Adapting Pettee for Orthodox Libraries

By Melanie Hechenberger

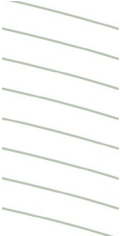*Librarian, SS Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Institute*

Introduction

This paper outlines the reasons why I chose to use the Pettee Classification System, otherwise known as the Union Classification System,[1] for SS Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Institute's (SCMOI) library and how I have adapted it to better suit the needs of its patrons. SCMOI's library is part of an Eastern Orthodox tertiary education institution established by the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR). Its collection, therefore, has a particular focus upon Eastern Orthodox and Russian works, key topics among these being patristic literature, Church Slavonic language books,[2] church history and doctrine. As a newly founded theological library (2021), the choice of classification system was critical as it determined how the collection would be organised and in turn our patrons' user experience.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' (IFLA) identifies five tasks patrons undertake when using a collection: Find, Identify, Select, Obtain, and Explore.[3] For patrons to be able to easily undertake these tasks when interacting with the collection, the collection must be arranged in a logical and strategic way so items are 1) where patrons can expect to *find* them (logical order) and 2) arranged to optimise their browsing experience when *exploring*

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[1] Julia Pettee, *Classification of the Library of Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York*, Revised and enlarged ed., ed. Ruth C. Eisenhart (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 1967).

[2] Church Slavonic is the primary language used in ROCOR churches.

[3] Pat Riva, Patrick le Bœuf, and Maja Žumer, *IFLA Library Reference Model: A Conceptual Model for Bibliographic Information* (Den Haag: International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2017), 16, https://repository.ifla.org/handle/123456789/40.

the collection (strategic order). Modifications to the Pettee system for SCMOI's library are a response to the Western Protestant bias of the system, which has inherent structural issues for Eastern Orthodox libraries due to differences between Protestant and Eastern Orthodox canons and that it, in places, underrepresents Eastern Orthodox topics. I will explain why I consider the Pettee system the best option for SCMOI's library, and thus demonstrate how the system provides theological libraries with an easily adaptable framework for their classification needs. Having provided this context, I will then outline the main changes I have so far made to the system to suit the user needs of my Orthodox institution.

Choosing the System

Currently, there are three classification systems predominantly used in Australian theological libraries: Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), Library of Congress Classification (LCC), and the Pettee Classification System.[4] I concluded that the Pettee system would be the most suitable system for our library for the following reasons:

- It has the broadest and most detailed class system for Christian works with 26 main classes. It is, moreover, the only system that has been designed with the exclusive purpose of cataloguing theological libraries, having been initially created for the Union Theological Seminary, which is a Protestant seminary, so every class is relevant to our collection. Alternatively, the other systems are general classification schemes that only have a couple of classes that are relevant to our needs, which means that there are fewer classification numbers that can be used to describe our collection.

- It is structured in such a way that there is room to update the system,[5] a necessity that the system's creator Julia Pettee was well aware of.[6] Hence, regular gaps are left between subclasses for updates as shown in Figure 1. As the system does not need to allocate numbers to the diverse range of topics that, for instance, a public library may require, there is ample space within its construction to not only allocate numbers to a wider breadth of religious themed topics, but also for updates and modifications as needed.

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[4] Philip Harvey and Helen Greenwood, "Classifying Religion: A Conversational Survey of the Three Main Classification Systems," *ANZTLA EJournal*, no.25 (December 2020): 2–10, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31046/anztla.i25.2734.

[5] Lavinia Gent, "Julia Pettee Matters: A Librarian Worth Classifying," *ANZTLA EJournal*, no. 27 (October 2021): 24–25, https://serials.atla.com/anztla/article/view/3028/3771.

[6] Julia Pettee, "The Philosophy of the Maker of a Special Classification," *Special Libraries* 28, no. 7 (1937): 258, https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/sla_sl_1937/7.

- The system's classes group topics in a logical way, specifically centred around Christianity,[7] which optimises the browsing experience for our patrons who are primarily studying or teaching Christian theological courses. This came about as Pettee took the time to research how theological scholars envisioned the key branches of theology and based the system's schedules on that research.[8]

- It has no fees associated with its use as it is no longer being maintained by a formal international editorial authority, unlike DDC and LCC.[9] This economic consideration would be of importance to institutions with limited funds as they will be able to allocate more of their budget to other needs.

