

COMMENTARIES

ALEF BIT

November 17, 1989

Dear Dr. Weinberg,

Your excellent publication, through its "alef bit" department, produces some of the finest articles on Jewish computers and automation that I have seen. As the president of the National Jewish Computer Users Group, I read many publications and engage in much research, and find myself constantly referring our subscribers to your publication.

We have a number of librarians and synagogue libraries as members of our group, who are constantly in search of the latest and most appropriate uses of automation in their organizations. Keep up the good work and high quality of articles and resources for the benefit of all.

Sincerely yours,

Glenn S. Easton
Executive Director
B'nai Israel Congregation
Rockville, MD

ARCHIVES

Dear Editor:

In response to Annette Ratkin's article, "Establishing Archives in Synagogues and Jewish Centers," (*JL*, vol. 4, no. 1, Fall 1987–Winter 1988) here is an account of how Congregation Shomer Emunim in Toledo, Ohio, is collecting and organizing its historical material. The Congregation was founded in 1875 by Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise.

We depend mostly on the congregation's office files for our material. In this way, we received all of our late Rabbi Leon I. Feuer's correspondence, as well as his speeches and lectures at the Temple during the last forty years. Rabbi Feuer was one of the first Reform Rabbis to advocate the founding of the State of Israel. He also served as head of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Our current Rabbi, Alan M. Sokobin, is writing letters to certain members who were

very active in the 1940s, '50, and '60s, to ask them if they have any material that would be valuable to us.

We state that the purpose of our archive is to serve as a teaching resource for the religious school. It is already an integral part of the curriculum, beginning in the seventh grade. We have decided to make the archive accessible to everyone, by using a form with which they are already familiar: the card catalog. The Rabbi, the staff, the Sisterhood, the Brotherhood, and any member of the congregation can easily use it, too.

We use a worksheet from the Winnebago Card Catalog Maker computer program, and input the cataloging on our Apple IIe. We will interfile the cards with the cards in our regular book collection catalog. The classification is by location, for example, "Vertical File" or "Pamphlet Box Number." The vertical file is in alphabetical order by main entry and then by date. In this way, our archive will be an integral part of our collection.

We differ from most of the local archives in the accessibility and completeness of our indexing. This is what we feel is important.

I have an A.M.L.S. degree from the University of Michigan, and have been a Judaica Cataloger at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio. I am also a life-long member of this congregation, and am cataloging the archives on a volunteer basis.

Sincerely,

Alice Applebaum
Archivist
Resource Center
Temple Shomer Emunim
Sylvania, Ohio

CATALOG DEPARTMENT

To the Editor:

The article, "Classification of the Judean Desert Documents (Dead Sea Scrolls)," by Hans H. Wellisch (*Judaica Librarianship* 4, no. 2, Spring 1988–Winter 1989, pp. 163–5 and 177) was most welcome. Yet there are a number of additional points to be raised regarding this important issue. I trust that your readers would be interested in the concerns of a scholar, whose main research is devoted to Qumran Scrolls.

Readers should understand that, in fact, many of the Qumran Scrolls and the bulk of the other collections—the scrolls from Masada and the Bar Kokhba documents—are still in the process of being published. (We omit from consideration here the Samaria papyri, although they are often grouped with the other documents for purposes of discussion.) Despite the improvements and acceleration which the process of publication of these documents has recently undergone, we still cannot expect full publication for some time. Hence, any attempt to solve the problems of classifying these materials cannot be definitive unless it takes into account the unpublished texts.

A look at the lists of the published and unpublished documents would lead to the conclusion that the author's list of groups of scrolls (p. 165) must be expanded somewhat. He omitted the Masada materials, despite the fact that in one or two cases, manuscripts of the same text were found in both Qumran and Masada. Second, the many texts dealing with Jewish law must be given their rightful place in the corpus of scrolls.

