# The Cataloging of Jewish Liturgy by the Library of Congress: A Critique

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## BACKGROUND

For many decades, Judaica librarians tolerated the concentration of a large portion of their catalog records under the Library of Congress corporate-form subheading **Jews. Liturgy and Ritual** (AACR1, Rule 29c). The purpose of this heading was ostensibly to bring together Jewish liturgical works and prayer books for all holidays and occasions, on the model of headings for other organized religions, which were considered to be the "authors" of their liturgy. (More on this below.)

In addition to the cumbersome two levels of **Jews. Liturgy and Ritual,** there were many problems with the third level of the heading—the uniform title—as LC did not recognize the unity of the Jewish concepts **Siddur** and **Mahzor,** and split them into multiple separate headings (Weinberg, 1980, p. 335).

In the last decade of the life of the heading **Jews. Liturgy and Ritual,** there was a change in the position of the uniform title, which used to follow the form subheading in italics, e.g., **Jews. Liturgy and Ritual. Hagadah;** the latter was subsequently placed in brackets and shifted to the next line, just above the title page transcription, e.g.:

### Jews. Liturgy and Ritual.
### [Hagadah]

With the advent of AACR2 (1978), and its implementation several years later by the Library of Congress, the heading **Jews. Liturgy and Ritual** was forever laid to rest, and the principle of uniform title as the main heading for Jewish liturgical works was adopted, in contrast with the pattern for organized churches. [For comparative purposes, it is worth noting that the Vatican cataloging code has always prescribed uniform titles for its own liturgical works, and does not consider the Catholic Church their author (Vatican Library, 1948, p. 160). For the sake of completeness, though, it must be reported that the Vatican catalogs liturgies of non-Catholic churches under corporate body (Vatican Library, 1948, p. 162).]

Berger and Wachs (1983) describe the new LC practices for descriptive and subject cataloging of Jewish liturgical works. These practices have created several significant new problems for Judaica catalogers. In this paper, I attempt to demonstrate how many of the new rules violate or contradict the cataloging principles which the Library of Congress purports to follow. In particular, the new subject heading structure will wreak havoc in a Judaica library card catalog; in addition, the structure is totally inappropriate for an online catalog. Practical proposals for modifying current LC cataloging of Jewish liturgy conclude the paper.

## DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGING

The implications of AACR2 for Judaica catalogers were discussed at the 1979 Association of Jewish Libraries Convention in Cincinnati, and a number of points regarding the descriptive cataloging of liturgy, elaborated upon in the following, were originally made at that forum (Weinberg, 1981, p. 76-79).

### Choice and Form of Heading

AACR2 designates *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972) as the authority for the establishment of headings for Jewish liturgical works. With all due respect to EJ, its headings were assigned within a Jewish context, and they may not work in the general context of the Library of Congress catalog. It would involve research on comparative religion to determine whether **Blessing of the Sun** (already established by LC) exists in other religions, but I believe that **Grace after Meals** (another EJ heading recently established by LC) is not unique to the Jewish experience. In fact, on the same catalog record on which the latter heading appears, the subject heading GRACE AT MEALS, with the subdivision JUDAISM is assigned. Thus, for a generic EJ term such as "Benedictions" to constitute a unique and comprehensible heading for a Jewish liturgical work, a gloss such as (Judaism) or (Jewish Liturgy) must be used. I would, however, prefer a Romanization of the distinctive Hebrew title *Birkhot ha-Nehenin.*

### *Romanization*

This author's position against Romanization has been frequently published (Weinberg, 1974, 1980), and it may thus seem contradictory that transliteration rather than translation of the heading is advocated. The reason is that there are certain concepts in Judaism for which there is no precise equivalent in English, and the approximate translation in a general catalog is non-distinctive. Moreover, the pronunciation of the titles of Jewish liturgical works is, in most cases, easily verifiable, unlike that of the many other Hebraic names and titles which catalogers are called upon to Romanize.