- Despite the system not being maintained by a formal authority, there are still several libraries that continue to use it for their collection, such as the Leon Morris Library (Ridley College, Parkville, Victoria) and Dalton McCaughey Library (located at the University of Melbourne), which means that there is a network of libraries that continue to maintain the schedules and can be called upon for assistance.


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                    JUDE
FQ80          General, introductory and critical works
FQ88          Commentaries
FQ89          Commentaries on special chapters or verses


        REVELATION (APOCALYPSE OF JOHN)
FR            General, introductory and critical works
FR8           Commentaries
FR8.5         Prophetical interpretation applied to present events
                 and vagaries. (Compare RX23 - Keep here only if
                 limited to John. Do not use for any commentary
                 which follows order of chapters.)
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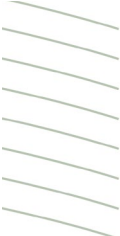
Figure 1: Class F in the Pettee Classification System showing how FQ90-FQ99 and FR1-FR7 have not been utilised (Pettee, *Classification*, 97).

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[7] Philip Harvey, "Pettee Reactions," *Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association Newsletter*, no. 10 (April 1990): 3, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31046/anztla.v0i10.818; Pettee, "The Philosophy," 256; William Walker Rockwell, "Preface," in *Classification of the Library of Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York*, Julia Pettee (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 1967), iii.

[8] Pettee, "The Philosophy," 254; Christopher H. Walker and Ann Copeland, "The Eye Prophetic: Julia Pettee," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 44, no. 2 (2009): 170, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1353/lac.0.0069.

[9] Harvey, "Pettee Reactions," 4; Harvey and Greenwood, "Classifying Religion," 5.

In summary, the Pettee system has the broadest and most detailed classification system out of the three options, good scope for amendments, provides optimal browsing experience for patrons, is free to use, and is in current use at other libraries which can be called upon for guidance.

Modifying the System

The major issue with the Pettee system is that it has a Western Protestant bias, having been designed for the specific needs of an American Protestant seminary.[10] None of the other classification systems on offer, however, can be said to treat Orthodox material any better as they are all designed by non-Orthodox Americans for non-Orthodox libraries. In all fairness, it should be mentioned that Pettee's system has sections for Orthodox material, the liturgical books section in Class U (Practical Theology) being particularly good. In many cases, however, these sections are minimal in their descriptions and in some sections Orthodox topics have been overlooked entirely. This is likely due to the Protestant library it was made for not having a sizable collection of Orthodox material, understandably as Orthodoxy was not its focus. As the system has room for modifications this is not an unsalvageable situation for Orthodox libraries and is certainly preferable to designing a classification system from scratch.

Having selected the Pettee system, for the reasons given above, the next task I was faced with was to ascertain in what ways it needed to be changed. So far, I have identified three main areas:

- The books recognised as belonging to the Old Testament,

- The location of patristic texts within the collection, and

- The expansion/creation of Eastern Orthodox themed sections.

The issue with Pettee's system for Eastern Orthodox libraries in regard to its treatment of Old Testament material is that it follows the Protestant Old Testament canon, not the Eastern Orthodox canon. The Eastern Orthodox canon follows the Septuagint canon and, consequently, recognises more books than the Protestant canon which follows the Masoretic canon. As demonstrated in Table 1, the Eastern Orthodox canon includes eleven additional books along with the Prayer of Manasseh, and additions to the books of Esther, Psalms, and Daniel. As the Pettee system follows the Protestant canon, books about all these texts are not located in the 'Old Testament' section (Class D), but in the 'Judaism and Jewish Literature' section (Class E). This is

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[10] Harvey, "Pettee Reactions," 4.

confusing for Orthodox users who would expect them to be with the other Old Testament books in Class D, especially in an Orthodox library. I have, therefore, allocated them new call numbers in Class D. Table 1 also compares the Old Testament canon of the Roman Catholic Church to demonstrate how this issue with the Pettee system is not exclusive to Orthodox libraries.
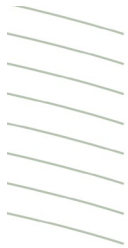
Table 1: Comparison of books in Old Testament canons.

