Citizens of the World

A History and Sociology of the Baha'is from a Globalisation Perspective

by

Margit Warburg

BRILL

LEIDEN • BOSTON
2006

On the cover: A Danish Baha'i at the United Nations Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995. © Baha'i International Community.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Warburg, Margit.

Citizens of the world : a history and sociology of the Baha'is from a globalisation perspective / by Margit Warburg.

p. cm. — (Numen book series. Studies in the history of religions, ISSN 0169-8834 ; v. 106)

Inludes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-90-04-14373-9 (alk. paper)

ISBN-10: 90-04-14373-4 (alk. paper)

1. Globalization—Religious aspects—Baha'i Faith. 2. Baha'i Faith—History. 3. Religion and sociology. I. Title. II. Studies in the history of religions ; 106.

BP370.W37 2006

2006042601

ISSN 0169–8834
ISBN 13: 978 90 04 14373 9
ISBN 10: 90 04 14373 4

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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PREFACE

Citizens of the World represents many happy years of working with the Baha'is and the Baha'i religion. In both Denmark and worldwide, I have been privileged to enjoy the openness, willing assistanceship, friendship and hospitality of many Baha'is. I am particularly grateful to the supreme Baha'i leadership, the Universal House of Justice, who, as an extraordinary gesture, allowed me to spend many months doing research, field work and archival studies at the Baha'i World Centre in Israel.

It is with humility that I present my version of the Baha'is and their religion with this book. There are two reasons for my humility. One is that the subject is so rich and extensive that I invariably had to leave many aspects incompletely covered. My approach is that of a sociologist of religion not that of an Islamicist or a theologian, and this, of course, is reflected in my choice of subjects that are covered most extensively. The other reason for my humility is that because I am not a believer myself, there are parts of the religion that I can not fathom, although I know that they are central to the Baha'is themselves.

I began writing the first parts of the manuscript for this book at least ten years ago. Over the years, I have extracted material from the book, when it was still a manuscript, and published it in independent papers, encyclopaedic entries and books, mostly in Danish and English. However, when material from these publications is used again in this book, I often interpret it from a slightly different angle, as part of a new whole. The bulk of *Citizens of the World*, nevertheless, is published for the first time in the present book.

In general, I refer to my earlier publications, when it is relevant. The list below gives an overview of longer passages in this book that were published previously (not necessarily *verbatim*) in English:

- Chapter 2: The Baha'i review policy (approx. 2 pages).[1]
- Chapter 6: The history of the Danish Baha'i community (approx.

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[1] Margit Warburg, "Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of Religion", in Curt Dahlgren, Eva M. Hamberg, and Thorleif Pettersson (eds.), *Religion och sociologi. Ett fruktbart möte. Festskrift till Göran Gustafsson*, Lund, Teologiska Institutionen i Lund, 2002, pp. 329–339.

20 pages). Some of the material was presented previously in a shorter version.[2] However, the text was thoroughly rewritten and expanded in Chapter 6.[3] The section concerning the permission given to the Danish Baha'i community to perform legally binding marriages has been condensed from my previous discussion of this issue.[4]

- Chapter 6: Data on the growth of Baha'i communities in Western Europe (Figure 6.1) plus a less elaborate use of the demographic equation (approx. 1 page).[5]
- Chapter 6: Some sociological data regarding the Danish Baha'is (approx. 1 page).[6]
- Chapter 7: Religious seekership and ways of joining (approx. 8 pages).[7]
- Chapter 8: The concepts of knowing, doing and being (approx. 4 pages).[8]
- Chapter 8: Extracts of interviews showing Baha'i globalist attitudes (approx. half a page).[9]
- Chapter 9: The description of *huququ'llah* (approx. 1 page).[10]
- Chapter 10: A brief description of the Baha'i World Centre (approx. 1 page).[11]

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[2] Margit Warburg, "The Circle, the Brotherhood, and the Ecclesiastical Body: Bahá'í in Denmark, 1925–1987", in Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen (eds.), *Religion Tradition and Renewal*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1991, pp. 201–221.

[3] The sections in Chapter 6 on the history of the Danish Baha'i community form the basis for most of a book chapter published in 2004, see Margit Warburg, "From Circle to Community: The Bahá'í Religion in Denmark, 1925–2002", in Peter Smith (ed.), *Bahá'ís in the West. Studies in the Bábí and Bahá'í Religions*, vol. 14, Los Angeles, Kalimat Press, 2004, pp. 229–263.

[4] Margit Warburg, "Restrictions and Privileges: Legal and Administrative Practice and Minority Religions in the USA and Denmark", in Eileen Barker and Margit Warburg (eds.), *New Religions and New Religiosity*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1998, pp. 262–275.

[5] Margit Warburg, "Growth Patterns of New Religions: The Case of Baha'i", in Robert Towler (ed.), *New Religions and the New Europe*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1995, pp. 177–193.

[6] Margit Warburg, "Baha'i: A Religious Approach to Globalization", *Social Compass*, vol. 46, 1999, pp. 47–56.

[7] Margit Warburg, "Seeking the Seekers in the Sociology of Religion", *Social Compass*, vol. 48, 2001, pp. 91–101.

[8] Margit Warburg, "Uncovering Baha'i Identity", in Erik Karlsaune (ed.), *Contemporary religiosity*, Trondheim, University of Trondheim, 1988, pp. 79–94.

[9] Warburg, "Baha'i: A Religious Approach to Globalization".

[10] Margit Warburg, "Economic Rituals: The Structure and Meaning of Donations in the Baha'i Religion", *Social Compass*, vol. 40, 1993, pp. 25–31.

[11] Warburg, "Baha'i: A Religious Approach to Globalization".

In addition, miscellaneous material from Chapters 4, 6, 8 and 9 has been used previously in a number of publications in Danish, including a large chapter on the sociology of religion in a Danish textbook.[12] This material concerns:

- Chapter 4: An explanation of the millenarian aspects of the battles of Shaykh Tabarsi and Babism (6–7 pages).[13]
- Chapter 4: Some of the material on the persecution of the Baha'is in Iran after 1979, including an interview with an Iranian Baha'i woman (approx. 2 pages).[14]
- Chapter 6: Some sociological data on the Danish Baha'is (approx. 1 page).[15]
- Chapter 8: An analysis of the ordinance of the fast, and interviews with examples of Baha'i self-labelling terms (approx. 8 pages).[16]
- Chapter 9: Some of the material on the difficulties associated with being a Baha'i in Denmark (approx. 2 pages).[17]

All together, the contents of about sixty pages of the manuscript for the present book have been published before.

While I was writing *Citizens of the World*, I was asked to write a book on Baha'i for an Italian series of small handbooks on different religions. The book, *I baha'i*, was published in 2001.[18] As a handbook, its primary aim is not to present original research, but instead to give a general, broad, up-to-date presentation of the Baha'i religion. It therefore contains a chapter on the Baha'i history, a chapter on Baha'i doctrines, rituals and festivals, and a chapter describing

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[12] Margit Warburg, "Religionssociologi [Sociology of religion]", in Mikael Rothstein (ed.), *Humanistisk religionsforskning. En indføring i religionshistorie & religionssociologi*, Copenhagen, Samleren, 1997, pp. 135–246. Some of the Baha'i material was used in an earlier, shorter textbook chapter: Margit Warburg, "Baha'i", in Tim Jensen (ed.), *Minoritetsreligioner i Danmark—religionssociologisk set*, Copenhagen, Columbus, 1991, pp. 67–93.

[13] Warburg, "Religionssociologi"; Margit Warburg, "Millenarisme i religionsvidenskabelig belysning" [Millenarism in the perspective of the study of religion]. *Chaos. Dansk-norsk tidsskrift for religionshistoriske studier*, vol. 33, 2000, pp. 9–24.

[14] Margit Warburg, *Iranske dokumenter. Forfølgelsen af bahá'ierne i Iran* [Iranian documents. The persecutions of the Baha'is of Iran], Copenhagen, Rhodos, 1985.

[15] Warburg, "Religionssociologi".

[16] Margit Warburg, "Afholdenhedsidealer inden for baha'i [Ideals of continence in Baha'i]", in Lene Buck, Margrethe Haraldsdatter, Anneline Juul, Charlotte Schönbeck, and Oluf Scönbeck (eds.), *Idealer i religion og religionsforskning*, Copenhagen, Museum Tusculanum, 1997, pp. 101–113; Warburg, "Religionssociologi".

[17] Warburg, "Religionssociologi"; Warburg, "Baha'i".

[18] Margit Warburg, *I baha'i* [The Baha'is], Turin, Elledici, 2001.

the external face of the Baha'i religion in the form of its architecture, its mission and its activities in the United Nations System. The first four chapters of *I baha'i* were condensed from the corresponding passages in the manuscript prepared for *Citizens of the World*. No new information was added and the chapters contain very little primary material from *Citizens of the World*. The last chapter in *I baha'i*, called "Schism, Opposition, and Persecution", was written for the first time, and parts of this chapter were then incorporated in *Citizens of the World*, in Chapters 4 and 5 (about 3 pages).

The manuscript for *I baha'i* was sold by the Italian publishers to a publisher in Salt Lake City, Signature Books, to appear as a small book in 2003.[19] The text for this book was revised, condensed and made less academic in style by the publisher and myself.

In 2004, the completed historical material presented in Chapters 4 and 5 was used as the basis for the writing of a book chapter in French on the birth and development of the Baha'i religion.[20] In 2005, a presentation of my globalisation model, called the dual global field model (Chapter 3), was published in a chapter in an edited book on Baha'i and globalisation.[21]

In the long process leading up to the publishing of *Citizens of the World*, I have received much interest and help from many people, both inside and outside my field of specialisation. This began even long before I wrote the first pages, when I was conducting an interview survey among the Danish Baha'is. The survey included long personal interviews with 120 Baha'is, and it was clear from the outset that I needed skilled student assistants to do this along with me. Eva Boserup, Karen Graversen and Morten Warmind are thanked for their clever and polite tenacity in successfully conducting these important interviews. On different occasions, the two, three or four of us travelled together around Denmark and enjoyed each others' company when finally we could relax and eat dinner after having reviewed and typed the interviews of the day. Most of the interview

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[19] Margit Warburg, *Baha'i*, Salt Lake City, Signature Books, 2003.

[20] Margit Warburg, "De l'islam à la religion baha'ie", in Jean-François Mayer and Reender Kranenborg (eds.), *La naissance des nouvelles religions*, Geneve, Georg Editeur, 2004, pp. 145–182.

[21] Margit Warburg, "The Dual Global Field: A Model for Transnational Religions and Globalisation", in Margit Warburg, Annika Hvithamar, and Morten Warmind (eds.), *Baha'i and Globalisation*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 2005, pp. 153–172.

data were subsequently entered into a computer database, and Rikke Nöhrlind did this part of the work with precision and a never-ending care for guarding against errors.

These interviews—as well as the rest of my study of the Danish Baha'i community—would not have been possible without the positive and interested participation of the Danish Baha'is. The many hours we have spent together have made this part of my professional life a memorable and enjoyable period. I owe special thanks to a number of Danish Baha'is who have supported the work on different occasions: Iraj Khodadoost, Edith Montgomery, Hans Raben, Ulla Rhodes, Leif Schiøler and Fereydun Vahman. Especially, however, I owe thanks to Lise Q. Raben, who from the very first day took interest in my study and supported it. We have spent many working hours together in a warm and studious atmosphere, and she patiently retrieved much valuable information when I asked for it, trusting our common understanding of professionalism. She read the entire manuscript at a late stage and pointed out some errors, misunderstandings and obscurities that I am glad have been amended. We did not always agree on my interpretations—but we both understood and appreciated that our relationship also was that of an insider-outsider relation.

The book is not only about the Danish Baha'is, but also about the Baha'is of the world. Everywhere I visited local Baha'i communities I was met by people who were open, trusting and willing to assist me in practical matters or to spend an hour or two in an interview. Some of these people appear by name in the book, others are made anonymous like most of the Danish Baha'is. I wish to thank them all for their cooperation.

My two periods of fieldwork at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa were made possible only through the positive support of the Universal House of Justice, and their constructive attitude to my many requests has made a significant, positive difference to this book. General support, however, is one thing; another is the indispensable day-to-day assistance that I received from several of the staff members in Haifa, who moreover showed hospitality and a keen interest in my work. I spent much of my time at the Baha'i World Centre Library, and I wish to thank William P. Collins and Louise Mould for their tireless and professional assistance and interest. Elizabeth Jenkerson is thanked for her great and informative help at the beginning of my first stay, and so are the young library assistants, who during a busy

day laboured a little extra to provide me with photocopies of material that I needed. Pamela Carr from the Statistics Department is thanked for allocating many extra hours on collecting useful statistical data, and Judith Oppenheimer for extracting from the archives a wealth of relevant letters and other archival material to and from some of the early European Baha'is.

