

# Hiding in Plain Sight

The Case for the Authenticity of an  
Alternative Portrait of the Bab

# Aqa Bala's $\frac{3}{4}$ Profile Watercolor Portrait of Bab in Haifa



عمل کمترین اقا بالا در بلد  
اورمی کشیده شد سنه ۱۲۶۶

*The work of the lowliest,  
Aqa Bala, done in the  
city of Urmia (in the)  
year 1266 [1849-50].*

(Signature of the artist)

# Other $\frac{3}{4}$ Profile Portraits of the Bab Begin to Appear



1909/10



1905



1923



1982



~2013



1905



1923

Nicolas Subset



1909/10



Сейид Али-Мохаммед Баб

1982

Atrpet Subset



1982



~2013







SEYYËD-ALI-MOHAMMED  
dit le BÂB

*(d'après un portrait à l'aquarelle)*

*Seyyid-Ali-Mohammed  
called the Bab (from a  
watercolor portrait)*

1905

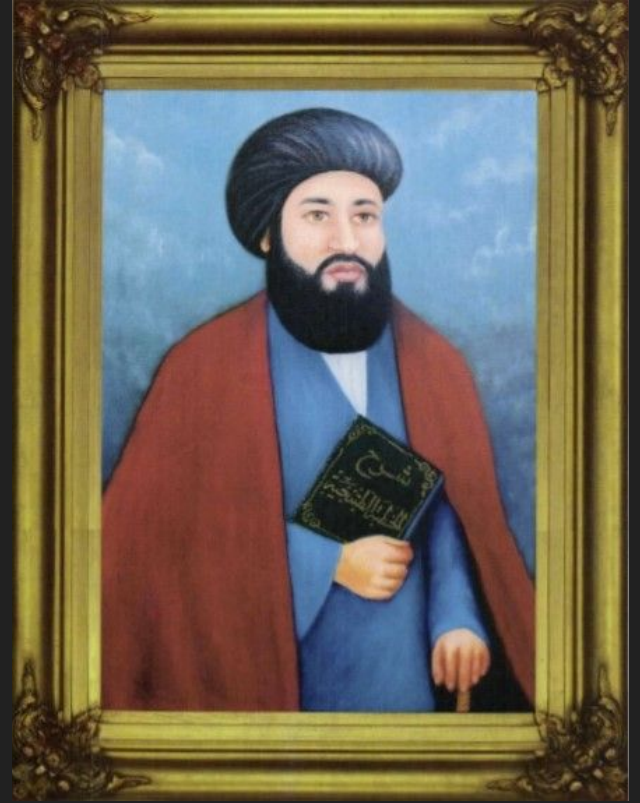
*May I also draw your attention to the fact that the Báb's photograph which appeared in Nicola's [sic] book "Siyyid Ali Muhammad di le Báb" many years ago is not authentic, although it presents great similarity to the original drawings of The Báb's portrait.*

(Husayn Rabbani on behalf of the Guardian (signed) to the US NSA, May 1934)



1905

*Some thought that this drawing [taswir] attributed to the Primal Point is taken from the pen drawing [taswir-i qalami]. But after the pen drawing was visited in the presence of Abdu'l-Baha, it was realized that this is not a representation [timthal] of the Primal Point. Rather, that holy one is younger and more handsome than this, and his blessed turban was much smaller than this. Lately, it has become known that this is a picture [aks] of Hajji Sayyid Kazim Rashti, the son of Aqa Sayyid Abu al-Qasim the silk merchant who was engaged in trade in Rasht. (Kawakib 1:26)*





*Some people have circulated images [suvvar] that are in books and some on photographic paper, all of which are fanciful images [suvvar-i khiyaliyyih] and imaginary drawings [nuqush-i vahmiyyih] and have absolutely no resemblance to the drawing [rasm] of his holiness the Bab. (Kawakib 2:219)*



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ՃԳՈՒՄԱԿ



*Execution of "Bab"*  
*The only portrait of the*  
*author,*  
*in Alexandropol*

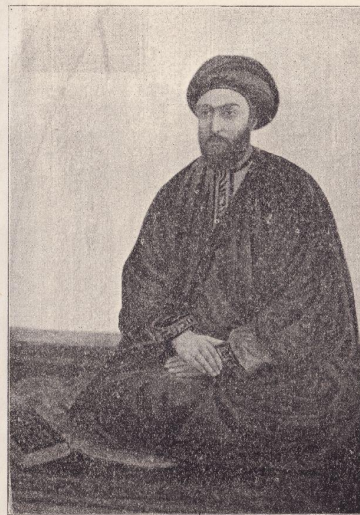


Казнь „Баба“  
Единственный портрет у автора,  
въ Александрополь.