OT Books	Protestant	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic
Genesis			
Exodus			
Leviticus			
Numbers			
Deuteronomy			
Joshua			
Judges			
Ruth			
I Kingdoms (I Samuel)			
II Kingdoms (II Samuel)			
III Kingdoms (I Kings)			
IV Kingdoms (II Kings)			
I Chronicles			
II Chronicles			
I Esdras			In appendix
II Esdras (Ezra)			
Nehemiah			
Tobit (Tobias)			
Judith			
Esther			
Esther: additions			
I Maccabees			
II Maccabees			
III Maccabees			
Psalms			
Psalms: addition of Psalm 151			
Prayer of Manasseh			
Job			
Proverbs of Solomon			
Ecclesiastes			

Song of Songs (Song of Solomon			
Wisdom of Solomon			
Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)			
Hosea			
Amos			
Micah			
Joel			
Obadiah			
Jonah			
Nahum			
Habakkuk			
Zephaniah (Sophonias)			
Haggai			
Zechariah			
Malachi			
Isaiah			
Jeremiah			
Baruch			
Lamentations of Jeremiah			
Epistle of Jeremiah (Epistle of Jeremy)			
Ezekiel			
Daniel			
Daniel: additions Susanna and Bel the Dragon			
IV Maccabees		In appendix	

Additional passages to books already in the Old Testament class were simply allocated classification numbers the same way you would treat any work about that book. To be able to slot in the additional eleven books, however, I needed to rearrange things slightly. I noticed that Pettee was very generous with the spacing of the Old Testament books section, giving each book a range of ten numbers, but in most cases only using three of them (Figure 2). Obviously, she set it up to allow room for new classification numbers if required as can be seen in the Genesis section where classification numbers have been allocated to popular subjects within the work (Figure 3). In order to fit eleven additional Old Testament books among them (for the Orthodox canon) it was necessary to reduce the range of numbers for many of the books: instead of ten, I allowed them five numbers. For example:

NEHEMIAH

DL45 General, introductory and critical works

DL48 Commentaries

DL49 Commentaries on special chapters or verses

      TOBIT *(inserted)*

DL50 General, introductory and critical works

DL53 Commentaries

DL54 Commentaries on special chapters or verses

I then slotted the extra books into the system as closely as I could to the order in which they appear in the Orthodox Study Bible.[11]

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DK              SEPARATE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT


        EXODUS
DK40      General, introductory and critical works
          Ten Commandments   see CR42
DK48      Commentaries, general
DK49      Commentaries on special chapters or verses
             Chap.21-23: (Book of the covenant)


        LEVITICUS
DK50      General, introductory and critical works
DK58      Commentaries, general
DK59      Commentaries on special chapters or verses


        NUMBERS
DK60      General, introductory and critical works
DK68      Commentaries, general
DK69      Commentaries on special chapters or verses
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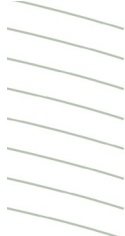
Figure 2: Example of the classification numbers used for Old Testament books in Class D of the Pettee Classification System (Pettee, *Classification*, 72).

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[11] St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008).

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        GENESIS
DK30     General and introductory works
DK34     Textual criticism
DK35     Literary and historical criticism

         Topics
DK36.1      Genesis and science.  Genesis and archaeology
               Controversial works   see RF25-26
               Genesis and archaeology   see CP40-46
                  Delitzsch and the "Babel-Bibel" controversy
                     see CP46

DK36.3      Creation stories
               Garden of Eden, Paradise, Adam and Eve, Cain

DK36.5         Pre-Adamites

DK36.6      Legends, Tower of Babel, Flood, etc.
               Babylonian legends   see BF67

DK38     Commentaries, general
DK39     Commentaries on special chapters or verses
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Figure 3: Example of the classification numbers used for the Genesis topic in Class D of the Pettee Classification System (Pettee, *Classification*, 71).

Patristic literature (the study of early Christian writings) in the Pettee system is grouped by author in Class G. This is a perfectly valid way to approach patristic works; however, it means that works on specific topics are not so easily findable when browsing the shelves by topic. Our patrons, being predominantly Eastern Orthodox students and academics, tend to use the collection by topic as most assignments are based on a topic not an individual author's work. Making patristic works discoverable for these projects is important as Eastern Orthodox Christians value many patristic works highly as their authors are venerated as saints in the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Eastern Orthodox churches are perhaps best known for their iconography and if you visit an Orthodox church, you will no doubt notice a large collection of icons depicting Christian saints scattered throughout the church being venerated by Orthodox Christians. Orthodox saints being so prominent in the daily worship activities of Orthodox Christians, their names are instantly recognisable and would, therefore, catch their eye when browsing the shelves, even when not housed in a dedicated patristic section. The issue of locating patristic texts in their own section is that when students and academics are browsing the shelves for works on a topic they are studying, works by patristic authors can easily be missed. Hence, after many months of consideration about how our patrons would use the books, I made the

decision to allocate patristic texts to Class G (by author) only when they do not feature a particular topic. Those that focus on a topic are grouped with that topic.

