

Library of Congress Classification*

Although the Library of Congress was founded in 1800, the detailed classification scheme in present use was largely instigated by Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, 1899–1939, and most of the scheme appeared between 1899 and 1920. Each main class is separately published. The schedule for Law first appeared in 1969, others have gone through several editions and in some cases supplementary revised schedules have been issued. Though designed for a large single library, it has been adopted by other libraries in different parts of the world and, as was pointed out in the section on DC above, its popularity is increasing.

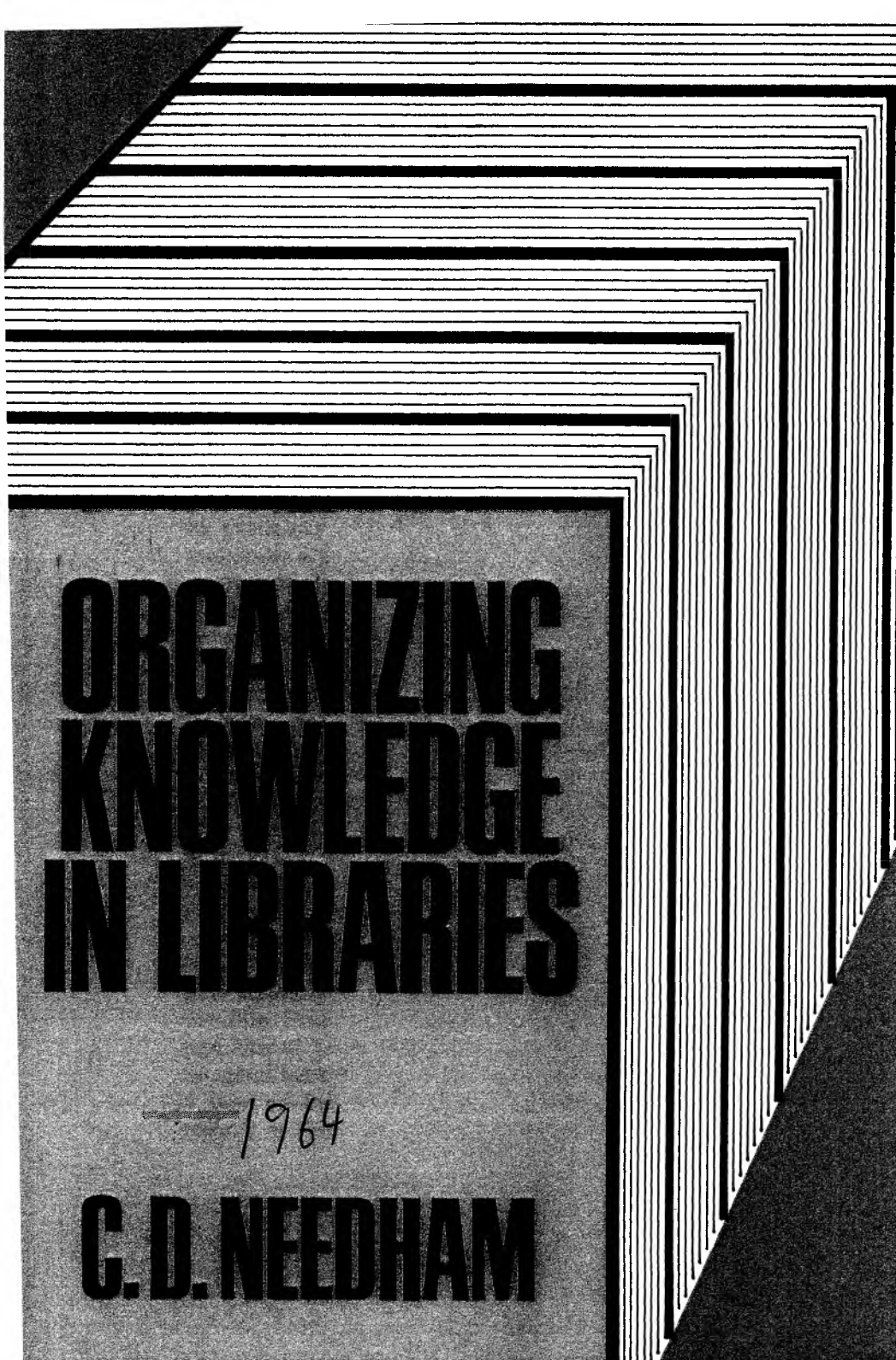
Several features – the separate publication of classes and the lack of common subdivisions for instance – stem from the fact that the Library is organized on a subject department basis and to a large extent the main classes can be viewed as separate special schemes, though incorporating the same fundamental principles and practices.

