

# Declassifying the Library of Congress Classification: The Case of the Department of Philosophy Library at the University of Padova (Padua, Italy)†

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**ABSTRACT:** The ongoing project to revise the arrangement of the open shelves library collections occasioned a historiographic account of the implementation phases of the Library of Congress *Classification* (LCC), subclasses B-BJ – Philosophy and Psychology, at the Library of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Padua (Italy). The schema was adopted as a collection shelving and location device since the Library institution in 1997. The LCC international acknowledgement and the neutral

framework of the schema have undoubtedly played a role of driving factors at the first stage of the selection process. However, the implementation of the classification scheme had to consider critical issues like the shortage of the library area, the selection criteria of the appropriate bibliographic material, as well as the effort to settle and tailor the original schema to the specific needs of the library collections and its end-users. The purpose of this paper is twofold: from one hand, we aim to examine in detail each stage of the implementation project in order to provide a preliminary impact evaluation of the classification schema both on the collections management and development and on the research practices of the local users community; from the other, we intend to highlight the principal factors that have implied a sort of declassification process of the system itself. In conclusion, we argue that the declassification of library collections can be read, from a bottom-up perspective, as index of vitality of the collections themselves, as well as a valuable basis for planning the next steps of the Library project.

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## 1. Introduction

The ongoing library project to revise the arrangement of the open shelves collections has occasioned a historiographic account about the implementation phases of the Library of Congress *Classification* (LCC), subclasses B-BJ – Philosophy and Psychology, at the Library of the Department of Philosophy in Padua. In fact the Library adopted this system and used it with some modifications as a collection shelving and location device since its institution in 1997. The Library of Congress *Classification* is probably the most widespread bibliographic classification employed in the context of the academic and research libraries all over the world, although, as we will see, this is not the main reason why the system was embraced at the Library. The purpose of this paper is twofold: from one hand we aim to examine in detail each stage of the implementation project in order to provide a preliminary impact evaluation of the classification system both on the collections management and development and on the research practices of the local users community; from the other hand, we intend to highlight the principal factors that have implied a sort of declassification process of the system itself.

## 2. Background: history and institutional context

The history and the development of the Library of the Philosophy Department at the University of Padua are deeply grounded in the institutional and research context in which the Library came into being. This is a distinctive aspect connoting the origins of most part of the university libraries in Italy, as they were conceived, at least in their early stages, to ex-

clusively serve their scholarly community. However, it is rather unquestionable, if not trivial, to assert that the historical collections development of a given institution can be seen as a mirror of the institution's own history. Collections, from this reading perspective, may preserve the richness of signs left by generations of readers and scholars; they gather and keep inside the niches of those lines of research from which are followed in some cases veritable schools of thought. And in this respect, the case of the Library of the Philosophy Department at the University of Padua is not an exception.

The Department was officially activated on January, 1<sup>st</sup> 1997. It was founded in 1996 by merging the previous two institutes: the Institute of Philosophy of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, founded by Marino Gentile following the transformation of the former Philosophy Seminar directed by Luigi Stefanini, and the Institute of the History of Philosophy at the Faculty of Education Sciences (formerly Faculty of Education), founded by Carlo Giacon. Thus, the whole of the academic staff in philosophy of both Faculties joined the new born Department along with some scholars coming from the Faculty of Psychology.

Between tradition and innovation, the Department of Philosophy offers a program covering a wide range of fields in systematic philosophy and the history of philosophy. Its special strengths lie in German idealism, moral and political philosophy, aesthetics, epistemology, philosophy of logic, philosophy of language, the history of analytic philosophy, ancient philosophy, medieval philosophy and Eastern philosophies.

The Department is responsible for both undergraduate and graduate instruction. It administers the full degree course in Philosophy and the philosophy

section of the degree course in Education. Graduate studies have been recently organized in the Doctoral School in Philosophy that includes three main research lines: Philosophy and history of ideas, Moral and theoretical philosophy, Political philosophy and history of political thought.

Furthermore, the Department hosts the headquarters of the Interdepartmental Centre for Research in Medieval Philosophy “Carlo Giacon” and the Inter-University Centre for Research on History of the Aristotelian tradition, which has absorbed the former University Centre for the History of the Aristotelian tradition in Veneto, founded by Carlo Diano. For further information about the Philosophy Department and the Library, see their official web site available at the address <<http://www.filosofia.lettere.unipd.it>> and at <<http://www.filosofia.lettere.unipd/biblio/>> respectively (last visit: December 28, 2008).

