.

Both the sharing of the catalogue and the interlibrary lending or reproduction of items add to a library's workload. The sharing of the catalogue immediately opens the library to an influx of corrections and suggestions, and to increased numbers of requests for items that the library may not be in a position to lend or copy.

G. CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY

In the last few decades, professionals, institutions and law enforcement have become aware of the depredations of libraries and archives by clever thieves and mutilators who pose as legitimate researchers to gain access to priceless materials. Already one can see dealers in rare and used books charging over \$800 for a first edition of Mason Remey's *Through Warring Countries to the Mountain of God* (Washington, D.C., 1915). The World Centre Library owns one of three known copies of the first edition of the *Kitáb-i-Iqán* (Bombay: Hasani Zivar Press, 1299? AH [1882 CE]). The rarity of these items is becoming known, and it places collections in danger. Any number of older items have also disappeared from the library of at least one summer school in the United States merely through a general carelessness or lackadaisical attitude about book ownership. I got into significant trouble once at the World Centre when I readied a library security policy that included the librarians' right to search a researcher's bags and papers if there was a reasonable suspicion that something had gone missing from the materials they used. The Universal House of Justice rightly saw this lack of trust in approved researchers and in the staff of the World Centre as a violation of a Bahá'í ethic. The question is, in a Bahá'í environment, to what lengths are we permitted to go in order to safeguard materials? We now have the added concern about security of infrastructure against terrorist attack, natural disaster, vermin and pollution. More than thirty libraries, several corporate archives, and priceless art collections were destroyed in the collapse of the World Trade Center.

In all institutional environments, questions of confidentiality arise. In the Bahá'í context, the question looms even larger because the Central Figures, the Guardian, and the elected institutions fulfilled a pastoral role. This role involves issues that are personal, potentially embarrassing to individuals, and sensitive. Bahá'í institutions are charged with protecting the reputation of individuals in their care. The records for which librarians and archivists care include confidences made to others and to the institutions. What are the consequences of breaking confidentiality? In recent years there has been at least one case of an individual Bahá'í in the service of a national institution who shared with others a confidential letter that went from the House of Justice to selected National Spiritual Assemblies. The letter in question fueled the fires of opposition among some

former believers. In government, such a person would have lost his job. Individuals who have read unreleased private papers in some archives have harmed the reputations of historical figures by repeating hearsay, accusations and speculations from archival material. Should we be training Bahá'ís in the ethics of, and responsibilities inherent in, handling confidential materials? And how does the importance of confidentiality relate to the need for reasonable levels of openness (what some call "academic freedom") and the avoidance of aloofness and secrecy?

H. ACQUISITIONS

In order to have Bahá'í libraries and archives at all, these repositories of knowledge need to acquire important materials. Libraries have to deal with the rising cost of books generally; the proliferation of Bahá'í publishing firms in competition with National Spiritual Assemblies, Publishing Committees and Publishing Trusts; and a growing awareness in the used book market that certain Bahá'í-related materials are collectible. All of these multiply the funding problems and affect our ability to understand the Bahá'í market thoroughly enough to know what to get and through which channels.

As I noted earlier, some booksellers and individuals auctioning on Ebay, are raising the cost of collecting to such an extent that Bahá'í libraries cannot compete because they have fewer resources than individuals who have income to support their own focused collecting. With older Bahá'í publications becoming more expensive to obtain, will Bahá'í publishers at any time reprint these classic publications at reasonable prices so that libraries do not have to struggle to build their collections of older works?

For archivists, if we look at acquisitions of papers other than the institutional ones, it is a process of cultivating relationships with people or organizations from which the archives would like to obtain papers, or simply being on the lookout for the serendipitous appearance of something major. An example of the latter was the collection of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab papers that a non-Bahá'í discovered in New York and

offered to the National Bahá'í Archives. Many individuals are not aware of their own historical importance, or are unsure what it will mean if their papers are in a Bahá'í archives. We need to be reassuring them, and we need to be setting collection policies that assist Bahá'í archives in approaching individuals about donating their papers, while at the same time avoiding unnecessary competition.

The Universal House of Justice has set an example by generally refusing to purchase manuscripts, especially Sacred Tablets and letters from the Guardian. Without being privy to its full reasoning on this, it is obvious that refusal to purchase staves off a market for forgeries, although that will probably come in time. We should learn from the example of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who suffered a serious problem created by master forger Mark Hofmann.¹¹ Hofmann, who personally disliked the Church, began to come up with many controversial and unexpected documents relating to Mormon history. The Church began to purchase these documents, which the Church confirmed as genuine through comparison with other minor documents that Hofmann had convinced the Church to purchase years earlier and that document experts were having difficulty detecting as fakes. The Church purchased these documents because they were seen as “priceless” treasures; but the Church also purchased them to protect the faithful from potential bombshells from these documents, since Hofmann chose sensitive historical events for which he created his forgeries. Hofmann was close to being found out when he committed murder to keep himself safe; he injured himself while manufacturing a second bomb destined for another individual involved in his deals. He was also close to completing a forged manuscript of the missing pages of the Book of Mormon that were stolen and supposedly burned by the non-believing wife of an early Mormon who served as Joseph Smith's scribe. It should not be difficult for people here to imagine the possible “missing” Bahá'í historical documents that a talented and unscrupulous individual might endeavor to create.

I. APPRAISAL AND SELECTION

¹¹ See Robert Lindsey, *A Gathering of Saints: A True Story of Money, Murder and Deceit*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988; Linda Sillitoe and Allen D. Roberts, *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1988.

Some of the biggest problems for archivists and librarians stem from the controversial processes of appraisal of archives and selection (or de-selection) of publications. How do we decide what to keep and what to destroy? First, does appraisal actually have a place in archival theory? The archival bond is important - the idea that within the whole of the records created by an entity all the records are connected through their context of creation and the items and files within each record series relate to each other. To destroy the archival bond is to destroy meaning. But we cannot keep everything. What are the criteria that we use to determine what to keep? What are the archivist's and/or librarian's roles in appraisal and selection/deselection?

J. ORGANIZATION OF RESOURCES: CATALOGING, SUBJECT ACCESS, DESCRIPTION

We have a full session on cataloguing and classification issues later in the conference. All libraries are sustaining the impact of changing from card catalogues to computerized catalogues. Most large public library systems in the West, and most university libraries, have made this transition. Yet they continue to be challenged by the ability of automated systems to permit different kinds of access. The Library of Congress has a program to receive tables of contents electronically from certain publishers and incorporate them into searchable records. Will Bahá'í libraries be able to make similar enhancements without a significant amount of effort? How many Bahá'í libraries have only an online catalogue and no paper catalogue? How many of our libraries and archives can afford the expense of online systems, which run from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands of dollars in cost?

One of the biggest difficulties in organizing collections is helping institutions, inexperienced individuals, and even some professionals, to understand the difference between cataloguing and subject access. Cataloguing is the process of creating records that describe a particular publication or archival collection. It includes the selection of a cataloguing code to follow, guidelines for choosing the access points, and methods of

record formatting. Subject access is the imposition of a topical or subject structure on a library's holdings, by classification (the collocation of physical publications by subject relationships), and by assigning alphabetical subject terms. In the continually developing world of information technology, under what circumstances does it matter whether one classifies a collection of books? Closed stack libraries may not need this, although staff frequently note that it is easier to find related items that are shelved in classified subject order. But what about assigning classification numbers in computer records while shelving the books by some other convenient method, and using technology to collocate the records intellectually rather than physically?

Should there be one standard for cataloguing and for classification for all Bahá'í libraries? Many libraries and national assemblies have asked for this or suggested it. Does it make sense given the variety of libraries that exist in the world and in the Bahá'í community?

For libraries that catalogue languages that require transliteration into the Roman alphabet, which transliteration system should be used? This is most pressing for Arabic and Persian. If the choice is the transliteration system used by Shoghi Effendi, the difficulty is that he transliterated Arabic as spoken by Persians (for instance with a *váv* for a *wáv*) and that Shoghi Effendi's adaptation does not always transliterate but rather reproduces the other language's sounds. Transliteration is intended to be a letter for letter match rather than a pronunciation guide.

IV. FALLACIES

A. THE ALL ELECTRONIC LIBRARY

It could be said that we are growing closer and closer to library collections that include all the information publicly available in the world. Certainly the Internet has made possible the electronic availability of large amounts of information. More electronic information is being created digitally or through conversion of hard copies to

digital format. This trend gives birth, however, to a powerful distortion – that we will soon have libraries in which physical conveyances for knowledge will be few, if not dispensed with altogether, in favor of digitization of all the libraries' contents. At the Bahá'í World Centre, one of the most disturbing beliefs we had to deal with when designing the future International Bahá'í Library building, was the idea that we would not need a very significant storage facility because “everything will be available electronically.” This thinking was very powerful for the architects, project managers, and information technology people. Every practicing librarian knows it is a dangerous fallacy.

Historically, every new format for knowledge has ended up sitting side by side in a library with older formats. Some older formats, such as wax cylinders and 33-1/3 rpm discs for recorded sound, have disappeared from common use. But libraries still hold enormous collections of material only available in these formats, never converted. Middlebury College, until the 1980s, had a folk song collection available only on wax cylinders, which could still be played on one of the few remaining wax cylinder players still in existence. It took decades and enormous amounts of money and labor for the College to convert these cylinders to another medium. But we must not forget that it never disposed of the cylinders; they are historically important in themselves as objects and have been retained. So libraries are faced with several problems.

- (1) There is a need to maintain access to the contents of multiple formats of material, some of which require expensive equipment to access.
- (2) The cost of converting existing analog forms to digital ones remains high. The sheer volume of physical containers for knowledge is such that digitizing even a significant portion of it would cost trillions of dollars.
- (3) The different formats and editions of created works are themselves important for their evidentiary value. When electronic texts change, creators have a tendency to jettison the earlier ones that have been superseded. But knowing exactly which edition was available to whom at a given time is essential for understanding history.

- (4) As the digital age has established itself, the number of published books has not decreased but has increased exponentially. Each published book or edition conveys a certain set of information that is not exactly the same as conveyed in another edition or even necessarily in another copy of the same individual book.
- (5) Archival collections are usually collections of unique documents, with many thousands of pages. To digitize them, they must first be fully arranged, properly indexed, and preserved.

So we need to study this question of the electronic library realistically and then ensure that we can communicate with those who have an exaggerated view of the technological magic they think will replace books and manuscripts.

B. CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

Another controversial area is that of centralization of authority, responsibility, and standards among Bahá'í libraries and archives. Certainly people naturally gravitate toward centralization and standardization, and others tend to want autonomy and local independence. The danger is when one or the other of these views becomes dominant and outbalances the other. It is an age-old problem in federal systems where at least two factions develop: those who support a strong federal authority, and those who support a strong provincial authority. Some of the most difficult inquiries for the Bahá'í World Centre Library to answer were those that requested, hoped for, or demanded a ruling or single clear answer from the Library.

There is a strong logic, for instance, behind the idea that whatever system of classification used at the World Centre Library should be the one used by all other Bahá'í libraries. In the short term, it would appear to be a way to make things work more easily. The problem is that the imposition of a single way of organizing a library is no more possible in the diverse Bahá'í community than it is in the wider world, where Dewey, Library of Congress, Universal Decimal, Colon, and Cutter Classifications all exist and are used in certain types of libraries. It would also be sheer hubris to think, at this early

stage, that, simply because something is done a certain way at the Bahá'í World Centre, then that solution is the best one for the Bahá'í world. We need to avoid the extremes and seek a balanced approach. We need to sort out what needs to be centralized and what does not. The library and archives at the Bahá'í World Centre have yet to be constituted as the “world-shaking” institutions that Shoghi Effendi foresaw. Until then, we have the job of beginning to work this issue out.

C. DATA, INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

In the last four decades, the world of computers and the Internet have overwhelmed our sense of proportion. A great deal of time is spent in libraries and archives, let alone in the rest of the world, worrying about who has and does not have information. While it is a legitimate concern, it has clouded modern thinking by confusing data with information, information with knowledge, knowledge with wisdom, and creating the belief that if one has information then one has truth. The Librarian of Congress, James Billington, calls librarians and archivists “knowledge navigators.” It seems to me that the greatest task of Bahá'í libraries and archives is to see their mission as not just collecting data and providing information, but also purveying knowledge and nurturing wisdom.

VI. THE FIVE LAWS OF OUR PROFESSION

S. R. Ranganathan, perhaps the greatest library philosopher of the 20th century, developed what he called “the five laws of library science.” They are as true today as they were five decades ago, and with some modifications, can just as easily be “the five laws of archival science.”

1. Books [Archives] are for use.
2. Every book [archival collection] its reader [user]
3. Ever reader [user] his/her book [archival collection]
4. Save the time of the reader [user].

5. The library [archives] is a growing organism.

Can we turn these “laws,” along with principles in the Bahá’í writings, into a foundation for Bahá’í archival and library standards, ethics, and policies?

VII. ACTION

It is easy to gather and discuss. The difficult part is to turn words into actions. I have mentioned enough issues to consume our lifetimes several times over. During this conference, let us endeavor to do a few simple things: create shared understandings; seek best practices; and determine a few actions on which we can focus, using the modest resources available to us, to forward the development of libraries and archives in the Bahá’í world. To start from where we are and move toward our vision is to create the bright and shining reality of the future where libraries and archives will be vital organs of the Bahá’í commonwealth.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BAHÁ'Í LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

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The Babi and Baha'i Religions according to Ottoman-Turkish Sources, 1844-1920s

Necati Alkan

While a great deal of scholarly works on the development of the Babi and Baha'i Religions in Iran and the Ottoman Empire has been produced, these have been based on sources in Persian and Arabic. Sources in Ottoman-Turkish have not been accessible especially to the Baha'i community other than the Turkish. The latter has been able to learn about documents in the Turkish Prime Ministry's Archive (Istanbul) and other sources on the Faith through very few, now elderly Baha'is who were or are able to read the Ottoman sources in the Arabic script. The first, as to my knowledge, who did research in the 1970s in the abovementioned archive was the late Mr. Sami Doktoroglu. He had sent copies of state papers to the Baha'i World Centre. Moojan Momen mentions this and gives summaries of some of the documents in his *The Babi and Baha'i Religions: Some Contemporary Western Accounts, 1844-1944* and in his article on the trial of the Letter of the Living Mulla Ali-yi Bastami who was exiled to Istanbul. Other Turkish Baha'is, Mr. Haydar Diriöz and his wife Dr. Meserret Diriöz, have been working for an extended time collecting materials and sending it to the Universal House of Justice. Thanks to ~~of~~ these scholars I could base my own research on their meticulous research and have been able to find some more documents in the same archive. I was also fortunate to find published primary sources in Ottoman sources, such as letters, articles and books, on the Babi and Baha'i Religions. All these I do analyze in my PhD thesis.

Beginning with the state papers in the Prime Ministry's Archive, I will give a sketch of the sources in question. Incidentally and fortunately, access to this archive is very easy for Turkish, as well as other scholars. Yet, as the collection of Ottoman documents can be regarded as the largest collection of historical manuscripts in the world, and the work of cataloguing of most of the documents is still in progress; we must assume that there may be still more sources dealing with Babi and Baha'i Religions unknown to us.

Archival sources:

The earliest mention of Babis (even later in the early 1900s the Baha'is are referred to as "Babis") in Ottoman state papers is the trial of Mulla Ali-yi Bastami in Baghdad and his exile to Istanbul in early 1845. These include reports of the governor of Baghdad to the Sultan and the original fatwa (verdict; legal statement) of various Muslim clerics declaring Bastami and the one who claims to be the Mahdi (the Bab) as heretics who are to be punished. Other documents dating from 1863 include Sultan Abdulaziz's decree re. the transfer the Baha'is in Baghdad after a short period in Istanbul, to Edirne or Bursa; the Babis' travel expenses from Baghdad to Istanbul and their expenditure in Istanbul; the wish of the Babis to be transferred to Edirne and the residence and pension of Mirza Husayn 'Ali [Baha'u'llah] in Edirne. The greater part of the state papers deal with the circumstances of Baha'u'llah's exile to 'Akka. Of particular interest is a file containing following items: official reports about the "Babis", i.e. the leadership claims of Mirza Husayn 'Ali and Mirza Yahya Subh-i Azal; min-

utes of the interrogation of Mishkin Qalam, Sayyah, and some other Baha'is in Istanbul; a letter of Baha'u'llah in Persian to the governor of Edirne complaining about Azal's activities; and most notably, there are numerous original Tablets of Baha'u'llah in His and His secretaries' handwritings; there is also a collection of writings of Subh-i Azal in one volume; all these writings were confiscated before the exile to 'Akka/Cyprus and comprise some 500 photocopied pages.

There seem to be no documents about the Baha'is and Azalis from after 1868 until the late 1890s or I have not been able to come across those. A number of documents from May-June 1896 are reports on the assassination of Nasiru'd-Din Shah. The Persian political agitator al-Afghani is accused of being a leader of the Babi society and an agitator and of having relations and secret correspondence with Freemasons, Armenian committees, and Young Turks. Reference is also made to the cooperation between the politically active and notorious Azalis Mirza Aqa Khan Kirmani, Shaykh Ahmad Ruhi and al-Afghani in the context of the assassination of Nasiru'd-Din Shah. There are some more documents relating to this, i.e. the expulsion of Afghani, Kirmani and Ruhi to Iran.

Among the documents I was able to find only two are from Sultan Abdulhamid II.'s reign and are about 'Abdu'l-Baha. The first, dated June 1905, says that 'Abbas Efendi must be prevented from propagating the Baha'i sect and that He be exiled to Fizan in the North African desert. The other report is re. the Babi sect that with the help of its American followers and under the leadership of a certain 'Abbas Efendi in 'Akka want to build a hospital on Mt Carmel in Haifa but this be absolutely prevented because 'Abbas Efendi is regarded as being an agitator and His sect involved in subversive activities. I could however not locate several reports on the Commissions of Investigation who were send in 1904/1907 to harass 'Abdu'l-Baha and are mentioned by Moojan Momen and based on Mr Sami Doktoroglu's finds.