There is one person among the Baha'i World Centre staff to whom I owe my deepest gratitude and that is David M. Piff. David was always ready with new questions, answers and comments, all underpinned by his immense knowledge of Baha'i matters. His academic interest in the religion pushed him to pursue a Ph.D. study at the University of Copenhagen some years after I left Haifa, and here we renewed once more our friendship, now as colleagues sharing a keen interest in both major issues and telling minutiae of the Baha'is and their religion. We have published several papers together, and it has always been inspiring preparing them.

The staff of the National Baha'i Archives in Wilmette, Illinois is thanked for the help provided when I worked in these archives on two occasions.

I have, of course, discussed my work quite a few times with scholars whose work concerns the Baha'i religion. On different occasions—and in particular at a conference called "Baha'i and Globalisation" held in Denmark in 2001—I have appreciated the suggestions, commentaries and criticism from Juan Cole, Lynn Echevarria, Will van den Hoonaard, Stephen Lambden, Todd Lawson, Zaid Lundberg, Sen McGlinn, Moojan Momen, Wendi Momen, Robert Stockman, Fereydun Vahman and Per-Oluf Åkerdahl. At the same conference, my colleagues in the study of religion, Armin W. Geertz, Annika Hvithamar, Mikael Rothstein and Morten Warmind, contributed with many valuable comments and reflections on the topic, and I wish to thank them all. At that conference, I did not have the chance to meet with Anthony A. Lee, Denis MacEoin or Peter Smith, but on other occasions I have appreciated their comments and opinions in correspondence; and in the case of Tony, I also enjoyed his hospitality twice in Los Angeles, where I again could draw upon his extensive knowledge of Baha'i matters.

At the University of Copenhagen, there is one colleague above all to whom I owe extraordinary thanks, that is, to Niels Kastfelt for his long, warm and enduring friendship and unselfish willingness to

read and comment on my different papers regarding Baha'i and other topics throughout many years. Niels read the entire manuscript of *Citizens of the World* and came up with many shrewd suggestions for alternative approaches and for amending academic or linguistic obscurities. I am most grateful for his efforts and skills.

I have the good fortune of working at the University of Copenhagen with helpful colleagues and department heads supportive of my work. I am not only thinking of the many occasions of economic support for travels and field studies granted by the university over the years, but also of the positive attitudes of colleagues who were willing not only to listen and discuss, but also to substitute for me in classes when needed. I wish to thank my colleagues in the sociology of religion, Peter B. Andersen, Annika Hvithamar, Tove Tybjerg and Morten Warmind, for this invisible and yet important support. My thanks are extended to Una Canger; although she comes from a different field, her positive attitudes and never-failing enthusiasm of scholarship has always been stimulating. I also wish to thank Jane Mortensen for using her skill and persistence as a librarian to unearth some rather difficult bibliographical references. My thanks for this kind of invaluable professional help are extended to the Royal Library in Copenhagen, where I have spent innumerable productive working hours. Other productive working hours were spent at Løgumkloster Refugium, where beautiful surroundings, good food, and warm hospitality encouraged the process of writing. The retreat is also thanked for three grants supporting my stay at different periods.

The Research Council of the Humanities is thanked for grants twice supporting my fieldwork at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa. The Faculty of Humanities and the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies are thanked for a generous grant that allowed me to get assistance for the final linguistic improvements. Deborah M. Licht, who was assigned this task, has more than fully lived up to my expectations of professional linguistic advice.

The Baha'i International Community is thanked for providing several fine, copyrighted illustrations for this book. A number of other institutions and individual persons are also thanked for permission to reproduce copyrighted illustrations. These acknowledgments are implied when I quote the sources of the illustrations.

Finally, I wish to thank my husband Jens and children Rebecca and Valdemar who have supported me and helped me from the

beginning. They have visited almost all the local Baha'i groups around the world together with me, and this has been a positive and memorable experience for the whole family. Valdemar also spent many hours typing and checking figures for the statistical treatment of the interview study, and Rebecca patiently and meticulously assisted in the proof-reading of the bibliography. Jens was challenged by my thoughts of models of Baha'i and globalisation, and he transformed pencil sketches into computer-designed figures with a sharp eye to graphical aesthetics. Jens also checked and proof-read all table material, and he was always present to discuss the many aspects of my work. As in all good marriages, the spouse's support makes a crucial difference, and his support made it realistic for me to write this book. It is only fair that *Citizens of the World* is dedicated to him.

Margit Warburg
Copenhagen, October 2005

CHAPTER ONE

WHEN THE GLOBAL MEETS THE LOCAL

Dreary places can have their moments in history. South of Copenhagen Harbour there is an extensive common reclaimed from the shallow sea. For a short period, a specific location on this largely undeveloped piece of land caught global attention: from the 6th to the 12th of March 1995, the *Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development* was held here in the Bella Centre, a large modern exhibition complex of modest architectural significance. More than 14,000 participants attended the summit, among them state delegates from 186 countries and representatives from 811 non-governmental organisations (NGOs).[1] They were gathered to negotiate the final wording of the *Copenhagen Declaration*.[2] Statements were delivered by heads of states, United Nations officials, and representatives of intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations during the 14 plenary meetings on the agenda.[3] As one of only four representatives of religious NGOs, Mr. Jaime Duhard, a Baha'i from Chile, also gave a speech at the summit.[4]

A few kilometres from the premises of the official Copenhagen Summit, the newly abandoned naval base, *Holmen*, was the scene of the *NGO Forum '95*.[5] Inside a vast hall originally built for the overhaul of torpedo boats, there were exhibitions, restaurants, and separate

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[1] *FN's verdenstopmøde om social udvikling: København, 6.–12. marts, 1995. Beretning* [UN summit on social development: Copenhagen 6–12 March 1995. Report], Copenhagen, Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1995, p. 5; *Social Policy and Social Progress. A Review Published by the United Nations. Special Issue on the Social Summit, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995*, New York, United Nations, 1996, pp. 14–21.

[2] *The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. World Summit for Social Development*, New York, United Nations Department of Public Information, 1995.

[3] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995)*, United Nations A/CONF.166/9, 1995, pp. 96–119.

[4] The four religious NGOs that were represented by speakers were (in the following order): Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; World Council of Churches; Baha'i International Community; South Asia Caucus. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, p. 96. The name of the Baha'i speaker is reported in Ole Helbo, "NGO Topmøde", *Dansk Bahá'í Nyt*, April 1995, pp. 4–6, National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Denmark. (NSA-DK).

[5] The following is based on observations made and material gathered during my visit to *NGO Forum '95*, 5 March 1995.

rooms for lectures and workshops. In the main exhibition area, a host of NGO representatives manned the many exhibition booths. Some of them were very imaginative, some appeared to be based on the philosophy that idealism might suffer if polluted by professionalism, and some were just plain and functional. Flyers, pamphlets and documents were generously distributed owing to the competition for the attention of the public concerning the very diverse views on the topic of the summit—and sometimes also on other issues only remotely related to the summit.

Two of the booths were manned by people in blue sweatshirts with "Bahá'í World Citizen" on their backs, and material with particular Baha'i views on global issues could be picked up here. The Baha'is also had an exhibition in the "Global Village" hall, with the theme "A Focus on World Citizenship and Global Prosperity", and they were the sole organisers of the Children's Forum '95, with four days of activities for children.[6] During the entire period of the *NGO Forum '95*, the Baha'is organised more than twenty workshops, discussions and cultural performances.[7]

Over 250 Baha'i volunteers from Denmark and abroad worked on the Baha'i contribution to the Copenhagen event.[8] The volunteers had their local base in a villa on a quiet residential street in Hellerup, an old, well-to-do suburb north of Copenhagen. Here, they carried out administrative co-ordination, served meals, and provided other necessary support.[9]

The villa, at 28 Sofievej in Hellerup, has been owned by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Denmark since 1955.[10] A passer-by might not notice anything unusual about this well-kept, white stucco house, which was originally built in the 1890s to accommodate a large household. During the evenings or on Sunday afternoons, the street outside the house is often filled with parked cars, and the passer-by might then notice the thirty or more people going into the house, looking as if they are attending a public cultural event. Many

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[6] *Participation of the Danish Bahá'í Community in the Process Surrounding the World Summit for Social Development. December 1993–March 1995*, n.p. [Copenhagen], n.d., p. 11. (NSA-DK).

[7] *NGO Forum '95 Official Calendar*, Copenhagen 3–12 March 1995.

[8] *Participation of the Danish Bahá'í Community*, p. 6.

[9] Helbo, "NGO Topmøde".

[10] *Endeligt Skøde* [Final deed], Title No. 16 *od*, Gentofte by, Hellerup sogn, Sofievej 28, Hellerup, 1 August 1955. (NSA-DK).

kinds of people, families with children, youngsters, and elderly single women are often evident; some of them have darker hair, are shorter in stature, and are more formally dressed than the average Dane. Everyone, however, is a Danish Baha'i coming to celebrate a Baha'i holiday or attending a meeting in this house, which the Baha'is call *haziratu'l-quds*.[11] See Photo 1—Haziratu'l-quds *in Denmark. The Baha'i centre at 28 Sofievej, Hellerup, Copenhagen.**

The 300 or so Danish Baha'is share with a claimed five million other people around the world the belief that the Iranian prophet Mirza Husayn-Ali Nuri (1817–1892), called *Baha'u'llah*, was God's "manifestation" on earth.[12] They also share the belief that their religion will establish a new world order of peace and harmony by unifying all humankind across nationalities, races and religions. For Danish and non-Danish Baha'is, the active Baha'i presence at the Copenhagen World Summit was not just another opportunity to show up—it was a high-priority task reflecting a core message of the Baha'i religion.

Citizens of the World

Citizens of the World is a monograph on the Baha'is and their religion at a global level, at a national level and at an individual level. A broad, academic monograph on the Baha'i religion and its adherents has not been published since Peter Smith's *The Babi and Baha'i Religions* was published in 1987.[13] This book is still recognised as a standard work on the Babi and Baha'i history up to modern times; however, it does not cover to any great extent community life and religious practice among contemporary Baha'is. In contrast, most of *Citizens of the World* addresses contemporary Baha'i and is largely based on primary source material collected since 1979, during my study of the Baha'is in Denmark and around the world. This included half a year of fieldwork at the Baha'i world headquarter in Haifa, Israel. The book

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[11] From Arabic, meaning "the sacred fold".

* All colour photos and black and white photos are printed in two separate units in the back of the book.

[12] "Mirza" is a Persian honorific title that means "Mister", when placed before a name, and "Prince", when placed after a name.

[13] Peter Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions. From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press and George Ronald, 1987.

thereby fills a lacuna in the academic literature on Baha'i, as is apparent in the literature review presented in Chapter 2.

The subtitle of the book, *A History and Sociology of the Baha'is from a Globalisation Perspective*, indicates that I have found it fruitful to analyse the Baha'i religion and its followers within a theoretical framework inspired by current studies of religion and globalisation. At the same time, the book has provided me with the opportunity to discuss religion and globalisation in more general terms. This has resulted, among other things, in a model for analysing transnational, centrally organised religions in a world undergoing globalisation; in this respect, the book can be seen as a contribution to the study of globalisation as such. It is this model that provides the globalisation perspective for many of the analyses of the empirical material.

Many transnational organised religions can be analysed from a globalisation perspective using the model. However, to discuss globalisation in relation to the Baha'is is *also* to grasp an essential aspect of the Baha'is and their religion. The Baha'i religion emerged and was shaped in a period (the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries) when globalisation began to influence economy, politics, and culture significantly in most parts of the world. Furthermore, the Baha'is are globalised in the sense that they live all over the world and share a religious belief in a future, united world order and civilisation.

Baha'is often label themselves "world citizens", for example on badges and in pamphlets, they sing songs about being world citizens, and they persistently suggest that the United Nations system should promote the idea of "world citizenship".[14] The aforementioned blue sweatshirts with "Bahá'í World Citizen" are typical in this respect. The term "citizen" alludes to Baha'u'llah's social teachings, which regard individuals as good citizens who share both privileges and duties in a global "good" society. The Baha'i ideas concerning global citizenship and the like will be presented, of course, but not expounded on in any great detail, because it would entail a more philosophical emphasis than I wish to pursue in this book. This also implies that the expression "citizens of the world" is not an overarching analytical concept—its use is limited to reflect an apt characterisation of the Baha'is in a number of contexts.

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[14] *World Citizenship. A Global Ethic for Sustainable Development*, New York, Baha'i International Community, n.d.

Thus, *Citizens of the World* builds on two premises. The first is an empirical one suggesting that the book meets a need for a general monograph on the Baha'i religion and the Baha'is, with emphasis on contemporary, sociological themes. The second is a recurrent hypothesis suggesting that it is fruitful to analyse the material in the book from a general perspective of globalisation and religion. This perspective is developed in Chapter 3, resulting in a model, called the dual global field model.

Chapters 4 and 5 together provide a general historical-sociological analysis of the Baha'i religion and its development into a global religion. The chapters draw upon the wealth of literature concerning the early periods of the religion. An important part of this literature was published after Smith's book, making a renewed treatment of the Baha'i history topical. This renewed treatment has again allowed for original thematic discussions of issues and phenomena relating to the development of the Baha'i institutions and the spread of the religion.

Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 analyse the Baha'i religion on the basis of a case study of the Danish Baha'i community, allowing an examination of the Baha'is on a specific, representative micro-analytical level. The historical-sociological approach from Chapters 4 and 5 is continued in Chapter 6, but with a focus on the qualitative and quantitative development of the Danish Baha'i community and its relation to the Baha'i world organisation.

In Chapters 7, 8 and 9, the initial diachronic approach switches to a synchronic analysis of the Danish Baha'i community and its members. The chapters address conversion, Baha'i daily life, and resource mobilisation. This synchronic approach is maintained in Chapters 10 and 11, while the focus turns to the general global level, treating important but, so far, less-studied aspects of the Baha'i religion. This includes a detailed treatment of the organisation and working conditions in the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa.

In the course of Chapters 4 to 11, my model for analysing transnational organised religions from a globalisation perspective—called the dual global field model—is applied recurrently with differing emphasis on its elements. The aim of structuring the chapters within a framework of the model is to achieve a comprehensive coverage of the globalisation perspective in a book that is laid out as a general monograph on the Baha'i religion. This should appear from the conclusions in Chapter 12, which also serves as a general summary of the preceding chapters.

The following two sections in this chapter briefly present the Baha'i religion and the globalisation perspective. These sections should serve as a helpful introduction to readers who are not acquainted with these topics beforehand. Since both sections summarise material that is expounded on in the rest of the book, I have kept references to the absolute minimum.

The Baha'i Religion—One of the Old "New Religions"

In the Western world, there are hundreds of different religious groups in addition to the major Christian churches.[15] Most of the groups are tiny and ephemeral, but there are also some that occupy a more permanent and significant position in society. One of them is the Baha'i religion, which has been present in the West since the 1890s. Compared with most of the other relatively new religions of the West, the Baha'is at least seem to be important in quantitative terms: by the end of the 1990s, the number of registered Baha'is in Europe was 30,000–40,000 and in North America 120,000. Furthermore, in contrast to the Muslim and Hindu groups, which have grown mainly as a result of immigration, the Baha'is have been relatively successful in gaining the majority of its adherents among residents of Europe and North America.

On a global scale, the Baha'is have also been quite successful. According to official Baha'i sources, the number of Baha'is has grown from fewer than half a million in the beginning of the 1960s to more than five million in the 1990s.[16] These five million people make up about 0.1% of the world population, so in general, Baha'i members are sparsely spread throughout the world. The Baha'is often claim that they are the second-most widespread religion on earth, quoting

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[15] Eileen Barker estimated in the late 1980s that in Britain alone there were around five hundred groups, and 1,500–2,000 in North America. For comparison, Stark and Bainbridge counted 1,317 "cult movements" in Europe, but only 425 in the United States. See Eileen Barker, *New Religious Movements. A Practical Introduction*, London, HMSO, 1989, p. 148, and Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *Religion, Deviance, and Social Control*, New York, Routledge, 1996, p. 124.

[16] See, for example, "Introduction to the Bahá'í Community", in *The Bahá'í World 1999–2000*, Haifa, Bahá'í World Centre, 2001, pp. 7–18. The numbers reported are probably maximum estimates, including also a certain proportion of inactive Baha'is.

a statement in the *1991 Britannica Book of the Year.*[17] There are considerable regional differences, however, and there are small countries in Latin America and Oceania where between one and ten per cent of the population are reported to be Baha'is.[18] It is, however, part of the Baha'i mission strategy to be present everywhere, even if only represented by a few believers. So within each country, the Baha'is have settled in small groups throughout the country, instead of being concentrated in particular cities.

The Historical Development of the Baha'i Religion

The Baha'i religion has its origins in religious currents within Shi'i Islam during the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1844, a millenarian movement, called Babism, rose from these currents. The Babis provoked the Islamic establishment by insisting that their leader, Ali Muhammad Shirazi (1819–1850), called the Bab, was a new prophet and a source of divine revelations. This implied in principle that the age of Islam was over. The rapid growth of the Babi movement occurred in a general climate of public unrest, and from 1848 the Babis were engaged in a series of bloody fights with the Iranian government. By 1852, however, the movement seemed to have been crushed, and the surviving Babi leaders, including Baha'u'llah, were exiled to various cities in the neighbouring Ottoman Empire, first to Baghdad, in 1863 to Istanbul (Constantinople), and shortly after to Edirne (Adrianople) in the European part of present-day Turkey.

In the exile, a growing tension developed within the Babi community between Baha'u'llah and the nominal leader Subh-i-Azal (ca. 1830–1912), who was Baha'u'llah's younger half-brother. The tension led to a schism in 1866–1867 in Edirne, when Baha'u'llah openly declared that *he* was "He Whom God Will Make manifest". This was the title of the prophet whom the Bab had prophesised would appear in the future to complete his own mission. The majority of Babis soon

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[17] David. B. Barrett, "World Religious Statistics", *1991 Britannica Book of the Year*, Chicago, Encyclopædia Britannica, 1991, p. 299. The reliability of Barrett's Baha'i data is questioned in Chapter 5; however, it is probably reasonably correct that the Baha'is are present in 205 countries, second to the 252 countries in which Christianity is present.

[18] *The Seven Year Plan 1979–1986. Statistical Report*, Haifa, The Universal House of Justice, 1986, pp. 48–51. (BWC).

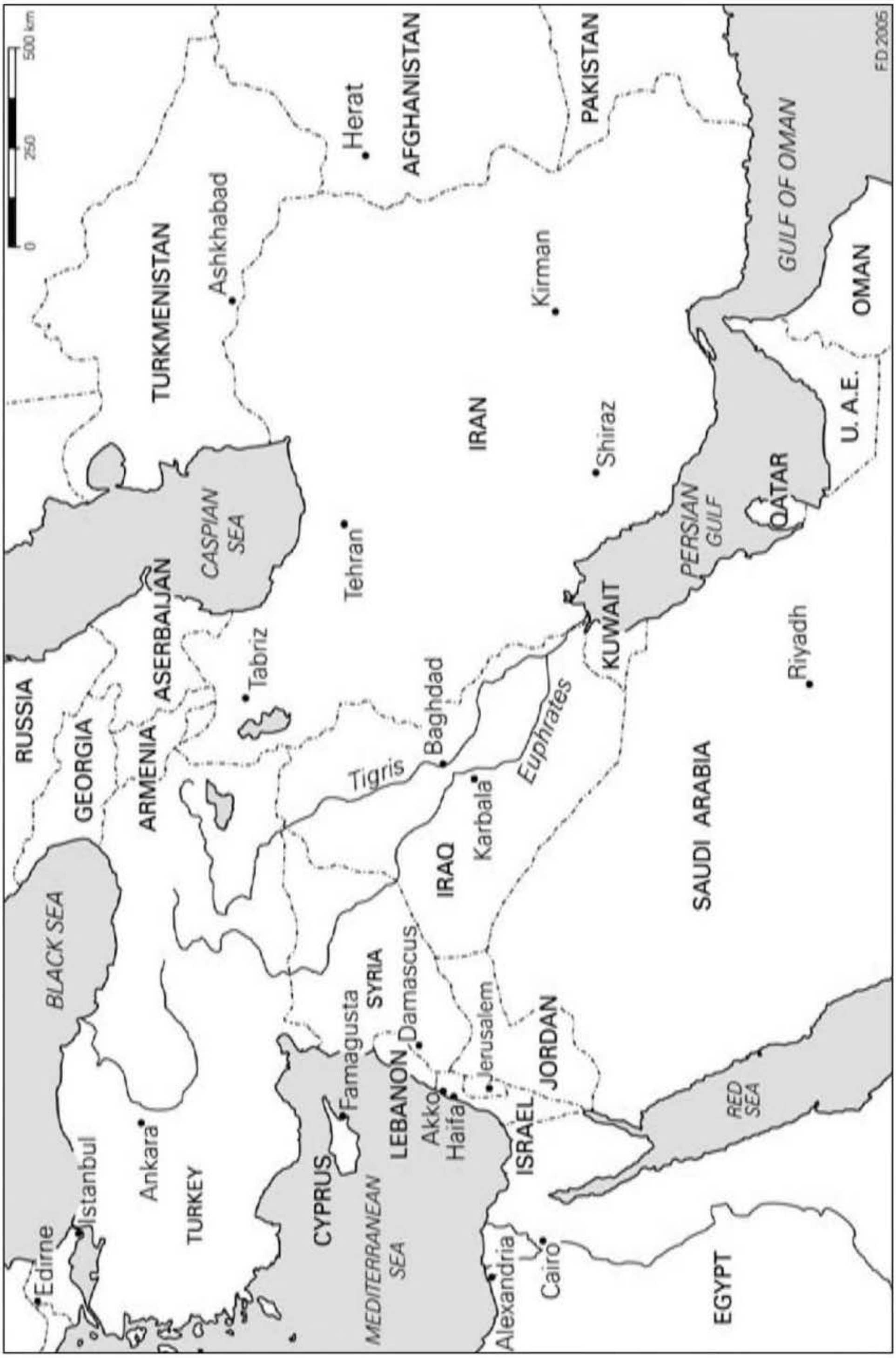
seemed to accept Baha'u'llah as their new prophet, while a minority of the Babis, called the Azalis, sided with Subh-i-Azal. The Azalis never developed further, but disappeared as a movement in the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1868, the unrest following the schism in the Babi community in Edirne motivated the Ottoman government to exile Baha'u'llah, with his family and some of his followers, to Akko (Acre), north of Haifa in present-day Israel. Baha'u'llah remained there for the rest of his life, continuously working to change the Babi heritage into a new religion, Baha'i.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the administrative centre of the Baha'i religion moved to its present location in Haifa, where the Baha'is had begun in the 1890s to buy land on the slopes of Mount Carmel. Through systematic mission activity, initiated by Baha'u'llah's son and successor, Abdu'l-Baha (1844–1921), Baha'i gradually expanded outside its Muslim environment. Baha'i missionaries went to the USA and Canada in the 1890s and to Western Europe around 1900. Effective growth in Europe did not occur, however, until after World War II, when Abdu'l-Baha's grandson and successor, Shoghi Effendi (1897–1957), organised a Baha'i mission in Europe, assisted by many American Baha'is who came to Europe as Baha'i missionaries or pioneers, in the Baha'i terminology.

Figure 1.1 below portrays a brief chronology of Babism and Baha'i, showing the names of the leaders and some major historical events during the first expansive phase of the Baha'i religion. Shoghi Effendi was the last individual to lead the Baha'is. When he died in 1957, an interim collective leadership established the present supreme ruling body of the Baha'i religion, the Universal House of Justice.

The fact that the great majority of Babis recognised the theophanic claims of Baha'u'llah constitutes a strong element of continuity between Babism and Baha'i. The Bab occupies a central and visible position in the Baha'i religion, and his remains are buried in a splendid golden-domed shrine on the slope of Mount Carmel in Haifa. The Shrine of the Bab is considered the sacred centre of the world, and it is the architectural centrepiece of a remarkable complex of terraces and gardens, which also include the Baha'i administrative headquarter, the Baha'i World Centre. The year 1844, when the Bab made his declaration, is the year one according to the Baha'i calendar, which was devised by the Bab. The New Year begins on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Kirman
Shiraz
IRAN
Tehran
Tabriz
Tigris
Baghdad
Euphrates
Karbala
IRAQ
KUWAIT
QATAR
U.A.E.
OMAN
PERSIAN GULF
GULF OF OMAN
SAUDI ARABIA
Riyadh
SYRIA
Damascus
Famagusta
LEBANON
Akko
Haifa
Jerusalem
JORDAN
ISRAEL
CYPRUS
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
RED SEA
Alexandria
Cairo
EGYPT
Ankara
TURKEY
Istanbul
Edirne
FD 2005

Middle East

Figure 1.1. *Chronology of Babi and Baha'i leadership*

the traditional Iranian New Year, *Naw-Ruz*, at the vernal equinox. For example, the year 163 BE (Baha'i Era) begins on 20 March 2006 at sunset and ends on 20 March 2007 at sunset.[19]

The Baha'i Organisation

The Baha'is are well organised, with democratically elected bodies in a hierarchy of three levels. The basis is the local spiritual assembly, which is responsible for all the affairs of the local Baha'i community of a town or municipality. At the national level, the Baha'is elect a nine-member national spiritual assembly; the election takes place at an annual national convention by voting among the delegates. The world leadership is in the hands of the Universal House

[19] A Baha'i year, therefore, in principle should be represented in the standard Gregorian calendar by two dates, here 2006–2007. For the sake of convenience, only one standard year is given, for example, in graphs or tables; it refers to the Baha'i year, which *begins* on 20 March at sunset in that year. Thus, 2006 represents 163 BE.

of Justice, a body of nine men elected for five-year periods by delegates (only men are eligible). The Universal House of Justice has the supreme religious and administrative authority in the Baha'i religion. It is seated in the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa.

