

# DEWEINEAZAR

## Judaica Classification Schemes for Synagogue and School Libraries: A Structural Analysis

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### Introduction

In scanning the publications of the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL), one finds a variety of opinions on classification schemes. These range from the "marking and parking view"—it doesn't matter what class number you write on a book as it's just a label to define its place on the shelves (Kaganoff, 1970)—to the philosophical defense of organic Jewish schemes (Posner, 1981). In the middle we find what I call the "inertial position"—if you've been using a scheme for a long time and it "works," stick with it (Posner, 1981).

My work experience is not in synagogue, school, or center (SSC) libraries, but rather in Judaica research libraries and in teaching classification—both general and Jewish. My approach is structural, i.e., I analyze features of classification schemes for Judaica which I consider relevant to SSC libraries in making a choice.

I do not assume that a small library should choose only among small classification schemes. Small Judaica libraries have the potential to become medium-sized or large libraries, as in the case where a synagogue library expands to serve a school and/or community center. When the classification system used is not expandable, or is incompatible with other classification schemes, wholesale reclassification becomes necessary. I therefore treat larger general and Judaica classification schemes as options for the SSC library.

Even in cases where SSC libraries do not experience rapid growth, they are likely to develop significant collections in specific areas such as the Holocaust or local history. In the recent issues of *AJL Bulletin* devoted to cataloging and classification, there were several articles which encouraged tampering with published classifica-

tion schemes, i.e., making up a number for a topic when you don't find it in the published scheme (Richter, 1982). I am not in favor of this for two reasons:

a) American library schools provide so little training in classification theory that the average librarian does not know enough about the structure of notation to construct new numbers correctly, and

b) in revised editions of a particular scheme, new numbers are likely to conflict with homemade ones, necessitating reclassification.

While discouraging tampering, I am interested in classification schemes which feature *synthesis*—the possibility of combining two classification elements to represent a compound topic, e.g., the *Holocaust in Denmark*. I am also interested in the compatibility of smaller Judaica schemes with larger ones, so that expansion rather than reclassification is a possibility when the collection increases in size dramatically. Compatibility with *general* classification schemes permits the borrowing of class numbers for such marginal topics as *Needlecraft* rather than making them up. We must keep in mind that almost any topic can have a "Jewish" angle, and we cannot expect a Judaica classification scheme designed for a small library to predict the creation of works on Jewish crime, philately, papercuts, etc.

Classification is not a simple matter, even in the small library. It has been said that the only classification scheme in which no uncertainty of application would arise is one which consists of a *single number*; none of us, however, wants to return to the days when Dewey threw all Judaica into 296.

It may be argued that a small classification scheme which lists only broad disciplines such as *sociology*, *anthropology*, and *folk-*

*lore* is harder to apply than one which enumerates such specific topics as *dress*, *manners*, and *food customs*. In the latter case, a classifier can often match title words of a book to specific class numbers. In the former case, the librarian must think about the author's approach to the topic. Retrieval of books on specific topics is also more difficult from broad classification schemes.

For this reason, I disagree with statements on the order of "in a small library . . . it is not necessary to have a too involved and detailed classification scheme" (Friedman, 1981).

While classification schemes containing few numbers may be difficult to apply and often fail to enumerate specific topics, they generally have simple *notations*—two letters or three numbers—which is clearly an advantage for patrons and shelvees. In general, there is a tradeoff between *specificity* and *complexity* of notation.

We were all taught in library school that "a classification is not its notation," i.e., the logical sequence of topics is determined first, and then a notation is applied in a correctly constructed classification scheme. It is the sequence of topics which determines the *philosophical acceptability* of a classification for Judaica, not its use of letters or numbers, unless any of us thinks that the Roman alphabet or Arabic numerals are objectionable! In considering a scheme, we must ask whether it has a Christian *bias*. Does it juxtapose topics in a manner which is illogical or unacceptable to one's clientele? Too much can be made of this issue, as the patron rarely notices the overall sequence of classes. Those who carefully examine the underlying philosophy of a Judaica classification scheme are directly opposed to the "marking and parking" school of classificationists.