Articles and Books

In his review of E. G. Browne's *Traveller's Narrative* (in "The Academy", March 12, 1929(?), no. 1036, p. 245-6) the Hungarian Orientalist Arminius Vambery notes: "Only one pamphlet seems to have escaped the attention of Mr. Browne, and that is Kemal Effendi's little book, written at Constantinople in 1858 in Turkish. Kemal Effendi, previously Turkish Ambassador in Tehran and afterwards tutor to the sons of Abdul Majid, compiled a short history of the Bab. I am unaware if it has ever been printed." This alleged book has not yet been located.

Some members of the reformist and secret "Young Ottoman Society" were exiled to places such as 'Akka and Cyprus and were in contact with Baha'is; they also met or communicated with Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha. One of them is the famous author and poet Namik Kemal (d. 1888); in some of his letters he mentions contacts with "Babis" in Cyprus, probably Azalis. Another Young Ottoman gives a very positive account of the "Babis" in 'Akka, particularly of 'Abdu'l-Baha (Bereketzade Ismail Hakki: *Yad-i Mazi* ("Past Recollections"), Istanbul: Tevsi-i Tibaat, 1915, pp. 105-120, <http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~bahai/trans/vol4/yadimazi.htm>). He says that Abbas Efendi "is an erudite and noble-minded eminent figure who is cognizant of the conditions of the age" and that despite of the rumours about the Babis, "both the good manners of the community and the children are indeed worth of appreciation."

An important and unbiased Ottoman-Turkish source is the book *Nasiru'd-Din Shah and the Babis* (<http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~bahai/notes/vol4/nazif.htm>) by Suleyman Nazif (d. 1927), supporter of the "Young Turk" reform movement. Here, Nazif places Babi-Bahai history in the context of Iranian and Ottoman history. He recounts the genesis, development and

fate of the Babi movement in Iran and the Ottoman Empire. He also dwells on the personality of 'Abdu'l-Baha, and conveys to the reader his three encounters with him in 1917 in Haifa. Abbas Efendi, "son and successor of the famous Baha'u'llah", who had withdrawn from Babism and established an independent religious school and, as stated by Himself, a sect, moved from 'Akka to Haifa after the Young Turk revolution in 1908. Because his words and statements were for the most part distorted, 'Abdu'l-Baha initially received visitors with suspicion. But then he was assured of Nazif's sincerity and talked about all the events since his childhood.

In connection with the exile of Mirza Yahya to Cyprus, Nazif notes that at that time the famous poet Ziya Pasha was governor of Cyprus. Here, as maintained by some Western historians, he had met Subh-i Azal and laid the foundations of the contacts between the Babis and the "Young Ottomans", yet there is nothing to support this. Nazif remarks that "The more the Babis retreated towards the West, the goals and fundamentals they pursued also changed. The religious movement in Iran gradually took a social form". He moreover relates that 'Abdu'l-Baha was acquainted with Ziya Pasha and had communicated with him and Namik Kemal, another reform-minded and important figure among Ottoman literati of the Tanzimat ("re-ordering") era: "When I met 'Abbas Efendi... he told me with complete sorrow that he had an extensive correspondence with Kemal Bey but that out of worry over the investigation and persecution in the time of Sultan Abdulhamid II, he had burnt those letters". Elsewhere Nazif states: "Abbas Efendi had told me clearly and emphatically that he was not a Babi", and: "Abbas Efendi withdrew from Babism and even was praying to God to guard him from it... It is also true that Subh-i Azal was surrounded by the company of the wicked and degenerated Babis. The power and grandeur was on Baha'u'llah's side, as it is only Baha'u'llah's still well established creed and religious order that is esteemed and influential in Europe and America".

A few months after the publication of the book "The Beirut Province" (*Beyrut Vilayeti*), in the first volume of which twelve pages deal with the authors' meetings with 'Abdu'l-Baha, Nazif met Him in Haifa; the Baha'i leader complained that his statements and ideas were misrepresented there or not properly understood. Nazif confirms that some statements in those pages are not congruent with the "manifest intelligence" of 'Abdu'l-Baha, and adds: "I do not know how real 'Abbas Efendi's sincerity towards me was. I have not witnessed anything that corresponded to his insincerity". Süleyman Nazif ends the story of his encounter with 'Abdu'l-Baha with the latter's words that "We have no belief that is contrary to true Islam. Our opinion is in accord with the spirit of Islam and not contrary".

A special concern of Nazif is his admiration of Tahirih's person, her beauty, and her virtues, expressed with magnificent words intended to eternalize her (see translation below). Interestingly, he describes her as the "youthful Turkish woman from Qazvin".

Although Süleyman Nazif's work has some factual errors, it can be regarded as an important primary source with regard to first-hand information that was not accessible before to the Western reader. Like other Ottoman sources from the 1910's and 1920's on the Babi and Baha'i religions, Nazif's book is also highly positive and unbiased, something that modern Turkish academic literature fails to achieve.

During the 1910s and 1920s a many articles on the Faith had been published in newspapers and journals. Most of them dwell on the personality and activities of 'Abdu'l-Baha, His be-

liefs and virtues, His journeys to the West and His philosophy. Some authors also quote lengthily from His talks in Europe and deeply appreciate His ideas.

Foremost among those articles is a series of articles by the Baha'i Emin Ali, published around 1921/1922. He gives a positive description of Babi-Baha'i history and teachings; the author was identified with the Baha'i Faith and the group of suspected Baha'is who were put on trial in 1928 in Istanbul and Izmir (see below). Based on these articles, Abdullah Djewdet (d. 1932), one of the founding members and chief ideologists of the Young Turk "Committee of Union and Progress", published an article in March 1922 titled "The Sect of Baha'u'llah, a World Religion", in his own journal *Idjtihad*. He was convicted of blasphemy and attacking Islam, and praising the Bahai Faith as a world-embracing movement of peace and brotherhood. On this episode a historian notes: "The trial of Djewdet for heresy which was begun by an *irāde* (edict) of the last sultan (perhaps of March 1922) and continued under the (Turkish) republic deserves to be classed among the world's famous trials. In the court of first instance in April 1922, Djewdet was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for blasphemy but discharged after 4½ years argument in the final verdict of Dec. 30, 1926 under the new Turkish code introduced on July 1, 1926. The trial of Djewdet is given in the new Turkish code as one of the reasons for abolishing the crime of blasphemy..." Thanks to Djewdet's trial the Faith was extensively discussed in a considerable number of newspaper articles in the late Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic.

The first persecution of Turkish Baha'is took place in October-December 1928. Shoghi Effendi talks about the nature and outcome of investigations and trials of Turkish Baha'is in Izmir (Smyrna) and Istanbul in October and December 1928 in two letters, dated December 6, 1928 and February 12, 1929, (*Baha'i Administration* (US ed. 1974); pp. 151-152, 165-69; see also Moojan Momen, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions: Some Contemporary Western Accounts, 1844-1944*, section "Persecutions in Turkey"). Newspapers reported extensively about this, articles appeared mostly in the front pages.

I hope that this report is helpful. I would like to thank Mr Graham Hassall for inviting me to this conference. Although I have not been able to participate, I am grateful that my paper was included in the programme and read by Mrs. Anita Graves. My thanks also to her.

Paul Gerard Phoenix

The Problem

While quite a large quantity of library materials have accumulated over the years at the Australian National Bahá'í Centre, these have not as yet been organised into a library as such. The need for a properly organised Australian National Bahá'í Library has become evident.

Unfortunately the writer is not in a position to volunteer full-time on site professional services to rectify this situation – nor are the resources available to employ a suitable person to manage a library, however he has been able to offer a professional assessment of the current position.

The library materials at the National Centre need to be organised so that:

1. They are consistently and logically arranged for browsing.
2. They are properly indexed (“catalogued”) – so that items can be located by Author, Title, and Subject. This needs to be done properly – recognising that individual authors, titles and subjects can have different names or designations, and individual library items (books, videos, photographs etc. can have multiple authors, titles, and subjects).
3. The collection can to be properly housed, cared for, and maintained. Access to the collection needs to be facilitated in a controlled manner – including a properly documented loans system.

As a “remote” librarian offering advice to the National Office the writer has been concerned with the first two aspects.

Before we even start!

Before precious resources – either monetary or other – are allocated to the library it was necessary to select or devise a library system which, if properly applied, will ensure these two aims.

Our initial consideration was that if at all feasible we ought to standardise to a large extent with other Bahá'í libraries around the world, in particular with the World Centre Library in Haifa. After a good deal of correspondence we managed to obtain a reasonable picture of how the system at the World Centre Library functioned – however we also met with a number of surprises.

1. We were informed that at this stage the World Centre Library has not the resources to act as a leader for Bahá'í libraries around the world, and in fact does not seem to see that as its role anyway. In particular, the World Centre Library does not see its use of the Library of Congress classification as necessarily a standard for world-wide use, but mainly, at least, as a solution to the problem of classifying Bahá'í materials in one particular library.

2. On close examination of the World Centre Library classification – it became evident that whatever its other qualities might be, it is changed from the Library of Congress standard to the extent that it is essentially a new, specialist schedule. Not that there is anything necessarily wrong in this in itself, in fact it is difficult to see what else could have been done, given the initial decision to employ LC – but it does seem to counteract the main theoretical benefit of using the Library of Congress scheme – the fact that it is a world-wide *standard*.

We decided therefore, for our present purposes, to look at the World Centre classification purely on its own merits: rather than as a world standard, to be taken as read. In this context several difficulties arose.

While a Bahá'í library needs above all a good classification for purely Bahá'í materials, it also needs a good, usable scheme for materials on other religions, and for general subjects. The Library of Congress scheme has evolved as a solution to the problems faced by its parent library, some of which are not shared by most other libraries. Its advantages (for, for instance, the large university libraries which constitute the largest community of “outside” users of the scheme) depend very much on:

(1) the bulk, at least, of new acquisitions being basically a subset of those of the Library of Congress itself, so that comparatively little original cataloguing needs to be done, and:

(2) the scheme being used exactly as it is in the Library of Congress. (Since any non-standard schedules and practices will involve extra “original” work, at least in classification, and thus negate the main advantage of using LC in the first place).

Now a typical Bahá'í library is:

(1) very likely to acquire a good deal of material that will not form part of the acquisition list of the Library of Congress. Hence, even if full advantage is taken of available shared cataloguing from LC (and, possibly, the British and Australian National libraries) – a good deal of original cataloguing will need to be done. Hopefully one day shared cataloguing of most Bahá'í works will be available, if not from the Library of Congress, then from a central Bahá'í library (perhaps, but by no means necessarily, the World Centre Library). At the moment this looks like being a long way off.

(2) unable to adequately classify for arrangement or retrieval using any standard scheme. LC is very possibly the best of a bad lot in this regard, but the very extensive extensions made for the World Centre Library illustrate how necessary specialist extensions to *any* existing scheme would be before it could be applied to a Bahá'í library. The effect of this is that even where shared cataloguing of Bahá'í works IS available – classification numbers from that shared cataloguing will, in most cases at least, need to be re-done.

In the circumstances we felt that, even if the selection of the Library of Congress scheme for the World Centre Library was, at the time and place the decision was made, the best for that library – it would be a mistake to burden the Australian Bahá'í libraries with the very real drawbacks to the use of the Library of Congress Classification, without any chance of benefiting from the advantages available to the large academic libraries in which it is principally found.

The only other library classification that is well developed, frequently updated, and used in shared cataloguing all over the world, is the Dewey Decimal Scheme. For the Bahá'í works that will form the bulk of our acquisitions this scheme is risibly

inadequate. Older editions of the Dewey Scheme, recognising that this would be the case for many of the world's religions, allowed for the optional insertion of a schedule for what they called a "home religion". This was to come before the numbers for religion as a whole. This option has not been widely used, for two main reasons:

(1) It involves the construction of what amounts to a new classification for the "home religion". While the existing Dewey schedules may supply many clues for this, it remains a pretty major undertaking!

(2) The "solution" is directed at what is, especially from a Bahá'í point of view, only half the problem. One's own religion may be properly covered by the time one is finished, but one is stuck with the (mostly very poor) standard schedules for all religions but one's own!

In fact it is almost a relief to note that in the current edition of Dewey this is no longer a "standard", allowed option.

In spite of a full 10% of Dewey's original number base having been reserved for "religion", the 200-299 section is undoubtedly the least effectively organised of the whole scheme. In fact its inadequacies for a Bahá'í library do not stop with the Faith itself. The schedule for Christianity is reasonably well developed (although very old fashioned) – and there are workable, if rather sketchy, schedules for Judaism and Islam – but no other religion has anything approaching an adequately developed schedule. In addition to these inadequacies, unreal distinctions are made between very closely related subjects in "religion in general", "philosophy of religion", and "comparative religion" – which make the proper organisation of library materials on any of these subjects unnecessarily difficult. It is almost as if the publishers of the Dewey scheme had many years ago put "religion" into the "too hard basket", and more or less left it there ever since.

After a good deal of soul-searching, we came to the conclusion that the use of Mr. Collins' "Dewey" insert at B200 was not what we wanted, if only because of the faults in the regular Dewey 200s, which we would have had to go on using for all religions other than the Faith.

At this stage we were close to the desperate expedient of proposing an entirely new classification, specially designed for Bahá'í libraries. The writer actually began work on just such a scheme – starting with the schedules for the Faith itself. Although the use of Mr. Collins' LC and Dewey extensions had already been rejected they were shamelessly plundered for general, and in some cases quite specific, ideas. The basic framework for the new schedule I stole from some work I had done many years before for a specialist library system for recorded sound called MUSICL. A copy of the standard Dewey 200s in paperback was also purchased. During this phase I remained very concerned with what we would do with works on other religions, and works on other (secular) subjects.

A colleague – observing the mess I was getting myself into, advised me to look again, very hard, at the idea of using Mr. Collins' Dewey insert. For the reasons mentioned above, I still felt that this just would not do – but it did set me to looking again at Dewey itself. The Dewey scheme is of course more than adequate for all our non-

religious subjects. For religions other than the Faith it is, on the whole, rather poor, although it could serve. For the Faith it is just not there! At this stage the idea of *rewriting the Dewey 200s* arose. The Dewey people themselves periodically redo whole sections of the scheme, so this is something that could be presented in the context of the normal development of the Dewey Scheme.

What is a “Phoenix Schedule”?

Any library classification has two fundamentally opposed requirements. The first is that it must remain eternally the same: because changes in the scheme will cause dismay, confusion, and a great deal of hard labour in the libraries in which it is employed. The other requirement is for frequent, continuous, and sometimes radical revision, to keep up with the constantly changing world of knowledge; and to correct mistakes, made either when the classification was first put together, or later, when it was revised.

One of the features of the DDC that has been an important factor in its success is that its publishers have managed to strike at least a measure of balance between these contradictory requirements. In fact our classification is now in its 21st edition, which is of course many times larger than the original (42 page) proposal. Over the years, the changes necessary to keep the scheme fairly current have been made in two basic ways.

The first method has been to expand existing schedules to accommodate new subjects, essentially by sub-dividing existing headings. The simple “decimal” notation used by DDC is admirably adapted to this procedure, up to a point. Eventually new numbers become very long and cumbersome indeed. This is most noticeable in the “500s” and “600s” (science and technology) where a great many totally new subjects have arisen since 1876.

The other method has been to simply scrap a whole section of the classification that is palpably out of date and replace it with something entirely new. The current DDC schedule for Music (the 780s) is a fairly recent example – Law (the 340s), Mathematics (the 510s), and, most strikingly, Computer Science (the original schedule at 001.64 having been replaced by a new one at 004, 005 and 006) are among other sections which have been redone in this way in living memory.

This kind of thing was once called a “Phoenix Schedule”, after the legendary bird born anew out of the flames: the term is so apt it is worthy of revival.

What are the Dewey 200s?

The original Dewey scheme divided all knowledge into nine major classes (plus a tenth class for miscellaneous subjects that did not fit easily anywhere else). Each major class received a block of one hundred numbers.

The block of numbers between 200 and 299 were reserved for “Religion”. In comparison with the 500s (“science”) and 600s (“technology”) the Dewey 200s have NOT grown spectacularly, or changed fundamentally over the years; in fact, they remain relatively close to Dewey’s original outline.

In 1876, Melvil Dewey was (quite properly) concerned with the needs of the particular library for which he was responsible, for other libraries in the United States, and, perhaps, other English speaking countries. In the world as he knew it, or at least in the world in which he envisioned his classification being used, “religion” really meant “Christianity”. This approach to the subject is reflected in the schedule to this day.

To clarify just what we are talking about, this is how the official “Second Summary” of the Dewey 200s goes:

200	Religion
210	Philosophy and theory of religion
220	(Christian) Bible
230	Christian theology
240	Christian moral and devotional theology
250	Christian orders and local church
260	(Christian) Social and ecclesiastical theology
270	History of Christianity and Christian church
280	Christian denominations and sects
290	Comparative religion and other religions

Originally, numbers under 200 and 210 also referred more or less exclusively to Christianity. The broadening of scope of this part of the schedule has left the 220s (Bible) hanging out before the numbers used for “Christianity in general” (the 230s), and, rather more seriously, created a rather unreal, or at best difficult and unhelpful, distinction between “comparative religion” and “religion in general”. The study of Buddhism (or the Faith, of course) is considered to be part of “comparative religion”, whereas the dispassionate study of Christianity is not. The unsuitability of this schedule, for a Bahá’í library especially, obviously lies far deeper than its notorious subordination of the Faith to Islam, or its lack of any specifically Bahá’í topics.