The Baha'i organisation is called the Administrative Order and has doctrinal significance as a guideline for a future politico-religious world order, the *World Order of Baha'u'llah.* Its establishment and present form is discussed in greater depth in Chapters 5 and 10. There are no formal clergy or other ritual specialists in Baha'i, and the local Baha'i communities themselves organise their religious meetings and services.

The Baha'i Communities

The Baha'i communities of today share a distinct "Baha'i-ness", and it is easy to recognise the similarities of the different local Baha'i communities, regardless of their nationalities. The Baha'i centres are well-kept, neat houses or flats, often situated in middle-class or even more affluent neighbourhoods. Inside, there are the same pictures of the characteristic nine-angled Baha'i temples, the same calligraphy, the same literature, and the same way of arranging flowers on a lace doily situated below a picture of Abdu'l-Baha, showing him as a white-bearded man wearing a white turban and long mantle. See Photo 2—*The main room of the Baha'i Centre in Palermo, Sicily.*

The Baha'i leadership does not demand this conformity, and local differences are also visible, yet the air of a common, international Baha'i culture is salient. In most locations, the majority of the Baha'is are native to the country, but there is usually a significant contingent of foreign Baha'is as well, staying for shorter or longer periods in the country. In all these respects, the Danish Baha'i community is typical of Baha'i communities of Western Europe.

Baha'is do not have a reputation for zealous or colourful mission activity, and they are not accused of brainwashing or dubious economic transactions. The Baha'is do not engage in the controversial spending and fund-raising practices that characterise some religious groups; all Baha'i activities are exclusively financed through voluntary donations from the Baha'is themselves, and the Baha'is do not accept economic support from non-Baha'is. It is therefore hardly surprising that in Europe and North America Baha'is are not surrounded by controversies that result in headlines in the tabloid press. Indeed, it

is hard to find any public animosity against them in the West. This is in contrast to the situation in most Muslim countries, in particular Iran, where the Baha'is are not only regarded as heretics by the Muslim *ulama*, but also as representatives of a Western outlook that is perceived as a threat to traditional Islamic values.

Expatriate Iranian Baha'is make up a considerable percentage of most Western Baha'i communities. In Iran, the Baha'is constitute the largest religious minority, counting between 0.5 and 1 per cent of the Iranian population. The Baha'is of Iran have regularly been persecuted and even killed for their religious beliefs. In the first years after the Iranian revolution in 1979, the Khomeini regime orchestrated ruthless persecutions resulting in widespread destruction of Baha'i property and about two hundred killings. This made the Baha'is known to the public in the West, and for once, their condition roused political interest.

Contemporary Baha'i Beliefs and Religious Practices

The following exposition of contemporary Baha'i beliefs and religious practices reflects how the religion is presented officially by the Universal House of Justice, for example, in *The Bahá'í World* or in Baha'i dictionaries and other literature that comply with the official presentation of the religion. The exposition is, therefore, an idealised abstraction that does not include individual variations or variations due to time and place. Such variations are ubiquitous—in this respect, Baha'is are no different from followers of other religions.

The Baha'i faith is strictly monotheistic. According to Baha'i doctrines, the founders of major scriptural religions, such as Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, the Bab and Baha'u'llah, are human manifestations of an invisible and indescribable deity who is called God by the members of these religions. Evil is not a principle in itself, but is explained as the absence of good, as darkness is the absence of light.

The belief in Baha'u'llah as a manifestation of God is a fundamental tenet of Baha'i, and it is precisely this belief which places Baha'i outside the realm of Islam, both in the eyes of the Baha'is and in the eyes of the Muslims. It is parallel to the fundamental tenet dividing Jews and Christians, which is the belief in the divine nature of Jesus as Christ. Abdu'l-Baha is not a new manifestation of God, but he is recognised by the Baha'is as the authoritative and divinely

inspired interpreter of his father's writings, and he therefore has a special position above that of an ordinary man.

The writings of the Bab, Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha make up the Baha'i canon of sacred texts. These texts were written in Arabic or Persian; unlike the Muslim view of Arabic, however, the Baha'is do not consider Arabic and Persian holy languages, and Shoghi Effendi translated many of his predecessors' writings into English. Excerpts of Baha'u'llah's writings have been translated by the Baha'is into more than eight hundred different languages.[20] Among other things, this can be seen as quantitative evidence of the universalistic aspirations of Baha'i.

According to Baha'i teachings, every human being has a soul, and it is the possession of the human soul that distinguishes human beings from animals. Every individual has free will and is responsible for his or her behaviour, which means that fate is not pre-determined. Human souls exist because of God's love, and in return, humans must love God. The human soul has the gift of rational thinking and may be able to approach God by seeking an ever-increasing understanding of and love for the attributes of God. It is a Baha'i principle that every human being has the right and duty to pursue truth independently.

The Baha'i concept of the human soul is that the soul comes into existence at the time of conception and continues to exist after biological death. It is not reincarnated in another body, nor does it go to Heaven or Hell. However, these notions may be used to characterise the status of the soul in its new non-material form of existence in the "Abha Kingdom". In the Abha Kingdom, the soul may progress until it attains God's presence. Prayers for the dead may affect the status of the soul, but its status is also determined by how the person lived his or her life on earth. However, concerns about individual salvation of soul or body, either here or in the hereafter, do not occupy a prominent position in the Baha'i teachings. The Christian idea of original sin has no counterpart in Baha'i doctrines.

The Baha'i ethos is this-worldly and collective, being true to its origin in Islamic millennialism. The core activities in Baha'i religious life are the obligatory daily prayers and reading of the sacred texts, but it is also important to participate in communal religious life, to donate to the cause, and of course to proselytise among the vast sea

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[20] *The Bahá'í World 1998–99*, p. 317.

of unbelievers. Prayer and meditation are acknowledged ways of reaching spiritual insight, whereas spiritual techniques like asceticism or self-torture are rejected. Baha'i law forbids its followers to drink alcohol and take drugs, and it prescribes a yearly fasting period, but otherwise the Baha'is have retained none of the dietary prohibitions of Islam. The prescribed collective rituals are few: a brief wedding vow to be said aloud and a communal prayer for the dead; in fact, the Baha'is generally discourage the development of collective worship into formalised rituals.

All together, a comparison of the central doctrines of Baha'i and of Shi'i Islam shows both continuity and significant breaks. With regard to religious practice, central rituals resemble their Islamic counterparts, primarily prayer, fasting, pilgrimages, and visitations to holy places such as tombs.

Baha'i law has also retained many Islamic characteristics. The law contains prescriptions for daily prayers and the rules of fasting in the period of the fast, but it also elaborates on regulations for inheritance and parts of civil law, for the payment of tax, and for many other aspects of community affairs among the Baha'is. Baha'i law resembles the Muslim *shari'a* by being divinely ordained and by regulating not only religious life but also what would be considered secular life in a Western society. However, unlike some radical Muslim groups, the Baha'is do not insist that Baha'i law should pre-empt civil law; on the contrary, the Baha'is are obliged by Baha'i law to obey the government and the laws of the country. The Baha'i position is therefore that many parts of Baha'i law can only take effect when most of mankind have become Baha'is, and the future Baha'i World Order has been created.[21]

Social Teachings

According to their central doctrine of the unification of humankind, the Baha'is claim a number of social and ethical principles that might be called liberal from a North American political perspective. For example, official Baha'i doctrine condemns racial prejudice and stresses the principle of equal rights and opportunities for men and women. Baha'is insist on compulsory education and the elimination of the extremes of poverty and wealth.

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[21] William S. Hatcher and J. Douglas Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith. The Emerging Global Religion*, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1989, p. 140.

In their personal lives, Baha'is are expected to observe the general moral codes of the society within which they live. They praise cultural pluralism, and pictures of people representing the most diverse ethnic groups are favourite Baha'i icons, see Photo 3—*Baha'i icons on the web*. They are also actively engaged in environmental issues, and Baha'i views are clearly consonant with major trends in religious environmentalism.[22]

Globalisation and the Baha'i Message

Globalisation has become the standard term for describing how humanity in recent decades has experienced a historically unique global interdependency among people and nations. The political aspects of this global interdependency of humanity was certainly acknowledged by the participants of the Social Summit, because the word globalisation and the issues raised by globalisation are specifically mentioned in one of the paragraphs of *The Copenhagen Declaration*.[23]

Globalisation is more than its popular image of instant electronic communication and Western fears of a *jihad* against the familiar comfort of McWorld.[24] Globalisation is also more than internationalisation; the uniqueness of globalisation among other things is linked to the rapidly increasing supraterritorial connections between people and societies.[25] This "deterritorialisation" follows from the present, rapid integration of the world economy, facilitated by revolutionary innovations and growth in international transport and electronic communications.[26] Globalisation is multi-dimensional, encompassing different political, economic, and cultural trends in a world that is becoming "a single place", as one of the prominent globalisation scholars, the sociologist of religion Roland Robertson, has phrased it.[27]

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[22] Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, London, Sage, 1994, pp. 206–224.

[23] The relevant paragraph (p. 5) is quoted in full in the beginning of Chapter 3.

[24] The sentence alludes to the book by Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, New York, Times Books, 1995.

[25] Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization. A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000, pp. 41–61.

[26] Scholte, *Globalization*, pp. 99–101.

[27] Roland Robertson, "Globalization, Modernization, and Postmodernization. The Ambiguous Position of Religion", in Roland Robertson and William R. Garrett (eds.), *Religion and Global Order. Religion and the Political Order*, vol. 4, New York, Paragon House, 1991, pp. 281–291 (quotation p. 283).

Globalisation has significantly changed the rules and topics of international politics. Human rights, environmental problems, ethnic conflicts, health care, sexual equality and social development are examples of problems that were of little concern to classical diplomacy, because they were considered internal affairs. However, the series of eight United Nations world conferences from 1990–1996 demonstrated that with globalisation such "residual problems" were elevated from their traditional obscurity in international politics. For example, the *opening* paragraph of the *Copenhagen Declaration* reads:

> For the first time in history, at the invitation of the United Nations, we gather as Heads of State and Government to recognize the significance of social development and human well-being for all and to give to these goals the highest priority both now and into the twenty-first century.[28]

The sociologist Peter Beyer, another scholar studying globalisation, coined the above-mentioned term "residual problems" and noted that they present political opportunities to organisations and movements, including religious organisations working transnationally.[29] By using, in particular, the United Nations system, such organisations and movements may become recognised as players on the international political scene, where they can pursue their goals and offer their solutions.[30] Thus, more than 500 NGOs, including the Baha'i International Community, have consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC.[31] Usually, the solutions suggested by these transnational organisations concern humankind as a whole, which means a more or less conscious sharing of the allegory that "the earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens", to quote yet another globalisation thinker, who was introduced above: Mirza Husayn-Ali Nuri, better known as Baha'u'llah.[32]

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[28] *The Copenhagen Declaration* . . ., p. 3.

[29] Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, pp. 105–107.

[30] Scholte, *Globalization*, pp. 151–155.

[31] *Directory of Non-Governmental Organizations Associated with the Department of Public Information*, New York, United Nations, 1995. Other religious NGOs are for example: Baptist World Alliance, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, a considerable number of Catholic organisations, Conference of European Churches, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Lutheran World Federation, Muslim World League, The Salvation Army, Soka Gakkai International, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Nations of Yoga, World Jewish Congress, World Muslim Congress.

[32] [Baha'u'llah], "Lawḥ-i-Maqṣúd (Tablet of Maqṣúd)", in [Baha'u'llah], *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Wilmette, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1988, pp. 159–178 (quotation p. 167).

The call for the unification of the world has always been one of the most important parts of the Baha'i message. The Baha'is see this unification process as the culmination of the spiritual development of humankind achieved through the successive revelations of God's will in the prophecies of the different religions. In Baha'i thinking, all the major religions of the world therefore represent different stages in the spiritual evolution of human society towards a unified world civilisation.

But the unification is not only a call. The Baha'is share with other utopian thinkers a belief in historical determinism and in their own historical role. Thus, the Baha'is perceive themselves as the vanguard of a continuing historical process, which is destined to result in a new golden age for humankind, the "Most Great Peace". This process is aided by God's finger in history:

> The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require.[33]

God may provide the remedy, but it is up to people to take it, and Baha'u'llah urged for active involvement in society. Thus, he continued:

> Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.[34]

The "Most Great Peace" can only be accomplished when the majority of people have become Baha'is. It is believed, however, that it is to be preceded by the "Lesser Peace", in which the nations of the world reach an agreement to abolish war and enter into a political unification of the world, consonant with the Baha'i call for the unification of humankind.

In several aspects, Baha'u'llah's thoughts on religion, state and society were revolutionary in relation to traditional Islamic social and political thinking in the second half of the nineteenth century, but in tune with reform thoughts among modernist Middle East intellectuals

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[33] [Baha'u'llah], *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, Wilmette, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1983, p. 213. The quotation and its continuation below are also rendered in the official Baha'i yearbook, *The Bahá'í World 1994–95*, Haifa, Baha'i World Centre, 1996, p. 19.