### 3. Portrait of the Library: on collections and classification

The constitution of the Library of the Department of Philosophy cannot be disjointed from the institutional context of the Department to which it is closely related. The Department and the Library share in depth a similar genealogy and common cultural values, as well as the institutional mission devoted to promote the development of research in philosophy and in supporting teaching in philosophical studies.

Following up the activation of the Department in 1997, the Library was born by the conflation of the Libraries' collections of the former Institute of Philosophy and of the Institute of the History of Philosophy. The union library is housed in the new spaces inside *Palazzo del Capitano* where the Department has its headquarter and where the library is still located.

The Library is currently part of the University Library System applying its General Regulation and library policies. As a centre of information services and resources, the institutional function of the Library is to promote the study and research in the philosophy domain by acquiring, storing and making available the philosophical production of the national and international scholarly literature, both in print and digital format.

With an annual index growth equal to about 1800 items, the Library owns almost 90,000 books, with 19,653 volumes belong to special collections coming from the donors of Emilio Bodrero and Erminio

Troilo (both professors in Philosophy at the University of Padua), and 840 ancient and rare books. The Library's serials collection includes 257 current subscriptions and 120 ceased periodicals. The bibliography of courses in philosophy is also provided; textbooks are purchased on an annual basis, when possible in multiple copies.

The collections of the Library are completely computerized and indexed in the University Library Integrated System, migrated to Ex Libris Aleph 500 in 2007; all of its documents are available through the university electronic catalogue to the online searching and browsing. The Library stopped updating the card catalogue in 2002. The university electronic catalogue can be reach from the Padua Library System Portal at <<http://www.cab.unipd.it>> (last visit: December 28, 2008).

#### 3.1 Collections arrangement

The collections location is arranged according to a mixed device. Thus, the Library's collections are partly located on open shelves and partly on closed stacks of two off-sites depositories.

##### 3.1.1 Closed shelves collections

Most of the library material (over 87%) is stocked on closed shelves in the two library depositories. Books are sorted out by book size based on the dimensions as measured in centimetres from head to tail and from spine to fore edges of the cover.

The call number is made up by the introductory capital letter M of the shelf-mark (M stands for the Italian word “magazzino”, i.e. “depository”), followed by letters E, F, G etc. in conformity with the book size (i.e. “E” stands for books at most cm 18 tall) and closed by the chain number which is generally based on the order of the arrival of the works in the library.

For example:

E.g. M.H.11817 is the call number assigned to the following work:

Voltolini, Alberto. 2006. *How ficta follow fiction: a syncretistic account of fictional entities*. Dordrecht: Springer.

where:

M stands for a work shelved in depository  
.H stands for a volume that is at most 24 cm tall  
.11817 is the chain number assigned to the copy

The arrangement by book size is also applied to other collections housed in the depositories as those of special collections *Fondo Bodrero* and *Fondo Troilo* (call number with opening shelf-mark FB and FT respectively) and that one reserved for the ceased periodicals (call number with shelf-mark RIV.M.). However, there are some exceptions. For example, the collection reserved for standing orders of monographic series is ordered by an identification number assigned to each series (call number with opening shelf-mark M.CONTI), while the ancient and rare books belonging to *Fondo Bodrero* are embedded in the subdivision ANT of FB (ANT is the Italian abbreviation for “antico”, i.e. “ancient”).

All books on closed shelves are available for circulation upon the submission of a formal request by filling the apposite form at the circulation desk or by sending an e-mail. The staff of the Library fetches the books from the depositories four times a day.

### 3.1.2 Open shelves collections

The open shelves collections are housed in four reading rooms and in a mezzanine floor within the Library area. They are composed by five main subdivisions organized as follows:

Collections	Sections
I. Reference works collections	CONS > .A, .B, .DIZ., .ENC, .STO, .FIL, .M, .MS, .S
II. Course readings collection	CORSO
III. Philosophy collection	B
IV. Serials collection	RIV
V. Rare books collection	Z.ANT

Note that the sections order corresponds roughly to the collections arrangement throughout the library reading rooms. Let us stop for a moment to consider their internal composition.

