

**ABS RELIGIOUS STUDIES SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP, BI-ANNUAL SEMINAR NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
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ABSTRACTS**

■ Lil Abdo, London, UK
"Two Churchman"

This paper is part of a larger work which considers the development of the Baha'i Movement in the British Isles between 1899 and 1930. Here the work of two churchmen, RJ Campbell and Basil Wilberforce is examined in relation to their links with the Baha'i Movement and other contemporary religious and social institutions. Whilst neither Campbell nor Wilberforce considered themselves to be Baha'is and their only significant contribution to Baha'ism was to provide venues for 'Abdu'l Baha - their networks were of immense importance to the pre war Baha'is. This paper is presented in two parts, the first deals with biographical information about the two men. The second looks at some of the religious, social and philosophical developments with which they were connected and their interface with Baha'ism.

■ Seena Fazel, Oxford, UK
"Trends in Baha'i Studies - an Examination Using Citation Analysis"

The last decade has been an eventful time in Baha'i studies. This paper will investigate what has really happened using the technique of citation analysis, a widely used method to report trends in academia. Citations in academic literature on the Babi-Baha'i Faiths in 1997-2001 are compared with ten and twenty years previously. Findings that will be discussed include the proportion of women writers, the impact factors of various Baha'i periodicals, and the most cited Baha'i books, monographs, and authors.

■ Stephen Lambden (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; Ohio, USA)
"Baha'u'llah and the Hebrew Bible: Citations and Tablets to Jews"

Though the Tawrat (Torah=Pentateuch/Hebrew Bible) is positively spoken about in the Qur'an, many post-Qur'anic Muslims came to support a doctrine of tahrif (scriptural falsification) that overruled the sanctity and scriptural veracity of this ancient sacred book. Such eminent individuals as the outstanding tafsir writer

and accomplished historian al-Tabari (d. 310/923) and the ultimately zahiri polemicist Ibn Hazm (d. 456/1064) had a very negative view of Judaic scripture. Such perspectives were challenged by Baha'u'llah during the latter years of his living in Iraq (1853-1863) in his *Jawahir al-asrar* (1861) and *Kitab-i Iqan* (1862). Therein, Baha'u'llah rejected the radical Islamic rejection of the Torah, though he only indirectly cited one passage from the Hebrew Bible, a Persian paraphrase of Isaiah 65:25a. In later years, especially when addressing Iranian and other Middle Eastern Jewish converts to the Baha'i religion, he came to cite a wide range of texts from a number of books within the Hebrew Bible. In this paper, the Persian and Arabic versions he cited will be analyzed from a textual and hermeneutical standpoint.

■ Moojan Momen (Cambridge, UK).
"Usuli, Akhbari, Shaykhi, Babi: The Tribulations of a Qazvin Family"

This paper is a description of the effects of the religious turbulence of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries upon one Qazvin family, the Baraghánís. Three religious encounters are described, each resulting in turmoil in the city of Qazvin and a crisis for three successive generations of the family. The first was the Usúlí-Akhbárí dispute of the late eighteenth century. This split the city of Qazvin and led eventually to the expulsion and exile to the village of Baraghán of Shaykh Muhammad Malá'ikah, who thus became the first of the family to be known as Baraghání. The second religious encounter was between the Usúlis and the Shaykhís at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This again led to divisions in the city, but this time it also split the family. Of the three sons of Malá'ikah, the eldest strongly opposed the Shaykhís, the youngest supported them and the middle brother wavered. On this occasion the crisis was resolved through the forced departure from the city of Shaykh Ahmad, the originator of the Shaykhí movement, following a heated open debate. The third crisis arose because of the advent of the Bábí movement in the middle of the nineteenth century. It involved the next generation of the family, the children of the three Baraghání brothers, as well as the brothers themselves. It came to a crisis with the murder of Mullá Taqí and threw the city into turmoil. The anger

of the city and of the family of Mullá Taqí was turned in upon one of their own, Táhirah, whose abilities despite being a woman threatened the perceived natural order which placed women below men, whose passionate discourse as an equal among men threatened to rupture the strict separation between men and women upon which the social order was based, whose discarding of the veil posed questions about her chastity and thus threatened the honour of the family and the society's moral order, and whose espousal of the anti-clerical Bábí movement threatened to overturn the very basis of the family's power and wealth.

■ Betsy Omidvaran, Dublin, Ireland
" 'Self-Narrative' in Egypt in the Early Twentieth Century"

Self-narrative, autobiography, memoirs, novels, mudhakkirat, sira, dhatiyya...These are the basis of my questions, asked about Egypt. Are they the same or different? Are they of western origin or an indigenous phenomenon? What can they tell us about the events and people in the Middle East, especially Egypt, at the turn of the twentieth century and what the people were thinking, how they saw their future, how they reconciled the many experiences and influences swirling around them. My main focus is on Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid's Qissat hayati. He was born in 1872, was a significant player in many of the key events of Egypt in the next 8-9 decades and wrote this book in his eighties. But I am also looking at other writings by his contemporaries, mainly those interested in reform. Some of the documents were written at the time and some later; some are identified as autobiography and some not; some are translated into English and some not, including works by Taha Husayn, Ahmad Armin and Muhammad Abduh.

■ Will C. van den Hoonaard, New Brunswick, Canada
"Siegfried ('Freddie') Schopflocher and Florence ('Lorol') Schopflocher: Cases of Biographical Zoning."

This paper is a progress report of a forthcoming biography on Freddie and Lorol Schopflocher. Using historical records, interviews with Baha'is and family members, I try to bring depth and understanding to the lives of Freddie Schopflocher, a Hand of the Cause of God, and Lorol Schopflocher, the inveterate Baha'i traveller and teacher. One analytical lesson I have learned from research is the powerful force of "biographical zoning," an ever-present phenomenon when attempting to piece together a biographical puzzle where the pieces are sometimes ill-fitting.

■ Ismael Velasco, Nottingham, UK
"The medium is the message": Reflections on Kerygma (Proclamation) as a Conceptual Tool in Babi-Baha'i Studies.

Bahá'í studies have tended to concentrate on social, historical, and hermeneutical 'snapshots' without sufficient mutual correlation or integration. This means that Bahá'í scholarship today suffers from an underdeveloped analysis of the Bahá'í Faith as a conceptual whole, with limited insight into the dynamic interplay between developing processes of history, community, and sacred text. A major obstacle lies in the fragmentation and lack of coherence of the conceptual frameworks in current historical, linguistic, hermeneutical, sociological and anthropological Bahá'í studies. This paper will explore the analytical value of the concept of kerygma (message/proclamation/announcement), imported from New Testament studies and literary criticism and roughly parallel to the Arabic bisharat, for an understanding of the history and dynamics of the Baha'í religion. The study of kerygma in the Babi-Bahá'í faiths, it is suggested, may provide a powerful tool for understanding the distinctive logic of change and continuity in the Bahá'í Faith during its first century and a half; will facilitate an integrated analysis of heterogeneous aspects of Baha'i history; belief and practice; and allow for the correlation of a substantial and multidisciplinary body of current scholarship on the Babi and Bahá'í faiths.