[34] [Baha'u'llah], *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 213.

and dissident governmental circles.[35] However, Baha'u'llah went further than advocating social and political reform in Iran and the Ottoman Empire, the two major powers dominating the Middle East at the time. Baha'u'llah addressed the entire world, offering a new religion that aimed at accommodating all the religions of the world, forming a future peaceful and prosperous world community, united politically and religiously. On the one hand, this new religion represented a continuation of millenarian ideas within Islam since the tenth century. On the other hand, its *shari'a* was also based on important ideals of modernity, such as democratic government, international law, religious liberty, and a break with traditional gender roles.[36] In particular, Baha'u'llah's social vision was remarkable for its time, through its "strong globalist perspective" and his goal of "achieving a manageable, ongoing international peace".[37] James Beckford adds that, in some sense, the faith of Baha'u'llah "foreshadowed globalization, with its emphasis on the interdependence of all peoples and the need for international institutions of peace, justice and good governance".[38]

Also today, the Baha'is see themselves as active participants in the process of globalisation, following their own strategy for promoting the religious and political unification of the world. Two high-ranking Baha'i authors have commented on the Baha'is' engagement in issues that many may find "political":

> While most people would probably agree that this Bahá'í goal [the unification of the world] is a worthy one, many would regard it as utopian to believe that such an ideal society could ever be actually achieved. Moreover, many people feel that religion should be concerned exclusively with the inner development of the individual, and they are surprised to find a faith that places so great an emphasis on mankind's collective life, on forms of social organisation, and on the achievements of social goals.[39]

The Islamic heritage in the Baha'i religion is easily recognisable, and the whole concept of including detailed guidelines for good govern-

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[35] Juan R. I. Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium. The Genesis of the Baha'i Faith in the Nineteenth-Century Middle East*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998.
[36] Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium*, pp. 1–15.
[37] Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium*, p. 110.
[38] James A. Beckford, "Religious Movements and Globalization", in Robin Cohen and Shirin M. Rai (eds.), *Global Social Movements*, London, The Athlone Press, 2000, pp. 165–219 (quotation p. 175).
[39] Hatcher and Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith*, p. 130.

ment in religious texts is Quranic above all. Yet, on crucial points, the Baha'i religion represents one of the most profound breaks with Islam. The claim that Baha'u'llah is a prophet and a "Manifestation of God" means that both Muslims and Baha'is regard the religion as being beyond the pale of Islam. Baha'u'llah's views on society and world order also broke with other fundamental tenets of Islam, such as the Islamic juridical distinction between believers and non-believers.[40]

Citizens of the World—Scope and Contents

Considering the relative age and quantitative importance of the Baha'i religion worldwide, there are surprisingly few research monographs on modern Baha'i. As can be seen in the literature survey presented in Chapter 2, most studies of Baha'i deal with the emergence of the religion (and its predecessor Babism) in its Iranian context. Outside the Iranian setting, several authors have treated the early historical expansion of Baha'i in the West, whereas there is more limited coverage of the period after 1960, a time in which the largest expansion of the Baha'i religion has taken place.

The Globalisation Perspective

Relevant theories of religion and globalisation are discussed in Chapter 3, where I develop a general model for analysing transnational religious organisations from a globalisation perspective. The model owes much to Roland Robertson's model of the "global field", which is discussed therefore in some detail. My model is called the dual global field model, and it is used to structure the presentation and analysis of the material in the remaining chapters of the book.

The dual global field model operates with four Baha'i constituents: the *individual*, the *national Baha'i communities*, the *international Baha'i organisations* and *the Baha'i world.* These four constituents make up a square representing the Baha'i global field. Outside the Baha'i global field, there is another square, the general global field, and the two global fields share the *individual*, who is an actor in both global fields. The other three constituents of the inner Baha'i global field are juxtaposed

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[40] Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium*, pp. 111–118.

with the other three constituents of the general global field proposed by Roland Robertson: the *national societies*, the *world system of societies* and *humankind*.[41] The model allows for a diachronic analysis, that is, an analysis of the historical development of Baha'i, as well as a synchronic analysis of Baha'i, namely, its present position in the world.

However, *Citizens of the World* is primarily a monograph on the Baha'i religion and the Baha'is, and the reader should not expect that globalisation is mentioned on every other page of the book. I use the dual global field model in order to organise and analyse the material in this book, and this is what is meant by an analysis from a globalisation perspective. Of course, this approach cannot stand alone. For a topic as broad and complex as an entire religion and its adherents, it is necessary to adopt a more encompassing approach—in other words, to apply a plurality of methods and theories in the analyses. Later in this chapter, I discuss the implications of such a methodological approach.

In the book, I also recurrently make use of the classic pair of concepts *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, used by Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) to designate two ideal types of social relations.[42] Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to see the two terms interpreted as a classification scheme of two (ideal) types of society, the traditional (*Gemeinschaft*) and the modern (*Gesellschaft*), but this simplistic view is not loyal to their original meaning as two *complementary* ideal types of *social relations* and *social acts*. In Chapter 3, I expound on the two terms and the academic discussion of their meaning, including their relevance in a discussion of globalisation. I also make use of Tönnies' concepts of *Gemeinschaft* versus *Gesellschaft* in a graphic model, which I use later to describe the balance of resources spent on different needs in the long-term development of a religious community. In this model, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are symbolised by two axes perpendicular to each other, and the development in resource allocation is represented by a trajectory in the diagram.

The Making of Baha'i into a Global Religion

The Babi period saw the formulation of important doctrines, which were later perpetuated in Baha'i and soon resulted in the decisive

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[41] Roland Robertson, *Globalization. Social Theory and Global Culture*, London, Sage, 1992, pp. 8–31.

[42] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie*, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1970.

secession of this new religious movement from Islam. The persistently strained relationship between the Baha'is of Iran and the powerful Shi'ite *ulama* owes much to the Babi past. The Babi heritage of Baha'i is salient in Baha'i sacred history rendered by Shoghi Effendi in his book *God Passes By*, which was originally published in 1944, at the centenary of the Bab's declaration. This book, more than any other doctrinal work, has shaped the Baha'is' comprehension of their own history.[43] Any understanding of Baha'i would be incomplete without an understanding of Babism and the situation of the Baha'is in Iran, and this is the topic of Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 treats the historical development of the Baha'i religion from the ruins of the Babi movement in the 1850s to its present worldwide organisation. The development of the Baha'i religion is a well-documented case of the making of a new religion. Baha'u'llah transformed the Babi *shari'a* and the millenarian expectations of the early Babis into a more far-ranging vision of a unified world civilisation. The doctrinal compatibility with Western ideas of modernity created the platform for Baha'i expansion outside the Muslim world. Baha'u'llah's visions and doctrines were propagated through the personal charisma of Abdu'l-Baha at the right time and place—in the period from the 1890s until World War I, the religious climate of North America was receptive to ideas adorned by exotic words and represented by an Oriental sage who had a long beard and wore a turban and a long cloak.

When Shoghi Effendi succeeded Abdu'l-Baha, he foresaw the need for strengthening the Baha'i organisation. He established the Baha'i organisational principles, called the Administrative Order. The Administrative Order has proved effective in preventing major schisms at critical phases in the expansion process, and the Baha'i leadership has been able to maintain a monopoly on the religious heritage of the two prophets, the Bab and Baha'u'llah.

In the period from 1963 to 1986, the Baha'i religion increased its number of registered adherents more than ten-fold, and since the 1990s, the Baha'is have claimed more than five million adherents. These figures have occasionally been disputed, however, and Chapter 5 ends with a critical examination of Baha'i membership data.

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[43] Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, Wilmette, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1995.

From the Global Perspective to the Individual

Chapters 6 through 9 draw mainly on my case study of the Danish Baha'i community. Chapter 6 contains a historical and demographic analysis of the development of this community, continuing the diachronic perspective of Chapters 4 and 5. Although charisma could be said to have been routinised by Shoghi Effendi to allow for carefully planned mission campaigns, charismatic individuals still prove to be decisive on the local level. Here, the making of a new religion with its particular traditions and community characteristics is repeated on a small scale, when those missionaries who had the right talents, formed a circle of the first believers around them. Chapter 6 is based on primary material, including a detailed demographic analysis of the Baha'i community over a period of more than fifty years. This analysis reveals a number of demographic trends that make it increasingly difficult for the Danish Baha'i community to maintain a net growth in the number of Danish-born members. In fact, demographic considerations show that the creation of a new major religion is a tremendous up-hill task, and it is no wonder that so few religious groups have been able to grow to any significant size.

Chapters 7, 8 and parts of Chapter 9 also draw upon primary material from the Danish Baha'i community, but are used in a synchronic analysis of the data. Chapter 7 discusses conversion to Baha'i, and the reliability of the informants' own conversion accounts as sources is critically assessed. The motives and circumstances that lead people to become Baha'is are extracted from qualitative and quantitative analyses of the conversion accounts, and the results are compared with established theories of conversion to new religions. The concept of the religious seeker—an ideal type of the potential convert—is scrutinised and reinterpreted in the light of the different attitudes and behaviour of the Danish Baha'is in the course of the conversion process.

Chapter 8 is concerned with the religious life of the Baha'is of Denmark and the issue of belonging to the Danish Baha'i community. The members' attitudes and behaviour regarding being a Baha'i are examined here. Religious traditions play a crucial role in the upholding of both individual commitment and the cohesion of the religious community. However, the study of the Danish Baha'i community shows how these traditions are malleable and open to re-interpretation, and this even extends to the central ordinances of prayer and

fasting. There are subtle differences between the native Danish Baha'is and their Iranian fellow-believers, but these differences seem mainly to be part of the general cultural differences between the two groups.

But spiritual values and religious traditions alone do not "make the world go 'round' ". Money and other resources must be mobilised and put to use in a controlled manner to benefit both proselytising and the demands for running the community in general. In particular, the Baha'i leadership is faced with the crucial issue of achieving the proper balance between the resources spent on the different activities in order to satisfy the needs of both *Gemeinschaft*-oriented and *Gesellschaft*-oriented activities. This is the main theme of Chapter 9. Resources are provided by the individual Baha'is in the form of time, money and labour, and data have been collected to estimate quantitatively all three types of resources in the case of the Danish Baha'i community. The resources that the Danish Baha'is can spend on missionary activities are limited, and this influences the mission strategy. At the root lies the problem of a strained financial situation; this situation and the prospects of change are also discussed.

Global Centre and Global Periphery

Chapters 10 and 11 analyse the international Baha'i institutions and activities. Chapter 10 examines the Baha'i holy places and administrative centre in the Haifa area in Israel. Here, the Baha'is have built what I call a religious metropolis, which functions both as an administrative centre and as a place of pilgrimage. The remarkable architecture of the Baha'i religious metropolis reflects this dual function of being a centre of both the global Baha'i *Gemeinschaft* and the global Baha'i *Gesellschaft*. Two periods of fieldwork (one month and five months) enabled me to get an inside view of the daily activities of the Baha'i World Centre and its staff of eight hundred Baha'i volunteers.

Chapter 11 begins with a description and analysis of another type of remarkable Baha'i architecture, the Baha'i temples, which are placed around the globe, one on each continent. The results of field studies from the temples in Frankfurt, Kampala and Panama City are included. Local examples of Baha'i development projects in Africa and Central America are used to discuss the strategic challenges for the Baha'i mission work. The chapter concludes with both diachronic and synchronic analyses of how the Baha'is interact in their mission

activities on a global scale in the United Nations system. This leads the reader back to the example presented at the beginning of the book, the Copenhagen Summit and the very active presence of the members of a religious minority who consider themselves to be "citizens of the world".

The final chapter is a brief presentation of the main conclusions drawn from the present study of the Baha'is.

Studying the Baha'is

Twenty-five years of a pleasant ethnographic relationship with the Baha'is have provided me with the bulk of the material for this book. This includes a broad interview study of the Danish Baha'i community in 1981–82, regular participatory observations from 1980 until today, and a follow-up demographic survey in 1999. I have also made much use of material from fieldwork at the Baha'i World Centre in Haifa in 1987 and 1988–89, archival studies in Chicago, Haifa and Copenhagen, and from numerous visits to Baha'i institutions and Baha'i communities around the world, including five of their seven temples.[44] The intention with these international field studies has been to broaden the scope of the study to a global level, because early in my study of the Danish Baha'is, I soon realised that the global and the local levels are intimately connected. Both levels are equally important in order to comprehend the Baha'i religion, its ideology, its believers, its organisation, its religious practice and its strategy to gain influence and more adherents in a world undergoing globalisation.