*Reference section:* the section is the result of a layering process of several interventions in the collections arrangement over time. Thus, the section is articulated in embedding subdivisions that gather, and somehow classify, the heterogeneity of the *corpus* of the reference works. In this respect, general reference sources as bibliographic and research guides, bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, handbooks and so forth, can coexist with sources on individual philosophers

and their works, as well as with sources related to a specific branch of the philosophical research. For example, research tools largely related to the Medieval studies, including primary and secondary sources, are housed separately in the third reading room and shelved according to the following arrangement:

CONS.A collects the Latin Aristotle Commentaries

CONS.B collects primary and secondary sources in biblical studies

CONS.M and CONS.MS are specifically reserved to research tools for Medieval Studies and Philosophy

Conversely, the philosophical reference collection is properly housed in the reference stacks of the first reading room near the circulating and reference desk. The collection gathers, along with language tools, the principals reference tools related to the philosophical field like bibliographies, lexicons, encyclopaedias and alike. The reference collection includes also several philosophical series which endow the reader with excellent introductory works to the most important philosophical topics, as well as to the study of individual philosophers and their works.

Books are arranged according to an in-house location device which has been elaborated in recent years by the library staff. For example:

E.g. CONS.ENC.2.8 is the call number assigned to the following work:

8: Labirinto-Memoria, in *Enciclopedia*, [edited by Ruggiero Romano]. Torino: G. Einaudi, 1979

where:

CONS means that the work belongs to the class CONS reserved for the *Reference works* collection (CONS stands for the abbreviation of the Italian word “consultazione”, i.e. “consultation”)

.ENC means that the work belongs to the subdivision assigned to the reference type “encyclopaedias” (ENC stands for the abbreviation of the Italian word “enciclopedia”, i.e. “encyclopaedia”)

.2 is the chain number assigned to the whole work (i.e. *Enciclopedia*)

.8 is the sequence number, that is the eighth volume of the *Enciclopedia Einaudi*

E.g. CONS.FIL.GUI.1.10.50 is the call number assigned to the following work:

Blackburn, Simon. 2005. *Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (Oxford readings in philosophy, v. 50)

where:

CONS means that the work belongs to the class CONS reserved for the *Reference works* collection  
 .FIL means that the work belongs to the subdivision assigned to reference works in philosophy (FIL stands for the abbreviation of the Italian word “filosofia”, i.e. “philosophy”)  
 .GUI means that the work belongs to the reference type “guides” of the subdivision in reference works in philosophy (GUI stands for the abbreviation of the Italian word “guida/e”, i.e. “guide/s”)  
 .1 is the subtype number assigned to reference works on philosophical topics  
 .10 is the chain number assigned to the philosophical series *Oxford readings in philosophy*  
 .50 is the sequence number of the series, that is the fiftieth volume of the *Oxford readings in philosophy*.

Books are generally available only for consultation, as the shelf-mark's name describes it, with the exception of some monographic series recently open up for short-term loan without renewal.

*Course readings*: the collection is shelved in the first reading room and gathers the textbooks belonging to the bibliography of courses in philosophy related to the past two academic years. Due to the temporary nature of this location, books are arranged according to an intermediate call number. For example:

E.g. CORSO.2008/09.154 BIS is the call number assigned to the following work:  
 Foucault, Michel. 2001. *Biopolitica e liberalismo*. Milano: Medusa

where:

CORSO means that the work belongs to the class CORSO reserved for the *Course readings* collection (CORSO stands for the English word “course”)  
 .2008/09 means that the work belongs to the bibliography of a current course in philosophy  
 .154 is the chain number assigned to the copy  
 BIS means that it is the second copy of the work. Note that if a second copy of the work is available, then the work is available for loan.

*Serials collection*: the collection of current periodicals is shelved in the mezzanine floor. The collection gathers the leading scholarly reviews in the philosophical field published in Italy and abroad. According to the library collections policies, since 2004 the Library subscribed regularly to the electronic version of journals if available.

The periodicals are arranged on open shelves in alphabetical order according to a homemade location device. The call number is made up by the introductory shelf-mark of the section RIV (RIV stands for the abbreviation of the Italian word “rivista/e”, i.e. “review/s”), followed by the capital letter A and closed by the identification number assigned to each journal title.