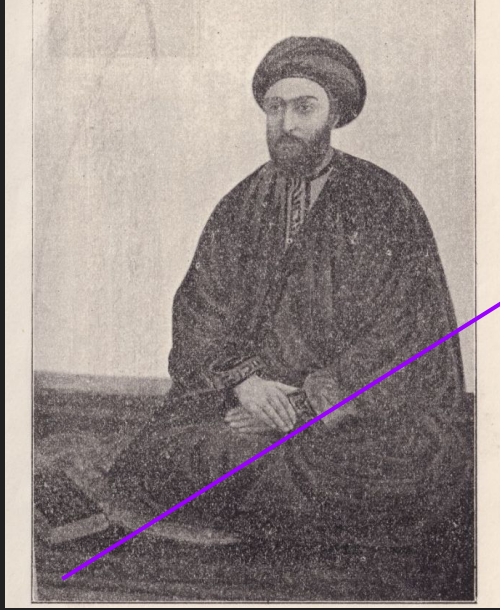
Сейдъ Али Магометъ „БАБЪ“.  
(Работа европейскаго художника)

*Seyd Ali  
Mahomet “Bab”  
(work of a  
European artist)*

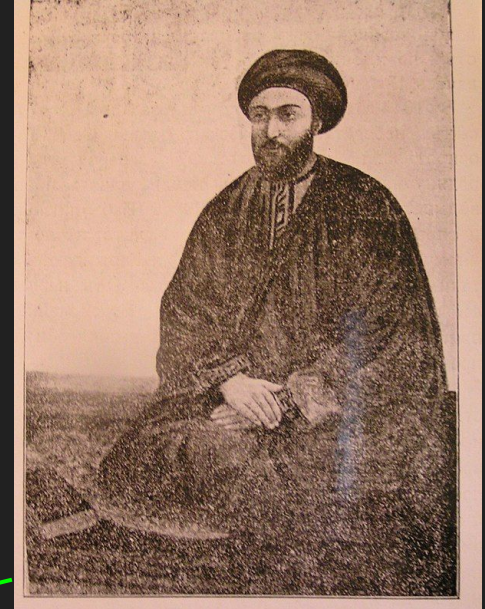
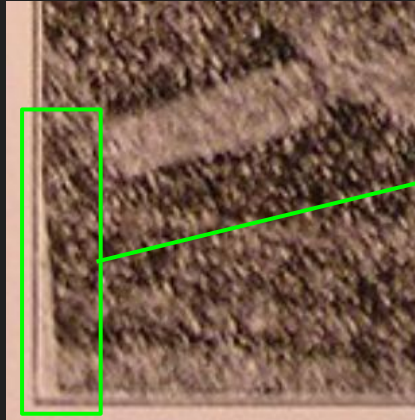
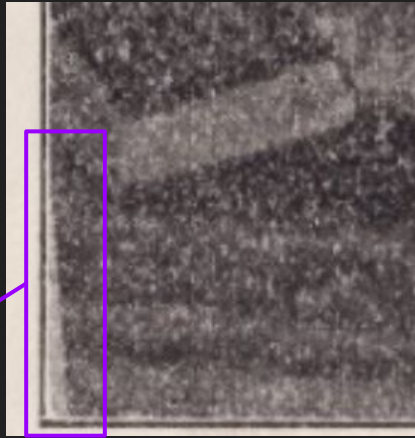


Сейдъ Али Магометъ „БАБЪ“  
(Работа персидскаго художника)

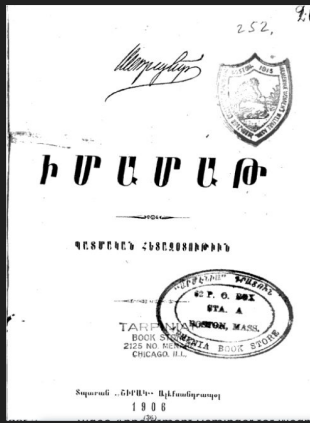
*Seyd Ali  
Mahomet “Bab”  
(work of a  
Persian artist)*