Sources for the Study of the Baha'is

When I approached the Danish Baha'i community for the first time in 1978, the group had never been studied before, and I had only a loose impression of whom they were. I followed the group through participatory observation at Baha'i holy days, and in 1980 I conducted a few, unstructured pilot interviews among the Baha'is of Copenhagen, including interviews with eight Baha'is who were among the first members of the community. I also had several meetings with members

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[44] A list of these visits can be found in the bibliography, section B.

of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Denmark, and after some time they allowed me to conduct a general interview study of the Danish Baha'is, and they encouraged the members to participate. I prepared a detailed questionnaire, and in the period 1981–1982, three student assistants and I conducted 120 interviews with members of the Danish Baha'i community. Details about this interview study are given in Appendix 1.[45]

The intention of the interview study was to attain a broad knowledge of the Danish Baha'i community, and of the Danish Baha'is, their social and religious backgrounds, their religious lives, and their internal relationships. As might be expected, some of the questions in the questionnaire touched on very interesting issues, while other questions turned out to probe barren soil. As an example of the latter, I included several specific questions concerning relations between the Danish and Iranian Baha'is, but found no pattern common to the answers. This was in the heyday of the founding of minority studies in Denmark, and I had anticipated a complex relationship with some internal tensions. Instead, I realised through both the interviews and the participatory observations that the relationship between the two groups was smooth and non-controversial—and it still is.

In most of my publications on Baha'i, I have drawn on these interviews as an important source, but not the only source, of information on attitudes and behaviour of the Baha'is. The field trips to many Baha'i communities around the world and my continued close relationship with the Danish Baha'i community also taught me typical Baha'i manners and traditions.

My long-lasting study of the Baha'is, both in Denmark and abroad, has given me a good basis for judging when to generalise over time and when not to do so. In the 1970s, the Danish Baha'i community—like other Western Baha'i communities—experienced a considerable influx of new members, so that its size almost doubled over a few years. The community went through a transition and routinisation phase to meet the challenges of this rapid growth. From 1980 and on, however, the demographic situation became more stable with a

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[45] In the different chapters of this book, I often refer to particular questions from this interview study. Such questions are referred to in the text by "Q" followed by its number in the questionnaire. Thus, "Q14" refers to question number 14 in the questionnaire.

steady, slow growth in the number of members and a relatively lower rate of conversions and resignations. In fact, many of the Danish Baha'is whom I interviewed in 1981–1982 still make up an active core of the members.[46] All quantitative measures of community activity also show a remarkable stability in the entire period 1980 to 1999, indicating that much of the quantitative data on communal activities are representative of the situation today.[47]

Comparative demographic analyses of a number of European Baha'i communities show that in quantitative terms, the Danish Baha'i community has developed like other Baha'i communities of North Western Europe from the 1960s to the 1990s.[48] A wealth of primary data has been gained from fieldwork and archival studies around the world, not the least from the extensive fieldwork and archival studies at the Baha'i World Centre. The material corroborated my proposition that the results of the detailed analyses of the Danish Baha'i community are representative of Western European Baha'i communities and for the most part also of Baha'i communities elsewhere.

While most of the results and conclusions presented in *Citizens of the World* are based on data obtained through interviews, participatory studies, fieldwork and archival studies, my analyses of the historical development of the Baha'i religion naturally draw on the many excellent studies already published on the Babi and Baha'i histories.

The Baha'i Language

Issues concerning language warrant a comment. Most Western Baha'is are familiar with correspondence, sacred texts and prayers in English, and English is often used at Baha'i meetings all over the world. English is the working language of Baha'i worldwide; only at the Baha'i World Centre are both English and Persian the official languages.

The Bab, Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha authored the sacred Baha'i texts in Arabic or Persian, but the manuscripts have not been released in their original as authoritative texts. All manuscripts are carefully edited and translated into English before they are endorsed by the Universal House of Justice as authoritative texts and published by

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[46] See Appendix 1 for more details.
[47] See Chapter 8 for more details.
[48] Margit Warburg, "Growth Patterns of New Religions: The Case of Baha'i", in Robert Towler (ed.), *New Religions and the New Europe*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1995, pp. 177–193.

acknowledged Baha'i publishers. These authorised English translations of the sacred texts are the basis for further translations into other languages, even including sometimes texts translated into Arabic itself.[49] The consequence of this policy is that the authorised English editions of the sacred Baha'i texts, and not the original texts written in Arabic or Persian, provide the relevant doctrinal basis for the beliefs and practices of Western Baha'is today.

Some Considerations on Methodology

In my study of the Baha'is, I apply different methods, theories and sources to examine meaningfully the many aspects of the subject. I agree with the Danish historian of religion Armin Geertz when he states that in the study of such complex subjects as human reality, it is necessary to apply a plurality of methods and theories.[50] This approach, of course, is not the same as eclectism; it calls for pragmatic, careful, methodological considerations. This is hardly a controversial viewpoint, yet is not without its pitfalls.[51]

Because theories can illuminate only part of reality, theories and theoretical concepts may be *complementary* to each other. Some patterns of reality are best illuminated and understood by applying one particular theory. Other patterns then may be barely visible; but if another theory is applied, these patterns stand out in stark contrast, while the first pattern vanishes. It is like the well-known phenomenon of illuminating an object in a dark room with lights of different colours: parts that were bright when using a red light are barely visible in green light, while other parts now appear bright. The images of the object are different, yet the results are not inconsistent; they

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[49] An example is given in Chapter 5.

[50] Armin Geertz considers in some detail the application of a plurality of theories and methods as a general methodological principle in the study of religion. Armin W. Geertz, *The Invention of Prophecy. Continuity and Meaning in Hopi Indian Religion*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994, pp. 28–30.

[51] Armin Geertz' methodological considerations have been challenged by his Danish colleagues Tove Tybjerg and Morten Warmind, who call for a more persistent attempt to use one recurrent theoretical approach, see Tove Tybjerg and Morten Warmind, "Armin Geertz' disputats" [Armin Geertz's doctoral thesis], *Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift*, vol. 23, 1993, pp. 105–115. My own position is that it is meaningless to state in general terms which of the two methodological strategies is the most fruitful; it must depend on the subject under study. It is important, however, that theories and methods must be chosen so that they do not lead to inconsistent conclusions. Otherwise, I find no obvious reason to disregard *a priori* a theory or method from the common toolbox of scholarship.

only highlight different parts of reality. This is a fundamental aspect of the scientific method; there is no such thing as a theory of everything.

Apart from the principle of complementarity there is an additional theoretical argument for applying a plurality of theories and methods. A complex subject often has to be studied at different *scales* to grasp its essential features, and the selection of the proper scale is important. For example, one could imagine conducting a study of the Baha'is of Europe by interviewing a random sample of people drawn from the entire population of European Baha'is. However, not only would this be rather impractical, it would also be an expression of poor methodology. This choice of scale, i.e., the European Baha'is together, would be inappropriate, because the sample of people interviewed would be culturally less homogeneous than the Danish Baha'is alone, and this would probably make it more difficult to distinguish particular Baha'i attitudes and behaviour. I suggest that a more profitable alternative is to study the Danish Baha'i community as a representative case of European Baha'i communities. The ability to generalise from this case study depends on the extent to which the Danish Baha'i community can be considered a representative case of a national Baha'i community. This issue is further examined in Chapter 6 and Chapter 9.

A final issue I wish to raise is that of quantitative versus qualitative methods. In the 1980s and through most of the 1990s, the advantages and drawbacks of the two kinds of methods were the topic of lively debates among social scientists. The debate suffered from the trenches dug between proponents of what were emotionally perceived as "soft" versus "hard" sociology, and I agree with Peter Abell in his critique of this strong polarisation of scholarship.[52] The two methods, of course, are complementary and so are the data obtained.[53] If possi-

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[52] Peter Abell, "Methodological Achievements in Sociology Over the Past Few Decades with Special Reference to the Interplay of Quantitative and Qualitative Methods", in Christopher G. A. Bryant and Henk A. Becker (eds.), *What has Sociology Achieved?*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990, pp. 94–116; Margit Warburg, "Religionssociologi" [Sociology of Religion], in Mikael Rothstein (ed.), *Humanistisk religionsforskning. En indføring i religionshistorie & religionssociologi*, Copenhagen, Samleren, 1997, pp. 135–246.

[53] Will C. van den Hoonaard, *Working with Sensitizing Concepts: Analytical Field Research*, Thousand Oaks, Sage, 1997, pp. 56–63; Ole Riis, *Metoder på tværs. Om forudsætningerne for sociologisk metodekombination* [Methods across. On the conditions for combining sociological methods], Copenhagen, Jurist- og Økonomforbundets Forlag, 2001.

ble and relevant to the issue studied, and if the available resources allow it, both methods can be combined with advantage, for example, in interview surveys. In my study of the Danish Baha'i community, 120 Danish Baha'is were interviewed. This number was sufficiently high to allow for quantitative analyses, but not so high that analyses using qualitative methods, in the form of in-depth interviews on specific topics, were made impossible. The analysis in Chapter 6 of the issues of gender, occupation and non-conformal religiosity, the discussion of the concept of seekership in Chapter 7, and the analyses in Chapter 8 of attitudes and behaviour related to the central ordinances of prayer and fast are illustrative for showing the advantages of combining quantitative and qualitative data analyses.

To summarise, I maintain that no single method or theory enjoys the status of the "best" in the study of such a complex subject as the Baha'is, and I therefore rely on the application of a plurality of methods and theories. If I were to make any programmatic methodological declaration, it therefore would be to adopt a methodologically agnostic position in a recurrent, critical confrontation with the sources.[54]

Issues of Terminology

Writing an academic book on the Baha'i religion makes certain choices concerning the use of internal Baha'i terms pertinent.[55] Siddhartha Gautama is better known from his title, Buddha, and Karol Wojtyła was generally called by his Catholic title and name, Pope Johannes Paul II. For the same reason, I have used the Baha'i names of the central religious figures, rather than their civil names (for example Abdu'l-Baha instead of Abbas Effendi). I have also generally used Baha'i terms for concepts particular to Baha'i; however, some Baha'i

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[54] The methodologically agnostic position that I advocate for should not be confused with Peter Berger's "methodological atheism", which is concerned with difference in premises between sociology and theology. Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York, Doubleday, 1967. This discussion has re-emerged in the 1990s, see Pål Repstad, "Theology and Sociology—Discourses in Conflict or Reconciliation under Postmodernism?", in Eila Helander (ed.), *Religion and Social Transitions*, Helsinki, Helsinki University Press, 1999, pp. 141–155.

[55] Margit Warburg, "Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of Religion", in Curt Dahlgren, Eva M. Hamberg, and Thorleif Pettersson (eds.), *Religion och sociologi. Ett fruktbart möte. Festskrift till Göran Gustafsson*, Lund, Teologiska Institutionen i Lund, 2002, pp. 329–339.

terminology so strongly expresses a personal acceptance of Baha'i beliefs that I have chosen not to follow the Baha'i practice in a few cases. For example, I have avoided the Baha'i habit of capitalising words like "His" and "the Writings" and the use of confessional synonyms and titles for the religious figures, such as "the Guardian" for Shoghi Effendi. I have also reduced the number of Baha'i terms that are capitalised according to official Baha'i spelling; as a general rule, only those Baha'i institutions and concepts that are proper nouns are capitalised, for example, the Universal House of Justice.[56]

Many Baha'i names and terms are of Persian or Arabic origin, and the Baha'is usually transcribe these words with full diacritical marks.[57] The most conspicuous difference between the Baha'i transcription system and modern academic transcription systems is that the Baha'is have retained an earlier practice of using the acute accent instead of the horizontal stroke over the long vowels: a, i and u. To achieve consistency and to facilitate recognition, I have used the 1923 standard Baha'i transcription system as the basis for the spelling of Baha'i terms and names throughout the book.[58] This principle extends to terms that are not only Baha'i terms, but are in general Islamic usage. Of course, in direct quotations, including titles in references, all names and terms are reproduced in the original, whatever transcription system may have been used. Since the same word may be transcribed differently when used in a Persian or Arabic context, apparent inconsistencies are inevitable.

However, for the convenience of most of the readers who have no particular interest in the details of transcription, I have generally omitted the diacritical marks of transcribed words in the text proper, as well as in the names of authors and publishers in the bibliography. To facilitate recognition, connecting dashes are retained, and apostrophes are used in place of both *ayn* (') and *hamzah* ('). When *ayn* (') is preceding the first letter, such as in the name 'Abdu'l-Bahá

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[56] An exception is the Administrative Order, which is capitalised for the sake of recognition.

[57] Marzieh Gail, *Bahá'í Glossary*, Wilmette, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1976; Moojan Momen, "The Baha'i System of Transliteration", *Bahā'ī Studies Bulletin*, vol. 5, 1991, pp. 13–55.

[58] I have consulted standard Baha'i reference works, such as: Wendi Momen (ed.), *A Basic Bahá'í Dictionary*, Oxford, George Ronald, 1991; Glenn Cameron and Wendi Momen, *A Basic Bahá'í Chronology*, Oxford, George Ronald, 1996; Peter Smith, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá'í Faith*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2000.

(spelled with full diacriticals), it is omitted for reasons of simplification, however, so that the name is rendered as Abdu'l-Baha. Since all the Baha'i names and words used in *Citizens of the World* are still easily recognised after this simplification, the use of full diacriticals would seem to be more of a formality than a help to the non-specialist reader.