*Rare books collection*. The collection gathers ancient and rare books mainly related to primary philosophical sources. It is housed in the fourth library room, reserved to the academic staff, and kept safe in closed shelves. The books are shelved by book size and ordered by call number. For example:

E.g. Z.ANT.16.44 is the call number assigned to the following work:  
*L'istrumento della filosofia di M. Alessandro Piccolomini*. In Venetia: per Francesco Lorenzino da Turino, 1560.

where:

Z stands for the Library of Congress Classification, Class “Bibliography and Library science”  
 .ANT stands for the subdivision related to ancient and rare books  
 .16 means that is a “sixteenmo” book (i.e. with sixteen leave per sheet)  
 .44 is the chain number assigned to the copy

### 3.2 The philosophy collection

Housed throughout the first and the second library reading room, the philosophy collection informs the bibliographic core of the Library's collections profile gathering the works of worldwide leading philosophers. Books are shelved according to the subdivisions of the class B “Philosophy and Psychology” that the Library of Congress Classification reserves for the philosophical works. As we will see more in detail in the next paragraph, the schema was adopted by the Library with functions of location device and shelves arrangement since its inception in 1997.

Currently, the philosophy collection is sorted out in the following class shelf-marks:

B	Philosophy (General)
— 105	<i>Special Topics (Events; Meaning; Reference, etc., specially related to Philosophy of language)</i>
— 108-708	Ancient Philosophy (600 B.C. – 430 A.D.)
— 720-765	Medieval Philosophy (430 A.D. – 1450 A.D.)
— 770-785	Renaissance
— 790-5739	Modern Philosophy (1450 A.D.- )
Branches of Philosophy	
BC	Logic
BD	Speculative Philosophy (Metaphysics; Epistemology, Methodology; Ontology)
BF	<i>Psychology</i>
Limited to: <i>Relation to critical and speculative philosophy; Psychoanalysis; Consciousness; Cognition</i>	
BH	Aesthetics
BJ	Ethics
<i>Note: ongoing revision</i>	
Topics related to Philosophy: <i>Philosophy and/of —</i>	
B	<i>Religion (Cf. Religious Philosophy)</i>
BL 51	Religion
BT 40-50	<i>Theology (Cf. CONS.B)</i>
BX	<i>Only for classic protestant texts</i>
P	<i>Language</i>
P 27	Collected works, papers, etc., of individual authors (i.e. Chomsky's Collected papers)
P 39	Relation to logic
P 99.4.P72	Pragmatics (Cf. P831.5.A1 +, Philosophy)
P 101-107	Language. Linguistic theory. Comparative grammar
Philosophy, origins, etc. of language	
General works subdivided by period	
P 151	Theory of Grammar
P 291	Syntax
P 299.A-Z	Other aspects, A-Z
P 325.5.	Semantics
P 325.5.A-Z	Other aspects, A-Z
Q	<i>Science</i>
Q 124-175	Science
Q 295	System theory; Cybernetics

Q 325	Self-organizing system. Conscious automata
Q 327	Artificial intelligence
Q 342	Information theory
QA	Mathematics
QA 9	Philosophy. Mathematical logic
QB 14.5	Astronomy
QC 6	Physics
QD 6	Chemistry
QH 331	Biology
QH 360	Evolution
<i>Note: ongoing revision</i>	
<i>Religious Philosophy</i>	
BL 51	Religion (General)
BQ 251-799	Buddhism – History – Philosophy
BQ 1001-1945	Buddhism – Literature
BQ 1100-3340	Canonical Literature
BQ 4061-4570	Doctrinal and Systematics Buddhism
BQ 4911-	Works
BR 100-110	Christianity – Philosophy
BR 140-1500	History
BS 1-2979	The Bible (Cf. CONS.B)
BT	<i>Abandoned</i>
BX 4800	<i>Only for classic protestant texts</i>
<i>Note: ongoing revision</i>	
<i>Political Theory</i>	
JA 71-84	Political philosophy
JC 11-126	Pre-modern political theory
JC 71	Greek political theory
JC 131-300	Modern political theory
JC 301-497	Forms of the State
JC 327	Sovereignty
JC 336	Social contract
JC 500-561	Purpose, function of the state
JC 571-628	The State and the Individual
JC 571-574	Authority. Individualism.
JC 575-578	Equality. Justice.
JC 585-599	Liberty
JK 1751-1788	<i>Political ethics - Citizenship</i>
<i>Note: ongoing revision</i>	