Nor is this the whole problem. Because of the piecemeal way in which the schedules for the Dewey 200s have evolved, there is little consistency in the way in which the same topics are arranged under each religion. First we have Christianity: sprawling over 70% of the available number base, in an arrangement firmly based on the needs of the library of a nineteenth century theological college. Then there are the schedules for Christianity’s close relatives, Judaism and Islam. These are later (in fact apparently last revised for Dewey 21) but although perhaps in some ways better arranged, they are *different* from the Christian arrangement, and from each other. Finally, there are all the real “others”: originally lacking any kind of subdivision at all. These have been given a more or less standard arrangement, fairly sensible, but unfortunately rather inflexible, far from comprehensive, and, once again, *different*.

To illustrate the effect of this inconsistency, here is an entry from the alphabetical index to standard DDC:

Prayers (Private devotions)	291.433
Buddhism	294.344 33
Christianity	242
Hinduism	294.543 3
Islam	297.382 4
Sufi	297.438 24
Judaism	296.45

Incidentally, reference to the schedules reveals that some of these index entries do not refer *specifically* to private prayer at all, but to more general headings, such as “personal devotions”. Ignoring this for the moment; for comparative religion, and some particular religions, our topic seems to be covered by “-433”; but for Islam, it is evidently “-3824”, for Judaism “-45”. There is no way for the library user to work out

where to find works on private prayer in a particular religion; and in fact even for the cataloguer it is far fiddlier than it need be.

To summarise the position; in “fixing” the Dewey 200s, we face two problems:

- The basic outline of the scheme at this point is grossly biased towards one religion. This would not suit a Bahá’í library, even if the religion concerned were the Faith (which, of course, it is not).
- The subdivision of the different religions is inconsistent, and inconsistently specific. This makes the scheme unnecessarily hard to follow for both cataloguer and user, and (from the Bahá’í point of view, especially) fails to reflect the principle of the oneness of religion.

How can we fix the outline?

The idea of a Phoenix schedule is of course “Burn it, and let a new one be born”. This new outline follows the theories of the great Indian mathematician and librarian Ranganathan – in that it classifies by one thing at once – in this case “religious system”. Something like this:

200	Comparative religion, works concerned with several religions
210	Cults, quasi, historical religions, tribal, folk and localised religions
220	Hinduism
232	Jainism
238	Sikhism
240	Buddhism
253	Confucianism
254	Taoism
256	Shinto
258	Zoroastrianism
260	Judaism
270	Christianity
280	Islam
290	Bahá’í Faith

Rather than put the Faith first, and add other religions as an afterthought, a detached unbiased point of view has been taken – putting the Faith *last*, as the youngest of the world’s living religions.

In fact our allocation of numbers is still not as even-handed as we would have wished. Since there are only nine digits in our numbering system, and more than nine religions; we have had to make decisions about which religions are to be defined by a single digit, which by two, and which by three or more (the “miscellaneous” religions grouped under 210). To have produced an absolutely unbiased outline we would have needed a number base long enough to avoid the necessity of making this kind of distinction.

In spite of this limitation, it is suggested that on the whole our first object is met. No one religion (even our own!) takes up more than 10% of the total available base, and there is “room” for a fully detailed classification of any existing religion, as well as several “spare” numbers, where new religions could be inserted.

In fact the overall aim is a schedule that would be superior to the standard DDC 21, not just for a Bahá'í library, but for any library, even a professedly Christian one.

What about the division of each religion?

Many topics mean something rather different in the context of the various religions; but a clear implication of the principle of the oneness of religion is that *the outline, at least, of a classification of one religion can be applied to any other.*

In fact some (non-Bahá'í) people I have shown this scheme to – including some librarians(!) have been most reluctant to accept that that this is not already the case, so inconsistent is the current arrangement with the classification as a whole. It is hard to escape the conclusion that Melvil Dewey himself would have wanted it done this way, at the beginning of the 21st century.

The following is an equivalent alphabetical index entry to the standard Dewey one considered above (although in our actual index it is no longer necessary to give so many examples). The first number, in square brackets, is not a complete Dewey number (and is never used on its own) but may be added to the base number for any religion.

Prayer	[-833]
(for example)	
Buddhism	248.33
Christianity	278.33
Hinduism	228.33
Islam	288.33
Judaism	268.33
Sufism	288.588 33

Not all topics apply in the same way to all religions – for instance, a religion might conceivably encourage prayer very strongly, forbid it absolutely, simply ignore it, or take any of a number of intermediate positions. Even so, in this schedule *any subject common to more than one religion has, so far as it is at all possible, the same number*, regardless of the religion concerned; and is thus arranged on the shelf in the same relation to other topics, under the overall heading for the religion concerned.

Most religions, however, have one or two idiosyncrasies that call for some flexibility. Consider the following:

Founders of religions	
Biography	[-31]
(for example)	
The Báb	293.1 (!?)
Confucius	253.31
Jesus	273.1
Muhammad	283.1

While most religions have one clear founder, others do not. The Bahá'í Faith, for instance, has “twin founders”, both of whom have a similar status in Bahá'í theology. The first of these, The Báb, has been given the [-31] number for chronological reasons;

Bahá'u'lláh is 293.2 instead. Anomalies like this have been kept to a minimum; but our helpful common outline must not become a distorting straitjacket!

Many other topics, such as specific holy days, scriptural books, or idiosyncratic doctrines, are peculiar to a single religion: but almost all can still be (and are) grouped under common headings. For instance:

Scripture	[-4]
(for example)	
Bahá'í scripture	294
Buddhist Scripture	244
Christian scripture, Bible	274
Hindu scripture	224
Jain scripture	232.4
Mormon scripture	272.798 4
Muslim scripture	284
Taoist scripture	254.4

So far, so good. “Scripture”, like “Prayer”, is a common heading applying to virtually every conceivable religious system. But what about *particular* Holy Books? At this point, of course, it is necessary to move into an area where numbers are no longer necessarily “common” – for instance the Bhagavad Gita is classed at 224.65, St. Luke’s Gospel at 274.4726, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas at 294.54.K6 These numbers are “exclusive” to Hinduism, Christianity, and the Bahá’í Faith respectively. None the less, the specific works of scripture of each religion are arranged under the same common [-4] overall heading, and therefore fall into the same relative position to other subjects. The same is true for all other “exclusive” topics: they are arranged in relation to the common overall outline in the same way as if they applied to all religions, instead of only one.

Where did all the subjects in this schedule come from?

I remember the introduction to a school dictionary that I read many years ago remarking that a lexicographer (a dictionary maker) stood either on the shoulders of his predecessors, or not at all. This applies just as universally to the construction of a classification scheme. While the *arrangement* of the subjects in this schedule is largely mine, the subjects themselves are largely lifted from other sources.

For the Bahá’í section we obviously owe a strong debt to Mr. Collins. For other sections, previous work (especially the standard Dewey 21 schedules) has had similar consideration. The aim has been, in general terms at least:

- To include subjects covered in previous work.
- To change the order and grouping of such subjects only where the outline and philosophy of this schedule demand such change.

Why so much emphasis on non-Bahá'í religions?

In short – the standard, “Christian-biased” Dewey schedule gives one a horrible example of how NOT to set up a schedule on religion. The Bahá'í attitude to other religions should always be based on the principle of the oneness of religions, and of the importance of the elimination of religious prejudice.

This is NOT to imply that a Bahá'í library will, or should, necessarily have major collections of works on other religions. The Dewey Decimal Classification is used in many very different libraries, with very different agenda. It is, or should be, a universal scheme, suitable for almost everyone. There will therefore be many pages of largely redundant schedules for every library – but they won't be the same pages, of course!

In fact, this schedule has been drawn up not only to provide a schedule for Bahá'í libraries – but also to provide a universal, up-to-date “religion” schedule for *any* library using DDC. The extensive Bahá'í schedule is to a degree the main point of the exercise for our purposes, however the schedule for Christianity is also complete, and in most respects is at least as detailed and specific as the current DDC standard. The “other” religions are already much better covered than in DDC 21, even where there is still obvious room for improvement.

The logical overall arrangement, with its broadly parallel division of different religions, is designed to make the schedule easy to follow for both the cataloguer and the user of *any* library – regardless of where they are “coming from” in regard to religious faith.

In fact I have been working on the assumption that this schedule (or something very like it) will eventually become the Dewey standard for the “200s”. At least I have felt constrained to produce something that *could* be universally applied, rather than a narrow little classification “just for us”.

Has something been published about every subject in this schedule?

Some classification schemes (notably LC) lay great stress on “literary warrant”. What this boils down to is that every subject in the schedule should have the “warrant” of at least one published work. While the Dewey scheme is also primarily concerned with the body of existing literature, drawing up tables of subjects often implies many others that *might* well be covered, if not in the past, then at some time in the future. The idea of literary warrant is that it sets a sensible limit to the size of a scheme of classification by tying it firmly to the real world. Funnily enough – the Library of Congress scheme (based rigidly on literary warrant) is many times *larger* than Dewey (which is not), and needs *more* updating to cover new subjects rather than less.

Since the bulk of the subjects enumerated in this schedule have been lifted from elsewhere – mostly from classifications in actual daily use in real working libraries - the great bulk of subjects actually listed or “enumerated” ARE “warranted”; although some lists have been completed, regardless of whether every item on the list has been (as yet) the subject of an actual work, or necessarily ever will be. The basic idea is that it is much better to have a few “never used” subjects in the schedule than to have a major crisis whenever a new subject arises.

Many subjects that can be *built* using this schedule are in fact covered by literary warrant many times, others are logical absurdities, while others again are perfectly feasible subjects, whether they have actually been (or ever will be) treated or not.

Is the schedule “finished”?

Ideally, all religions would be fully and carefully classified, to more or less the same degree of detail. This is very patently not the case, at least in this edition. Even though most of the detail present in the standard Dewey 21 has been incorporated (and often extended) there is evidently a good deal of work that could be done, especially on the religions that are not well treated in standard DDC.

Perhaps no individual could have the background to single-handedly “complete” this schedule, even if, for our own purposes, its completion were strictly necessary. We have no desire to replicate the kind of risible error to be found in some dictionaries and encyclopedias of religion, where, all too often, too much has been attempted by one person; or at least by too few people. There is a big difference between describing a religion and classifying books etc. about that religion, (and of course the latter task is much less demanding) but all the same, one must face one’s limitations! None the less, this schedule does need much fuller amplification at several points – and at this stage, at least, it also almost certainly includes inappropriate headings and other anomalies of which we are, in our ignorance, unaware.

In the meantime, the task of classifying a particular item and “finding a place” for a subject not yet properly covered in the schedule, either in the specifically enumerated lists of headings for the religion concerned, or in the common 200-209 table, should be tackled by reference to the schedules for the religions that have been more fully classified. Commonsense comparison – in effect building up an “ad hoc” or “literary-warrant” schedule for the religion concerned – is likely in practice to produce the “correct” number in most cases.

Why is the schedule set out like that?

The setting out of this schedule follows that of the standard Dewey schedules fairly closely. This is not because of a desire to plagiarise, nor because the standard DDC setting out could not be bettered; but simply because it is assumed that a library using this schedule will be doing so in conjunction with either the full DDC edition 21, or at least the abridged version. Obviously, if you’re hopping from one book to the other it helps if they have a similar layout. There are a few minor differences but these have generally been kept to a minimum.

A feature of the standard Dewey schedules that has been carefully noted, and in general imitated, is the considerable degree of “redundancy” present in the index and notes. Because a particular question is fully answered in one note does not necessarily preclude touching on it in several other places as well. Similarly in the relative index, most “see” and “see also” references are rendered unnecessary by including fully detailed entries under several different headings. These features are designed to increase the usability of the Dewey volumes, as opposed to their brevity and academic purity. If anything, this Phoenix schedule is just a little *less* “redundant” than the

standard one, but preserves (we hope) the advantages of standard Dewey practice in this regard.

Can we use this schedule without adopting the whole of Dewey?

To classify (say) a small Bahá'í library consisting entirely of works on the Faith – it is perfectly feasible to take a section of the schedule (in this case the “290s”) and apply it to the collection without reference to either the rest of the schedule, or Dewey as a whole. In this case it would probably make sense to drop the “29” at the beginning of each number: so that “299.83” would become “983”, and “295.1576” would be “515.76”. Another alternative “cut-down” might be if it were to be applied to an exclusively religious library, but one in which more than one religion was to be represented, in which case the initial “2” could be left off, with “299.83” becoming “998.3” and “295.1576” becoming “951.576”.

In general, however, especially for all but the very tiniest of collections, the advantages of investing in (and using) a copy of either the full Dewey Schedules, or at least the abridged edition, in conjunction with this schedule cannot be too strongly emphasised. These advantages include the flexibility of a complete classification, and thus of having somewhere to put those “non-religious” works that even a purely religious library will be most likely to acquire, and the simplicity of following the usage of a standard scheme.

How do Dewey numbers work, anyway?

One of Melvil Dewey's most useful inventions was the way his class numbers reflect, or “express” the relationship between the various subjects. Librarians are probably pretty familiar with the idea of “expressiveness” – if they will bear with us for a moment let's see how this works.

To take an example, the “Year of Patience”, an aspect of the Bahá'í Law on divorce, has a class number (296.55383) where each decimal place indicates a new division of the one before; and each new heading comprises a subset of the one above, as follows:

200	Religion
290	Bahá'í Faith
296	Bahá'í Law
296.5	Bahá'í social law
296.55	Bahá'í family law
296.553	Bahá'í marriage law
296.553 8	Bahá'í divorce law
296.553 83	Year of Patience

This “expressiveness”, has all kinds of advantages; in fact it is one of the reasons why the Dewey Decimal Classification has been so popular for so long. It does however have some drawbacks, so that Dewey himself, not to mention subsequent editors of his scheme, compromised this strict step-by-step progression in many places. So do we (albeit rather *less* frequently than the standard Dewey 21 Schedule); as can be seen in

this summary of the schedule for Jewish scripture (note that the schedule for the scripture of other religions, including the Faith, follows a very similar pattern):

200	Religion
260	Judaism
264	Jewish scripture
264.1	Commentaries, studies etc. (Collections)
264.2	General collections
264.3	Special collections (Specific texts)
264.4	Tanakh (Jewish Bible)
264.5	Talmud
264.6	Legal writings
264.7	Cabala & other ancient sources
264.8	Aggadah (Nonlegal literature)

Here there are in fact three divisions of our general heading “scripture”: works *about* Jewish scripture, collections of that scripture, and specific texts. Instead of a straight step-by-step progression, however, two steps are not given their own numbers. We would not be using these headings as subjects in their own right anyway, and leaving them out uses the available number base much more efficiently. Numbers for specific parts of the Jewish Bible or the Talmud (for instance) are shorter than they would be if we had followed each step with its own number. On the other hand the logical overall order, the main object of our numbering system, remains.

There are many other places in this schedule, and, incidentally, in standard DDC as a whole, where a step by step progression down an orderly hierarchy is not followed, or if it is, is not reflected in the numbering. Rules about the construction of Dewey class numbers have always been secondary to the primary aim of creating a good “browsing order” on the shelves by bringing together related subjects.

While on the subject of class numbers, let’s return to the idea of using this schedule in isolation. If Dewey as a whole is not to be used, a completely different set of numbers could be applied, possibly abandoning Dewey-style expressiveness altogether. It should be pointed out that there is nothing particularly magical about class numbers as such: the real essence of this (or any) scheme of classification lies in the choice and arrangement of the *subject headings*, which is, as we have seen, essentially independent of the *numbering* system. This is not the place to go into the possibilities of a renumbering of the schedule; but if well done, it could have real advantages (shorter, neater, and more mnemonic shelf marks for instance) for a library, especially a very small one, with either an exclusively religious provenance; or a more or less exclusive concern with a particular religion.

It might also be possible to adapt all or part of the schedule to fit into the framework of another scheme; without, of course, changing the subjects themselves or doing violence to the order in which they are arranged. Again, this would not be a completely straightforward task, and should not really be attempted by anyone but a professional librarian with a very close knowledge of both Dewey, and the scheme concerned.

The use of this schedule in the intended manner (as a “plug in” for the standard Dewey Scheme) is, none the less, once more strongly recommended, for all kinds of reason!

I can't find the place for magazines and journals!

There are many different ways a library could be arranged. The Dewey Decimal scheme assumes that the arrangement is to be by *subject*, with the subjects systematically rather than alphabetically arranged. Here, as in many Dewey libraries, this is taken to its logical conclusion, and *medium* is ignored so far as the classification is concerned. We classify a serial publication, such as a magazine, journal, newsletter etc., just as if it were a book (or a video, a sound recording, a computer file, or anything else we might keep in a library).

It may not be desirable, or even physically possible, for all different media to sit physically in the one sequence; but it is very helpful to at least have them all arranged the same way. Some libraries find it convenient to prefix the number on a particular library item (say, with a letter) to indicate that it is to be found (and of course put away again) in a different place to other materials. “S” is often used in this way to identify a serial publication, shelved in the “Magazines and Journals” section of a library. This is quite consistent with an arrangement by subject identical with that used in the “monograph” (i.e. book) section.

Should this classification become a world-wide standard?

Like the World Centre classification, the Dewey 200s Phoenix has been developed primarily as the solution to the problem of classification in a single Bahá'í library. There are very real long term advantages to a world-wide standard in the classification of Bahá'í library materials, but ideally this would be as a result of the publishers of the standard, internationally used schemes recognising the Faith as a world religion, and allowing for a usable classification in the context of the same schedule used in general and “non-Bahá'í” libraries.

In a perfect world (as I have already hinted) – this Phoenix schedule would itself become the world standard, not just for the Faith, but for religion in general. In a sense this classification “jumps the gun” – assuming this “hoped for” future state of affairs in relation to the Dewey scheme.