The LC liturgical headings established so far feature a mixture of translation and Romanization, yielding rather ludicrous juxtapositions such as:

**Mahzor. Pilgrim Festivals**
**Mahzor. Shavuot.**

I submit that the former subdivision is less likely to be sought than its Hebrew equivalent *Shalosh Regalim,* and that the English counterparts of the latter (Pentecost, Feast of Weeks) are better known terms than "Pilgrim Festivals."

The worst juxtaposition occurs, however, as a result of the difference between the LC (1976) and *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1972) systems for the Romanization of Hebrew. The notable divergence in the consonant table is EJ's use of z vs. LC's ts for tsadi; in the vowel table, EJ assigns ei as the value for *tsere,* whereas LC has e alone. The difference with the most frequent consequence is EJ's doubling of the consonant when it includes a *dagesh forte,* i.e., gemination (*Enc. Jud.*, 1972, vol. 1, p. 90, note 2), while LC's table does not call for this. This leads to the uniform heading **Haggadah,** followed by the Romanized title [Hagadah].

The difference between the EJ and LC systems of Romanization is officially recognized in the latter's *Cataloging Service Bulletin* #26 (1984, p. 26), but the implications do not appear to be fully understood, as the examples of EJ uniform

titles are grouped with verso of title-page forms of personal names. The latter do not, in many cases, derive from a systematic Romanization table, while the former do.

In my view, LC should have used EJ for the *choice,* but not the *form* of heading, e.g., in the case of the EJ heading *Akdamut Millin,* the Hebrew-Aramaic form should have been reconstructed and Romanized according to the LC table. As a final point on EJ as an authority for the choice of heading, it is worth noting that the *Encyclopaedia* often violates the AACR2 principle of "the best known form of the best known name," as EJ tends to prefer the "scholarly" form. Many Judaica librarians can surely attest to this, having been forced to consult the index to EJ when they could not find a major topic in its appropriate alphabetic position. *Akdamut Millin* is an excellent case in point, as most Jews refer to this Aramaic poem read on Shavuot by the first word of its title only (in fact, the LC authority record refers from it), and mistakenly pronounce it "Akdamot." The EJ/LC heading is therefore likely to lead to uncertainty in the mind of the user that the work being sought has indeed been identified.

### Main vs. Added Entries

1. *Author vs. Title* — The appeal to EJ leads to conflict with other principles of AACR2. Liturgical works are entered under title, even if they have well established personal authors. The heading **Akdamut Millin** again serves to illustrate this point; the LC authority record does not even provide a cross reference from the author's name, **Meir ben Isaac Nehorai,** *11th cent.*— a heading which has been established by LC.

2. *Title vs. Uniform Title* — AACR2 provides several unclear examples of entering Jewish liturgical works under title proper rather than uniform title (rule 21.39c); these appear to represent non-crystallized forms, e.g., "Jewish marriage services" or variants of standard Jewish prayer books issued by branches of Judaism outside the mainstream. The latter practice may lead to charges of bias as more examples become available. The marking of the non-standard rite after the uniform title is a related issue, discussed below.

3. *Text vs. Commentary* — Several Judaica catalogers have reported inconsistencies in LC's interpretation of the rule regarding main entry for commentary vs. text of a liturgical work when the former is emphasized (AACR2, rule 21.13B). Whereas in the days of AACR1, any work containing a text was entered under text, the current rule demands greater judgment.

While librarians invest a lot of time and energy in the selection of main entry, its importance is disappearing in an age of online cataloging, when all entries are equally accessible. It is therefore ironic that LC has chosen at this time to create subject headings for Jewish liturgical works which duplicate the main and added entries provided in the name-title catalog. A detailed critique of this point follows the conclusion of the treatment of descriptive cataloging.

### Liturgical Rite

The identification of the rite of a work of Jewish liturgy has always presented a challenge to Judaica catalogers, and its relative position in the heading has not been consistent in standard Judaica bibliographies, i.e., some gather everything on a rite, while others keep all editions of an individual liturgical work together and subarrange these by rite. The elements of language and date can further complicate the subarrangement question. Indeed, it is not clear whether these elements added to the heading are designed to break up voluminous files of liturgical works or to identify a single work.

