

INTRODUCTION TO
CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE FOR THE
BAHA' I FAITH:
BP300-399

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The intent of this introduction is to provide to the novice Bahá'í librarian a basic knowledge of how to apply, in his/her own library, the classification for Bahá'í publications that is in use at the Bahá'í World Centre. Because most Bahá'ís who are placed in charge of a Bahá'í library are not trained in librarianship, and have no experience in classification, the introduction has been made as simple and clear as possible, while covering all aspects of classification that the Bahá'í librarian may face.

HISTORY OF THE MAJOR GENERAL LIBRARY CLASSIFICATIONS

Library classification schedules provide a means for library materials to be organized in subject order. This facilitates physical browsing as well as computer access. Since the time of the Library of Alexandria during the Hellenic period, some logical order has been imposed upon library collections. It is only in the last century and a half that a number of modern notations for library classification have been developed. Such classifications contain letters, numbers, or a combination of the two, to indicate subjects and subtopics; and additional marks to aid alphabetical shelving within the subject. Perhaps the best known is Melvil Dewey's Decimal Classification, first published in 1876. It is composed of ten large classes:

General works (000)

Philosophy (100)

Religion (200)

Social sciences (300)

Philology (400)

Pure science (500)

Useful arts/applied science (600)

Fine arts (700)

Literature (800)

History/biography (900).

A modified version of Dewey's Decimal Classification, called the Universal Decimal Classification, was prepared by the Institut International de Bibliographie (Brussels) in 1899-1905. It is used widely in Europe, and has a more minute identification of subjects than the Dewey classification, as well as incorporating symbols to express the interrelationship of subjects.

Alphanumeric classification schemes were developed about the same time as those that were solely numeric. Charles Ammi Cutter, librarian of the Boston Athenaeum, published his Expansive Classification in 1891. The best features of this scheme were adapted to the Library of Congress Classification. The Library of Congress collections, founded in 1800, were destroyed in 1814 with the burning of the Capitol Building by the British in the War of 1812. In 1815 Congress obtained the library of Thomas Jefferson, and adopted his classification, which was an adaptation of Francis Bacon's scheme for the classification of knowledge. In 1897, the Library of Congress realized that it needed a new classification scheme, and set about to create a pragmatic organization of books that was never expected to be used by other libraries. The outline of the main classes is as follows:

A	Polygraphy
B-BJ	Philosophy
BL-BX	Religion
C-D	History (except American), Genealogy
E-F	American history
G	Geography, anthropology
H-J	Social, economic and political science
K	Law
L	Education
M	Music
N	Fine Arts
P	Language and literature
PZ	Fiction and juvenile literature in English
Q	Science
R	Medicine
S	Agriculture
T	Technology
U	Military science
V	Naval science
Z	Bibliography, librarianship

The Library of Congress Classification has been adopted by most university and college

libraries in North America, as well as many large public libraries.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BAHÁ'Í CLASSIFICATION BASED ON THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SYSTEM

The Universal House of Justice decided in 1977 to set up a professionally-organized Library at the Bahá'í World Centre. Up to 1977 the library resources had consisted of books sent to the Bahá'í World Centre as deposits from Bahá'í publishers. For these deposits, a single hand-written card was made showing the accession numbers assigned to each volume. It was essential that a properly organized classification scheme be developed that could handle the range of topics covered by the rising number of publications. Planning also required that a general classification be chosen for the large number of general reference works and non-Bahá'í publications. The Dewey Decimal Classification assigned only a single number to the Bahá'í Faith (297.92). The Library of Congress system, on the other hand, assigned a range of numbers at BP300-395. The Library of Congress Classification had more space to expand, and more flexibility for creating specific numbers. However, the numbers assigned to the Bahá'í Faith in the Library of Congress scheme were not adequate. The staff of the Bahá'í World Centre Library therefore developed an expanded classification for the Bahá'í Faith based on BP300-395. The Bahá'í World Centre Library retained the rough outline of the Library of Congress organization, causing only a small amount of disturbance to the original arrangement of numbers by the Library of Congress. The Bahá'í World Centre Library decided, after testing, to adopt the Library of Congress Classification as the general

classification scheme for the Library, and to maintain a special expanded Bahá'í World Centre version of the section on the Bahá'í Faith, using the numbers BP300-399.