Table 1. Philosophy classification scheme: outline

Philosophers' works are collected under their names and enumerated within the tripartite temporal order of the philosophy's schedules (B). According to the original schema, they are further arranged and grouped following a space-temporal principle where each country, or major historical period within a country, is subdivided as follows: collected works,

general works, special topics A-Z, individual philosophers A-Z. However, general works, special topics, as well as any subdivisions hosting the pertinent secondary literature (i.e. “Criticism and interpretation” or “Criticism” in the schema), have been progressively abandoned to allow the expansion of philosophers’ works throughout the library open shelves. For example, philosophical works belonging to the so-called modern period are arranged as follows:

B 790-5739	Modern Philosophy (1450 A.D.-)
850-945	United States
934-945	Later 19th and 20th centuries
945	Philosophers A – Z
1111-1674	England
1131-1299	17th century
1148-1299	Philosophers A - Z
1300-1398	18th century
1302.5-1398	Philosophers A - Z
1401-1584	Scottish philosophers, 18th & early 19th centuries
1403-1559	Philosophers A – Z
1561-1612	19th and 20th centuries
1573-1612	Earlier 19th century to 1870
1574-1612	Philosophers A - Z
1614-1674	Later 19th and 20th centuries
1618-1674	Philosophers A - Z
1801-2403	France
1815-1907	17th century
1824-1907	Philosophers A – Z
1911-2179	18th century
1928-2179	Philosophers A – Z
2185-2417	19th century
2189-2417	Philosophers A – Z
2421-2430	20th century
2421	General works
2424	Special topics A - Z
2430	Philosophers A - Z
2521-3396	Germany. Austria.
2543-2611	17th century
2615-2729	18th century
2741-3177	Later 18th and early 19th centuries
2750-3177	Philosophers A - Z
2949.5-3177	Other philosophers A – Z
3180-3396	Later 19th and 20th centuries
3198-3396	Philosophers A – Z
3551-3656	Italy
3571-3585	17th century
3591-3598	18th century
3601-3656	19th and 20th centuries

3801-4095	Netherlands. Holland.
4201-4279	Soviet Union
4301-4495	Scandinavia
4511-4598	Spain. Portugal.
4670-4895	Eastern Europe

Table 2. Classification of Modern (and contemporary) Philosophy

Individual philosophers are classified accordingly to the range of call numbers (50 at most) assigned to their own subject headings. For example:

E.g.: B.2430.D483 P37 is the call number of the following work:

Derrida, Jacques. 2001. *Papier machine le ruban de machine a ecrire et autres reponses*. Paris: Galilee

where:

B.2430 means that the work is a twentieth century French work

.D48 is the Cutter number assigned to Jacques Derrida as subject heading

3 means that the work is a separate work by Jacques Derrida

P37 is the Cutter number assigned to the work *Papier machine*

A short explanatory note has to be introduced with regard to the Religious philosophy. As we can observe in the classification outline above, religious subdivisions—as given by the original schema—are poorly used and populated in the Library’s collections arrangement. The biblical literature is shelved separately in an *ad hoc* library section, as it is the whole of the monumental series of *Corpus Christianorum*. On the other hand, works by Christian authors are subarranged under their name within the appropriate ranges of call numbers of the Late Antiquity and Medieval period.

#### 4. The Library of Congress *de*-classification

The above portrait of the collections arrangement points out the fragmentary or, if one prefers, hybrid organization of the open shelves collections. Furthermore the variety of call numbers, as well as the same notation format, do not help the casual reader “to see” Philosophy through those classification paths that trace, to say so, the collections boundaries by characterizing, at the same time, their bibliographic profile. As we have seen, the Library of Con-

gress *Classification* is mostly used as location device to classify authors and their works on the library open shelves; whereas works on philosophical topics play a marginal role and are often banished in the reference sections where they may find some rooming within the thematic series. Hence, which were, and still are, the reasons to classify philosophical works using the Library of Congress *Classification*?

#### 4.1 *The Library of Congress Classification: an economic and strategic choice*

The unification between the former Library of the Institute of Philosophy and the Library of the Institute of the History of Philosophy cannot bear the consequence of assuming the location system previously used to arrange the bibliographic material of both libraries on the shelves. Both systems reflected the specific character of their own library and community of users. They were conceived to arrange books in order to grant their invisible college, so to say, the appropriate primary and secondary sources but both were not adequate to represent in a systematic way the organic corpus of the philosophy collection of a modern research library.