I am not the first researcher in Baha'i studies who has adopted a simplified spelling without most of the diacriticals; Peter Smith used the form "Baha'i" instead of "Bahá'í" (and "Babi" instead of "Bábí") in his book on the Baha'i religion from 1987.[59] Juan Cole went further and decided to drop most diacriticals in his book on Baha'u'llah.[60] In Denis MacEoin's book, *Rituals in Babism and Baha'ism*, which was published in the series *Pembroke Persian Papers*, the main text (in the words of the series editor Charles Melville) is "kept as free of intimidating transliteration as possible".[61] This trend set by leading specialists studying the Baha'i religion is a refreshing liberation from the spelling orthodoxy of Baha'i research.

Baha'i literally means "a follower of Baha", that is, Baha'u'llah, but the word is also used by the Baha'is as an adjective, such as in "Baha'i Prayers". The Baha'is officially call their religion "the Bahá'í Faith", but the consequent use of this term in academic work has become a strong signal of personal membership in the religion. I therefore avoid it, except in a few cases where I wish to refer specifically to its teachings of faith. The older term "Baha'ism" is now almost abandoned, and the most neutral, acceptable term today seems to be "the Baha'i religion". This is a bit long, however, and I often use the noun "Baha'i" alone to designate the religion, drawing a parallel to most other religions, which are designated by one word only. However, since there are weighty arguments against introducing a new etic term when the emic term, "the Baha'i Faith", is equally understandable and precise, my use of "Baha'i" is not a crusade for renaming the religion, but is a practical and shortened term to be used interchangeably with "the Baha'i religion".[62]

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[59] Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions.*

[60] Cole, *Modernity and the Millennium*, p. xi.

[61] Denis MacEoin, *Rituals in Babism and Baha'ism*, London, British Academic Press, 1994, p. xiii.

[62] I would here like to thank Will van den Hoonaard, University of New Brunswick, for a stimulating discussion on this subject.

CHAPTER TWO

APPROACHES TO BABI AND BAHA'I STUDIES

The history of research concerning Babism and Baha'i reveals an uneven enterprise over time. Systematic scholarship began in the 1860s and reached a peak by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. From around 1920, however, academic studies of Babism and Baha'i ebbed out, and only a few works of lesser significance appeared, until the late 1970s, when a more consistent tradition for research into Babism and Baha'i developed.

The scholarship of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was carried out by non-Baha'i Orientalists, who were mainly spurred by their interest in the Babi movement. This historical-textual tradition experienced a renaissance in the late 1970s and is represented nearly exclusively by several productive scholars who are or have been Baha'is. The focus of their studies is primarily the historical development of Babism and early Baha'i or textual analyses of Babi and Baha'i writings.

Scholarship of Baha'i in the West is more fragmented and seems to have proceeded along several, not quite related tracks. This may have delayed the maturation of academic studies of modern Baha'i. A few sociologists of religion have conducted comparative studies that included Baha'i among other religious groups. For example, Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge compare the growth and geographical distribution of Christian Science, Theosophism, Liberal Catholicism, Divine Science and Baha'i in the "Roaring Twenties".[1] Other authors have been interested in Baha'i *per se*, and this literature to a large extent is composed of empirically-oriented community histories in the sociological and anthropological traditions. Most of these histories are the result of Master's or Ph.D. studies; however, as dis-

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[1] Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Secularization and Cult Formation in the Jazz Age", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 20, 1981, pp. 360–373; Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *Religion, Deviance, and Social Control*, New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. 109–111.

cussed later in this chapter, the early history of Baha'i in the USA and Canada is also treated in weighty volumes by senior researchers.

No comprehensive research history of Babism or Baha'i has been published, but in an unpublished manuscript of fifty-odd pages, Denis MacEoin gives a rather detailed overview of the development of Baha'i scholarship up to 1979.[2] One of the great advantages of his overview is that it includes the scholarship carried out in Iran. Among published works, Moojan Momen's compilation of Western sources of the Babi and Baha'i religions up to 1944 should be mentioned in this context, because of its long introductory chapter with a chronological survey of Western scholarship on Babism and early Baha'i and a useful appendix with short biographies.[3] Peter Smith's monograph *The Babi and Baha'i Religions* contains a short annotated bibliography covering the main literature until 1985.[4] Finally, the former chief librarian at the Baha'i World Centre, William Collins, has issued an extremely useful, comprehensive bibliography of English-language works concerning Babism and Baha'i up to 1985.[5] It includes an annotated compilation of Master's and Doctoral theses.

The following overview of the research history and literature on Babi and Baha'i studies reflects the scope of *Citizens of the World*, which means that emphasis is laid on the presentation and discussion of studies of modern Baha'i, primarily in Western societies. The intention is to provide broad coverage of the relatively modest number of published works and major theses that cover this topic, whereas the presentation of publications concerning the research history and literature on Babism and historical Baha'i is restricted to main developments.

The chapter ends with two special issues of importance to the research history. The first focuses on the current discussion of whether Baha'i is a religion, a sect of Islam, a new religious movement or maybe something else. The Baha'is themselves claim that their religion is a "world religion". The origin of Baha'i in a Shi'ite environment has traditionally lead scholars to place Baha'i in an Islamic context;

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[2] [Denis MacEoin], *The Development of Babi and Baha'i Studies up to 1979*, file index Pam 138–2333, n.d. (BWC-L).

[3] Moojan Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions 1844–1944. Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, Oxford, George Ronald, 1981.

[4] Peter Smith, *The Babi and Baha'i Religions. From Messianic Shi'ism to a World Religion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press and George Ronald, 1987.

[5] William P. Collins, *Bibliography of English-Language Works on the Bábí and Bahá'í Faiths 1844–1985*, Oxford, George Ronald, 1990.

however, its spread and development since World War II may justify a reassessment of this classification.

The other issue emerges from the fact that—with a few prominent exceptions—the study of Baha'i is dominated by scholars who are Baha'is themselves. A scholar's personal belief in Baha'u'llah as a manifestation of God, in principle, should be irrelevant to the quality and impartiality of his or her research. However, it is not irrelevant to the study of Baha'i that scholars who are also Baha'is are obliged to submit their work for preview. This problem and its possible academic consequences are worth discussing.

Early European Studies of Babism and Baha'i

Western public awareness of Babism arose quite early after the Bab's emergence as a religious leader in 1844.[6] This interest culminated with the persecutions following an attempted assassination of the Shah in 1852, when accounts of the atrocities suffered by the Babis were dispatched to Europe.[7]

The first academic paper on Babism seems to be a short report to the American Oriental Society by A. H. Wright in 1851. It was afterwards translated into German and published in the same year.[8] However, it was not until the 1860s that any substantial scholarship on Babism developed. Around 1860, the Orientalist Jean-Albert-Bernard Dorn (1805–1881) of St. Petersburg travelled in Northern Iran, and he was the first European scholar to collect manuscripts written by Babi scribes. Dorn's Babi manuscripts together with manuscripts acquired later by the Orientalist Nicolai Vladimirovich Khanykov (1819–79) made up a considerable collection of Babi manuscripts in St. Petersburg.[9] The Russian Professor of Oriental Studies Viktor

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[6] Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions 1844–1944. Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, pp. 3–14.

[7] Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions 1844–1944. Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, p. 11, pp. 128–146.

[8] A. H. Wright, "Bâb und seine Secte in Persien", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. 5, 1851, pp. 384–385.

[9] B. Dorn, "Die vordem Chanykov'sche, jetz der Kaiserl. Öffentlichen Bibliothek zugehörige Sammlung von morgenländischen Handschriften", *Bulletin de L'Académie Impériale des sciences de St.-Pétersbourg*, vol. 8, 1865, cols. 246–300; B. Dorn, *Die Sammlung von morgenländischen Handschriften, welche die Kaiserliche öffentliche Bibliothek zu St. Petersburg im Jahre 1864 von Hrn. v. Chanykov erworben hat*, St. Petersburg, Buchdruckerei der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1865; B. Dorn, "Die wissenschaftlichen

Rosen (1849–1908) later edited and annotated the Babi manuscripts in the Dorn-Khanykov collection and also a number of manuscripts written by Baha'u'llah.[10] The first book on Babism was also written by a St. Petersburg Orientalist, Alexandr Kazem-Beg (1802–c. 1870), in 1865; his book was soon translated from Russian into French and appeared as a series of articles in *Journal Asiatique.*[11]

Josef Arthur de Gobineau

It was not, however, the professional Russian Orientalists, but a French amateur historian and philosopher who decisively influenced the future of Babi and Baha'i scholarship. Josef Arthur de Gobineau (1816–1882) was a French diplomat who had spent several years (1855–1858 and 1862–1863) as an envoy to Iran. Half of his book *Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* from 1865 is devoted to a vivid description of the Babi movement, its doctrines, its principal leaders, and the major battles between the Babis and the government troops.[12] The introductory chapter in his book is entitled "Charactère moral et religieux des Asiatiques" and is rich in prejudiced, generalised comparisons between European and "Oriental" culture and thinking.[13] Passages with similar derogative comparisons between the different people of Iran litter his chapters on the Babi movement.[14]

Sammlungen des Grafen de Gobineau", *Bulletin de L'Académie Impériale des sciences de St.-Pétersbourg*, vol. 16, 1871, cols. 340–346.

[10] Baron Victor Rosen, *Les Manuscrits Arabes de l'Institut des Langues Orientales, Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*, vol. 1, St. Petersburg, Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1877, pp. 179–212; Baron Victor Rosen, *Les Manuscrits Persans de l'Institut des Langues Orientales, Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*, vol. 3, St. Petersburg, Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1886, pp. 1–51; V. Rosen, "Manuscrits Bâbys", in MM.D. Günzburg, V. Rosen, B. Dorn, K. Patkanof, and J. Tchoubinof (eds.), *Les Manuscrits Arabes (non compris dans le No. 1), Karchounis, Grecs, Coptes, Éthiopiens, Arméniens, Géorgiens et Bâbys de l'Institut des Langues Orientales, Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères*, vol. 4, St. Petersburg, Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1891, pp. 141–255; Baron V. Rosen, *Pervyî sbornik poslaniî Babida Bekhaullakha* [A first collection of the tablets of the Babi Beha'u'llah], St. Petersburg, Imperial Academy of Science, 1908.

[11] Mirza [Alexandr] Kazem-Beg, "Bab et les Babis, ou Le soulèvement politique et religieux en Perse, de 1845 à 1853", *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 7, 1866, pp. 329–384, pp. 457–522; vol. 8, 1866, pp. 196–252, pp. 357–400, pp. 473–507.

[12] [Joseph A.] de Gobineau, *Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*, Paris, Librairie Académique, 1866, pp. 141–358.

[13] Gobineau, *Les Religions*, pp. 1–21.

[14] Gobineau, *Les Religions*, pp. 175ff.

Gobineau's outright racist ideas on European cultural superiority exerted much influence on the then current perceptions of Iran and other Asian countries at that time; but he was also a keen observer of Iran, and his book, for better or worse, was a remarkable success. A second edition was issued within a year, which was unusual for a book of that nature.[15] Gobineau's book also later inspired two of the most influential scholars in Babism and Baha'i, E. G. Browne and A.-L.-M. Nicolas.

E. G. Browne

Around 1884, the young British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne (1862–1926) read Gobineau's description of the Babis and became interested in them. This started his more than thirty-year-long involvement in Babi and Baha'i studies, with Browne quickly becoming a leading figure in the study of Babism. During several journeys to Iran, he acquired a large number of manuscripts and in Cambridge he established one of the most significant collections of Babi manuscripts.[16]

Browne visited Iran in 1887–88, and his travels are described in *A Year Among the Persians*.[17] In Iran, he met with Baha'is several times, and some of his primary written material and ethnographic observations were presented in 1889 in two well-written, very long articles, which are still classics with all their rich detail on Babi history, doctrines and literature.[18] In the same year, he also wrote a survey article on Babism, in an anthology on comparative religion.[19] In 1890, he travelled to the Middle East and visited Baha'u'llah in

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[15] Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions 1844–1944. Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, p. 22.

[16] Denis MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History. A survey*, Leiden, Brill, 1992, pp. 29–30.

[17] Edward Granville Browne, *A Year Among the Persians. Impressions as to the Life, Character, and Thought of the People of Persia Received during Twelve Months' Residence in that Country in the Years 1887–1888*, London, Century Publishing, 1984.

[18] Edward Granville Browne, "The Bábís of Persia. I. Sketch of their History, and Personal Experiences Amongst them", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, [vol. 21], 1889, pp. 485–526. Edward Granville Browne, "The Bábís of Persia. II. Their Literature and Doctrines", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, [vol. 21], 1889, pp. 881–1009.