On the other hand, were the Dewey people themselves to substantially revamp the 200s (even, perhaps, if this was less favourable to the Faith than our own Phoenix) then *this* would be the ideal application of the Dewey scheme to Bahá'í libraries in the context of a world-wide standard, simply because it would be the *standard*.

It is the author's considered opinion that it is much more important that it should become possible for Bahá'í libraries to use standard classification schemes in a standard way, than for all Bahá'í libraries all over the world to use the same classification.

In a world where the faith were properly recognised, it would not be necessary for special classifications for the faith to be considered.

Anita Jones - survey

Library
& archives
(that didn't
resp to
first survey)

Still, my heart beats for the archives -Gerd Krindell, Denmark

There is properly no history; there is only biography.—Ralph Waldo Emerson
[Quoted by David S. Ruhe in his Introduction to *Robe of Light*]

Lois Walker's Assessment

From: Lois E. Walker [lois@nvti.com] (work) 850-283-6264 (home) 850-647-9614

I feel strongly that it is important to have presentations by professional archivists, and to distinguish between the very important work of librarians and archivists.

I attended one session at Landegg while I was living in Germany (1994-1998). What a lovely setting, very conducive to teaching and learning. You're welcome to use any of my reports that would be helpful, including my lecture notes. I wonder if countries will send the same representatives that they sent to Germany. Will someone be coming from the World Center archives? We were disappointed that they were not able to send a representative to the Langenhain workshop due to funding. Is Roger Dahl planning to attend?

I sent Guenther Maltz a batch of materials from our workshop, including my notes on the status of archives in the countries that sent representatives. I hope that he forwarded those materials on to you. It was, in fact, a very good workshop with a great group of attendees--serious-minded and anxious to learn and make substantive contributions. I hope that the Landegg conference will stimulate them to continue pursuing their work.

From my perspective, the folks in **France and Italy** are in the most pressing need of archival assistance.

France: The collection in Paris is overflowing all available space and they have some priceless papers and artifacts (including the Dreyfus-Barney Collection and artifacts from Abdu'l-Baha's visit). They have appointed a librarian to attend to their impressive library, but she has her hands full and I suspect will not have much surplus time to devote to the archives. The NSA Secretary, Leila Saberán, hoped to be able to devote time to the papers once she retires. I submitted a letter and report to the French NSA with recommendations, but I am not aware of the results of their consultation. Hopefully progress has been made.

Italy: I have not seen Italy's collection, but from the description of their attendee it sounds like they have a substantive collection and quite a backlog of archival work to attack.

Turkey: I also suspect that Turkey is in need of much help. In contrast, the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland are in relatively good shape.

BWC

Ailsa Hedley [mailto:ahedley@bwc.org]

Representatives present: Ailsa Hedley, Parvine Foroughi (Library), Michael Bernhard (Library), Louise Mould (Library)

David Piff, formerly Archivist at the BWC, is working in San Francisco for the National Archives and Records Administration, in one of the Federal records centres. He and Shahla are well. David will definitely not be able to come. He and Shahla left the BWC last summer.

Archives Education on the Internet: If the idea of taking a course is overwhelming and too costly, there is quite a bit a person can learn from reading sources on the Internet. There might even be some online courses.

I know there is one, for example, in records management offered by the University of Toronto that I would take if I were a non-professional and had to deal with records management for a national office:

<http://ce.fis.utoronto.ca/courses/rmintro.asp>

But there are also other sites that just contain lots of information:

Archives Association of British Columbia's Manual for Small Archives.

<http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/msa/>

The documents prepared by Lois Walker for the workshop you took last year are valuable and we have sometimes recommended NSAs to make use of that website:

European Bahá'í Archives Workshop

<http://nvti.com/archives/>

A site about archival education in general:

<http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/index.asp>

Introduction

European countries opened to the Faith during the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh (1853-1892): Cyprus, Turkey (Ottoman Empire)

European countries opened to the Faith during the Ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1892-1921): Austria, England, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Scotland, Switzerland

44 countries were considered for the purposes of the informal survey taken by Anita Graves. Information was received from 35 of these countries or administrative areas within those countries. It should be noted that the list of countries compiled was based on the membership of the European Union, as well as the recognition of certain National Spiritual Assemblies by the Universal House of Justice.

Albania

Payam Payman [mailto:payam@bahai.tirana.al]

- ❖ Do you have an established archives? I would say as best as we could.
- ❖ Approximate earliest dates of materials in your archives. Some materials from 1991 and then regular from 1992 when the NSA was elected. We also have found some copies of early publications from the 1930's.
- ❖ Approximate size of archives (linear feet, cubic feet, number of boxes, shelves, bookcases, etc.) We have 4 (four) bookcases of 1 x 2 meters with folders, pictures, some early books, some tapes, the Bahá'í Bulletin, some videos newspapers and of course separately 15 copies of all published books in Albania
- ❖ The location of your archives (rooms, attics & basements, all in one place, scattered, etc.) First floor on the National Assembly in closed bookcases, and folders
- ❖ Is your archives organized? In a state of chaos? Both? I think it is well organized, but a professional person for sure could improve it.
- ❖ Do you have private collections in your country that have not been donated? There are some historical documents in Kosovo but we have not been able to have these books even if we tried to buy them. Some copies of these books are also at the National Albanian Library
- ❖ Within your archives, are there personal collections of early believers in your country? No
- ❖ Do you have an official archivist? What is the name of your archivist? Email address, or mail address, or both, please! No Sorry to inform you that we do not have any person specially involved with archives. The National Secretariat follows what is done directly.
- ❖ Is your archivist formally trained? Untrained? No one is trained
- ❖ Does the archives have full time attention? Part time? Paid? Volunteer? National secretariat as a Volunteer
- ❖ Did anyone from your community attend the First European Bahá'í Archives Workshop at Langenhain with Lois Walker in 1991? If so, did they try to apply what they learned to your archives? No
- ❖ Does your National Assembly or Regional Assembly take an interest in the archives; do they provide support for you in terms of space for the archives, encouragement, and financial assistance? Not really, but they appreciate what is kept for the archives
- ❖ Do you have researchers asking to see your archives? No

Andorra

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh William Danjon conquered the country, and there are pioneer families there now, along with William. However, there was no email address for them. There is most probably a small archives and the personal papers of William Danjon who lives now in Andorra.

Austria

Shervan Mottahedin [mottahedin@yahoo.com]

- I must say that there is nothing of outstanding historical value in the Austrian archives.
- In the early part of Austria's Baha'i history, it shared the same national spiritual assembly as Germany, and for example the letters of Shoghi Effendi addressed to the NSA of Germany and Austria are stored in the German national archives
- Moreover, I understand that some other items of archival significance are not actually in the archives, but elsewhere in the National Center or owned privately.
- At the moment, the Archives in Austria are at a semi-professional state. If they were to become professional, we would be lacking the time and money resources as well as further training.
- Human resources is the critical issue as the NSA would probably provide further financial support if asked.
- We do have researchers using the archives occasionally
- My wife (Afsaneh Nour) and I are the archivists, and do so on a voluntary basis
- We do not have specialized training (however, I did attend the Archive Conference in Langenhain conducted by Ms. Lois Walker in June 2001).
- One friend will soon support us in a limited capacity
- The Archives are located at the National Center in Vienna.

- We have a room at our disposal where the archive material is preserved.
- Our library consists of the following:
 - A large collection of Bahá'í books (approximately 2000), both old and new
 - Bahá'í newsletters and journals from around the world
- Our Archives consist of the following:
 - An audiovisual collection, consisting of
 - ❖ Audiocassettes of talks by prominent Bahá'ís; about 300 audiocassettes of which about 50 are talks by different Hands of the Cause of God who visited Austria
 - ❖ Original LPs of Austria's singing group *The Dawnbreakers*
 - ❖ CD's
 - ❖ Videos including some videotapes which have yet to be sorted out
 - ❖ Important photographs including old photographs (e.g. National Convention pictures) that are of historical interest for the Faith in Austria.
 - Some personal items of Austria's first Bahá'í, Franz Pollinger
 - Records of past teaching committees for partner countries, such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia
 - Records of past and current Bahá'í activities in Austria
 - Copies of a few letters from/on behalf the Beloved Guardian (originals are stored in the German national archives)
 - A few other miscellaneous items.
- Additional comments:
 - Our archives committee recently decided, after consultation with our NSA, to dispose of all Bahá'í newsletters and journals that are not related to the Austrian Bahá'í community, with the exception of publications prior to 1963.
 - Our book collection is already paper indexed.
 - We have recently made an electronic database of our audiocassette collection (currently an MS Excel spreadsheet, we will eventually make an MS Access database), and we are in the process of doing the same for the book collection.
 - Our goal is to eventually have digital records of the entire archives.
 - Other short-term projects include the scanning and digital archiving of old/historic photographs for better preservation.
 - We are also currently converting audio material of historic importance to CD format.
 - A medium term project is the improvement of the physical storing of archival material, such as the use of archive-friendly boxes.
 - Finally, another planned project of the Archives committee is that of communicating with local communities about maintaining their local archives. The Secretariat of the National Spiritual Assembly maintains its own records/archives, including the correspondence between the NSA and its committees.

Belarus

Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Belarus
 P.O. Box 262, Minsk 220050, Belarus
 Tel/fax: +375 (17) 206 52 72, tel. 210 48 22
 E-mail: secretariat@bahai.by
 Vassily Kislyak, Secretary NSA

No one could come to Landegg conference. Reasons: 1) lack of finances, 2) lack of people who could speak English, 3) absence of Bahá'ís who could maintain archives upon returning from the conference.

Basic trends of the development of the archives work

- Organisation of the storage of original materials (Annual Reports, Minutes, Policies and other documents of the National Assembly, National Training Centre, National Committees; national bulletin "Svecha lubvi" ("Candle of Love"); outgoing correspondence and that incoming one that has local origin).
- Creation of electronic archive (for the materials mentioned above).
- Creation of photo archive (incl. electronic one).
- Creation of publication and book archive. (The articles, issues, books about Bahá'í Faith and Belarusian Bahá'í community published in the non-Bahá'í world in Belarus).
- Work with LSA secretaries on proper running of local community archives.

What is planned for the perspective

- Creation of the archive of publications produced by Belarusian Bahá'í community (till now we have only 3 such publications: a thin brochure, a booklet and a Bahá'í ID card).
- Creation of the chronicle of the most important dates and events in Belarusian Bahá'í community.

Current status of the archives in Belarus

Inasmuch as the first Bahá'í community in Belarus appeared in 1991 and the National Spiritual Assembly was elected for the first time only in 1995, there are not many materials for putting into archives. All original materials are kept safely but they need to be systematised and placed in such a way that people could easily find them.

There is no separate room for the archive. The thing is that the National Bahá'í Centre is situated in three-room apartment on the second floor of the dwelling house and only one room is for the needs of the National Office. All archive materials are kept on the closed bookshelves or in the bookcases of this room. The Assembly searches now for the new (more spacious) National Bahá'í Centre that would be placed in an administrative building and there is understanding among NSA members to get a separate room for Bahá'í library and archive.

There is no appointed archivist in the community. It is the National Secretary who supervises archives and sometimes technical secretary is involved in performing different tasks.

Challenges

Photos accumulated in the National Office for recent years need to be systematised; Lack of human resources; In local communities where we lost Local Spiritual Assemblies and appointed Administrative Committees do not function either, no one keeps up local archive development.

Belgium

Presentation to be given in person by Guido Cooreman who will be attending Landegg (Library).
Archivist: Mrs. Toos ten Brink, National Secretary

Reply to a Survey On Bahá'í Libraries sent by Landegg

Name of library / archive: Bahá'í bibliotheek België

Postal address: Troonstraat 205, 1050 BRUSSEL

Name of respondent: Guido Cooreman

Email address: HYPERLINK "mailto:gcrmn@hotmail.com" gcrmn@hotmail.com

Fax / phone nr: + 32 011 22 66 55

Mission Statement

Goals of our library: to provide to all interested in the Bahá'í teachings a collection of introductory works. They should treat the Bahá'í Faith in general or specific subjects. The placement on shelves should be designed to make them easily accessible for the public; to contribute to the deepening of the Bahá'í friends by providing a large collection of the Holy Writings, together with commentaries and research works, and books on Bahá'í history; to establish a reference library for personal, scientific and historical research. (This mission statement was prepared 10 years ago, and never updated, but maybe it can still serve)

Combination With Other Institutions: no

Classification System

The classification system is kept very elementary, to make it easy for the general public to find its way, since it was used at the same time for the shelf-placement.

There are 6 categories:

Holy writings + Shoghi Effendi + Universal House of Justice

Compilations (general, 4 other subdivisions)

History (general, biographies)

Different subjects (general introductions, 3 other subdivisions)

Arts

Children books and youth and adult courses

Electronic Catalog: None. Some inquiries have been made on ISIS.

Population Served: Whole national community; open to the public during activities at the Bahá'í center

Physical Facility: One complete room at second floor of the Bahá'í center + archive facilities in the basement. In the room there is a computer, typewriter, table and chairs, easy seats, and video + television. Large window towards the east.

Primary Language: Although the primary language should be French (most clients are French-speaking), the majority of the books and video's are in the English language. Dutch is also important, since it is the second official language of the country.

Other Languages: A lot of other languages are present in the library. Of course Persian and German (third official language of our country), but also other European, African and Asiatic languages.

Strength Of The Collection: Books edited by the MEB (French publishing trust)

Rare Books: Some rare books are kept in the archive-department, together with some autographed books from personal collections.

Staff: Only volunteer staff. One professional librarian (but without any professional experience). Volunteers for lending service, encoding of new books, periodicals.

Budget: The National Assembly always reserves a general budget for the library, which is usually not fully used. This year budget: 750 euro; no salaries; no separate budgets; no income from grants; yes, 2,5 euro (inscription = life-time membership); book sales, fines, gifts

Collection:

around 200

around 3.000

around 3.000

no separate count has been made. The collection contains only a few theses and a few hundred pamphlets

none

1 subscription and a few free serials

i: a few hundreds of photographs, but mostly not yet well classified

ii: around 50 video-tapes

iii: around 50 audio-tapes, mostly bad quality

iv: some filmstrips and film material; preservation status not known.

manuscripts and letters from members of our Bahá'í community are kept in the archives.

Library Services:

e) no; on demand and during national activities at the Bahá'í center

Electronic Services: none the library possesses some files (full text Holy Writings, seminar reports) on CD, but the present computer has not yet been configured to run them.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Rebecca [Laurent Amine Mesbah] [<mailto:lrmesbah@smartnet.ba>]

No established archives but possess materials from 1998 in two large organizers in the office of Rebecca (secretary of the NTC, but not the official archivist), more or less organized by topics, cities, but not chronologically; papers do not contain any private collections; the responsible institution does not take an interest in the archives, or provide support to the archives, and there are no researchers. For anything prior to 1998, the archives are with the NSA of Austria. Since we became involved with the Faith in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1998, Rebecca started keeping records, correspondence, reports from travel-teachers, LSA, etc. The LSA of Sarajevo had considered sending one member to this conference at Landegg. However, the LSA decided it is too early.

Bulgaria

Maria Milosheva, Secretary NSA <bahaibg@spnet.net> or <miloshevi@hotmail.com>

Archivist: Elena Bourilkova, Assistant Secretary, and Julia Baicheva, librarian

No established archives, as such, but have collected all Minutes from the establishment of the NSA of Bulgaria, all committees, the correspondence in and out; earliest materials date from 1990, when the first NTC (before establishment of NSA); approximate size of archives: about 7 m² hard copies, and about 5 – 10 video cassettes; hard copies are in the Secretariat; Video cassettes, copies from media, Bulgarian Bahá'í news are in the Library of the National Center, as well as in attics and the homes of some friends; the archives are organized, but in a way without any instructions; they are not in chaos; there are no private collections either within or without the archival group, except some small amount from Marion Jack, from the time before the War and that from Annemarie Kruger for the period of her life, 1918 – till now. Elena and Julia take care for collecting and arranging every thing in the Bahá'í Center. They are untrained and work some hours per month, along with their other responsibilities. NSA takes an interest in the archives, provides support in terms of space for the archives, encouragement, and financial assistance; no researchers.

Canary Islands

Kambiz Nekoudin <kambiz@teide.net>

Croatia (see Slovenia & Croatia)

Cyprus

Anita Graves, Archivist, PO Box 29350, 1624 Nicosia, Cyprus, agraves@spidernet.com.cy

Established archives from 1996, with materials dating from 1953, most having to do with the formation of the NSA in 1976 (now 25 years old). NSA UK was the parent Assembly, and most of the institutional archival papers begin with the date of 1976. The archives consists of approximately 25-30 linear feet of binders containing the institutional minutes, minutes of NSA, LSAs, newsletters, correspondence with the Universal House of Justice, and personal and confidential files. Personal collections of early pioneers to the Island begin with the time of the appearance of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh in Cyprus. The personal collections have been augmented with about 20 audiotapes containing oral history interviews of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, and some of the early pioneers. The archives also contain about 4 linear feet of archival materials still in a state of chaos. Precious items contained in the archives are two strings of prayer beads of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, passed down to us, a signed copy of *The Priceless Pearl*, and a few other items housed in the safe. Two locked file cabinets contain some early newsletters, and confidential files, as well as the files of pioneers and travel teachers. The archivist is not professionally trained and serves on a part-time voluntary basis. The NSA is very much aware of its archives. Because of the political division of the Island, the archives has heretofore been kept in south Cyprus, but in the past two years the National Secretariat has moved to north Cyprus. Because of the difficulties involved in moving things between the north and the south of the Island, the archives remains in the south, for the most part, but it is clear that we really have three archives: the English archives, the Turkish archives, and the Greek archives. The archivist is considering presenting to the NSA a proposal to appoint an assistant archivist for the Turkish language archives, and one for the Greek language archives. The national center contains one small room that serves as the national office for south Cyprus, and the archives would not fit in that room along with the papers and records of the Southern Executive Committee, hence the bulk of the archives is in the private residence of the archivist until such time as the NSA makes space available elsewhere. The archivist did attend the workshop of Lois Walker in Langenhain, and received hands-on training with other European archives representatives. The NSA has no funds to support the archives, but it is mentioned in the budget. Because of the history of the Island, with the four faithful Bahá'ís who came in 1868, we have some records from the period of British colonial rule in 1878, but Balyuzi, Momen, and others have written these periods of history. There are no finding aids to date; researchers are beginning to ask about the archives, and are free to research.