Conversely the Library of Congress *Classification* seemed to offer those functional requirements to be able to meet the specific needs of a young but growing library. A special library committee was therefore established with the task of managing, from one hand, the evaluation process in order to select the appropriate classification scheme, and, from the other hand, of identifying the bibliographic composition of the open shelves collections. Committee's members were both from research and library staff.

If one consider that in those days, it was 1997, the university libraries automation was at the beginning, the most part of library collections were so poorly computerized as they were available to the online searching from the electronic catalogue, that the same libraries were accessible as far as to graduating students and research staff; then it may be more understandable at what extent the choice of an international standard could be sound as a position statement that can be easily defined revolutionary. Note that the attribute "revolutionary" is used in this context as synonymous of rupture, or break, with special consideration to the past tradition of the local library environment.

The outstanding acknowledgement of the Library of Congress *Classification* at an international level from one hand, and the neutral framework intrinsi-

cally innate in the schema from the other, have undoubtedly played a role of driving factors at the first stage of the selection process. But let us examine more in detail some of the surrounding reasons on which these factors can be based:

- *Neutrality*: as we have pointed out, the neutrality of the schema was able to overstep the permanence of some form of symbolic resistance, typically related to the legacy of the context, to mean that the Library of Congress *Classification* served as super partes schema.
- *Internationality*: the definition is taken *tout court* to mean a schema that is not elaborated in-house. On the other hand the Library of Congress *Classification* may be considered by the same standards since the schema was mainly conceived as location device to accommodate the Library of Congress collections.
- *Consensus and authoritativeness*: the fact that the Library of Congress of *Classification* is de facto one among the pre-eminent and most employed system in the international context of the academic and research libraries.
- *Reliability*: from a technical point of view, classification schedules, both of the Library of Congress *Classification* and of the *Dewey Decimal Classification*, were available as machine-readable data from the Library of Congress magnetic tapes used in the RAP environment for the automatic retrieval of bibliographic records. RAP stands for *Recupero Automatico del Progresso* (Automatic retrieval for the retrospective conversion of bibliographic records). RAP is a software implemented by the technical staff of the University Computer Centre. In the nineties of the past century, it was widely employed within the University Libraries project for the retrospective conversion of the library catalogue. Of course, nowadays such a working scenario seems to belong to an other age. The pervasiveness of the digital world with its searching devices, as well as the digital mass of information available online, have deeply affected the same way of perceiving the librarian's job.
- *Legacy*: the Library of Congress *Classification* was also used at the Library of the Biology Department of the University of Padua.
- *Time management*: along with the Library of Congress *Classification*, even the *Dewey Decimal Classification* was considered. But due to the contraction of time to manage both the removal and the actual running of the new library, it was not pos-



sible to carry out an in-depth analysis to compare the portability of the two systems.

#### 4.2 *The Library of Congress Classification: a choice content-based*

Among the factors outlined above, and despite the constraints of the project management, the Library of Congress *Classification* seemed also to positively respond to scholars' research habits, especially with regard to the indexing modalities of the philosophical domain offered by the schema. For example, compared with the *Dewey Decimal Classification*—at least from the standpoint of the evaluation committee—the Library of Congress *Classification* appeared to be more philosophy-oriented and to have got a deeper level of inclusiveness and hospitality. More in detail:

- schedules that coherently be able to embed the domain of philosophy and branches of philosophy
- schedules with a lower degree of scattering the author's works by different subjects. Furthermore:
- schedules with a more granular nesting be able to gain a stronger consensus from the research staff.

In this respect, a good example is given by the classification of the ancient philosophers. We can see below the case of the Aristotelian corpus and how the Stagirite's works are nested within the call numbers range B 402-491. It has also to be noted that the LCC distinction between classes B and PA (Greek and Latin languages and literatures) for philosophical works by Greek and Latin writers was not applied in the library schema. Thus, one can find in B both the original Greek and Latin texts, as well as the Latin translations (In *Italic* in the text):

B401 Dictionaries, lexicons  
Höffe, Otfried. 2005. *Aristoteles-Lexikon* herausgegeben von Otfried Hoffe. Stuttgart: Alfred Kroner Verlag.