As agonizing over original classification can be time-consuming for the overworked and underpaid SSC librarian, an important question to ask about a classification scheme is whether *centrally-assigned class numbers* are available to lower the cost and time involved in getting books to the shelves. These may appear in published catalogs or on magnetic tape for retrospective materials, or on printed cards, cataloging-in-publication, or computerized services for current material.

The Jewish world is a fast-changing one, and as the People of the Book, we are quick to record our experiences in print. We are already seeing the publication of books on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, with a corresponding demand by our patrons for material on the subject; thus, the *updating* frequency of a classification scheme is crucial to the image of the library.

The above are some of the factors to be considered in the selection of a classification scheme for a small Judaica library. In the following, seven Judaica and general classification schemes are analyzed in light of these factors. Table I summarizes the key points in the analysis.

#### Structural Analysis of Classification Schemes for Judaica

**1. LEIKIND**— We begin with the smallest scheme, the Leikind classification. Based on Dewey, it thus has the limitation of a Christian orientation, with Christianity (280) preceding Judasim (296), and with our religion as a subdivision of comparative religion (290). The system has Dewey's simplicity of notation—numbers only with decimal subdivision. In several cases, it violates Dewey's notational principle that no number end in a zero. There is a precedent for this in the Universal Decimal Classification, but there is no way we can expect a user to guess that 892.420 files *after* 892.421, as it does in the Leikind schedule for Hebrew literature. The scheme is generally compatible with Dewey, so that if a librarian so chooses, new numbers can be synthesized by combining a basic number with an element from one of the tables. The geographic table would probably be used most often. Leikind lags behind Dewey in that the last few editions of the latter have moved Jewish history out of Jewish religion into the 900's, albeit with complex notation (which is examined below). Leikind classes Jewish history in 296.09, but places Holocaust in the 900's with Dewey's World War II schedule at 940.5405.

To my knowledge, Leikind class numbers as assigned to specific books are not published anywhere. In my opinion, a four-paged, double-column, single-spaced classification scheme requires an index,

but the current undated edition does not feature one (Leikind, [1967 +]). I hope the revised edition will include current topics as well as an index.

**2. WEINE**— The system most similar to Leikind's is by Mae Weine (1982), but it adheres to Dewey's main numbers much less than does Leikind. For example, Weine uses the entire Christianity series in Dewey, 230-280, for Judaism, and accords Christianity only one number—296. In most other disciplines, Weine uses Dewey numbers with the Jewish modifier understood, appropriating extra numbers in the history

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schedules for Israel—950-958 instead of just 956.94 as enumerated by Dewey. Thus, in many cases, the scheme is incompatible with Dewey's. If a librarian wants to classify general materials on the Middle East, for example, there is no way to do so, because the Dewey numbers have been preempted by the Weine numbers for Israel. The introduction to the scheme suggests that general materials be classed by a separate scheme and that all the Judaica items bear the prefix "z" before the Weine class number. I believe this is undesirable, because many books of general scope contain Jewish material, e.g., a general work on the Middle East is almost sure to treat Israel. What we really need is a notation that modulates from the general to the Jewish without an inordinate lengthening of the number for the Jewish topic.

As for synthesis, Weine suggests using the Dewey table of standard subdivisions. The Dewey geographic table would also be compatible in most cases, e.g., to further break down local history of Jews in the United States.

While Weine is widely used, I believe there is no publication of class numbers for current books. If AJL officially endorses this scheme—as would appear to be the case from its distribution of it—I would suggest publication of Weine class numbers for new books announced in the *AJL Newsletter*.

**3. ELAZAR**— The third classification scheme considered most often by SSC librarians is the Elazar scheme (1979). Its recent revision and publication in an attractive format have brought it much attention. The system is hailed for its philosophical basis—using Jewish principles to organize Jewish materials. The outline of classes is well thought out, and the authors graphically illustrate the links among the main classes in their lengthy introduction.