Having practiced extensive cross-classification (subarranging headings by inconsistent principles) in the days of **Jews. Liturgy and Ritual,** LC seems to be doing the same with the new rules. The following main headings, which are derived from recent LC cards, illustrate this point:

**Siddur (Conservative, Rabbinical Assembly) English & Hebrew. Selections**

(84-119820)

**Siddur. Sabbath (Sephardic, Italy) Italian & Hebrew.**

(81-122420)

The former work contains the morning service, which, since it has a well established name **Shaharit,** could have been entered directly according to AACR2 rule 25.23A, on the model of the Protestant morning prayer example given with the rule. The second Siddur contains Sabbath and Holiday prayers, thus meriting an added entry for Mahzor. AACR2 has an explicit rule for positioning *Selections* after the language indicator, but the treatment of these two works—which are in essence both "incomplete" Siddurim, appears to be inconsistent, as a result of invoking various AACR2 principles.

It is not clear to me whom this type of heading is intended to serve. It certainly complicates the life of the cataloger by demanding highly specialized knowledge, while it is doubtful that the user would

approach the catalog with such a complex structure in mind.

The above examples by no means exhaust the possible complexities in liturgical headings subarranged by rite. The editor's name may be added following the rite to distinguish a variant edition from standard editions (AACR2, rule 25.22).

Further research is needed, both on the ascertainable elements of liturgical works, e.g., title, language, editor, place, and date—which lend themselves to the subarrangement of identical headings, as well as on the groupings that are most frequently sought by users of Judaica libraries.

Since the marking of the rite never occurs in initial position, LC's descriptive headings do not make it possible to identify, e.g., all Sephardic or Reform liturgical works. To serve the purpose of gathering all prayer books in one rite, LC has come up with new subject headings, which are examined in the following section.

## SUBJECT HEADINGS

Although the original American cataloging code was designed for a dictionary catalog (Cutter, 1904), in recent years, many libraries have chosen to separate the author-title catalog from the subject catalog, or, in order to juxtapose works about authors with works by them, the nature of the division may be *name-title* vs. topical subject catalog.

### Relationship of Subject to Descriptive Headings

It has always been a cardinal principle of Anglo-American cataloging that the form of heading for a proper name is established identically for descriptive or subject cataloging purposes. This rule applies to names of individuals, corporate bodies, geographic terms, and titles of works. It is suddenly being violated in the case of liturgy.

### Plural Form

We are now witnessing the establishment of the names of Jewish liturgical works in main and added entries in the singular form, while both singular and plural forms are used for the same works in subject headings, e.g., HAGGADAH/HAGGADOT.

### Redundancy

An even more serious problem than the form in which subject headings are established is their redundant application with respect to descriptive entries. The purpose of the latter has always been to

facilitate a "known-item" search, that is, to help the user locate an author or title he has in mind. The principle of bringing all editions of a work together led to the uniform title concept. (Although that term was not used by Cutter, the concept is implicit in his rules for anonymous classics, established more than a century ago.)

In essence, the author-title catalog has always represented what a work *is,* while the subject catalog has represented what a work is *about.* The new LC subject headings on the order of HAGGADOT—TEXTS will lead only to unnecessary clutter in the subject catalog. We might as well assign the heading "HAMLET—TEXTS" for the benefit of the misguided catalog user who thinks such works might be in the subject catalog.