WHERE TO BEGIN

To understand how to assign a classification number, it is important to analyze the contents of the work being classified. Always assign the narrowest classification number that fits the contents. For example, you have a book that covers Bahá'í history of the Baghdad period of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry. Look in the index for history; there you will find reference to BP330-358. These numbers are arranged from general to specific periods, chronologically; there are also numbers for history of the Faith in particular countries. You will find that history of the period of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry is BP331.2. This is not the correct number to assign to the book. Since the book is about Bahá'í history during the Baghdad period, the correct number is BP331.21. This number exactly and most closely matches the content of the volume. Suppose you have in hand Will van den Hoonaard's *The Origins of the Bahá'í Community of Canada, 1898-1948* (Waterloo, Ont. : Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1996). Because the book covers a period that is mostly the twentieth century, you might be inclined to classify it under BP332 for the twentieth century. This is incorrect; the narrowest topic is that it is history of the Faith in Canada. Therefore it should be BP355, history by country, with a special addition to the classification number to indicate Canada (to be discussed later).

The contents may be about a specific topic, in a specific format, or be a specific

work of scripture. It is important to recognize that there are a few simple principles that will help you to differentiate what has precedence.

If a book is by one or more of the Central Figures or the Guardian, it belongs in the appropriate number within BP360-364. If you are classifying *God Passes By*, even though it is a history it belongs in BP364 in order to keep the original works of sacred texts and interpretations together.

If a book is a compilation on a specific subject from among the writings of the Central Figures, Guardian and Universal House of Justice, the work should be classified with the specific subject.

If a book is a message of the Universal House of Justice, or is a collection of messages from the Universal House of Justice, classify the book in BP382.12.

If you are classifying a periodical (magazine, newsletter, etc.), it is automatically classified in BP300, no matter what the subject.

All other items are classified with subject.

As you use the index, you may find that more than one classification number is listed for an idea or topic. The classification contains notes to explain under what circumstances to use each number. A typical example would be a book of statistics from

the Three Year Plan (1993-1996). “Three Year Plan” in the index gives two numbers, BP373.916 and BP332.323. At each of these numbers is a note explaining how that number is to be used. Both notes state that statistics for plans belong in BP302.

BUILDING COMPLETE CLASSIFICATION NUMBERS

Each classification number must be a unique identifier for the item in hand. This is because each library maintains a shelflist inventory, in classification number order, indicating the number of volumes and the number of copies of each volume retained in the library. The Library of Congress Classification has basic classification numbers that may consist of BP, a number, and in some cases an additional prescribed decimalized alphanumeric designator called a “cutter number.” A good example of such a classification number would be the number for a book on love, which is listed in the index as BP366.437.L65. The “.L65” is a cutter number added to the classification to extend the organization of a class area when further decimalization would create extremely lengthy numbers.

Beyond these basic classification numbers, every work also receives an additional cutter number that stands for the “main entry” of the work according to accepted cataloging rules. The “main entry” is usually an author but can also be a title. Each classification number also receives at the end of the number a date for the year of publication of the first volume of the edition of the work being classified. If the work is a translation, the classification number also receives an alphabetic code for the language of the translation.

The order, therefore is as follows:

CLASSIFICATION NUMBER [INCLUDING ANY PRESCRIBED CUTTER NUMBERS]

CUTTER NUMBER(S) FOR THE MAIN ENTRY (USUALLY AUTHOR)

ALPHABETIC CODE FOR TRANSLATION IF APPLICABLE

DATE OF FIRST VOLUME OF THE EDITION IN HAND

Example 1A:

A fortress for well-being : Bahá'í teachings on marriage. -- 1974 ed.-- Wilmette, Ill.:
Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974.

BP368.2
.F67
1974

Example 1B:

Translation of 1A into French, published in 1992.

BP368.2
.F67
FRE
1992

Example 2A:

To move the world : Louis G. Gregory and the advancement of racial unity in
America / by Gayle Morrison. -- Wilmette, Ill. : Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982.

BP395
.G73
M67

1982

Example 2B:

Same as 2A in Spanish, published in 1988.

