

DEWEINEAZAR

Dewey Decimal Classification. 200 Religion Class: reprinted from Edition 20 of the Dewey Decimal Classification . . . with a revised and expanded index, and manual notes from Edition 20. Albany, NY: Forest Press, a division of OCLC, 1989. viii, 191 p. ISBN 0-910608-43-1. \$15. LCCN 89-27221.

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Many Synagogue, [Jewish] School, and [Jewish community] Center libraries, which constitute the SSC Division of the Association of Jewish Libraries, use Dewey-based classification schemes. The purpose of this review of the reprint of the religion class of the twentieth edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) is to consider (a) the utility of this publication to SSC libraries, and (b) the extent to which it can be used independently of the complete four-volume DDC, which is priced at \$200.

The editors of the reprint recognize ethics as a cognate discipline of religion and have therefore appended the schedule for ethics (170). This is essential because topics in moral theology are synthesized in DDC from a base number in the religion class and the final digits of a number in the ethics class. For example, a class number for Jewish medical ethics is built from the base number 296.3856 (Judaism—specific moral issues) and 174.2 (Medical ethics), yielding 296.385642.

While synthesis is a powerful device, it tends to produce longer class marks than does enumeration. Synthetic classification is also more difficult to apply, and given the fact that many SSC libraries are run by volunteers, this is an argument against their adoption of DDC.

Revision of the Judaism Schedule

The assistance of Dr. Marcia W. Posner is acknowledged in the Preface (p. vii). In her chronicle of the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL), Posner (1991, p. 134) describes her review of the religion schedule.

From a comparison of the 20th edition of class 200 (Dewey, 1989) with earlier

editions of the scheme, a radical restructuring of the Judaism class is not evident. There is, however, enumeration of additional specific topics: "Hasidism" was only an example of the topics to be included under "Mystical Judaism"—296.833 in the 19th edition of Dewey (1979). In the 20th edition, Hasidism is assigned its own number: 293.8332, and 296.83322 is allocated to "Habad Lubavitch Hasidism."

This review is not the place for a comparison of the outlines of Judaica classification schemes. The impression of this reviewer, however, is that the Judaism schedule in DDC is couched in Christian terms and divides up the universe of literature on Judaism on the basis of Christian constructs, e.g., "Doctrinal, moral, social theology." The enumeration of specific topics also seems to be done from a Christian perspective. For example, of all Jewish organizations, only "Young Men's Hebrew Associations" and "Young Women's Hebrew Associations" have their own numbers (296.673 and 296.675, respectively), paralleling those for Young Men's Christian Associations and Young Women's Christian Associations (267.3 and 267.5). It is questionable whether YMHAs are *religious* associations at all; surely there is greater literary warrant for other Jewish organizations.

The sequence of topics in the schedule for the Jewish religion is often strange. Under reform movements, for example, the order is Conservative Judaism, Reconstructionist Judaism, and Reform Judaism. This is certainly not an evolutionary sequence, which would be logical given the overall chronological breakdown of sects and movements in 296.8 — ancient, medieval, modern. The sequence of books of the Bible

remains the Protestant one, with no option for the Jewish order.

The Christian primacy of the scheme is evident even in the text of the advertisement for this work: "Another *Good Book* for your religious collection." This is, of course, an allusion to the Bible; although Jews revere the *Tanakh*, they never refer to it as "the good book."

Independence of the Reprint

Few Judaica collections are limited to publications on religion. Almost all contain works on Jewish history and Israel, which are classified in the 900 (history, geography) schedule of DDC. Jewish sociology, art and music, and literature are classified in the 300s, 700s, and 800s, respectively, necessitating consultation of the complete Dewey schedules.

The reprint does not even serve for the representation of all topics in religion. It does not include the Dewey table of standard subdivisions, although it refers to them frequently. Thus, for example, to synthesize a number for "periodicals on Judaism," the classifier must consult the volume of Tables in the complete DDC (Dewey, 1989, vol. 1). The same goes for the breakdown of Judaism by country: one is dependent on the extensive geographic table in the full DDC, which is, of course, not reprinted here.

The editors have made a laudable effort to make the work self-contained by including notes from the DDC manual (Dewey, 1989, vol. 4 [Part 2]) that apply to the religion class, as well as a relative index developed just for the religion class. (The ethics schedule is not covered by the index, however.) SSC librarians are likely to require more general guidance, several auxiliary tables, and

schedules from other disciplines. Acquisition of the abridgment of DDC 20 (Dewey, 1990) is a cheaper option than buying the full schedules (\$75 vs. \$200), but at the price of lower specificity for Jewish topics. Buying the complete DDC 200 (religion) schedule and the corresponding abridged Dewey (i.e., the 12th edition, which corresponds to the 20th edition of the complete classification) would cost significantly less (\$90); from the advertisement placed in *Judaica Librarianship* (vol. 5, no. 2 (Winter 1991), p. 227), it seems that the publishers consider this a logical combination. The total price is still far higher than one would pay for either the Elazar (1988) or the Weine (1982) scheme for Judaica classification (\$32.50 and \$12.50, respectively) — \$90 may constitute a substantial percentage of an SSC librarian's acquisitions budget.

Conclusions

In a paper published in the first issue of *Judaica Librarianship*, I discussed factors to be considered by SSC librarians in the selection of a classification scheme (Weinberg, 1983). The 20th edition of Dewey and the reprint of its religion class do not lead to a reevaluation of DDC's appropriateness for small Judaica libraries. Its philosophical acceptability is still low; many topics enumerated in special Judaica classification schemes do not have their own numbers in Dewey; and DDC's movement towards increased synthesis makes it a scheme that cannot readily be implemented by untrained librarians. The availability of Dewey numbers in CIP (Cataloging-in-Publication) Data, in MARC (Machine-Readable Cataloging), and on Library of Congress printed cards remains its major advantage to Judaica libraries.

The solicitation of input from an AJL member in the revision of DDC is a positive phenomenon. Perhaps the Cataloging Committee of AJL's SSC Division should undertake the responsibility for monitoring the entire Judaica component of DDC, not just the religion schedule. (The demotion of Yiddish from a language to a dialect, which occurred in the 18th ed. (Dewey, 1971, vol. 2, p. 858) is an example of the type of problem that AJL should address.)

The acquisition of the Dewey classification by OCLC, the Online Computer Library Center, Inc., has long-range significance. There has been extensive experimentation by Markey (1987) and others in the online display of Dewey hierarchies. The advantages of classified displays over keyword searching have been demonstrated, and the hierarchical approach to subject searching will probably be implemented in online public access catalogs in the near future. For this reason, it is important to see to it that the arrangement of the Judaism schedule in the Dewey classification reflects a Jewish perspective, as opposed to the procrustean bed of comparative religion in which DDC places Judaism.

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