### Generic Posting

By far, the most serious flaw in the new LC subject cataloging practices for liturgy is the assignment to all individual works the general heading JUDAISM—LITURGY—TEXTS, in addition to the specific heading, e.g. HAGGADOT—TEXTS. The net effect of this heading is the same as that of **Jews. *Liturgy and Ritual.***

In the case of HAGGADAH, the heading for the ceremony at which it is used, SEDER, is also assigned, with the subdivisions — LITURGY—TEXTS. At the 1984 Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries, Rabbi Theodore Wiener, Judaica Cataloger at the Library of Congress, noted that in actual practice, the order of subject headings assigned differs from that reported by Berger and Wachs (1983) on the basis of correspondence with LC, i.e., that the subject heading for the specific work precedes JUDAISM—LITURGY—TEXTS. This discrepancy does not in any way affect access to the material. LC record # 81-122420 exemplifies the Berger and Wachs order, while #84-119820 features Rabbi Wiener's order. What is of concern is the inconsistent application of the new rules at this early stage, not only in terms of order of subject headings, but also in terms of their inclusion or omission in specific cases.

### *Implications for Online Catalogs*

Generic posting, i.e., the assignment of a general as well as a specific subject heading, is a practice which violates the basic principle of subject cataloging, i.e., to assign terms only at the level of specificity of the work. LC used to assign "duplicate headings" only to botanical and zoological species which could not be divided by place (Chan, 1978, p. 26-27), but has been using these increasingly during the past decade

for bibliographical and biographical works. This practice has been criticized both from a Judaica library standpoint (Weinberg, 1978, p. 22-24) and in the general library literature (Wilson, 1979).

To serve the user who might seek a general rather than a specific heading consistently, we should assign to every work about PURIM the additional heading JUDAISM—HOLIDAYS, and to every work about JUDAISM, we should add the heading RELIGION. The statistical implications of such systematic generic posting are astounding (Weinberg, 1984).

The increase in generic posting in recent LC subject cataloging is especially inappropriate at a time when serious proposals have been made for converting the LC subject heading list into standard thesaurus format (RTSD, 1984, p. 13, 15). (*Thesaurus* is the information science term for controlled vocabulary.) The advantage of thesaurus format over that of traditionally structured subject heading lists is that it makes explicit the nature of the relationship between terms. Thus, while the see *also* reference has two functions in Library of Congress Subject Headings—to link related terms as well as to refer from general to specific terms—in a thesaurus, different codes are used to express these two relationships.

By using a hypothetical online LC thesaurus, it would be quite easy to determine that HAGGADAH is one of the specific types of Jewish liturgical texts, and there would be no need to redundantly assign the heading JUDAISM—LITURGY—TEXTS to each Haggadah. Conversely, it would be equally easy to determine what the broader term for Haggadah is.

### Relationship of Subject Headings and Classification

A number of proposals have recently been made to take advantage of the classification data which is stored in online catalogs to enhance subject retrieval. Most of the published proposals relate to the Dewey Decimal Classification (Markey 1984, 1985), which—unlike the LC Classification used in most Judaica research libraries—has a hierarchically expressive notation from which it is easy to identify the various levels of a subject. (In the case of LC, levels of indentation for the names of topics in the printed classification schedules may serve to express the hierarchy, if these typographic clues are incorporated into an online catalog.)

For Jewish liturgy, multiple hierarchical levels are not particularly crucial, although LC's simple alphabetic cuttering by title does lead to the scatter of related materials,

e.g., works related to one holiday. In any case, the user who is interested in scanning a library's holdings of Jewish liturgical works may do so either via a shelflist in card form or in a future online shelflist or classified catalog. The fact that Jewish liturgy is kept together by a library's classification scheme is yet another argument for not duplicating this arrangement in the library's subject catalog under the heading JUDAISM—LITURGY—TEXTS.

In discussing the classificatory or gathering function of LC subject headings, it should be pointed out that the new liturgy headings bring together certain related works while dispersing others. MAHZORIM for all Jewish festivals are now juxtaposed, as are SIDDURIM containing both Daily and Sabbath prayers. Other uniform headings for individual prayers may lead to scatter of related titles throughout the catalog. Evidence from LC records for liturgy that have come through, however, indicates that many of the old Cutter numbers have not been changed, e.g., D3 for Daily Prayers; P4 (Passover) for Hagadah, although recent issues of Additions and Changes to the Library of Congress Classification Schedules feature new cutter numbers for New Year and Day of Atonement prayers (R67 and Y58). Thus works brought together in the alphabetical catalog may be scattered on the shelf and vice versa.