BP395
.G73
M67
SPA
1988

CUTTER NUMBERS

Table V in the classification is to be used for building cutter numbers for authors, titles, countries, etc. as needed or directed. The cuttering table for Library of Congress numbers is built on a *relative* system rather than a *prescribed* system. New cutter numbers are based loosely on the table, but must be created to fit into the order of books that are already classified and on the shelves of your library.

Table V shows four paths to build a cutter number, depending upon the first letter of the author's last name: after the initial letter S, after the initial letters Qu, after other initial consonants, and after initial vowels. Look at the example of 2A above - a book about Louis G. Gregory by Gayle Morrison. The classification number BP395 .G73 gives you the number for biography of Louis G. Gregory. However, there will be many biographies of Louis Gregory written. This one by Gayle Morrison must be distinguished from the others so that it will reside alphabetically by author's last name among the other biographies of

this distinguished believer. The name "Morrison" begins with an initial consonant other than S or Qu. Therefore you would use "After other initial consonants" as the method for building the cutter number. M is the first letter, followed by O. Under O you find the number 6. The cutter number for MO is ".M6". The next letter is R. The number to stand for R will be found under "Additional letters" at the bottom of Table V. The letter R gives you the number 7. Therefore a good cutter number for Morrison would be ".M67".

Suppose, however, that you have another biography of Louis Gregory by an author named Motley. Following through the same process as above, you note that the cutter up through two digits turns out also to be .M67. You must then go on to a third letter to get a unique cutter number under this subject. Going out to the next letter, you will get a cutter number of .M674. These techniques of creating "relative" relationships on the shelf, are more an art than a science. The intent is to keep all books under a single topic in some logical alphabetical order. The decimalized cutter number is a way to do this.

Remember that a cutter number is treated like a decimal. Thus BP365 .E56 is shelved before BP365 .E6, because .56 comes before .6.

Tables I, III and IV contain prescribed cutter numbers that have already been prepared for prayerbooks, countries, and continental areas. The classification contains specific instructions at certain numbers telling when to use these tables. Do not create your own cutter numbers for these. If no prescribed number exists, it is best to consult the World Centre Library for additions that may be needed.

In some parts of the classification, you may be instructed to arrange volumes in a certain way. Under BP361 .A1, BP362 .A1 and BP363 .A1 for example, selections are to be arranged "A-Z by title." This means that cutter numbers are to be assigned for the title of the work, because the author is the same for all of the books in this classification number.

WORKS OF SCRIPTURE AND INTERPRETATION

Individual works by the Central Figures have been assigned a range of cutter numbers. For instance, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas is BP362 .K6-695. What this means is that there is a range of cutter numbers for the Aqdas from .K6 through .K695. Each such range of cutter numbers for a specific work is broken down in Table II. Table II uses the convention of .x to stand for the initial cutter number in the series. Thus, the following table:

- .x Original texts, by date
- .x A1 Partial editions or selections, by language, then by date
- .x A2 Translations by language and then by date
- .x1 General works
- .x2 Authorship
- .x3 Method and nature of revelation
- .x4 Concordances, indexes, dictionaries

- .x5 Hermeneutics
- .x6 Commentaries; textual studies
- .x7 Treatises on special subjects
- .x8 Study and teaching
- .x9 History
- .x95 History of translations

would translate for the Aqdas into BP362:

- .K6 Original texts, by date
- .K6 A1 Partial editions or selections, by language, then by date
- .K6 A2 Translations, by language and then by date
- .K61 General works
- .K62 Authorship
- .K63 Method and nature of revelation
- .K64 Concordances, indexes, dictionaries
- .K65 Hermeneutics
- .K66 Commentaries; textual studies
- .K67 Treatises on special subjects
- .K68 Study and teaching
- .K69 History
- .K695 History of translations

Using this table, all texts of the works, their translations, and books about them, are arranged together.

DATES

Occasionally, the same work is published twice in a single year. In order to distinguish such publications from one another, a device is used with the date portion of the classification number. Suppose you have three different editions of Esslemont's *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, all published in 1997. To differentiate, the first one classified will be BP365 .E8 1997. The second will have the date 1997a, and the third will be 1997b.

CLASSIFICATION AND CATALOGING

Cataloging is related to classification. Those unfamiliar with bibliographic description of publications should consult *The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, professional librarians, or the Bahá'í World Centre Library and its Web page for additional information.