It has been frequently said that, because the classification scheme was based on a large existing book stock, the scheme has a greater 'literary warrant' than schemes based on theoretical principles. It is difficult to understand what exactly is meant by this, though there are parts of the scheme which show a particular awareness of special categories of literature, e.g. in Class TH there is a section for books on Heating and ventilating, preceding the schedules for these subjects considered separately. Again, in many parts of the scheme compounds are enumerated which could have been conceived only after a careful study of the book stock, e.g. the schedules under authors in the Literature class. Nevertheless, a scheme using simple elements based on literary warrant will cater for compounds as required with even greater success.

MAIN CLASSES

The traditional disciplines are chosen as the main classes:

* The following editions of the various classes have been used in this chapter: Class H, 3rd ed. 1950; Class L, 3rd ed. 1951; Class P, 1928; Class R, 3rd ed. 1950; Class S, 3rd ed. 1948; Class T, 4th ed. 1948.



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C. D. NEEDHAM

- A General
- B Philosophy and Religion
- C/F History G Geography, Anthropology
- H Social sciences J Politics K Law L Education
- M Music N Fine arts P Language and Literature
- Q Science R Medicine S Agriculture T Technology
- U/V Military and naval science
- Z Bibliography

It should be remembered that in so far as the classes represent separate subject departments, to that extent collocation is irrelevant in the broad classes. Bliss has criticized it as showing no great degree of collocation, e.g. Logic and Mathematics are separate, as are Geology, Astronomy, and Geography; also many sciences are separated from their fundamental technologies, and though Language and Literature are found at class P, within this class the Language and Literature of major tongues are separate (e.g. English language at PE, English literature at PR).

INDEX

There is no general index to the whole scheme. Indexes to individual classes collocate distributed relatives:

- Finance: Banking HG 1501—3540
- Crime HV 6763—71
- Crises HB 3731.M7
- Railroad HE 2231—71

but they can also be wasteful, repeating sequences found in the classification:

- Banking: Collections HG 136—9
- Dictionaries HG 150
- Directories HG 65—96
- Periodicals HG 1—51

The lack of a complete index to the scheme is a serious weakness.

FACET ANALYSIS

LC is more enumerative than any other major general scheme. Even common form divisions are not found applicable to the

whole scheme. There is some capacity for synthesis as we shall see, but it is limited. As examples of enumeration study the following:

- HD Economic history and conditions: here there is an enumerated list of industries (contrast DC—see example on page 151).
- R Medicine:
 - RC Internal medicine—254 Neoplasms
 - 280 Neoplasms—by organ alphabetically, e.g. RC280.B7 Brain
 - RD Surgery—645 Neoplasms
 - 663 Neoplasms of the Brain
- L Education
 - LB 1572—Elementary—curriculum enumerated
 - LB 1628—Secondary—curriculum enumerated
- P Language and Literature
 - PA 4413 34—Sophocles—divisions enumerated include editions, translations, criticisms, biography, philosophy, treatment of topics (philosophy, religion, etc.). (Similar treatment is found under all authors of note.)

Frequently form, period, and country divisions are enumerated, e.g.:

- R Medicine
 - Periodicals by country, e.g. 31 English periodicals
 - History by country, e.g. 486—489 Great Britain
 - Directories by country, e.g. 713.29 Great Britain
 - Medical education by country, e.g. 772 Great Britain etc.
 - (Many similar divisions are also found under Pathology, Surgery, etc.)

The reason for the length of the schedules will now be understood. To some extent the schedules become guides to the subjects— as in the Literature class. However the inevitable results of the enumeration follow.

(i) *Simple subjects cannot always be specified.* For example, in Class L Education, the general problem of Curriculum, regardless of kind of school; the Teaching of, say, Mathematics, regardless of kind of school; the Education of Girls; the Education of Boys. It is important to recognize that a high

proportion of the schedules does not consist of subject classification at all, but is merely the enumeration of forms, periods, places, and organizations. Thus, despite the detail, broad subject classification is the norm.

(ii) *Many compounds cannot be specified.* For example, although there are divisions for Church schools and Primary schools there is no place for Church primary schools; again, Liberal education can be specified and Technical colleges, but not Liberal education in Technical colleges; in class s Agriculture, we find:

SB 211.P8	Potatoes
SB 129	Storage
SB 741.M65	Mildew

– but not Storage of potatoes, or Mildew in potatoes, etc.