Further, there are problems with the existing schemes he cites. It is difficult to understand why the "Damascus Covenant" (296.625) appears as a sect separate from the Dead Sea Sect (296.624.2) in the UDC classification scheme in Table 2 (p. 165). Other errors in this scheme are as follows: the Book of Jubilees (229.11) is not a historical book. It belongs to the genre of rewritten Bible. Regarding "Liturgical and poetic texts" (296.72), there is debate among scholars on the liturgical role of virtually every text on the list, as well as concerning those still not classified. Classifications which assume a particular scholarly theory or identification should be avoided at all costs, in view of the tentative nature of much of the research. Many scholars see the *Temple Scroll* (296.735) and the *Copper Scroll* (296.736) as not deriving directly from the Qumran sect. (The Hebrew name of the *Temple Scroll* is *Megillat Hamiqdash*, hence, the Hebrew University's use of .M5, see p. 177.) Again, Masada texts are omitted from this system. Further, some distinction needs to be made between Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek documents from the Bar Kokhba caves 9 (296.79). The issue of the Hebrew and Aramaic dialectology and philology of the Dead Sea corpus is ignored.

These comments, however, do not address what for scholars are the central issues. We are somewhat less concerned about the fine points of cataloging than about being able to gain easy access to material. In the case of the Qumran Scrolls, systems like LC divide the texts up, spreading them throughout the library. As Dead Sea Scroll studies are emerging as a separate subfield of Biblical and Judaic Studies, we and our students need to avoid the splitting up of texts, best illustrated by the absurd separation in most libraries of the volumes of the standard collection *Discoveries in the Judean Desert* (published by Oxford), the official publication (and often the *editio princeps*) of many of the documents. A system should be devised to place the entire corpus together, to reflect its importance in reshaping radically our understanding of the history of Judaism in Second Temple times.

The systems now in use all are based on two significant misunderstandings of the importance of this material, both appropriate in the 1950's, but now obsolete. First, the scrolls are not simply evidence regarding strange sects of the Second Temple period. As more and more texts are seeing the light of day, it is becoming clear that these texts are also our major source for the Pharisees and the Sadducees in this period. We have to see the scrolls as a corpus of their own, providing data for the important transitional period between Biblical and Mishnaic times, and reflecting the diversity of Judaism in that time.

Second, the scrolls are not a part of what one might call "Late Biblical Studies." They now constitute a distinct field of study, with its own issues, methods, and contributions. This fact needs to be reflected in the classification systems employed for this material.

Yet there is a further and even more central problem. An unspoken issue which has run through the study of the scrolls since their discovery is whether they are to serve primarily as testimony to "precursors" of Christianity and background to the New Testament, or as a link in the unbroken chain of Jewish history. The systems in use in most libraries tend to separate the scrolls from Judaism, and to place them in the interconfessional no-man's land of "Biblical" studies. A system keeping the scrolls together and placing them squarely in a "Judaic" context would carry a very different message from that presently in use.

The work of classifying these documents will go on for years, as continued publication reshapes our view of the scrolls and their significance. Let us hope that Judaic

librarians will develop a system of classification that will preserve the unity of this corpus, while adequately reflecting its place in the field of Hebrew and Judaic Studies and, at the same time, making its contents available to scholars of the Hebrew Bible and early Christianity.

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Prof. Wellisch replies:

A few of Prof. Schiffman's points regarding the classification scheme for Judean Desert Documents (JDD) in the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) are well taken, and should perhaps have been considered had the classification been designed as a special scheme, entirely devoted to the topic, without connection to any other issues—Jewish, Biblical, or otherwise. Such, however, is not the case. First, the UDC is a universal classification system, covering everything in the universe of knowledge, and the 296.7 schedule for JDD is only one tiny part of it, which must fit into the overall framework. Second, the UDC is a synthetic and highly flexible system, in which class marks can be combined to express two or more aspects of a topic; it is intended for the classification of books as well as that of more specialized articles, reports, etc., to make them retrievable from several different angles, if needed. In this respect, it is quite unlike the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress classifications, which are designed only as "marking and parking" devices for books on shelves. As an American, Prof. Schiffman has probably never encountered the UDC, for which he is not to blame, since the system is rarely used in the U.S.—though it is widely employed in most European countries, the U.S.S.R., Israel, and many other countries, as well as by international agencies. Third, the UDC is an international enterprise, and its continuous revision is undertaken by committees of experts.

As a fellow toiler in the groves of academe, Prof. Schiffman is probably familiar with the workings of committees, which are notorious for designing horses that look more like camels. Considering the revision which my proposal underwent at the hands of the UDC Committee on Religion, I am glad to say that the scheme emerged much more horselike than many others.