Collected works

B402 *Greek Texts*  
Aristoteles edited by Roberto Radice in collaboration with Tatiana Gammacurta, Lucia Palpacelli, Ilaria Ramelli, Nicoletta Scotti, Emmanuele Vimercati, electronic edition by Roberto Bombacigno. Milano: Biblia.

Collected works > Translations

*Latin*

B407 English

Aristoteles. *De sensu and De memoria* Aristotele. Text and translation with introduction and commentary by G. R. T. Ross. New York: Arno Press, 1973

French

German

Italian

Other Languages

Separate works

B 415 De anima

—A5H Aristoteles. *De Anima* Aristoteles with translations, introductions and notes by R. D. Hicks. Hildesheim [etc.]: Olms, 1990

—A6B Aristoteles. *De l'ame* Aristotele traduction inedite, presentation, notes et bibliographie par Richard Bo-deus Paris: Flammarion, [1993]

B 416 De coelo

[...]

B 485 Criticism and Interpretations

(Currently used only for the series *The ancient commentators on Aristotle*, London: Duckworth)

—A5.A.1 Alexander Aphrodisiensis. *Ethical problems* Alexander of Aphrodisias translated by R. W. Sharples. London: Duckworth, 1990

[...]

B 491 Special topics (*Currently not used*)

Concluding, one can argue that the decision to adopt the Library of Congress *Classification* as location device was based not only on mere organizational reasons, but also on reasons of content.

#### 4.3 *Implementing the Library of Congress Classification*

The implementation project of the classification scheme at the library was not, and is still not, free from troubles, to the point that it can be easily defined as a self-learning library project, and this from several points of view. In the first instance, if it is rather true that the Library of Congress *Classification* is the classification scheme of the research libraries par excellence, it is likely true that the extent of its spreading among the Italian university libraries is still quite limited.

Without going too thoroughly into the topic, the isolation of the schema in the Italian context was

undoubtedly a relevant constraint from the early beginning of the project, preventing the actual possibility to share information and to cooperate, on a common empirical ground, with other peer institutions. Moreover, librarians, in particular those who were directly involved in the project, suffered the lack of specific training courses, as well as having available in Italian some pertinent literature in the field. Along with this, one should even to consider that in the late nineties the digital information infrastructure, notably the Web, was still in its seminal stage; otherwise said, that librarians were not so accustomed, if not skilled, to think the web like a huge digital library to explore.<sup>4</sup> It was not so simple, therefore, to access all that information as valuable as to support librarians towards a better understanding of the classification scheme. By contrast, at the present time, librarians can browse the LCC call numbers from their desktops and keep themselves updating through the Library of Congress *Classification Weekly* list. (The LCC Weekly list is available at <<http://classificationweb.net/>>. The revised edition of the Philosophy and Psychology schedules, published in 2008, cumulates all additions and changes to subclasses B-BJ through Weekly list 2008/18, dated April 30, 2008 (last visit: December 28, 2008).

#### 4.4 Declassifying the Library of Congress Classification

In a certain respect, the implementation project of the classification schema is still open and ongoing. Since the beginning the instance of the Library of Congress *Classification* at the Library has been subjected to a sort of mending and emending process in order to settle and tailor the schema to the specific needs of the library collections and its end-users. An extensive reduction of the original schema was, rather obviously, necessary, if not inevitable. The Library of Congress *Classification* has been elaborated—in a specific period and with specific purposes—to accommodate its own collections consisting of millions of books. Thus, this kind of interventions were (and still are) primarily aimed to trace a schema that is able to include and to represent the peculiarity of the philosophy collection of the Library.

For example, several subjects, with their relative ranges of call numbers, have not been taken into consideration, preferring instead the creation of new homemade subdivisions. It is this the case, as we have seen, of the philosophical journals and reference works embodied under a common library class

shelf-mark. Conversely, within the Congress, the periodicals, serials, dictionaries, as well as the general works are generally subdivided by language, and then within each language the topic is further subdivided by historical period; while general philosophical treatises and introductions to philosophy are embedded in the introductory numbers of the theoretical BD. It is also the case of the religious philosophy and, in particular, of the hybrid treatment reserved for the philosophical literature related to the field of the Medieval philosophy.

Similarly but conversely, others subjects, living outside the B class, have to be integrated into the schema in order to cover those topics and branches of philosophy that are in relation and mingled with other disciplines, as it is the case of the many “philosophy and/of”. However, it has to be noted that some of these border subjects are still not adequately represented through the open shelves philosophy collection. But to represent philosophy by philosophy is in some sort the core of the problem.