(iii) Following from (ii) it is not only impossible to specify these compounds in the notation, *it is also difficult to decide in which class to place the compound.* For example, shall the document on the Mildew of potatoes be placed with Potatoes or Mildew? In DC, though the compounds cannot always be specified, there are frequent directions: in LC such directions are all too few, and cross classification is likely.

(iv) *Facets are often clearly distinguished but not always.* An example of good differentiation is in Painting – divided by Form, Biography, History, Styles, Subjects and Materials. In Class TL Motor vehicle engineering, however, the main divisions are by type of vehicle (Gasoline, automobile, Motor buses, etc.); under Gasoline automobiles are divisions for construction details, which reappear as a separate facet: Design and construction. Cross classification is likely in such circumstances.

(v) *Order of facets in the schedules might be improved in places.* For example in Education, Grade (Elementary, etc.) is followed by the sequence: School architecture, Religious education, Education of special categories (negroes, women, etc.). However, an overall pattern is discernible: Form, Period, Country, preceding the specialized divisions of a class. Note that sometimes History is collocated, e.g. in the Education class L, the History of education, whether of Primary, Secondary, etc., is collocated at the general form division for history at the beginning of the

class – in contrast to other schemes where History is usually secondary to specific subjects. Similarly Place may take precedence, e.g. Higher education LB 2300/2411 caters for only the general problems, Higher education in specific countries being at LD/LG where actual institutions (e.g. Lampeter College) are enumerated under country.

(vi) *Order of foci and sub-facets.* Alphabetical order is very often used. Chronological sequences frequently found in Operations facets, e.g. in Agriculture.

NOTATION

The notation is simple: letters are used for the main classes, integers for the divisions (up to four-figure maximum). Better apportionment would have reduced length (e.g. PE English language, UE Cavalry, QD Chemistry, NB Scripture). As with all integer notations, only broad expressiveness is achieved:

TH 6101–6729	Plumbing
7010–7975	Heating, ventilation, lighting, acoustics
8001–8901	Decoration
9031–9615	Protection of buildings

As a result of this and the fact that synthesis is rudimentary, there is little mnemonic value in the notation. There are some literal mnemonics, e.g. G Geography, T Technology. As the notation can hardly be said to display hierarchy and relationships, browsing in a large library classified by LC is an unsatisfactory business – a fact which, along with the relatively broad specification, results in great reliance being placed on the dictionary catalogues so often found where LC is used. Clearly, it is not the ideal scheme for use in a classified catalogue.

Hospitality. New foci and steps of division can be accommodated if a gap has been left in the sequence at the point required; to some extent, as we have seen, integers are almost certain to determine order because gaps cannot always be left as required. However, alphabetical extensions help here. Synthesis of compounds, so far as it exists (see above), is achieved by:

(i) *Common tables within particular classes.* For example, in most classes there are Place divisions that can be added to a subject

number, e.g. in Class N Fine Arts there is a table of country divisions, numbers from which can be added to certain numbers in schedules, e.g.:

NE 501-794 History of engraving in particular countries
(US is 05 and thus NE 505 means History of engraving in US).

However, Place is often enumerated too, N 510-3990 Art Museum and galleries enumerated by county and town. There are also special subject divisions, e.g. in Education LF 1-12 Universities and Colleges in Great Britain divided by a table (Charters, Policy, etc.) shown on page 176 of the scheme.

(ii) *The use of alphabetical extensions.* For example, RC 2 Neoplasms, RC 280.B7 Brain neoplasms - the organ being provided by the alphabetizing number, B7. Very many divisions in the scheme are arranged alphabetically in this way.

J. D. Brown. Subject Classification

First published 1906. The 3rd edition, edited by J. D. Stewart, appeared in 1939. It is the only English general scheme. At one time used by a number of libraries in this country, but the lack of revision (many of the classes in Science, Technology and the Social Sciences are particularly dated), the peculiar features of the scheme (see below) and the use of DC by BNB, have led to its decline in recent years. Today its interest is mainly due to the underlying theory.

In his *Introduction* Brown states: 'I incline to think that in book classification the constant or concrete subject should be preferred to the more general standpoint or occasional subject. In complete contrast to all other schemes the SC *collocates concretes* instead of scattering them according to particular contexts; thus, whereas in DC, say, Restaurants will be found in a number of classes according to whether the Catering, Architecture, Management, or other aspects are being considered, in SC all aspects of Restaurants are gathered together

I 984	Restaurants
I 984.183	Architecture
I 984.767	Management
I 984.769	Staff
etc.	