The notation of the Elazar scheme is decimal, with three digits before the decimal point as in Dewey. Alphanumeric notation appears in the subdivision of parts of the Talmud, as it does in Dewey's arrangement of the works of Shakespeare. The filing sequence of alphabetic and decimal subdivisions of a number is the *opposite* of that in the Library of Congress system, where decimal subdivisions *follow* alphabetic ones.

Elazar also borrows Dewey's "divide like" notational device, thus providing for synthesis in selected portions of the scheme. There is no general table of form divisions in Elazar, but these are enumerated at various points, with occasional instructions to *divide like* a specific enumeration, e.g., 770—*U.S. Jewry*, is divided like 701-709, *Jewish history*, but European countries may not be broken down to the same extent. The assumption is that there is literary warrant for a breakdown of general histories of U.S. Jewry, but not for those of France. In general, throughout the scheme, Israel, the U.S., and Great Britain are the only countries enumerated under specific topics. This Anglo-American bias will limit the implementation of the Elazar scheme in Judaica libraries abroad. Modification of the system for special interest groups is difficult because of the absence of generally applicable tables. Elazar's form divisions are usually not preceded by zeros, so they cannot be applied at will without conflict. In fact, I discovered a conflict in the Elazar scheme, where the authors instruct the classifier to divide the topic *Holocaust* geographically, but the enumerated topical subdivisions of the Holocaust, 736.4-.8 would interfile with the area subdivisions, e.g., *Holocaust in Poland*, 736.636, would follow Holocaust—Memorials and precede *Holocaust—Reparations*. Surprisingly, this is not included among the errata recently published in the *AJL Bulletin* (Elazar, 1982).

The fact that form divisions are not introduced by zeros in Elazar will block the logical interpolation of new subjects in the scheme, since decimal subdivisions of whole numbers are used for such concepts as dictionaries and serials. But the current edition of Elazar is highly specific, and we needn't worry much about the hospitality of the notation to new concepts.

The system is inhospitable to general and non-Jewish material, and, as in Weine, the introduction suggests classing these by another system.

Although no centralized cataloging service provides ready Elazar class numbers, I believe it is a relatively easy system to classify from because of its detailed index—although the term *Holocaust* is missing from it. A second reason that Elazar is easy to apply is that it enumerates many specific topics, including names of organizations. Thus, the classifier needn't agonize over the appropriate rubric for the *Bund*, e.g.; the Elazars have told us that it belongs with the *Jewish Labor Movement* in 648.

In my opinion, the fact that the Elazar scheme enumerates so many of the concrete topics on which SSC libraries collect material, i.e., its *specificity*, is what makes it so attractive to these libraries—more than its philosophical superiority over the Dewey-based Judaica schemes. Increased use of the scheme will undoubtedly support frequent updating and revision.

**4. SCHOLEM** — Another Dewey-based classification scheme for Judaica is that developed at the Jewish National and University Library (JNUL) in Jerusalem, known by the name of its original compiler, Gershon Scholem—the Scholem scheme. The fourth edition appeared recently (JNUL, 1981), featuring many new numbers and an excellent introduction which clearly explains the structural elements of the scheme. These are: 1) detailed subdivision of Dewey's numbers for Jewish topics, e.g., 296 (Judaism) and 892.4 (Hebrew literature); 2) compatibility with Dewey for general topics and tables; 3) auxiliary symbols from the Universal Decimal Classification for breakdown by language and place. Some may argue that this complexity of structure and notation makes the system unsuitable for small libraries, but I contend that an SSC library will probably never need such complex breakdowns and will simply be able to use the enumerated decimal numbers. A more serious disadvantage for some librarians may be that the current edition is only available in Hebrew; the second edition was also issued in English, however (JNUL, 1964).

In addition to the Christian orientation of Dewey on which the scheme is based, there are minor points in the Scholem system that are philosophically unacceptable to certain Jewish groups, e.g., the equation of *Jewish nationalism* with *Zionism* and the juxtaposition of *Hassidim* with *Sabbateans*—believers in a false Messiah (Wunder, 1967).