The camel features, such as the class marks for the Damascus Covenant or the Book of Jubilees are there because they already existed in the UDC long before my proposal was submitted, and the committee did not allow them to be changed. They are, in any case, not part of my JDD proposal, which is limited only to the class mark 296.7 and its subdivisions.

I agree fully with Prof. Schiffman that the JDD should not be viewed only as evidence for the beliefs and customs of a sect from the period of the Second Temple; they should also not be tied to "late Biblical studies"; much less should they be considered simply as archeological exhibits (as in the Elazar classification). My scheme does not endorse any of these narrow and faulty views. Quite to the contrary, my aim was to design a classification that would establish the topic of the JDD as a "separate subfield of Biblical and Judaic studies," to quote Prof. Schiffman—one differing from what all other existing classification systems (including the specialized Jewish ones) do. The title of the schedule—the heading for 296.7—is quite neutral, not mentioning either a sect or Bible studies. But I do not believe that subordinating the entire topic to the class Judaism 296 is wrong: these documents were written by Jews, and they were devoted to religious issues. Not by any stretch of the imagination does the new classification schedule for JDD imply, or even hint at these documents being "precursors" of Christianity and the New Testament, and I am at a loss to understand why Prof. Schiffman saw fit to criticize it on this score.

Prof. Schiffman also faults the scheme for not including certain aspects of the documents, such as Jewish law. This reveals his ignorance of classification in general (which he confuses with the altogether different issue of cataloging), and that of synthetic classification in particular, as performed by UDC. The structure of the UDC (as mentioned above) allows the classifier to express the aspect of law by means of a class mark that is linked to that of any other topic; for example, an article on legal aspects of fragment X can be classed, and subsequently retrieved, both from the point of view of the nature of fragment X itself and from that of its legal aspects or implications.

Finally, I am fully aware of the fact that many JDD have not yet been studied, much less published, and that perhaps a number of them may still not have been discovered and may come to light in the future. For this reason, the last class marks

(Continued on p. 20, col. 3)

the sibilant "C" in "Cyrillic" and/or stand for "Slavic languages" (some of which are written in Cyrillic script).

10. The Library of Congress used RLIN for approximately 2 months before the release of Hebrew to other libraries.
11. *Forward* truncation means truncation close to the beginning of a word, with the remainder of the word or phrase (from the point of truncation to the end) used as the argument of the search.
12. Particle elimination was considered to be a very interesting problem at RLG. The alternatives are named after the following contributors: Richard Koprowski (now with Stanford University), Michael Carroll, David Ripp, and Michael Pobuda.
13. "pnambic" will probably not be found in a standard dictionary, but it is a useful word in the computer environment. It means something that is done behind the scenes; it is an acronym taken from the sentence "Pay No Attention to that Man Behind the Curtain" (*The Wizard of Oz* [motion picture]).
14. "The catalog in which all items in the collection are entered in a single alphabet from A to Z, regardless of language, regardless of form, regardless of subject. The American ideal." (Spalding, p. 8).

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Joan Aliprand is employed by the Research Libraries Group, Inc. as a Library Systems Analyst; she wrote the external design specifications for adding Hebrew to RLIN, and will soon begin work on the external design specifications for Arabic. Ms. Aliprand is a graduate of the School of Librarianship, University of New South Wales, and also studied at the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago. She has held professional positions at the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Chicago, and Macquarie University (in Sydney, Australia).

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for every subdivision end in the digit 9, labeled "other"—the standard device in the UDC to provide for topics at present unknown, but to be classed at a particular subdivision that will comprise it as a species of a certain genus. No other current classification system provides such "escape hatches," or is flexible enough to take future developments into consideration as far as this is humanly possible.

Given the present state of knowledge or ignorance about the JDD, I thought that the time had come to provide a classification scheme that would do three things: (a) put the entire topic in its proper Jewish (but not necessarily sectarian) context; (b) provide a reasonably detailed breakdown where needed, to enable scholars to class not only books, but also articles, essays, reports, and the like, dealing with specific aspects of the JDD; (c) provide also, as far as possible, for future developments in this field. Prof. Schiffman seems to believe that all this should have been postponed until a "definitive" scheme could be designed—say, in another 50 or 100 years, or however long it may take Biblical scholars to sort out the problems of the JDD and to resolve the various disputes and squabbles among themselves. I happen to believe that it is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness in which the traditional library classification systems had left the Judean Desert Documents.

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