Czech Republic

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Karl Tesar, E-mail: kareltesar@hotmail.com

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Established archives with dated materials: 8 (of 11) copies of newspaper clippings (from microfiche) from 1860s on the persecution of Bábís in Persia [Old German, printed in Prague] plus original booklets/photos - during Martha Root's travels in Czechoslovakia 1920s; Czech language newsletters 'Bahai Listy' (3) from 1948; photos of first Bahá'í communities (Prague) and individuals during period 1926-1984; photos, newspaper clippings, etc. from 1989 to present. Archives is divided into two parts (physical):

1. Archives of all materials to formation of first NSA Rid van 148/1991: approx. 0.5m3

2. Archives after NSA formation but non-administrative in nature: approx. 1m3

currently held in National Center in Prague, within the area of the administrative assistant's office. Some material is currently in the care for cataloging purposes, specifically: All documents (letters, minutes from committees, etc.) from 1989-1991. Photo archives to the period of 1989 are well organized in a protective book and documented; newspaper clippings from 1989-2000 are also well documented (photocopied) and preserved in folders organized by year. Our NSA administrative documents are well organized but not well protected against deterioration, as they are 'hole-punched' and filed up right in ring binders. There is still much to do but there is not much chaos as the volume in our collection is still limited. There are private collections that have not been donated, consisting of two substantial collections that exist and are in private hands: 1. Karel Tesar, long-standing member of the NSA has collected materials belonging to earlier Bahá'ís. He is also on the National Archive Committee. 2. Hana Sodeyfi of Vienna, Austria. She was on the Committee for activities in Czechoslovakia during the 1970s and 80s and knew many of the earlier Bahá'ís personally. Unfortunately the collections of these individuals have not been made available to our committee. There are no personal collections of early believers within the archives, though we have strong reason to believe there are some collections in existence, but in private hands. The official archivist, since 1995 is the couple Richard & Simona Sherwood; in 1999(?) a National Archive Committee was established consisting of three members (who have been re-appointed to the present time): Richard Sherwood, Simona Sherwood and Karel Tesar. None of the archives committee members is trained and they give sporadic attention to the archives on a voluntary basis, but they are given a yearly budget and space in the National Bahá'í Center for Archival purposes. Research requests have been very limited.

Denmark

Gerd Krintel, Archivist, National Bahá'í Archives, Denmark and Local Bahá'í Archives, Copenhagen, [gerd.krintel@privat.dk] or [sekretariat@bahai.dk]

Archives established beginning of 1980's; the bulk of material begins 1946/47, when pioneers arrived; Before that a single Bahá'í, Johanne Høeg, worked alone, and we have her private collection (a large correspondence with Shoghi Effendi) dating back to (?). She became Bahá'í in the early 1920's; archives occupies two rooms in the basement of the Bahá'í centre, maybe 8 and 12 m² with bookshelves and boxes all over, and some steel-cabins (drawers); it is organized in the sense that it is identified, in groups, but not properly processed and finished. Significant private collections have not been donated; within the archives there are personal collections of early believers. After some deaths, the heirs were invited to donate to the archives. Archivist is not professionally trained, only by experience, and started as an assistant to a Bahá'í lady appointed by the NSA in the early '80's. They happened to get the American "Guidelines to Bahá'í Archives", and we switched to that system from the homemade one we had knitted together ourselves. That means that the basic system on which the Danish Bahá'í archives is based is the very same as the one Lois Walker taught us. We have part-time attention in the archives: myself and a lady who volunteered and subsequently was appointed by the N.S.A.:

Gerd attended the First European Bahá'í Archives Workshop (Langenhain) and found it very helpful, and is always trying to introduce more of the good ideas from the workshop. The NSA provides space for the archives, two good rooms, locked, with extra space right next to them with a big table to work on, and in terms of financial help, they do not spend much apart from photocopies. We do have a few plans though, and we are confident our needs will be met. The NSA is aware – especially after the workshop in Langenhain – that we are on the right track. I believe they trust us to do the work. Level of awareness of the friends to the archives and its needs and its importance: Not very high. In general, the understanding of saving material for the history is non-existing in daily life. Often people correspond via e-mail, sending bits and pieces, mixed with private matters – and they do not print it out on paper. A new generation with new habits.

Still, my heart beats for the archives --Gerd

Estonia

Foad Vojdani, Secretary, NSA of Estonia <secretariat@bahai.ee>

Our community is very young and does not have so much archives materials. The correspondence is kept orderly in files at our national secretariat. Our first pioneer, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Mrs. Brigitte Lundblade, has letters and brief accounts from some of the pioneers, articles published about different visiting personalities, newspaper adds, minutes and reports (not very well organized) and many photographs. No official archivist, and unfortunately the National Assembly does not have any plans concerning the archives for the time being.

Finland

David Bergen, Secretary, NSA, dbergen@utu.fi

Matti Vesamaa, historian for the Finnish Baha'i Community, matti.vesamaa@pp.inet.fi

France (see combined questionnaire)

Jan Jasion will be in Landegg and will give a presentation on the Library.

Germany

Gunter Maltz will present the German archives separately

Gibraltar

Ramin Khalilian, official archivist, Khalilian@gibnet.gi 5E Malvasia, Vineyards, Gibraltar

The Baha'i Community of Gibraltar has been established since February 1992, community consisted of three Pioneers from the UK (at present consists of 12 adults and 5 children of various nationalities such as Gibraltarian, English, Indian, Turkish and Persian); Archives consists of a scrapbook with articles, photographs, newspaper articles, weekly advertisements, special occasions posters, etc. Approximate earliest dates of materials: Wednesday 11 March 1992 (no Bahá'í were officially present in Gibraltar before that time); size of archives: three books; Archives is located in the Bahá'í library, in an organized state; no private collections that have not been donated; no personal collections of early believers; volunteer archivist not professionally trained; The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Gibraltar has been established since 1995, and takes an interest in the archives, provide support in terms of space for the archives, encouragement, financial assistance; No researchers.

Greece

Ursula Muhlschlegel <ursula@otenet.gr>

As a matter of fact, I had not the feeling to be still responsible for the history - good to know now!! - All the files are in Thessaloniki because Helen and Kostas Kontos wanted to make a film and as I understood put it in the computer. I will ask them and if I am still responsible will ask for the files. The first steps which were done in Greece was to ask all the friends - at that time nearly only pioneers! - to write their history and when they arrived in Greece etc. These are most of the papers in the files. But then I went through the *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* to find more about Martha Root. If I remember well, I found something, but unfortunately I cannot tell you now exactly and to give you only a vague thing in such an important case, I prefer to be quiet! Of course in the bibliography by M.R. Garis *Martha Root - Lioness at the Threshold*, I found more about her visits in Greece. Then I also found in at least one volume of *The Bahá'í World* something of the Princess of Yugoslavia (daughter of Queen Marie) and her husband. Unfortunately my memory in this is also vague, I have to look these things up when I am at home again, beginning of January - too late for your Landegg talk! How I will go on in this, I do not know yet, have to think much more about it, and I would be very grateful for a joint consultation in this respect. I hope that the NSA has all the minutes of the NSA itself and of the few LSAs, and I think future history writers will have a lot of work to do, to go through all this things. It will cost a lot of time, which I do not see that I would have it right now. But if NSA is still of the opinion that I should be behind it, I will have to do it!

Hungary

Ajang Farid – farid9@mail.datanet.hu

Established archives, including materials from 1852 – newspaper articles of Bábí Persecution; Size of archives is approximately 5 shelves which store 10 boxes, located in National Bahá'í Centre; Archives is both organized and in a state of chaos; To our knowledge there are no private collections in Hungary or elsewhere that have not been donated, but Within our archives, there are a few personal collections of early believers in Hungary. Archivist is not trained, but learned a few skills at the World Centre, and serves the archives on a volunteer basis. National Archives of Hungary were not represented at the First European Bahá'í Archives Workshop at Langenhain with Lois Walker in 1991. National Assembly support: Financial assistance is there, space is given; no researchers. Our archives in Hungary file following items: 1) Photographs; 2) Newspaper clips; 3) Video recordings (of TV reports/interviews or internal meetings); 4) Invitations & posters of activities; newspaper clips and video recordings are filed very accurately, labelled and a copy of each sent to the World Centre; photos, however, are piled in envelopes, not yet filed in a proper way.

Iceland

Kelli, NSA secretariat, NSA Iceland nsa@bahai.is

Established archives, dating from 1930, consisting of 30 boxes, scattered at the moment, some organized, some in a state of chaos, but does not, unfortunately, include private collections that have not been donated; archives does not enjoy the privilege of an archivist, but is the responsibility of the employee of the National office who is untrained, but is a theologian by education who serves the archives as a part of other responsibilities; Yes and no, in terms of space for the archives, encouragement, financial assistance from the NSA, there are so many responsibilities that the archives are often left behind; researchers do ask to see the archives; lost a lot in fire some years ago; have been trying to get photocopies of most of the things but many are lost forever; a good collection of press articles; have arranged most of them; going to organize pictures and ask the community to loan their pictures to scan; files are a mess at the moment but will organize them when we have a storage room in 6 months or so.

Ireland

Ellen Fitzpatrick, for the Secretariat

Our National Centre is being refurbished and the office only came back this week after an absence of a year. The office is the only part of the building that is functioning. The archives have been stored for that time and the archivist will not have access to them for some time yet. They have not had proper work done on them for a long time and she was not archivist very long when the archives were put into storage. When the building is finished we will have an archives room that is temperature controlled with access only for the archivist, office staff and the NSA. As the NSA secretary does not work at the National Centre it really means that access will only be for the archivist and myself. There will be a task force to help the archivist at the beginning because of the move. I am office manager but I have worked in the office for most of 20 years and done some of the archiving myself. The only important archives that belong to our NSA are the effects of Hand of the Cause George Townshend. The furniture is being repaired and the papers and books were sent to Haifa until we have suitable conditions for storage of such important things. We do have the library belonging to Hand of the Cause Horace Holley as his widow was living in Ireland when she died. Other than that, our archives consist of all the normal papers of a fairly small community. I should imagine that it would be some time before we even have all the records archived as they were backlogged before the move a year ago.

Italy

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The national archives are divided into two sections. They both are all stored at the National Bahá'í Centre.

- a) The Historical Archives
- b) The Administrative Archives

The Historical Archives contain all selected documents (letters, cables, pictures, reports, early newsletters) testifying to the birth and growth of the Italian Bahá'í community from the late 19^o century until the formation of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Italy and Switzerland.

All items included in the archives are listed in a special book for easy reference and to find them easily. Please note that four years ago, after the International Convention, where I personally visited and had a long conversation with the Archives Department staff, a lady served the National Secretariat to check the status of all these documents, removing all metal pins and similar things, putting on the computer all the item list, making copies of documents written in carbon paper. Furthermore a work to transcribe on computer all hand written letters has started (this because many kind of calligraphy have today disappeared and many youths are no more able to easily read strange calligraphies). All the above is contained into a safeguarded metallic wardrobe placed in a special room of the National Baha'i Centre.

The Administrative Archives: Since the inception of the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy and Switzerland and the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Italy, a secretariat attention has always been given to the collection of all administrative documents that are all filed in a professional way. Also the oldest files (from year 1961 to year 1973) have been checked by a Bahá'í professional archivist who, recording to the National Spiritual Assembly, affirmed that our archive is an example in comparison to what is archived in the Italian public offices.

Since early '70's all incoming and outgoing mail and documents have been registered. At the beginning on special mail books (which are all stored in the archives) and then through computer. Therefore, having the exact references, is very easy to find out what a believer wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly or a Local Spiritual Assembly minute, etc.

All these files, Bahá'í year, after Bahá'í year, are all stored in the premises of the National Bahá'í Centre, for easy access of the staff personnel. The registering system is known by all staff members, although only one person has the task to register, day after day, the incoming mail.

We know that most of the Local Spiritual Assemblies in Italy follow a similar system. They keep their archives at a local level. The situation is more confused with National Committees because secretaries change quite often. Usually all their archives, sooner or later, are put in boxes and sent to the National Bahá'í Centre, where we store them in a cellar.

The archives is a regular work of the National Secretariat and provides a lot of background information to the work of the National Spiritual Assembly. We receive therefore, the utmost support from the NSA, being included in one of its most important operative branches; the National Secretariat.

Future developments (in years) will include a suitable display of the historical objects that are taken care by our National Spiritual Assembly (gifts from the Guardian, letters from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, objects belonging to the central figures of the Faith). All objects have been listed to the Universal House of Justice. Some of them have been sent to them according to their guidance, some of them permission has been received to take care of them here.

Programs for digital archiving system is under discussion on the NSA's agenda.

At present it is under maintenance and repair the ancient cloth laying on the grave of Bahá'u'lláh and donated by the Guardian. The work is followed up by a professional specialist in Florence, under the advise also of a staff member of the World Centre.

All friends coming for service at the National Secretariat have an orientation course where part of the historical items are shown to create deepening, motivation and awareness of growth.

Note: Anyway I am available for any comment or further information. As a comment I would like to add that qualities of a Baha'i archivist are a spiritual sense of history, a love for memories and availability of time. To archive is not to file, rather it is to study. [Report submitted by Franco Ceccherini, Department of Secretariat]

LSA of Trieste

Franco Astrologo, francoastro@siol.net, Koper-Slovenia, Italian pioneer in Koper, Slovenia, 20 km (3/4ths of an hour) from Trieste.

Archives are divided in 2 parts, because Mrs. Del Puppo (LSA Secretary) has all the material from December 1983 up to now, and has absolutely no place for any other material; while Mr. Imani has the rest of the material in a safe place near his shop. Mr. Imani has some 0,25 cubic feet of material consisting of all the minutes of years 1970/71 and from 1974 to 1977 + correspondence (letters sent and received and some beautiful postcards). Mrs. Del Puppo has nearly 1 cu. ft. of material consisting of 7 folders (or something similar) with all the minutes and correspondence.

Years ago I wrote a history of the Community of Trieste and I gave 1 copy to the LSA and one to the NSA (the NSA asked me to write it); I can tell you that when I had a look at the very first material, I had a very pleasant surprise: I found the very pretty letter that I had written to the LSA in 1977 in which I was asking to become Bahá'í!! (As a matter of fact, that letter was just a formality, since I already knew "everything" about the Faith. Part of the archives of the LSA have been moved quite recently.

Latvia

Jerry Smith, Assistant Secretary, NSA Secretariat secretariat@bahai.lv or Secretary, Vera Ivanova Smith

There are 100 Bahá'ís in Latvia of which approx 25 are so-called active; the NSA was established 4 years ago and all functions are in process of formation; archives is one area which needs attention as little has been done; working files are kept at the home of the national secretary some 200km from the capital, Riga; the secretary fulfills responsibilities on spare time basis; all incoming and outgoing documents are kept as hard copies and e-mails on the Secretariat computer; 4 years of NSA documents are in process of being stored on CDs; photos in albums show 10 years history of the Bahá'í Faith; newspaper articles about the Bahá'í Faith have been photocopied and filed. The National Library was started 2 years ago when a Bahá'í from Canada (Mrs. Conor) donated approx 300 Bahá'í books (English), and the Library is named in her husbands honor - Opal Conor; 3-4 videotapes of Bahá'ís being interviewed on TV (e.g., Mr. David Hofman and other visitors to Latvia), and local activities.

Liechtenstein

Anne Wohlwend, Archivist

Bahá'í archives are in boxes in the attics, most of it with the first local Bahá'í family who declared in 1967; Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Hushmand Manoucheri came in 1954, but stayed only 3 years and lives in Brazil now; some things are in an attic; there is no system; Liechtenstein Bahá'í community is very small (15 adults, 15 children), and does not have an LSA or an NSA; archives not organized but Mrs. Anne Wohlwend has agreed to serve as the archivist.

Lithuania

Helen Smith, Archivist <helen@pmt.lt>

No established archives, but have an archivist who describes their archival materials thusly: we possess materials from 1989; CDs, boxes and floppy discs, some in National Secretariat, the remainder with the Archivist; archival materials in both states of organization and chaos; no private collections that have not been donated; and within the archives, no personal collections of early believers; archivist is untrained and serves on a voluntary basis, but archivist did attend the First European Bahá'í Archives Workshop at Langenhain with Lois Walker in 2001 and some of what was learned was applied. NSA takes an interest in the archives, provides support as far as is possible; no researchers. The current archives consist of letters from the Universal House of Justice, International Teaching Committee, Counsellor; minutes; financial reports; general reports.

Luxembourg

Assemblée Spirituelle Nationale des Bahá'ís du Luxembourg [bahailux@pt.lu]
Claire-Anne Thill, secretariat
Tel. no of the national secretariat: 00352/442220
Or email no bahailux@pt.lu

We have no special Baha'i Archivist in Luxembourg. The archives are done by the secretariat of the National Spiritual Assembly. Our archives are built on a chronological system, separating Bahá'í institutions (external and internal), individuals and non-Bahá'ís (individuals and institutions). Also photos and articles of the press are Archived separately.