From this perspective, a brightening example is given by the emblematic case of the so-called Analytic philosophy of language, whose philosophical themes are subjected to a high scattering degree within the original framework of the Library of Congress *Classification*. For example, if we consider the thesaurus of the *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, Philosophy of language is represented under the node “Language and Languages – Philosophy that embeds hierarchically themes as the Ineffable, Language and ethics, Language and logic, Nominalism, Rethoric and Semiotics.

Thus, starting from the following sample of books (previously located in the library depository):

Kent Bach. *Thought and Reference*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987. M.G.7457.

Michael Devitt, editor. *The Blackwell guide to philosophy of language*. Blackwell Philosophy Guides. Blackwell, Oxford, 2005.

Michael Dummett. *Frege: philosophy of Language*. Duckworth, London, 1973. M.H.9015.

Gareth Evans. *The Varieties of Reference*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1982. M.G.13090.

Gareth Evans. *Collected Papers*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1985. M.G.13112.

Jerry A. Fodor and Ernest Lepore. *Holism: a shoppers guide*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1992. M.G.1326.

The same sample of books may be split into categories such as “Philosophers” = G. Evans = B.105.R25.E93;

P.106.E93, J. A. Fodor = B.945.F633, P. Geach = BC.50.G43, E. Lepore = BC.108.L47, J. R. Searle = B.945.S43 etc.; “Disciplines” = Theory of Knowledge = subclass BD, Logic = subclass BC etc.; “Concepts” = Description = B105.D4, B105.R25, BC199.M6, BF463.D47, Meaning = B105.R25; B849; P325.5.R44; “Truth” = subclass BC, BD and so forth.

The example above reveals, at some sort, the impossibility threshold to arrange in a unique shelf location the philosophical works in this field of studies.

Along with the external re-styling, to so say, of the original class shelf-mark, a second kind of intervention is specifically related to the indexing modalities of the philosophical works and, in particular, to the pervasiveness of the concept of authoriality that has so deeply affected and altered the schema itself. Thus, the Philosophy’s schedules have been turning into the Philosophers’ schedules following, better, exploiting a feature that it is own of the Library of Congress *Classification*, to collect authors’ works under their subject headings.

Evidence of this tendency is given by the choice to classify works by philosophers on philosophers under the shelf-mark assigned to the author of the work, that is to say that Anscombe’s *An introduction to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus* is not subarranged under Wittgenstein’s criticism but in Anscombe’s shelf-mark B1618.A57. For a similar reason, philosophical works—for example those that are typically classified by subject within the original schema—are gathered under the author’s range of call numbers. It is this the case of the political works of philosophers taken from JC—for example Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, Hannah Arendt’s papers and so forth – as well as it is the case of contemporary philosophers’ works.

## 5. On the revision project and some concluding remarks

If we observe the collections of the Library and the “form” that their bibliographic profile has evolved over the past ten years, we can actually notice the tangible signs of an endless reflection on the collec-

tion arrangement and management both from librarians and from the research staff. The concrete perspective to expand the physical space for the open shelves collections from one hand, the permanent growing of the collections size from the other, pressed the Library to embrace a long-standing project with the aim of identifying the best practices to be able to select the appropriate philosophical literature. More in detail:

- The need to bridge the bibliographic gap between the open shelves collections and the lines of research at the Department.
- The need to create the bibliographic core of the open shelves collections to be able to meet the information needs both of students and research staff.
- The need to simplify the collections arrangement and their call numbers.

The close collaboration between librarians and members of research staff allowed to carry out a first systematic revision of the open shelves collections and, at the same time, of the classification scheme adopted as location device. As we have seen, working closely on the collections building implied also the possibility to explore in-depth the original framework of the schema, tracing its weakness and strength points. Furthermore, the revision activity allowed to evaluate at what extent the schema has been affected by the adaptive process at the Library over time, evolving into what we have called the Library of Congress de-Classification. Similarly but conversely, we have observed at what extent even the philosophy collection at the Library has been affected by the framework of the schema, evolving into what we have called the Philosophers’ classification.

In conclusion, we argue that the declassification of library collections can be read, from a bottom-up perspective, as index of vitality of the collections themselves, as well as a valuable basis for planning the next steps of the library project towards, maybe, a new classification scheme.