[19] Edward G. Browne, "Bábiism", in W. M. Sheowring and Conrad W. Thies (eds.), *Religious Systems of the World. A Contribution to the Study of Comparative Religion*, London, Swan Sonnenschein, 1908, pp. 333–353.

his house outside Akko, as well as Subh-i-Azal in Famagusta.[20] Because Browne was the only European who ever met Baha'u'llah, his description of one of his interviews with Baha'u'llah is an often-quoted text among the Baha'is.[21]

In the following years, Browne edited and annotated a considerable number of Babi manuscripts, including a long account of the Babi battles in Zanjan.[22] Further, he edited three important, general narratives on the rise of Babism: *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb* (with full translation), *The Táríkh-i-Jadíd or New History of Mírzá 'Alí Muḥammad the Báb* (with full translation), and the *Kitáb-i-Nuqṭatu'l-Káf* (with a thorough synopsis comparing it with *The Táríkh-i-Jadíd*).[23] His last book on Babism and Baha'i is a diverse collection of source material published under the title *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion*.[24]

Browne had a keen understanding of Iran, and he is said to have radically transformed the study of Iranian literature and culture in nearly all aspects.[25] His work not only greatly advanced Babi and Baha'i scholarship, but interestingly, it also played a role in the spread of the religion itself. As Robert Stockman has shown, the first Baha'i missionary in the West, Dr. Ibrahim G. Kheiralla, made extensive use of Browne's works, which appeared just before Kheiralla

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[20] Edward G. Browne (ed., trans.), *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb. Edited in the Original Persian, and Translated into English, with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes*, vol. 2, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1891, pp. xxxix–xl.

[21] Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, vol. 2, pp. xxiv–xxvi, pp. xxxix–xl.

[22] E. G. Browne, "Catalogue and Description of 27 Bábí Manuscripts", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, [vol. 24], 1892, pp. 433–499, pp. 637–710; Edward G. Browne, "Some Remarks on the Bábí Texts edited by Baron Victor Rosen in Vols. I and VI of the Collections Scientifiques de l'Institut des Langues Orientales de Saint-Pétersbourg", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, [vol. 24], 1892, pp. 259–335; Edward G. Browne, "Personal Reminiscences of the Bābī Insurrection at Zanjān in 1850, written in Persian by Aqā 'Abdu'l-Aḥad-i-Zanjānī, and translated into English by Edward G. Browne", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, [vol. 29], 1897, pp. 761–827.

[23] Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*; Edward G. Browne (ed., trans.), *The Táríkh-i-Jadíd or New History of Mírzá 'Alí Muḥammad the Báb, by Mírzá Ḥuseyn of Hamadán, Translated from the Persian With an Introduction, Illustrations and Appendices*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1893; Edward G. Browne (ed., trans.), *Kitáb-i Nuqṭatu'l-Káf, being the Earliest History of the Bábís compiled by Hájjí Mírzá Jání of Káshán between the years A.D. 1850 and 1852, edited from the unique Paris ms. suppl. persan 1071*, Leyden, Brill, 1910.

[24] Edward G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1918.

[25] R. A. N[icholson], "Edward G. Browne" [Obituary], *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 58, 1926, pp. 378–385.

left for the USA in 1892.[26] In fact, the bulk of Kheiralla's knowledge about Baha'i history and doctrine was obtained through his study of Browne. This is a fine example of how the adherents of a religion should not be regarded as merely objects of research, but that they can also act on and take specific advantage of this research. Conversely, the example shows that a scholar studying a contemporary religion may unwittingly contribute to the shaping of the same religion.

The Baha'i Ambivalence towards Browne

In the introduction to the *Táríkh-i-Jadíd* from 1893, Browne raised the issue of the reliability and authenticity of the *Táríkh-i-Jadíd* versus the *Kitáb-i-Nuqṭatu'l-Káf* as sources on the Babi movement. He thereby ignited a mixture of religious and academic polemics, which today still influences not only academic work, but also Baha'i attitudes toward their own history and the study of it. Several scholars have been engaged in this discussion, but by far the most detailed and convincing analysis is made by Denis MacEoin in his book *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, from 1992. In the following, I summarise the essential conclusions of his analysis.

The *Táríkh-i-Jadíd* is a late source (ca. 1880) written by Mirza Husayn Hamadani, a Babi and former governmental employee. Hamadani based his history on a number of sources, of which the main one was an earlier history attributed to Mirza Jani Kashani, a Babi merchant who was acquainted with the Bab and several of the other Babi leaders.[27]

In 1892, Browne acquired the Babi manuscript named *Kitáb-i-Nuqṭatu'l-Káf* (the "Book of the Point of the Letter *Kaf*") from a collection of Babi manuscripts originally owned by de Gobineau and sold to the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris in 1884.[28] The first portion of the manuscript is laid out as a doctrinal treatise, while the later sections contain what Browne soon assumed to be an early copy of Mirza Jani Kashani's history. Browne considered his discovery to be of immense importance, since at that time no other copies of this

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[26] Robert H. Stockman, *The Bahá'í Faith in America. Origins. 1892–1900*, vol. 1, Wilmette, Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1985, pp. 43–47.

[27] MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, p. 151, p. 159, suggests that Mirza Jani Kashani's history was written in Baghdad about 1853–54 and he dates the first drafting of the *Táríkh-i-Jadíd* to 1879–1881.

[28] MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, pp. 140–144.

history were known. However, Browne also discovered that the manuscript was at variance with the version of Mirza Jani Kashani's history that made up the core text in the *Táríkh-i-Jadíd*. Although the two texts for the most part are equivalent, several passages in the *Nuqṭatu'l-Káf* that refer to Subh-i-Azal and his role in the Babi movement are not included in the *Táríkh-i-Jadíd*.[29] This led Browne to conclude that the discrepancies between the two histories were the result of a deliberate plot of the followers of Baha'u'llah to discredit Subh-i-Azal's claims to leadership.[30] The Baha'is hotly rejected Browne's conclusion and accused the Azalis of distorting the sources.[31] Thus, Abdu'l-Baha suggested that the Azalis had prepared a falsified version of Mirza Jani Kashani's history and had encouraged Browne to publish it.[32] This hypothesis was restated many years later by the Baha'i historian Hasan M. Balyuzi in his book *Edward Granville Browne and the Baha'i Faith*.[33] Balyuzi's viewpoints represent the closest one can come to a current, official Baha'i position on the controversy.

In MacEoin's opinion, neither Browne's nor Abdu'l-Baha's conclusions seem to hold. After a careful page-to-page comparison of the original manuscripts, MacEoin concludes that although some purging took place when the material from the *Nuqṭatu'l-Káf* was re-used in the *Táríkh-i-Jadíd*, the differences between the two texts for the most part cannot be explained as a result of tendentious editing by the author—or rather by the author *and* subsequent editors.[34] MacEoin sees no reason to follow the Baha'is in discrediting the *Nuqṭatu'l-Káf* as a source, nor to suspect that it is an Azali forgery.[35] He reports that some twelve editions of the *Nuqṭatu'l-Káf* are known to exist, which means that more than one version of Mirza Jani Kashani's history was in circulation when Hamadani wrote *Táríkh-i-Jadíd*.[36]

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[29] According to MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, p. 156, Browne's original comparison of the two histories, given in appendix II, pp. 360–368 of the *Táríkh-i-Jadíd*, is somewhat misleading, however, because it does not allow a direct page-to-page comparison of the two Persian texts.

[30] Browne, *Táríkh-i-Jadíd*, p. xviii, p. xxix; Browne, *Nuqṭatu'l-Káf*, pp. xxxvi–xlvii.

[31] MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, pp. 136–140, provides a detailed presentation of these disputes.

[32] MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, pp. 139–140.

[33] H. M. Balyuzi, *Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith*, Oxford, George Ronald, 1975, pp. 62–88.

[34] The *Táríkh-i-Jadíd* was heavily edited and exists in several recensions, cf. MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, pp. 158–161.

[35] MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, p. 151.

[36] MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, p. 147.

on Baha'i written by two prominent Baha'is, the authors have felt it necessary to devote several pages to a refutation of Browne's hypothesis concerning the significance of the *Nuqṭatu'l-Káf*, despite the fact that their book clearly addresses a much broader audience than academics studying Baha'i.[42]

Browne is buried at Elswick Cemetery in his hometown, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and in 1995 when I visited Newcastle to participate in a Baha'i conference, the organisers had arranged an excursion to Browne's grave.[43] I noticed that for the average, informed Baha'i, this ambivalent official Baha'i attitude towards Browne creates considerable uneasiness; for example, one of the local Baha'is found it most unsuitable to visit the grave. He also claimed that whenever he was near the graveyard he felt an atmosphere of coldness.[44]

A.-L.-M. Nicolas and Later Scholars

A.-L.-M. Nicolas (1864–1939), the son of a French diplomat, was born in Iran and lived there for thirty-five years. His studies of Babism were inspired by his father's critique of Gobineau's scholarship, and Nicolas soon absorbed himself in studies of the Bab's religious thinking.[45] He published a general history of Babism up to 1854, and he translated three of the Bab's major works: the *Seven Proofs*, the Arabic *Bayan*, and the Persian *Bayan*.[46] Within Babi studies, Nicolas' translations are considered to be of great value, also because of his subtle interpretations of difficult passages.[47]

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[42] William S. Hatcher and J. Douglas Martin, *The Bahá'í Faith. The Emerging Global Religion*, San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1989, pp. 207–211.

[43] Field trip, *Irfán Colloquium*, Newcastle University, 8–10 December 1995.

[44] The sociologist of religion David Piff, who has made a thorough study of ca. 1,800 hearsays and other unofficial pieces of information circulating among Baha'is today, has noted that "coldness" is often associated with Baha'i enemies. David Michael Piff, *Bahá'í Lore*, Oxford, George Ronald, 2000, p. 61; David Piff and Margit Warburg, "Enemies of the Faith: Rumours and Anecdotes as Self-Definition and Social Control in the Baha'i Religion", in Eileen Barker and Margit Warburg (eds.), *New Religions and New Religiosity*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1998, pp. 66–82.

[45] Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions 1844–1944. Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, p. 37.

[46] A.-L.-M. Nicolas (trans.), *Le Livre des Sept Preuves de la Mission du Bab*, Paris, Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1902; A.-L.-M. Nicolas, *Seyyèd Ali Mohammed dit le Bâb. Histoire*, Paris, Dujarric, 1905; A.-L.-M. Nicolas (trans.), *Le Béyân Arabe. Le Livre Sacré du Bâbysme de Seyyèd Ali Mohammed dit le Bâb*, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1905; A.-L.-M. Nicolas (trans.), *Seyyèd Ali Mohammed dit le Bâb. Le Béyan Persan*, Paris, Librarie Paul Geuthner, 1911.

[47] MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bābī Doctrine and History*, p. 4.

A few other scholars contributed to Babi and Baha'i studies, but not with the same profoundness as Browne and Nicolas. The influential French Orientalist Clément Huart (1854–1926) published *La religion de Bab*, largely based on Azali sources, and he contributed regularly with reviews or encyclopaedic entries on Babism and Baha'i.[48] In 1911, the German theologian Herman Roemer published as his doctoral dissertation a readable and objective history of Baha'i; the dissertation was published again in 1912.[49]

The Danish Professor of Iranian philology Arthur Christensen (1875–1945) was interested in the Babis and the Baha'is of Iran for many years. The Baha'is, however, were not his main area of research, and he mainly treated the subject in a number of minor articles and popular books—all in Danish and in reality with negligible influence on international scholarship.[50] Arthur Christensen also translated into Danish excerpts of the Bab's Persian *Bayan,* as well as excerpts of Baha'u'llah's *Kalimath-i-Maknunih* (Hidden Words), *Tirazat* (Jewels), and *Ishrakat* (Rays of Light), which were published in a chapter on Babism and Baha'i in a popular handbook of religion.[51] Arthur Christensen's concern with Babism and Baha'i was spurred not only by his scholarly interest in the history of religions, but also by his general political and cultural interest in contemporary Iran.[52] He shared the belief common among European travellers at that time that the

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[48] M. Clément Huart, *La religion de Bab. Réformateur persan du XIX^e Siècle*, Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1889. A list of Huart's reviews appears in Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions 1844–1944. Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, p. 40.

[49] Hermann Roemer, *Die Bābī-Behā'ī. Eine Studie zur Religionsgeschichte des Islams*, Potsdam, Verlag der Deutschen Orient-Mission, 1911; Hermann Roemer, *Die Bābī-Behā'ī. Die jüngste mohammedanische Sekte*, Potsdam, Verlag der Deutschen Orient-Mission, 1912.

[50] A complete bibliography of Arthur Christensen's publications on Babism and Baha'i was published in Margit Warburg, "The Circle, the Brotherhood, and the Ecclesiastical Body: Bahá'í in Denmark, 1925–1987", in Armin W. Geertz and Jeppe Sinding Jensen (eds.), *Religion Tradition and Renewal*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1991, pp. 201–221.

[51] Arthur Christensen, "Babi-Bahaismen" [Babi-Bahaism], in Arthur Christensen, Johs. Pedersen, and F. Pullich (eds.), *Religionernes Bøger*, Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1928–30 [1929], pp. 275–299.

[52] One source concerning Arthur Christensen's career, including a bibliography covering most of his published works, is his obituary by K. Barr, "Arthur Christensen. 9. Januar 1875–31. Marts 1945", *Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Oversigt over Selskabets Virksomhed* [The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters. Proceedings of the Activities of the Academy] *Juni 1945—Maj 1946, avec un résumé en français*, Copenhagen, Munksgaard, 1946, pp. 65–102.