1909



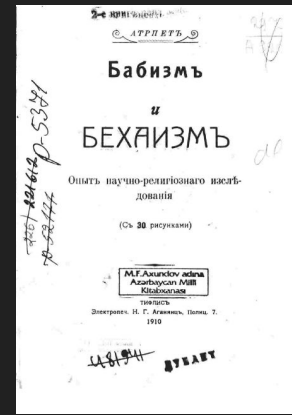
1910



*Imamat* (Armenian)  
Alexandropol (Gyumri), 1906



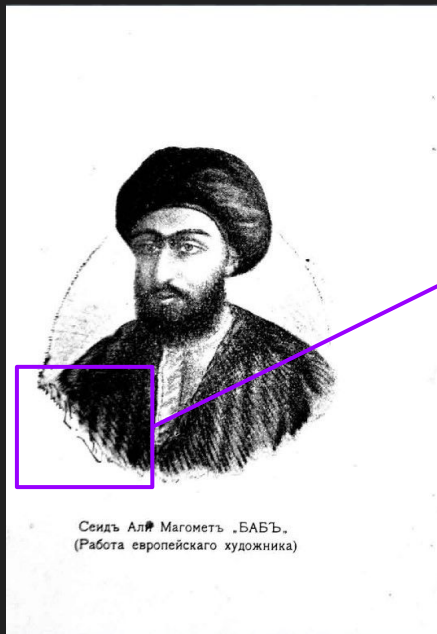
*Imamat* (Russian)  
Alexandropol (Gyumri), 1909



*Babizm i Bekhaizm* (Russian)  
Tiflis, 1910







Сейдъ Алѣ Магометъ „БАБЪ”.  
(Работа европейскаго художника)



„Беха Улахъ”. Гусейнъ-Али Бини Ага Бузуркъ.  
Единственный портретъ въ Акрь.



ՖԱԶԻԼԻ ՄՈՋԵԻԴԻ



Покойный Муджеидъ-Кербалая  
Фазыли Шеребиани





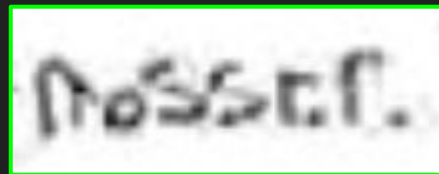
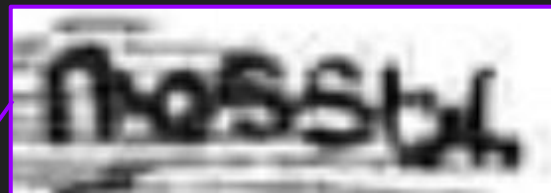
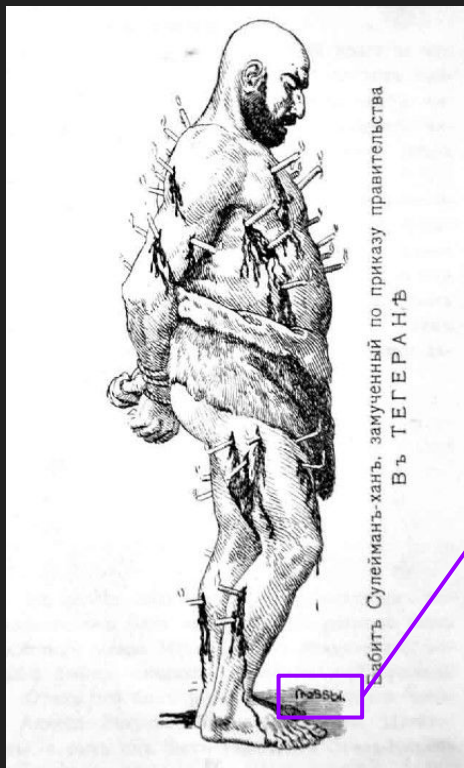
POTTER



POTTER







*Babi Suleiman-khan,  
tortured by order of the  
government in Tehran*



Бабитка „Рустемъ-Али“ Зенджанская  
героиня

*Babi "Rustem-Ali"  
Zenjen heroine*



Бабитка „Рустемъ-Али“ Зенджанская  
героиня

*Babi "Rustem-Ali"  
Zenjen heroine*



Тахирэ читаетъ лекцію, по богословіи тала-  
баитъ (студентамъ) въ Кербелѣ.