While I do not recommend wholesale adoption of the Scholem system by SSC libraries (or, for that matter, by Judaica research libraries), it is a good reference work for classifiers working with small Dewey-based Judaica schemes as it enumerates many classic works on Judaism in the schedules and index, aiding in their placement in a superordinate category.

Although the JNUL's cataloging is the basis of entries in its bibliographic quarterly, *Kiryat Sefer*, the class numbers are not published there. The classified Judaica catalog of the library, however, is now available on microfiche, with an English outline of the Scholem scheme as a printed guide (JNUL, 1980). The Judaic division of the new Hebrew University Library on Mount Scopus is currently being reclassified by a modification of the Library of Congress system, (see below) but I believe that the National Library will be committed to the Scholem system for many years to come.

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**5. DEWEY** — Having discussed several Dewey-based systems, let us now consider Dewey itself as an option—the 19th edition (1979) or the 11th abridged edition which is based on it (Dewey, 1979a). The main reason for considering standard Dewey for Judaica libraries is the availability of centrally-assigned class numbers in MARC (machine-readable cataloging), through commercial and Library of Congress card services, and in cataloging-in-publication. Although Judaism remains subordinate to comparative religion, its schedule has been highly developed since the days when only the number 296 was available. The typical SSC library will easily be able to classify its limited number of Rabbinic classics, its numerous works on Jewish holidays, and even the parts of the Old Testament according to the traditional sequence using a Dewey option. The Hebrew language can be subdivided to the same extent as English by using a special

table. Yiddish, unfortunately has been switched from its position following Hebrew—492.49—to German dialects, but no conflict will be created by using the base number from an earlier edition of Dewey. Hebrew literature may be broken down by a rather detailed period table if the collection warrants it.

The classification of general and local Jewish history is cumbersome in Dewey and results in lengthy notation, e.g., 909.04924—*General world history—ethnic groups—Jews*. The Holocaust is not given prominence in the World War II schedule either. A solution may be to use the Scholem schedule for Jewish history as it does not conflict with Dewey—it simply expands the scope of 933 from "History of Ancient Palestine" to "History of the people of Israel." This schedule was incorporated into the Universal Decimal Classification (IFD, 1969) and appears in the Hebrew abridged edition of Dewey published in Israel (Dewey, 1976).

Dewey is kept up-to-date by *DC&* which appears several times a year; the 20th edition is in the planning stages. Anyone using the Leikind system—which essentially uses Dewey with the Jewish modifier understood—would be well advised to have a copy of at least the abridged Dewey on hand as a supplement to the enumerated topics in Leikind.

Because every library has different collection strengths, I think merging elements from various compatible classification schemes is preferable to tampering with a single system and creating ad hoc numbers. If such a hybrid system is used, however, excellent documentation in a staff manual or classified authority file is essential.

Up to this point, the relationship between classification and subject headings has not been mentioned. If a librarian relies on specific subject headings for retrieval, a broad classification system may suffice for the arrangement of a small collection on the shelves. It is not often realized to what extent narrow classification schemes and subject headings are redundant, i.e., represent the identical topics.

Although I think that a color-coded system of the sort suggested recently in the *AJL Bulletin* (Eisen, 1981) would quickly break down, a simple alphabetic system would be workable.

**6. FREIDUS** — One alphabetic system in use at the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library is the Freidus system (Bloch, 1929). Like Elazar, it was developed specifically for a Jewish collection and features a

**Table I. STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF JUDAICA CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES**