Macedonia**Malta****Moldova**

Ludmila Zaichenko, archivist, was in Langenhain for the archives workshop but we did not receive her reply.

Monaco

Mr. & Mrs. Ali(?) & Shamsi Navidi pioneered to Monaco

Netherlands

Ank Buch, Archivist, Groenedijkplein 6, 4827 LP Breda, tel. 076-5719203, a.buch@tiscali.nl

Following the First European Bahá'í Archives Workshop in Langenhain, I wrote a detailed report to the NSA, in Dutch, mentioning all the items that had struck me with amazement and requested consultation about the archives and for the establishment of a national archives committee, so that the continuation of the work at the archives would be safeguarded in the near future, and requested a budget for the archives for conservation materials. During Lois' workshop I realized that I did not prepare the documents in the right way: I just put them in files (with codes of course), registered them in the database. In that way everyone, working at the National Secretariat, was able to find the right documents. It is still working, even without my assistance! The NSA invited me for consultation in November 2001. I could explain my wishes, and inform it about my visit at the Municipal Archives of Breda, where I was shown the way they keep all the precious documents, books, microfilms, etc. That was special and they only did so because I was an archivist, though not professional. They showed me practical things, such as the firm in the Netherlands specializing in archival materials. They offered me boxes and help, if necessary. The NSA promised to establish a committee and seek for a friend(s) to succeed me, due to my health. In 2001, I wrote a series of articles on archives, published in our newsletter, describing the way to keep them. Later I put these articles together into one. This document can be used for distribution whenever friends ask how to deal with archives. I prepared two advertisements: one for committee-members and one for an archivist, published in the newsletter, but nobody responded. I still travelled to the Hague, once a week, to work at the archives, but could no longer manage; I told the NSA several times, but as I thought it weak to stop while the Assembly was searching for a new archivist I stayed and did the work in my own way. Up to now nothing has happened, nobody appeared. In April 2002 the renovation of the National Centre has started and it is still going on. After the renovation one part of the archives will be placed at the attic in a spacy place, climatized as well. Another part will be kept in a small room near the national secretariat; renovation will last until summer 2003. Ank will reorganize the archives after the restoration, but let it be known that it would be better to stop completely, so that the community should know that there is no archivist now and for the future. May be one of the friends will rise to do the job. As long as I am on duty, one thinks: "Oh Ank is still there, don't worry!"

I 'did' the archives for about 18 years and stopping hurts! - Ank

Norway

NSA Norway, nsanor@bahai.no

Poland**Portugal**

NSA Portugal (aen@bahai.pt)

Established archives; 1965 earliest date; kept on shelves all in one place, organized; no private collections that have not been donated; within archives very little personal collections of early believers; no official archivist but the work is done by full time job (paid work) of a believer and a secretariat assistant who have no formal training; very few researchers. As mentioned above, the work of the NSA Portugal is being done for a long time by a full time assistant (believer) and till this moment we consider that our archives are satisfactory. External Affairs Office has a secretary and an assistant and has separate archives.

Romania

Della Marcus will be at Landegg for the Forum 2002, but can't stay for the Libraries & Archives conference.

As to your question about the Romanian Baha'i Archives, we do not really have one and do not also have an Archivist. Many of the members of the National Spiritual Assembly over the years have not really understood the importance of an archives and the only way that an archivist would be appointed is if one came forward to volunteer to do this. Those people who would be suited to the work and understand its importance are entirely too busy with other things. A friend and I have tried to collect things over the years and squirrel them away for the future, but that's about all that's happening here.

Sicily

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Scarlata Antonio, secretary.

Concerning our National Archives, we have to confess that they are in a very primitive state indeed. In part, they are undoubtedly located in Bern and Rome concerning the period of the fifties and early sixties, as the NSA of Italy wasn't elected until 1962, when the joint NSA of Italy and Switzerland was replaced by the two NSAs. The materials at hand are not in any particular order except for those accumulated since the establishment of the first Sicilian NSA. Some important materials are still in the hands of individual believers. We do not at this time have a national archivist.

Slovak Republic

NSA of Slovakia [bahaiadm@nextra.sk], Sona Riaposova

Established archives, dating from 1990; 3 shelves with 33 files at the National Secretariat (Incoming mail, Outgoing mail, Reports, Declarations cards, archived newspapers and articles about the Faith...), 2 book shelves with the national newsletters from various countries (America, Canada, India, Czech Republic, BIC, etc.); 3 books shelves with printed books and older newsletters in the basement; archives are well organized and since we are a very young community and our archives are not very big it's easy to find anything we need. No known private collections not donated, and none in the archives. No official archivist, the National Secretariat deals with all the archiving; no one formally trained, but every assistant of the Secretariat is always explained how and where to find everything. The archives are easily manageable and don't need very much attention. The National Assembly takes an interest in the archives and provides space for the archives when needed. No researchers.

Slovenia and Croatia

Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Slovenia and Croatia
Bohjnčeva 8 – 1000 LJUBLJANA (Slovenia)
Regional archivist: Carlo Brigolin
Štinjan, Kaščuni 77 – 52100 Pula (Croatia)
Tel./fax: ++385 52 517 177

At present this important institution, the archives, is distributed between three communities, Ljubljana, Zagreb and Pula. They are not connected, but Ljubljana more organized, Pula larger, and Zagreb more disperse. They are based on last 10 years' documents (Regional Institutions, Assembly, Treasury, Institute Board, etc.), pioneers, community pictures, and on published Bahá'í books, etc. About the historic importance, they cover mostly the last 12 years of the Faith in Slovenia and Croatia, but also some previous 20 years. After instruction we received from Lois Walker, we have done our task with more consciousness and understanding. Regarding relationship of archivist and archives to the RSA, it has to be noted that financial support received is still small. But the understanding of the expensiveness of the Archives is clear, and this is a big gap because our RSA is not self-supporting, and the budget has to be small. Archivist calls the awareness of the friends and the RSA members to the archives, its needs and importance; after Langenhain still many steps have to be achieved and a complete diffusion of the concept has still to be launched.

Zagreb Notes from Davor Prezel

In the Bahá'í center of Zagreb there is no archives established, no official or unofficial archivist. The concept is very new; the importance of keeping personal gifts and memorials was not given proper attention. There is a large collection of minutes from the LSA and Regional Committees from 1991-97 that should be archived, also some old provisional translations kept but never used, materials correctly translated and approved some years later. The first pioneers to Croatia after the fall of Yugoslavia were British Bahá'ís Firooz Firoozmand and Mehیار Badii-Azandahi, who came to Zagreb in 1990, and formed the first LSA in 1991, under the supervision of the Regional Teaching Committee of Austria.

Spain

Gibraltar

The Gibraltar Bahá'í Community has been established since 1991 and has now its own Local Spiritual Assembly governing the local community consisting of Bahá'ís from different racial and religious backgrounds such as English, Gibraltarian, Spanish, Indian, Persian, Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Zoroastrian. Gibraltar would therefore always be represented as a nation when local Bahá'ís participate in these international activities.

Sweden

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Sweden, Örjan Widegren, Secretary
Svenska Bahá'í, secretariat@bahai.se

Regrettably, such facilities are underdeveloped to the point of non-existence in the Bahá'í community of Sweden. We have a new Bahá'í Centre which presently is in a process of being rebuilt, while our national archive is stored rather unsystematically in boxes and generally not accessible. We also have been honoured with taking custody of the late Hand of the Cause Dr Ugo Giachery's personal Bahá'í library, comprising two book cases. Books from this library may be viewed by Bahá'ís when they visit the Centre, but of course it is not allowed to borrow them and bring them home.

Switzerland

Bahá'í Secretariat Switzerland, Dufourstrasse 13, CH 3005 Berne
Archivist: Tom Volk, Blümlimattweg 40, CH 3600 Thun, ltvolk@bluewin.ch

The national archives is located in the National Bahá'í Center in Dufourstr. 13 3005 Berne, Switzerland. The bulk of the collection is stored in the basement of the Center in a special room reserved for this purpose. Right now some of the materials are stored in the book storage area of the national book distribution service. The documents are stored in archive boxes that are placed in a rolling metal shelving system (Compactus). These rooms are equipped with a dehumidifier to provide for a controlled environment. A few items are now located in the main meeting room of the center in a wooden chest.

The collection comprises documents such as correspondence, minutes and reports, press clippings, photos, dissertations, books and pamphlets. There are no records on digital data storage or microfilm formats at this time. The records have been kept in good condition although paper clips, staples, plastic folders and similar archival taboos proliferate.

The main records are categorized as follows:

- Correspondence with Hands and CBC
- Correspondence with House of Justice
- Correspondence with various National Assemblies
- Information on situation in Iran
- Correspondence with BIC
- Information on various plans (5 Yr., 7 Yr., 6 Yr., 4 Yr.)
- Reports and Information concerning the National Convention and Regional Conv.
- Minutes and Agendas of National Assembly
- Treasurers Reports
- Information pertaining to Landegg
- Public relations committee
- Newspaper articles
- Correspondence with individuals
- Journals and Bahá'í Newsletters from around the world
- Correspondence and minutes of Local Spiritual Assemblies
- Correspondence and minutes of various national committees

Some items that are of special interest are some original letters from Shoghi Effendi. Mementos from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some old books of the Dreyfuss's. Various letters, reports and photos from old pioneers as well as information about Henni de Bons.

In the immediate future the archives will have to be sorted out and all materials be placed in a single, protected room to insure that everything is protected. Books will be placed in the National Library and items that are not necessarily subjects of interest to the Swiss Archives removed. Staples, paperclips and other similar items will be removed.

The National Spiritual Assembly has given me full support and encouragement to develop the national archives and to make it an ever increasingly professional activity. They are more aware of the need to have a comprehensive and well organized archive than me, the archivist! Until now there has not been an organized endeavor to insure that archives are being maintained at the local level. Some of the local communities have taken their own initiatives. Günter Malz gave a presentation on the development of a local archive at the last winter school that was well attended.

Turkey

Susan Merter, Secretary of the NSA says there is no archives in Turkey. Whatever materials there have been over time were in private hands and no attempt has ever been made to gather them together into an archives.

Ottoman Archives

Necati Alkan, necati@alkan.de

Necati currently lives in the Czech Republic, teaching at Towshend International School. He sent his report on the documents re Bahá'ís in the Ottoman Archive and it is being distributed separately.

Ukraine

United Kingdom

Rebecca Vickers, Archivist, <rvickers@compuserve.com>

As of this moment the historical National Archives for the UK are packed away and not catalogued or accessible. However, as of a month ago, suitable space has become available at the Bahá'í National Sub-office to be shared by the National Archives and the Afnan Library. It is hoped to prepare the space and start moving in the historical archives in the next 6 months. A policy decision has not yet been made by the NSA as to what archives will be deposited. So, ask this question again in a year and hopefully there will be good news.

Yugoslavia (Serbia & Montenegro)

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BAHÁ'Í LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES

LANDEGG INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY 2-4 JANUARY 2003

Report on Survey of Bahá'í Libraries and Archives

1. A survey was initiated. Method was distribution of questionnaire in rtf format by email to NSAs, with request that it be forwarded to the relevant Library and Archive offices.
2. Responses received from 20 countries. Most were from NSA-affiliated institutions. A response was also received from the Bahá'í Academy in India.

Europe (7)	Americas (3)	Asia (4)	Australasia (4)	Africa (2)
Belgium	Puerto Rico	Azerbaijan	Australia	Senegal
Belarus	USA	India	Fiji	South Africa
France	Venezuela	Japan	Vanuatu	
Germany		Thailand	Western Caroline Islands	
Slovenia & Croatia				
Sweden				
Switzerland				

3. 2 countries (Australia and USA) provided separate responses for the National Bahá'í Library and the National Bahá'í Archive, while the remaining 17 country responses covered both library and archives.
 4. 3 have Mission statements for their Archives: Australia, USA, Venezuela
 5. 3 have Development Plans: Australia; France, and Japan
- Very few have a separate budget for archives (Australia, USA), and most rely on periodic allocations from their NSAs. The report for the Library of Senegal reports that funding includes allocations from the Literature Subvention fund of the Continental Board of Counselors, a source that probably assists other libraries.
6. 4 have at least part-time paid staff: France, India, USA, and Australia
 7. The levels of use of archives and libraries are very low, with only France and India reporting use as high as 2-5 patrons per week.
 8. Few libraries or archives use dedicated software; those that do use software are using Microsoft excel and word
 9. A number of libraries act as the library of the NSA, or as a 'national reference library'
 10. Libraries vary in size from exceptionally small (Slovenia and Croatia 100; Western Caroline Islands 400; Vanuatu 600; Thailand 1000; South Africa 1500 to 2000). Larger libraries include: France 3000; India 4000; Australia 5000; Bahá'í academy 8000; US National Bahá'í Library 83,000 volumes.
 11. Few libraries or archives have developed mission statements:
USA Archives:

The purpose of the National Bahá'í Archives is to preserve, organize and make available for research the history of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is of the United States, its committees and agencies, and of the Bahá'is of the United States who have contributed or are contributing to the national life of the community by preserving suitable archival material associated with these bodies and persons.

Venezuela:

Our mission is to offer support to people that investigate the writings of the Faith, source of consultation for the institutions of the Faith, to provide of the whole literature Bahá'í in Spanish that is available in the world.

12. Few Archives are aware of their self-size: (Japan 70 meters; France 130 meters; Australia 205 meters)
13. Few libraries offer 'library services', such as loan facilities
14. The Libraries and Archives of Bahá'í Institutions can perhaps be categorized as belonging to 'new institutions' or to 'established institutions'.
15. The New national communities tend to have little developed by way of mission statements, development plans, policies, etc. They are generally serviced by volunteer staff, or even members of the NSA, in rented premises which often act also as administrative centres, with little conservation and preservation technology being applied.

a. Eg, Belarus:

Inasmuch as the first Bahá'í community in Belarus appeared in 1991 and the National Spiritual Assembly was elected for the first time only in 1995, there are not many materials for putting into archives. All original materials are kept safely but they need to be systematised and placed in such a way that people could easily find them.

There is no separate room for the archive. The thing is that the National Bahá'í Centre is situated in a three room apartment on the second floor of the dwelling house and only one room is for the needs of the National Office. All archive materials are kept on the closed bookshelves or in the bookcases of this room. The Assembly searches now for the new (more spacious) National Bahá'í Centre that would be placed in an administrative building and there is understanding among NSA members to get a separate room for Bahá'í library and archive.

There is no appointed archivist in the community. It is the National Secretary who supervises archives and sometimes technical secretary is involved in performing different tasks.

b. Eg: . Sweden

Archive facilities are underdeveloped to the point of non-existence in the Bahá'í community of Sweden. We have a new Bahá'í Centre which presently is in a process of being rebuilt, while our national archive is stored rather unsystematically in boxes and generally not accessible. We also have been honoured with taking custody of the late Hand of the Cause Dr Ugo

Giachery's personal Bahá'í library, comprising two book cases. Books from this library may be viewed by Bahá'ís when they visit the Centre.
(Respondent: Örjan Widegren)

The library and archive collections of 'established national communities', on the other hand, including those of USA, UK, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, and Japan, can tend to include unique and valuable collections:

Eg. 1: Japan:

: *The materials in this Archive were accumulated over some forty years through the efforts of Mrs. Barbara Sims, long-time secretary and member of the National Spiritual Assembly, and author of *Japan Will Turn Ablaze* and *Traces That Remain*.

* Special Collections include the private papers, photographs, possessions and books of Hand of the Cause, Agnes Alexander, Mr. Saiichiro Fujita, and Mr. Tokujiro Torii.

* The Archives currently holds a collection of books which properly belong in a Bahá'í Library and will be transferred there when one is established.

* The records of the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, elected in 1957, includes the earliest histories of the Faith in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

The collection is the largest Bahá'í Archives in North or Southeast Asia and includes copies of letters from Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, all the records of the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan, the Archives of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Kyoto and Tokyo, and Collections of individual prominent Bahá'ís, including the Hand of the Cause Agnes Alexander..

Eg. 2: Switzerland

Holds records of:

- international Bahá'í Bureau
- NSA of Italy and Switzerland (one of the World Crusade Assemblies)

16. The Most developed archive, outside the Bahá'í World Centre, is that in the USA:

2 professional archivists. Occupies seven rooms in the lower level of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, and also uses off-site commercial storage space. It is open to the public and is used by appointment during weekdays.

In 2001-2002 the Archives received 172 accessions, totaling 336 linear feet. This included 252 boxes of National Center records, 5 new collections of personal papers and 9 additions to existing collections of personal papers. The Archives also received five

original Guardian letters. Currently the Archives has something over 7,000 linear feet of holdings.

Audiovisual holdings include over 19,000 photographs; several thousands reels of films and video tapes; something over 5,000 reels of audiotape; approx. 200 reels of motion picture film and some filmstrips.

Documents (manuscripts, letters) As of May 2002 the Archives had processed 254 record series of National Center records, totaling 1,180 boxes, 32 rolls of microfilm and 11 boxes of microfiche. The Archives has 552 collections of personal papers, of which 325 (in 1,236 boxes) have been processed and open for research.

- 17. Electronic Services:** Few libraries and archives offer electronic services, although the French library seems to have some services, and estimates that 12% of its collection has been digitized:

<i>When answering "yes" to any of these questions, please explain further and/or give examples if possible.</i>	Yes	No
1. Do you offer reference service by mail or email?	Y	
2. Do you have interlibrary loan service with other libraries?		N
3. Do you have an electronic catalog that includes the library/archive holdings?	Y	
4. Do you have access to electronic indexes and reference tools?		N
5. Do you have access to electronic full-text periodicals?		N
6. Do you have electronic files (other than the catalog) created by the staff?	Y	
7. Do you have scanning equipment for patron use in the library/archive?	Y	
8. Is your library/archive producing full-text or data-files databases?	Y	

- 18.** The Library of Slovenia and Croatia estimates that 50% of the 100 Bahá'í books are available in digitized form.