*Tahire reads a lecture  
on theology of talabam  
(students) in Karbala.*



СМЕРТЬ „ТАХИРЭ“

*Death of Tahire*



*Nowhere is Baha's portrait or photographic card, since he did not like to be photographed at all. A single portrait has survived in Akka, and even then with a half-closed face so that almost nothing is visible. As reported, he was of average height, pleasant appearance with black pensive eyes and hair and a small beautiful beard. I had heard from Mirza Jelil (Мурзы Джелиль), who lived with Baha for more than two months and received Lawh Ishraqat from him, that Baha's face was so charming and attractive...*

2-е издание

АТРПЕТЪ

Бабизмъ

и

БЕХАИЗМЪ

Опытъ научно-религіознаго изслѣ-  
дованія

(Съ 30 рисунками)

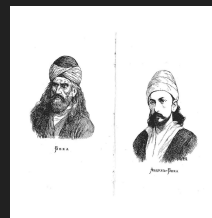
M.F.Axundov adına  
Azərbaycan Milli  
Kitabxanası

ТИФЛИСЪ

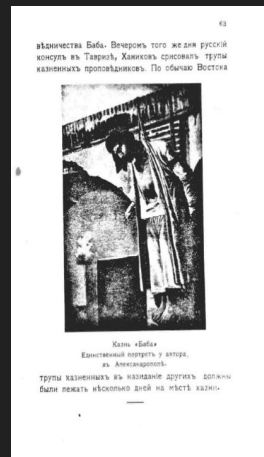
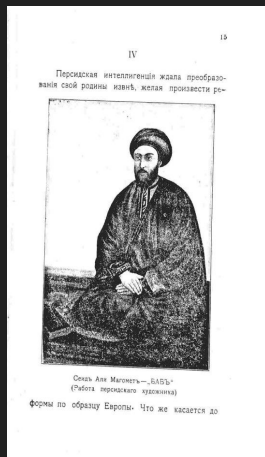
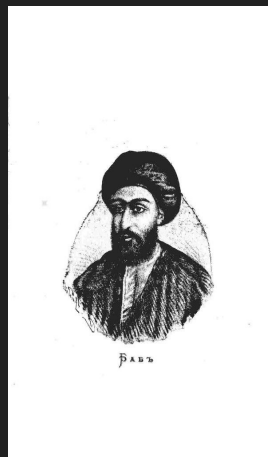
Электротеч. Н. Г. Аганянцъ, Полищ. 7.  
1910

48194

ДУБАНУ



Babizm i Bekhaizm (Russian)  
Tiflis, 1910



*The photograph thou hast sent is not that of His Holiness, the Bábu. A contemptible person hath given it to that hapless Russian author and even taken from him a sum of money in return for lies and slander. Announce this to all the friends.*

- Abdu'l-Baha



Сейид Али-Мохаммед Баб

1982



1982





~2013



1909/10

1982

1982

~2013

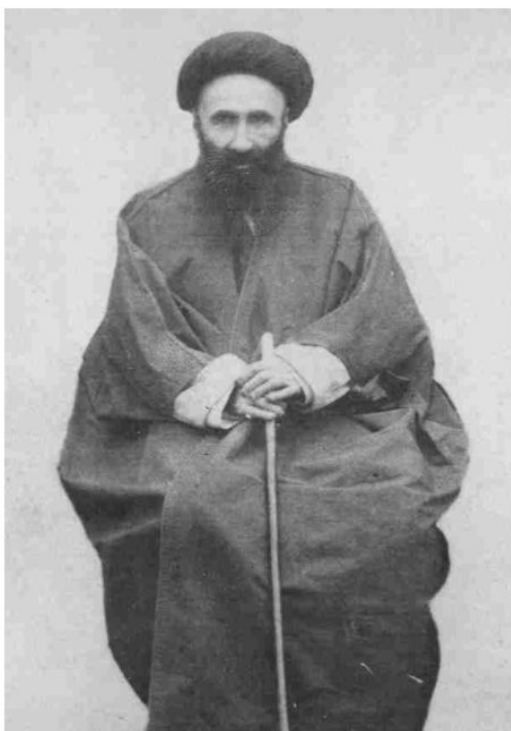
*'[t]he picture supposed to be of the Báb is not authentic at all. He advises you to destroy these as we never under any circumstances circulate pictures of either the blessed Báb or Bahá'u'lláh, and this one is not even of Him.*

- Letter on behalf of the Guardian, June 16, 1951









HÁJÍ MÍRZÁ MUHAMMAD-TAQÍY-I-AFNÁN

A cousin of the Báb  
And a renowned follower of Bahá'u'lláh





1905



1923

Nicolas Subset



1909/10



1982

Atrpet Subset



1982



~2013







1282 (1865)



1280? (1863?)



Shams al-'Imara  
1283 (1866-7)











*Mona Lisa* by Da Vinci

Lisa Gherardini



*Prado Mona Lisa*, likely painted  
at same sitting by Leonardo's  
student



*Isleworth Mona Lisa*, likely by  
Da Vinci and depicting younger  
subject