<i>Features:</i>	<i>Philosophical Acceptability</i>	<i>Specificity</i>	<i>Notation</i>	<i>Compatibility with general systems</i>	<i>Possibilities of Synthesis</i>	<i>Availability of class numbers</i>	<i>Updating frequency</i>
<b>Schemes:</b>							
LEIKIND	Low	Low	Simple	High	Medium	None	Infrequent
WEINE	Medium	Medium	Simple	Medium	Medium	None	Medium
ELAZAR	High	High	Mainly decimal, Some mixed	None	Medium	None	Medium
SCHOLEM	Medium	High	Complex	High	High	Retrospective, Microfiche	Medium
DEWEY	Low	Medium	Simple	High	High	High	Frequent
FREIDUS	High	Medium	Simple	None	None	Retrospective, Published	Infrequent
LC	Low	High	Complex	High	Medium	Very High	Frequent

logical order of main classes. At NYPL, the notation for each book housed in the Jewish Division begins with \*P, which would be redundant for an independent Judaica library. Broad topics are denoted by a single letter and subdivisions get a second letter. In recent expansions of the system, a third letter has been added in some cases (NYPL, 1955). Because a letter base is larger than a number base as notation for a classification system (26 x 26 vs. 10 x 10), the Freidus scheme can get quite specific with two characters, e.g., in the breakdown of sermons by language. It is incompatible with the major general systems and has no possibilities for synthesis, however; the classifier simply decides which is the general category to which the book belongs. Assistance in this task is available from the published catalogs of the Jewish Division (NYPL, 1960; NYPL, 1981). As Freidus numbers appear even in the computer-produced book catalog of the NYPL Research Libraries (NYPL, 1972), the library is apparently committed to it even in the age of automation and will continue to keep it up-to-date.

**7. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**—Libraries desiring a broad classification scheme limited to letters also have the option of using the first element in Library of Congress class numbers. While this might suffice for

music (**M**) and education (**L**), further subdivision of Judaism (**BM**) would quickly be required. The next option is to use the second element of LC class numbers, omitting the cutter numbers. While some SSC librarians consider LC too complex for their needs, if you never acquire individual books of the Bible, e.g., you will never have to apply the complex table which LC features. For the books of general Jewish interest which an SSC library is likely to acquire, LC notation is usually simple and brief, firstly because of its letter base and secondly because LC enumerates many compound topics, e.g., "Jewish philanthropy."

On the other hand, there are many disadvantages in using LC in a Judaica library. It clearly has a Christian orientation, and the modification of the scheme prepared by the Hebrew University (1982) does not completely eliminate this. Also, the alphanumeric notation which includes both decimal and whole numbers is sometimes problematic for filers. The LC system is somewhat unwieldy in that each class is published in a separate volume, and there is no good general index to the scheme.

LC's main advantages are: 1) its specificity; 2) integration of Judaic with non-Jewish topics, obviating the need for a second

classification scheme; 3) the availability of complete class numbers including cutter numbers on LC printed cards and in cataloging-in-publication (as opposed to Dewey numbers which never include cutter numbers and which are usually unavailable for Hebraica); 4) it is the scheme maintained by the largest library in the United States and used by numerous research libraries. This assures that it will be kept up-to-date. For librarians contemplating networking, use of a "standard" classification scheme is a major advantage.

**Conclusions**

In concluding this analysis, there are two myths about Judaica classification schemes that I would like to challenge:

- 1) that such schemes need accommodate Jewish topics only, and
- 2) that a detailed classification scheme is unsuitable for SSC libraries.

As for the first point, in my experience, all Judaica libraries include at least general reference works. Margot Berman, a very distinguished SSC librarian, recommends integrating "Jewish material with secular topics" (Berman, 1982, p. 2). *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* does not belong across the room from *The War Against the Jews*. If the Judaica classification scheme

cannot juxtapose these and requires the adoption of a second scheme to house the general material of interest to SSC library users, this is such a great disadvantage that it calls for the selection of a less philosophically acceptable scheme featuring greater compatibility with general classification systems.

As for specificity of Judaica classification schemes, most complaints about smaller systems focus on their lack of enumeration of specific topics (Lepelstat, 1981). Here again, compatibility with larger systems may be a solution.

Each librarian must determine the relative importance of each factor in the evaluation of Judaica classification schemes for his or her collection. For some, the economic advantages of ready-made class numbers for one system may outweigh the philosophical superiority of another. While this paper does not provide a pat answer to the problem of selection of a Judaica classification scheme, I hope it helps to articulate the questions that must be addressed in this fascinating endeavor.

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