- 19. Preservation:** few libraries and archives indicate that preservation and conservation procedures and technologies are in place. The report for Vanuatu indicates:

ALL MATERIALS ARE KEPT WRAPPED IN PLASTIC BAGS, AS A PROTECTION AGAINST HUMIDITY, COCKROACHES AND OCCASIONAL CYCLONES

We wish to thank all who responded to this survey. A report of the conference results appears in a second document.

Graham Hassall
Landegg International University
March 2003

MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í LIBRARY

These are some random thoughts pulling together my experience in working with a number of national Bahá'í Libraries over the last twenty years. I feel that these are the minimum conditions needed for the establishment and maintenance a national library.

1. **Commitment** from the NSA to have a National Bahá'í Library.
2. Decision on the **purpose** or end use of the Library.
Possibilities: Reference Library for the NSA and its Secretariat;
Lending Library for the Community
Research Library on the Holy Texts
Historical Archive and depository
Library on current developments in the Bahá'í world
3. A collection development and **acquisitions plan** to reflect the above decision. For example, the Reference Library for the NSA should have the latest edition of the Holy Scripture. Old editions are immediately replaced when new ones appear; the Historical collection would have all the Bahá'í books published in that country, etc.


*The above two points are necessary in order for the Library to be efficient, to serve the community and for the scarce resources of money, time and space not to be dispersed in collecting those items which do not meet the needs of the community. It is not necessary for a national library to collect everything.

4. Physical facilities. **At least one room, dedicated** permanently and solely for the Library. A set of shelves, or a cupboard, a table and a couple of chairs.
5. Staff. At least **one person on a permanent basis**. Could be part-time.
6. Some type of professionally guided **training**, and access to professional Bahá'í resources and personnel.
7. A professionally guided **catalogue** of the literature. Minimum standard would be AACR2 first level description. Though it is preferable to have the catalogue in a computer system, such as Windows Office, a manual card system or even a ledger is acceptable.
8. A **shelf list** is essential. That is the link between the catalogue record and the actual item. A subject-based system is not essential. Since most of the libraries either at present or some time in their future will be using a closed-stack system, a simple shelf-list will do. For example B III 10, where 'B' could indicates the cupboard; "III" the shelf, and "10" the actual item. If there is enough room on the shelves, the class number could become more sophisticated by adding an additional digit, i.e., ".2" for a second edition, or "c2" for a second copy, or "Fr" for a French translation. If more than one room is used the shelf list number could be preceded by the room number, or a letter or number code signifying the room. For pamphlets the previously mentioned system could be easily adopted. The Bahá'í World Centre Library system of using the

Bahá'í year and then the sequential number is not recommended, as it is too general. The drawback with a shelf list system is that it presupposes that the library and its physical shelving units are permanent. However, the system can accommodate a variety of shelving problems, for example, one could place pamphlets in pamphlet boxes or other appropriate boxes thematically and place them on the shelf as a book, with a shelf list number for the box and an added element for each item in the box. It would also enable oversize books to be housed comfortably on shelves. Either standing upright or laying flat.

9. A **budget** is also a significant requirement. It should be separate from the budget of the secretariat and any other committee. The size is not an issue. It is important that the Library be recognized as a separate element and not as an appendage of another agency. The money is needed for supplies and for the purchase of books.
10. **Access.** It is essential that with consultation with the Librarian, that the NSA states who has access and under what conditions to the collection. It might mean that some parts of the Library would have more restrictions placed on them than others.
11. The **audio-visual collection** of sound recordings, videos, photographs, etc. be established. This should be divided into two parts: historical and active. The historical collection should be part of either the Archives or the Library. The active collection along with reproduction capability would be better served being under a separate body.
12. It is essential that there be active, frequent and constructive **communication** between all of the agencies involved in the collection and dissemination of recorded material. This would mean the agencies responsible for the libraries, archives, modern records, audio-visual collections, photographs, and electronic data.

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation


Presenter: **J. Michael Kafes**

Place: **Landegg University**

Date: **4 January 2003**

The Worlds of God Index is the property of the
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís
of the United States of America.

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
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Outline Overview

I. Origin & History of Index - 1951. *Hoagg*

II. Hierarchical & Conceptual Classification System Described

III. Issues Underlying Its Completion

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

I. Origin & History of Index (1 of 2)

1951: National Reference Library Committee appointed by National Spir. Assembly (U.S.A.) - to prepare "Master Index" to the Bahá'í Writings. Marian Crist Lippitt one of its members.

By 1954: most NRLC members have left. No proposal re: methodology for indexing.


1954: Mrs. Lippitt writes NSA re: Mrs. Henrietta Emogene Martin Hoagg's indexing system. - 1943 encounter

1956: NSA approves use of Mrs. Hoagg's system.

Mrs Hoagg had studied with

Mirza Abul-Fozl.

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
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I. Origin & History of Index (2 of 2)

1956-1984: Indexing work performed by NRLC.


1984: Mrs. Lippitt passes away; NRLC work lapses.

1987: Index & other NRLC materials found in basement of Fellowship House, Green Acre .

1989-1993: Custody of Index & materials transferred to several Bahá'is.

1993: "The Foundation for the Investigation of Reality" is formed.

The Worlds of God Index




- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

II. The Indexing System (1 of 8)

- A Hierarchical Index of Concepts/Complete Thoughts
- Indexing Occurs for Every Complete Thought
- Examples: (from Arabic Hidden Word #9)

1. *"My love is My stronghold"*
2. *"he that entereth therein is safe and secure"*
3. *"he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish"*

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
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II. The Indexing System (2 of 8)


A Hierarchical Index of Categories of "Reality" - Why Reality?

- The Bahá'í Teachings/Writings are Truth and Reality
- The Prophets of God Reveal Reality to us

Sample quote: (more available upon request)

"Abraham announced teachings founded upon reality, Moses proclaimed reality, Christ established reality and Baha'u'llah was the Messenger and Herald of reality." - 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 313-314

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God ('alam-i-haqq)
- Prophethood / Command ('alam-i-amr)
- Servitude / Creation ('alam-i-khalq)

II. The Indexing System (3 of 8)

Top of the Hierarchy: All of Reality/Existence Composed of Three Metaphorical Worlds or Conditions of Existence

Ringstone Symbol, Lawh-i-Isim-i-A'zam (Tablet of the Greatest Name)


"Say, He Whom God shall make manifest is indeed the Primal Veil of God. Above this Veil ye can find nothing other than God, while beneath it ye can discern all things emanating from God."

Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 131

"Know that the conditions of existence are limited to the conditions of servitude, of prophethood and of Deity"

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 230

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

II. The Indexing System (4 of 8)


Subject Categories Comprising the Three Worlds:

God (D): Deity. - 1 letter abbreviation.

Prophethood (KG): Cause of God (CS), the Holy Spirit (HS), the Will of God (WL), the Word of God (WO), the Manifestation of God (MF) while not incarnate. - 2 letter abbreviations.

Creation (CRE) (examples): the Manifestation of God (MFN) while incarnate, soul during earthly life (SO'L), soul after death (SOUL), materiality (MAT, such as MAT-man, MAT-anm, MAT-veg, MAT-min), rationality (RAT), mankind (MNK), TIME, NUMBERS. - 3+ letter abbreviations.

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

II. The Indexing System (5 of 8)

A Few More Examples of Subjects in Creation:


RLN - *Revelation* of the reality of unseen worlds revealed to man by Manifestations. Baha'u'llah's Writings are RLN.

RLgN - *Revealed Religion (grasped RLN)*; the part of Revelation (RLN) that man grasps and uses.

SCR - *Scriptures*; humanly recorded reports of RLN and activities of Manifestations. The Bible is SCR.

rlgn - *religion* as developed, understood and practiced on earth; RLgN humanized; can include dogmas and rituals with man-made distortions of the original intended Truth.

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation


II. The Indexing System (6 of 8)

All Subjects Have Properties/Qualities to Describe Them

"Know that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing and the knowledge of its qualities. The essence of a thing is known through its qualities; otherwise, it is unknown and hidden." - 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Some Answered Questions, p. 220

What We Can Know About a Given Subject: (examples) names, its origin, actions it takes, actions that it is recipient of, attributes, its objectives, its powers/faculties.

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

II. The Indexing System (7 of 8)


7 Index Cards from Arabic Hidden Word #9 (Part 1 of 2)

<p>love // D:poss My Arabic Hidden Words, #9 "My love is My stronghold;..."</p>	<p>stronghold // D:poss My Arabic Hidden Words, #9 "My love is My stronghold;..."</p>
<p>My stronghold // D:poss(descr) My love is Arabic Hidden Words, #9 "My love is My stronghold;..."</p>	

poss = possessive

Diemy = Deity

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
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II. The Indexing System (8 of 8)

7 Index Cards from Arabic Hidden Word #9 (Part 2 of 2)

<p>safe // SOL-spec:att he that entereth therein is Arabic Hidden Words, #9 "he that entereth therein is safe and secure,..."</p>	<p>secure // SOL-spec:att he that entereth therein is Arabic Hidden Words, #9 "he that entereth therein is safe and secure,..."</p>
<p>stray // SOL-spec:act he that turneth away shall Arabic Hidden Words, #9 "...he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish."</p>	<p>perish // SOL-spec:act he that turneth away shall Arabic Hidden Words, #9 "...he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish."</p>


SO'L - spec = specific

//
soul during earthly life

att = attribute

act = action

The Worlds of God Index




- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

III. Issues Re: Completion

Legacy Index Status

- One Archival Hard Copy.
- Estimated 300,000 cards, 192 index card file drawers.
- Books indexed (through 1984): Hidden Words, Iqan, Gleanings, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Prayers & Meditations, Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, Bahá'í Prayers (Bahá'u'lláh only), Bahá'í World Faith (Bahá'u'lláh only).
- Books not indexed: Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Summons of the Lord of Hosts, Gems of Divine Mysteries, all of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and The Universal House of Justice.

The Worlds of God Index




- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
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III. Issues Re: Completion

Computerization of Legacy Index Status

- Data Entry done from photocopies.
- # of Drawers Photocopied.
- # of Drawers & Cards Entered
- About The Data Entry volunteers
- Microsoft Access
- WWW Interface

The Worlds of God Index




- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

III. Issues Re: Completion

Ways to Use the Index (Past & Present)

- Going to the office of the Foundation for the Investigation of Reality and using the physical file drawers. You can only look up quotes by Subject and Qualities categories, e.g. D:name, SOL.obj, etc.
- using the Microsoft Access file (not all cards entered yet), but you would need Microsoft Access software.
- WWW searches not yet ready.

The Worlds of God Index




- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

III. Issues Re: Completion

Ways to Use the Computerized Index (Future)

- Types of End Users: Webmaster, Programmers, Indexers / Data Entryers, Proof-Readers, Researchers
- Protocols: Passwords & Security Features
- Researcher Customizable Settings (Saved Searches, Bookmarks & Annotations & Comments)
- Presentation Reports & Compilations Generator
- Ways to Search the Database (on next page)

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation


III. Issues Re: Completion

Ways to Search the Database (Future)

- Drill Down Browse
- Any combination (one or more) of:
 - Subject(s),
 - Quality(ies) of Subject(s),
 - Key Phrase words,
 - Author(s), Book(s), or

Traditional Text Retrieval (Word & Phrase Search)

The Worlds of God Index



- Deity / God
- Prophethood / Command
- Servitude / Creation

III. Issues Re: Completion

Some Completion Estimates

- Disk Space
- Time
- Costs



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Abstract:

Library Science analysis of the Bahá'í Library's content and architecture, observations about online information retrieval, and ways to structure digital libraries.

Notes:

Prepared in partial fulfilment for the degree of Master's of Library and Information Studies, McGill University, Montreal, May 2001. Also presented at the [International Conference on Bahá'í Libraries and Archives](#), January 2003. See also a [newspaper profile of the Valedas](#).

See also my [vision statement](#) prepared as a supplement to Valeda's presentation.

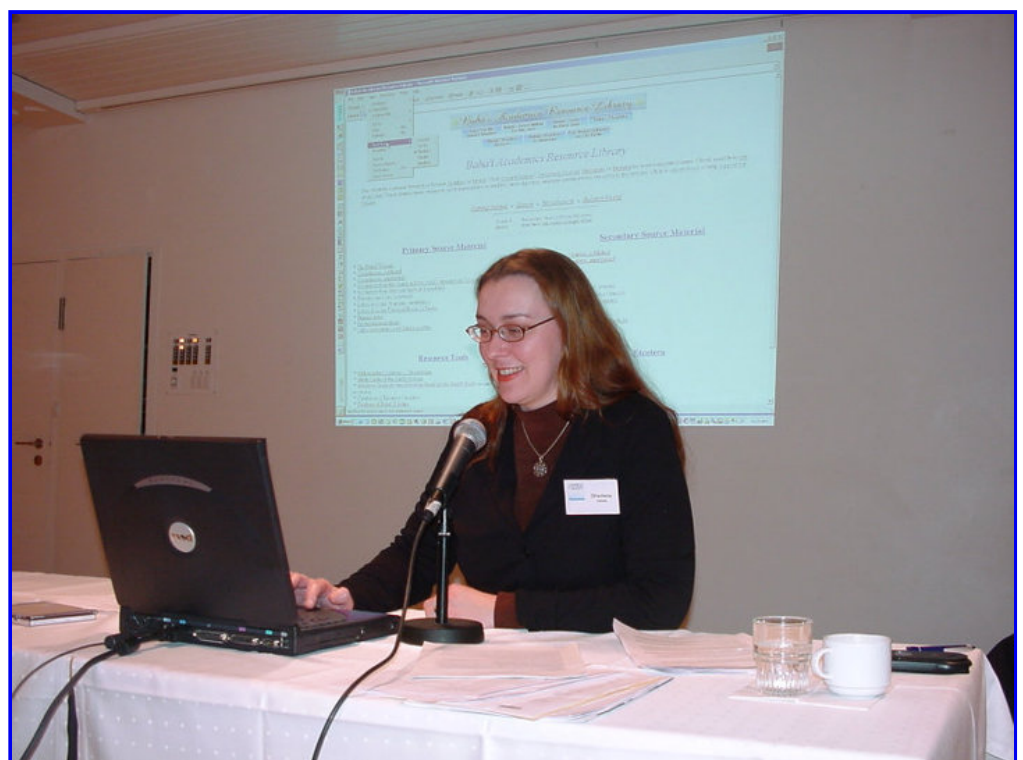
Organizing Digital Collections: The Case of the Bahá'í Academics Resource Library

by [Dharlene Valeda](#)

Kitchener, Ontario: 2001-05/2003-01

1. Introduction

The Internet began as a mechanism for sharing documents and amalgamating projects between specific institutions, and grew into a massive, ever-changing repository for all manner of information, textual, visual, auditory and interactive. Most of this development was accidental, in the sense that no one really set out to create what we can now consider a network of digital libraries, but it has turned out that way. The [Bahá'í Academics Resource Library](#) [since renamed "Bahá'í Library Online" -J.W.] is one example of a digital library which more or less 'just happened', and has now distinguished itself as the most extensive collection of primary and secondary texts for



[click for larger photo of Dharlene's presentation.](#)

Digital libraries, in the case of this paper, can be considered similar to traditional libraries, but instead of storage on shelves, the collection is entirely in digital format. Other than that, many of the roles and functions of a library persist in the digital model, such as the collection, organization, storage, use and dissemination of the information they contain, and they therefore have information policies, however casual or even unconscious. Decisions are made at every stage of the information cycle, although some roles, such as dissemination, are less in the control of the digital librarian (web site manager) than they could be in a physical setting. Even so, the organization of the digital library can very much affect which information users of the library are able to find, and therefore, dissemination is affected.

If the goal of a digital library is to make all the documents it holds available to a reading public, then it must draw upon the expertise and skills of librarianship in order to make all the documents findable. The extent to which this is true for the [Bahá'í Academics Resource Library](#) will be examined in this paper. The various ideas for organization of digital collections and technologies for information retrieval will be reviewed, and their applicability to the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* will be assessed. The goal of this paper is to review the usability of this digital library, and make recommendations based on current research which could improve its usability for current and future readers.

2. Overview of the Bahá'í Academics Resource Library

The *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* started in 1997 as an accidental initiative of one religious studies scholar, Jonah Winters (See [History](#) at the Bahá'í Academics Resource Library site). Mr. Winters's goal is to provide other scholars with convenient access to as much literature and documentation relevant to the academic study of the Bahá'í Faith as possible. Digital versions of published print books, articles, essays and discussion group postings as well as non-text documentation such as maps, images and charts are also available. I'm not aware of any sound files such as lectures being available, but I'm sure that Mr. Winters would be open to the idea, if the talk contained ideas and information not elsewhere available.

Documents are in various formats and states of "cleanliness" depending on the interest and availability of volunteers to scan, edit and proofread (i.e. compare with original print text). Fully formatted lengthy texts are broken down into sections, with links provided for 'previous' and 'next' sections, the table of contents and the section of the web site which contains the book or article. Original page numbers from the print version are included in the files, which is invaluable for discussion and citation of sources. If the books were only in html, and the original completely ignored, it would be harder to refer to pages accurately. A link to an excellent site by Melvin Page called [A Brief Citation Guide for Internet Source in History and the Humanities](#) is provided on the [Some notes on copyright](#) page of the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library*. The Library provides all the tools necessary for scholars to a) ensure that they are using reliable, authoritative sources as well as the tools to b) prove that fact to their readers.

For most files, there is a note regarding the permissions obtained and conditions of use for the text, and further information is available in the [Some notes on copyright](#) page.