The distinction between the descriptive headings and LC classification rubrics for liturgical works must be clearly understood by the cataloger. For example, the recent establishment by LC of the class Yom ha-Zikaron Prayers (BM 675.Y55) has no implication for descriptive catalogers, as the heading for a single edition of such a prayer will be its uniform title or title proper. The class number gathers works for this occasion, and the second cutter number assigned by the classifier serves to bring all editions of one work together on the shelf.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

While proposals to the Library of Congress for revision of its cataloging practices which are objectionable to Judaica libraries do quite often lead to change, the process is usually a slow one. These recommendations are therefore directed primarily to the Judaica cataloger who uses LC copy, but would like to prevent the proliferation of unnecessary and redundant headings in an already complex card catalog, which suffers from LC having changed its mind several times on the "Liturgy Question."

## Descriptive Cataloging

Much as I dislike the inconsistency in Romanization of uniform titles by EJ and LC, I am not recommending the in-house modification of EJ headings for liturgical works when they differ from the LC transcription of the title, because it would be too time-consuming. As for the criticism of the EJ "generic" English headings, such as Benedictions, these are likely to cause more problems in a general library than in a Judaica library. I do recommend the use of cross references from well known Hebrew titles to ensure that the library's patrons will be able to locate the desired materials. Choice of main vs. added entry is not worth quibbling over either, as long as all reasonable access points are provided.

In my view, not enough is known yet about catalogers' problems with the identification of rite or about users' needs in this regard to recommend a change in the structure of such headings. The relationship between the descriptive headings and subject headings for rite is redundant, however, and changes in their implementation are recommended below.

## Subject Headings

The basic change I recommend in the use of current LC copy for Jewish liturgical works is the conversion of redundant subject headings to cross references, while taking into account the existence in an individual library of a dictionary or divided catalog.

In the case of subject headings for individual liturgical works such as Haggadah, there is absolutely no need for the heading HAGGADOT—TEXTS in a dictionary catalog. In a divided catalog, a single cross reference for each work, e.g.:

HAGGADOT—TEXTS
see
**Haggadah**
in the author-title catalog

will potentially save a library hundreds of unnecessary cards in the subject catalog.

To take care of the generic posting problem, I suggest an *omnibus cross reference* from JUDAISM—LITURGY-TEXTS as a replacement for this superfluous subject heading. As each new heading for individual liturgical works is established, it should be added to the cross reference card or online authority record, e.g.:

JUDAISM—LITURGY—TEXTS
*See the following headings
in the author-title catalog:*
**Haggadah**
**Mahzor**
**Siddur**

(An omnibus cross reference is created for a general subject term to which no works are assigned, but which constitutes a category which a user might conceivably seek. All of the specific subject headings which fall into this broad category are listed on such a *see* reference card.) A similar omnibus cross reference card can be set up to handle the redundant marking of liturgical rite in main and subject headings, e.g.:

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM—
LITURGY—TEXTS
*See the following headings
in the author-title catalog*
**Haggadah (Conservative)**
**Mahzor (Conservative)**
**Siddur (Conservative)**

The latter practice may not be essential in a library which does not own many variant rites, as it will save very few entries.

It is interesting that the one post-AACR2 LC record that we have seen for a Sephardic liturgical work (#81-122420) did not have a subject heading assigned to it designed to gather all works in this rite. (This underscores the point made earlier regarding the inconsistent application of the new rules.) A cross reference on the preceding model would serve this purpose, i.e.:

JUDAISM—SEPHARDIC RITE—
LITURGY—TEXTS
*See*
**Mahzor (Sephardic)**
**Siddur (Sephardic)**
**Siddur. Sabbath (Sephardic)**

A single cross reference may be used to replace the [Ceremony]—LITURGY—TEXTS headings to serve the hypothetical user who does not know that the Haggadah is used at the Seder:

SEDER—LITURGY—TEXTS
*see*
**Haggadah**
*in the author-title catalog*

An illustration of the application of this principle to the Holiday subject headings is:

SABBATH—LITURGY—TEXTS
*see*
**Siddur. Sabbath**
*in the author-title catalog*

In making the decision to convert LC headings to cross references, the questions to be asked are:

1. Is the term a restatement of another heading to which a link can be made via a simple *see* reference? (One-to-one relationship)

2. Does the term represent a broader category than the work being cataloged? If

so, *see also* references may be made from the broad to the specific term. In the case of catch-all terms such as JUDAISM—LITURGY—TEXTS, which rarely apply to a single work, an omnibus cross reference may be created. (One-to-many relationship)

It is hoped that these simple proposals will assist Judaica catalogers in contending with the great changes in LC's handling of Jewish liturgy, and that they will eventually be adopted by our de facto national library, obviating the need for librarians to evaluate and modify LC cataloging copy for these primary Judaic sources.

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*Several of the proposals in this paper were made at a Cataloging Workshop sponsored by the New York Regional Chapter of the Association of Jewish Libraries, held at Yeshiva University on January 5, 1983, and many of the issues addressed in this paper were suggested by questions on LC practice raised by participants in subsequent Cataloging Workshops.*

# Judaica Cataloging:
# A selective annotated bibliography of recent publications in English

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## Scope and Method

This bibliography represents an attempt to bring together material in English dealing with the cataloging of Judaica, which comprises Hebraica, Yiddica and works on Jewish topics. Only published material was included. Sources more than twenty years old were omitted, unless they were found to still be of significance. In the case of works in several editions, only the latest was included. Sources which could not be located are marked with an asterisk and often lack pagination and annotation. The bibliography has a classified arrangement with alphabetical subarrangement, which is broken whenever an obvious relationship between sources demands their juxtaposition.

## OUTLINE

## I. *General Overviews*

1. *Association of Jewish Libraries Bulletin,* 16 (Spring 1981).

   Special volume (two issues) devoted entirely to Judaica Cataloging.

2. Baker, Zachary M., "Bibliographic Research and Organization of Yiddish Literature: Some Problems and Prospects", *Yiddish,* 4 (1980), 21-7.

   No national bibliography has devoted itself exclusively to Yiddica. It is suggested and hoped that the projected publication of the Union Catalog of Yiddish Books, based at the

Library of Congress Hebraic Section, will bring the bibliographic coverage of the whole field of Yiddish up to current professional standards. Includes bibliographic references. (See also #11).

3. Baker, Zachary M., "Problems in Judaica Cataloging", *Hennepin County Library Cataloging Bulletin,* 23/24 (September 1976), 54-7.

   Author discusses descriptive cataloging problems, such as Romanization and orthography of Hebrew and Yiddish, as well as subject and classification problems, which stem from the Anglocentric bias of the centralized cataloging authorities. Includes bibliographic references.

4. Berger, Pearl and Sharona R. Wachs, "Catalog Department", *Judaica Librarianship,* 1983-

   A column focusing on general developments in the cataloging profession which have a particular bearing on Judaica cataloging and classification, and on specific issues in the cataloging of Judaica materials.

*5. Berman, Margot S. *How to Organize a Jewish Library: A Source Book and Guide for Synagogue, School and Center Libraries.* New York: JWB Jewish Book Council, 1981.

   One chapter is devoted to the practical approach to cataloging.

6. Caruso, Naomi, "The Role of the Vertical File in a Jewish Library". Association of Jewish Libraries. *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Convention,* Montreal, 1976. p. 44.

   Summary of a paper describing the structure and contents of the vertical file in the Jewish Public Library of Montreal.

7. Gold, Leonard Singer, "Judaica and Hebraica in Book Catalogs", *Jewish Book Annual,* 35 (5738, i.e., 1977-1978), 33-45.

   Description of Judaica and Hebraica