There is a lot of activity in the area of digital library research, and much of it is being done by computer scientists who are looking for technological fixes for information organization, searching and retrieval. Börner (2000), Chung et al. (1999), Liu (2000), Maarek (1995) and Shipman (2000) are just a very few examples in this field, which is growing exponentially from week to week. The *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* works with only a minimum of technology (e.g. the basic search engines attached to specific sections), but is very useable nonetheless. The Library has been organized in a very thoughtful manner, much in the same way that giant collections were managed before there were online catalogues. There are a lot of similarities between the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* and big physical academic collections before computer catalogues. The most obvious feature is how it is divided up into relatively small sections. Large universities often had their collections physically divided by department (which would also usually correspond to subject) and each department library would have its own catalogue for accessing the collection. It's quite common that when libraries get computer access for their catalogue, departmental collections are integrated into the main collection.

3. Navigability of the Library

To experience how the Library is structured start at "Primary Source Material." Following through a series of links will demonstrate the hierarchical structure of the site, and how it moves from big to small, while always offering the opportunity to return to the next level up, as well as the original starting point. [Note: the index page Dharlene is referring to here, "Primary Source Material," has been merged into the main [Index page](#). -J.W.]

In this respect, the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* compares favourably with other digital libraries, and might even surpass them in ease of navigation. The survey by Yin Leng Theng (1999) showed that the most common indication of "lostness" in digital libraries was not being able to return to previously visited information. This problem is eliminated in the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* by the care taken in linking documents to the levels above them, as well as the generally transparent structure of the Library as a whole. Also, once the searcher actually reaches the text from a passage of a book, reference is made to the physical copy of the book from which the passage was taken. This helps scholars who use the Library to access their personal collections more efficiently, and those who want to cite from a physical copy of the book rather than an electronic version.

4. Shortcomings of the Bahá'í Academics Resource Library

The main, and quite important, element lacking in the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* is that there is no full subject access to the Library. The items in the Library are not catalogued in the traditional sense, and they don't have metadata with subject headings. The search engines are not operating with the benefit of a thesaurus which would help with problems like synonymy and varying forms of peoples' names. Schatz et al. (1996) present an intriguing technical solution which provides an intermediate level in the search process, allowing the user to refer to controlled vocabulary without having to use a separate document. However, this is an expensive technical solution, absolutely out of the reach of a small volunteer-based project such as the Bahá'í Academics Resource Library.

Much of the work of dealing with vocabulary/search terms problems is left to the searcher, or to the website manager who also functions as a reference librarian much of the time, pointing people to the files they need. The [Bulletin Board](#) and direct email are used for reference requests. Some decent alternatives are, however, available for searchers who need subject access, mainly in the Resource Tools section, and these will be looked at below.

Despite its relative simplicity, and the narrow scope of the subject being collected, growth of the Library is becoming unsustainable. Almost every file that is posted to the library is scanned, proofread, marked up for html and saved to the server by hand. Because of the time-consuming nature of these activities, volunteers contributing to the Library are reluctant to add additional information to the files such as a metadata standard such as [Dublin Core](#), even if they had the technical knowledge to do this. As it stands now, the website manager estimates that there is a 4 year backlog of contributed texts waiting to be formatted and posted to the Library, and that is without the additional task of subject analysis.

The Library is very well organized for known-item searches, which also happens to be the most common way it is used, according to the very informal surveys by Mr. Winters. Some of the fundamentals of information organization are evident in the library. It does bring like items together, in that items in a hierarchy may be by the same author (in the [Sacred Writings](#) section), or of a similar format or nature (such as in the "Secondary Source Material section) [Note: the index page Dharlene is referring to here, "Secondary Source Material," has been merged into the main [Index page](#). -J.W.]. It works very well for helping people find items that they already know exist, especially when they do a very specific search in the correct section using the search engines, but falls short in helping people find items of which they were previously unaware. The [Resource Guide for the Scholarly Study of the Bahá'í Faith](#) by Jonah Winters and Robert Stockman, which is available in the "Resources" section, takes care of some of this type of searching, but the Guide doesn't come close to covering the scope of the Library itself.

As you'll remember from the [History](#) paragraph, the [Resource Guide for the Scholarly Study of the Bahá'í Faith](#) was written before the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* started, and was therefore never intended to be used as access to the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library*. I still feel, however, that it is a very reliable way for scholars to determine which books and articles in the *Library* are relevant to their interests.

My example begins in on the [Table of Contents](#) page of the [Resource Guide for the Scholarly Study of the Bahá'í Faith](#). I clicked on the Table of Contents of the [Annotated Bibliography of Scholarship on the Bahá'í Faith](#). The Table of Contents functions somewhat as a list of subject headings. I chose [section 27: Gender Issues and Equality](#). The write-up for section 27 is in a narrative format. Some explanation of the topic and the Bahá'í perspective is given, then relevant pages from some standard works are listed, as well as referral to entire books, articles and passages from other books. Full bibliographic detail of the works is given in the [Bibliography of All Works Cited](#). The searcher can then, armed with specific details of authors and titles, use the search engines on the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library*. I chose "Sex, Gender, and New Age Stereotyping" by Lata Ta'eed, and was able to find it in the [Published Articles](#) section at: https://bahai-library.com/taeed_sex_gender_stereotyping.

The [Resource Guide for the Scholarly Study of the Bahá'í Faith](#) has an [index](#), which is also included in the online version. It is of very low quality, because it was generated automatically, but there is a friendly, honest

note attesting to this fact. For the online version of the [Resource Guide](#), however, the index is unfortunately entirely useless, because the page numbers it refers to are not included in the main body of the guide. Making the page numbers of this index into links is **not** a solution I would recommend, unless the index were rewritten by a professional.

Since the [Resource Guide for the Scholarly Study of the Bahá'í Faith](#) is the best subject access available on the Bahá'í Academics Resource Library, and since it is not perfect, other options for subject access are provided by the website manager.

5. Alternatives for Subject Access provided by Internet Resources Outside of the Bahá'í Academics Resource Library

The *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* provides access to a lot of resources outside of its own collection. The main starting points are under "Resources" and "Catalogues" [Note: these indexes are no longer online. - J.W.]. There is nothing that provides something like subject headings as well as the [Resource Guide](#), but many of the bibliographies are annotated and can be perused for topics.

The catalogues are actually all bibliographies or lists, and none have subject headings beyond some annotations. There is a Bahá'í university in Switzerland named [Landegg University](#) which was not linked by the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* in the catalogues section, rather only under [Organizational sites](#), but which I thought must have a good collection, so I investigated, and present a short evaluation here for the sake of comparison.

[The Landegg International University Library](#) has a Microsoft Access database of its catalogue available on the web site, but it is not linked from the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library*, for a few good reasons. It offers a title/author keyword search, and pull-down lists of subject headings and languages, which I thought was promising. Unfortunately, the subject headings seem to be the very broadest [Library of Congress Classification Headings](#), with Library of Congress Classification letters only. The list runs right from A to Z in the Library of Congress classification, with additions for Videos made in the normally unused V area, and Holy Writings by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh moved to the front of the classification in Ab, although these are not subject headings, but rather just a grouping by author. (The classification Ac says it is for Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá, but from the results list, seems to actually be for books on the environment.) The list of subject headings is very long indeed, including many subject headings for which there are no, and are likely to never be actual holdings. For instance, it is highly unlikely that the History of the Netherlands will be a big topic collected in this library. However other classification headings are already overfull, such as the History of Asia, because the Bahá'í Faith began in Persia, and the history of the Faith's beginnings are usually studied in conjunction with the history of the conditions in the region.

The main problem, though, is that in the subject headings pull-down under BP, where the Bahá'í Faith is listed in the Library of Congress Classification, there is no subdivision whatsoever. If the searcher chooses this option, they get a very long list of books. It's disappointing to see this, actually, when William Collins at the [International Bahá'í Library](#), the depository library for the Bahá'í world, has provided a very useful [expansion to the BP schedule](#) which can handle all Bahá'í material very well. The [International Bahá'í Library](#) has also developed [Bahá'í Subject Headings](#) for use by Bahá'í Librarians managing Bahá'í collections.

The bibliographic information in the Landegg catalogue is minimal, providing only author, title, language (which the searcher already knows, because she chose it in the pull-down list) and the truncated LC classification number. The *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* as it stands now, without the benefit of a database, is more useful than the Landegg International University Library catalogue for providing lists of Bahá'í literature, and even goes further by offering the full text. The Landegg catalogue seems to be simply a tool for locating the books on the shelf at the university itself, but walking up to the shelves and looking would probably be equally, if not more effective. This catalogue is indeed, insufficient for providing an alternative subject access to the Bahá'í Academics Resource Library.

6. Possible Improvements

Improvement #1.

Apply a controlled vocabulary to each file in the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* and provide this in the metadata

Advantages: This would dramatically increase the efficiency of the search engines currently running on the system, since more meaningful terms could be added to the files than might currently be there, and similar documents would be brought together in searches.

Applying a thesaurus to control synonymy and authorities for name control to the library would be an incredible improvement, since, in the case of Bahá'í studies, name authorities are essential to control variations. Not only is there a tremendous problem with transliteration and diacritics, but individuals also sometimes have a few names associated with them. Just one example would be Montreal-born Mary Maxwell. When she married Shoghi Effendi, the great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, the prophet-founder of the Faith, she was given the name Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiiyyih Khanum, which is subject to many spelling variations.

Disadvantages: Someone would have to go through and apply subject headings to each file manually. Bahá'í Subject Headings are available at the International Bahá'í Library web site, but it's in an automated format, not a text that can be browsed very easily, but it is doable. Ideally of course, the International Bahá'í Library would make its catalogue available online, so that copy cataloguing could be done, thereby eliminating the time-consuming task of intellectually analysing the books, articles and other items in the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* for the best subject headings. It is very possible, however, that the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* has many items that the [International Bahá'í Library](#) does not (because of unpublished items), but still, the ability to copy catalogue would dramatically decrease the amount of time it would take to add essential metadata to the files which correspond.

Improvement #2.

Put the whole library into a database, with each file being available in full text

Advantages: Would aid in searching and inventory of the Library, because author, title and text would be searchable in separate indexes, thereby improving the precision of searching. Searchers could chose different ways to display and sort bibliographic records.

Disadvantages: Each file would have to be manipulated by hand to have the various parts (title, author, text, copyright info, etc.) put into the various fields. This would require many, many hours and extra training of volunteers to not only do this kind of work but to learn to perform according to standards. Highly detailed procedures manual would have to be written.

This wouldn't solve the problem of the lack of subject access, unless Improvement #1 were combined with Improvement #2.

Improvement #3.

Create a completely separate union catalogue of the literature of the Bahá'í world, to which various libraries could add a tag saying they held it and contribute records.

Advantages: Creating a completely separate union catalogue is very attractive, in that it would potentially provide access to all Bahá'í collections, rather than just the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library*, and therefore have more long-term value. It would be like [Materials in Dutch Libraries](#), but with multiple locations for each item, and many, many of those locations would be live links to the digital files held at the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library*. It would have to be in database format, rather than a bibliography format, though, in order to provide the benefits mentioned in Improvement #2. Improvement #1 would of course also be implicit in this project, since to be a proper, authoritative, universal catalogue of Bahá'í literature, the records should be as complete as possible.

A resource like this would serve as a permanent union catalogue which Bahá'í libraries, physical or digital, all over the world, could use in lieu of creating their own cataloguing. They would simply have to look into the catalogue for the items they have in hand, and add their location code. If their item was not there, then they could contribute original cataloguing. It could work the same way that [OCLC Worldcat](#) and other bibliographic utilities do, but on a much smaller scale, because of the restricted subject scope of the relatively few participating libraries. Searchers would not have to use many different tools (bibliographies, lists, guides, etc.) to access many different collections. There would be one complete, comprehensive resource.

The other very attractive advantage is that the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* could be left intact in the format and structure it already has, and which users are currently finding very easy to use. This solution fits with the spirit of the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* in pointing to resources outside itself. Its missions and goals would not have to be altered in any way.

Disadvantages: This would be relatively simple for a team of trained librarians to do, but would not be free, even if the librarians volunteered. It would have to be done on a database, so that searchers could restrict searches to certain fields, which would be separately indexed, thereby allowing searches by title, author, subject, format, etc. Databases which are sophisticated enough to be useful for easy searching of bibliographic information, such as

Inmagic, are far from cheap. Free databases, such as Microsoft Access would be unsatisfactory. In addition, a reliable server would have to be available.

The person hours required to do this would also be considerable. All of the disadvantages of Improvements #1 and #2 are applicable here as well. It would make a tremendous difference, though, if the catalogue of the [International Bahá'í Library](#) would be made available to the union catalogue to form its core, and if their subsequent cataloguing could be copied to it in the future, just as the [Library of Congress](#) holdings make up a very substantial proportion of the [OCLC Worldcat database](#).

7. Conclusions

Digital libraries have emerged recently as an invaluable resource for all kinds of information gathering, but their development has been dominated by attempts to automate all processes associated with them, while abandoning the experience and wisdom which has been accumulated in centuries of library science. There is no technical replacement for intelligent and thoughtful organization, which the success of the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* proves very well. There is much that can be done to improve access not only to that digital library, but to all related collections, if the same energy and dedication which has gone into the *Bahá'í Academics Resource Library* could be applied to the new project of a universal Bahá'í catalogue.

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Bahá'í Academics Resource Library

— begun 1997

prepared for the
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BAHÁ'Í LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES
LANDEGG INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY, 2-4 JANUARY 2003

Dear friends,

This statement outlines the past, present, and near-future of the online Baha'i Academics Resource Library, bahai-library.org. Refer as well to bahai-library.org/unpubl.articles/digital.libraries.html. As everyone's time is precious, it is important to me not to duplicate work that someone else is doing, and you in this audience will know if anyone else is working on similar projects. Please contact me at winters@bahai-library.org if you have any pertinent information, or expertise to share.

This statement is in four sections: intro, staff, funding, and what's next.

INTRO

The Library was started exactly six years ago, January '97, as a small place to put my grad-school papers. I began adding documents that had not been posted elsewhere online, and the library soon became the largest online repository of Baha'i-related texts. I envisioned it as a temporary site, awaiting the emergence of authorized, funded online libraries. Until this happens, the Library will continue to grow.

The Library currently contains 1600 unique items, comprised of 17,500 distinct files, which are categorized into 35 separate collections. Every file is processed by hand, from initial correspondence to proofreading, editing, formatting, and finally classifying and posting. This process takes an average of two hours per document, and book-length works take up to 50 hours. At this rate 100 volunteers and I were able to post an average of one document per day for six years.

However, the Library has reached critical mass and can no longer function within this structure. The size of the site and the number of its users have grown to the point that administration, correspondence, and basic maintenance now occupy all my available time. The next step is thus to freeze the Library at its current size and begin converting the entire collection into a database structure. This will allow for greatly improved manipulation of the data, both by editors and by users. It will streamline the document preparation process, and will allow the Library to be infinitely scalable. I have started taking courses in database design and will begin converting the Library this spring. The conversion process will last over a year, during which time the existing Library will remain as is.

STAFF

I am greatly appreciative of the enormous amount of work people have put into the project. I thank the authors for their generosity in sharing their work and the hundreds of volunteers who put in thousands of hours proofreading and formatting. However, all editing, administration, and training of volunteers has been done by myself.

I have tried to make the Library a consultative, cooperative endeavor rather than controlling it as my own personal project. A dozen online colleagues agreed to participate in a consultative editorial board, but it proved to be a head without a body. Then I set up a managing editor system in which the more

*No subject access to site.
They are working on a subject classifier*

dedicated and skilled volunteers could each select a collection to call their own. Each of these managing editors was given a style sheet, a set of editorial guidelines, any necessary training, and a list of volunteers willing to work under their oversight. A broad support structure was created, including practice files, a listserver, and a bulletin board. These editors could then produce finished, edited documents for posting within their own section of the Library. To encourage participation, editors were given broad latitude to run their collection as they see fit. However, very few volunteers have been adequately dedicated to the task or had the necessary skills, and thus far just one collection, "Provisional Translations," is entirely under its own management. Training numerous occasional workers and administering the infrastructure required proved too time-consuming, and I have not sought further volunteers.

FUNDING

I have sometimes paid people to help with certain projects, and this proved superior to the volunteer relationship in that I could require a higher quality and timeliness. New Library projects will thus be contracted on a for-pay basis (at US\$10/hour), a relationship which produces the best and fastest results.

The Baha'i Library is unfunded, though the generosity of a long-time supporter covers the actual server costs. Other funding options are not apparent. As I am not affiliated with a university, educational grants and government grants are largely not accessible. Selling subscriptions or charging for access to the Library is not an option, for too many reasons to list here. Selling ad space would generate only minimal revenue. Actively seeking funding through donations has also not worked. I welcome funding suggestions!

WHAT'S NEXT

The following six steps outline the process I'll follow over the next couple years.

1. re-examine each and every document, and discard the less scholarly items as judged by a set of specific editorial criteria
2. parse each file into its component parts, e.g. title, author, body, links, etc.
3. add classification data and controlled keyword vocabulary to each file
4. import all files into a database (probably SQL), and convert the URL addressing scheme to the next-generation URN scheme
5. construct a web interface (probably PHP and CSS)
6. edit each document's body for spelling, content, formatting

Once the above steps have been accomplished, the entirety of the Library's content can be sorted, cross-referenced, and interfaced by any number of means. The data could also be exported into other digital archives, accessed by external networks, or imported into other interface programs. At this point and at this point only would further growth of the Library be considered. And for the distant future, I envision opening a physical counterpart to the Baha'i Academics Resource Library, namely a lending and research library open to the public.

Please contact me at winters@bahai-library.org to share information or expertise.

Thanks! -Jonah Winters

metadata - data about data.

Conference photos