I also noticed that with many popular topics, works are given different classification numbers based on the date of writing (Figure 4). I concluded that patristic texts fitted well within this method since they chronologically fall into the "before 1700 AD" category. This separates them from modern scholarship by giving them their own classification number but also locates them right next to that scholarship so they are easily discoverable by browsing. For example:

NEHEMIAH

DL45   General, introductory and critical works

DL47   Patristic/Church Fathers commentaries (before 1700 AD)

DL47.5 Patristic/Church Fathers commentaries on special chapters or verses (before 1700AD)

DL48   Commentaries

DL49   Commentaries on special chapters or verses.

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HOLY SPIRIT, DOCTRINE
RT          Historical works
            Treatises
RT2           Before 1700
RT3           1701-1800
RT4           1801-1900
RT5           1901 to date
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Figure 4: Example of classification numbers arranged by date in Class R of the Pettee Classification System (Pettee, *Classification*, 495).

The last change to be discussed is the expansion or creation of Eastern Orthodox themed sections throughout the system. As a Western Protestant-themed system, the Pettee system of classification often gives merely a nod to the existence of Orthodox and Eastern material rather than thorough treatment of it. For instance, in Class B (Philology-Language), Church Slavonic is only given one number and there is very little room for expansion (Figure 5). Church Slavonic was created specifically for use in churches and since the Pettee system was designed for theological libraries, I

am surprised that it does not allow for the expansion of this language in particular. Most modern languages are given far more room for expansion than this church language, as demonstrated in Figure 6. As we have quite a large collection of Church Slavonic language books, this section had to be expanded. So as not to disrupt the current order of things, I resorted to using decimal points based on the topics used for other languages as follows:

BP66   General works and essays on Slavonic language

BP66.3 Dictionaries and lexicons

BP66.4 Glossaries

BP66.5 Grammar

BP66.6 Syntax

I may expand this further when I catalogue this section.

SLAVIC (SLAVONIC) LANGUAGES

BP65   General works on all Slavic languages

BP66   Church Slavic or Slavonic *(Including Old Bulgarian and Old Slovenian)*

Class service books of Russian church with liturgies UJ

BULGARIAN

BP67   Language
        Literature *(See BW)*

Figure 5: Example of the classification numbers used for the Church Slavonic language topic in Class B of the Pettee Classification System (Pettee, *Classification*, 30).

BP21   **JAPANESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Japanese language

BP23   Philological works

BP24   Dictionaries

BP25   Grammar and books for learning the language

BP26   Dialects *(Add letter of dialect)*

BP27   JAPANESE LITERATURE, HISTORY AND CRITICISM

(For Japanese sacred literature see OK)

BP28   Collections of Japanese texts

Collections in translation

BP28.2   German translations

BP28.5   English translations

BP29   Japanese authors, alphabetically

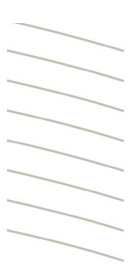BP29.5   Missionary translations into Japanese

Figure 6: Example of the classification numbers used for Japanese language and literature in Class B of the Pettee Classification System (Pettee, *Classification*, 28).

As for sections that needed to be created, the main one so far is the inclusion of a section in Class G (Christian Literature/Patristic literature) for Slavic fathers and collection of literature by Slavic theologians. At present there is no section for them in this class at all so I have decided to allocate them GM8, which has not been used for anything yet. This number is appropriately located as it follows the section on Greek fathers and theologians (GM3–GM6), who are also Eastern Orthodox Christians. A further point in its favour is that if, upon cataloguing the section, there is a need to break the topic down further (e.g. separating Slavic theologians into their own section), there is room to do so as GM7 and GM9 are also not spoken for.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined how I have adapted the Pettee system to suit the needs of Eastern Orthodox libraries. Choosing the Pettee system over DDC and LCC was the first step towards this outcome as it provided a foundation for organising the collection through a Christian perspective. The modifications made to the system outlined above constitute the next step towards presenting the SCMOI collection in the most fitting way for its patrons' user needs. These modifications are unlikely to be the only ones required for Eastern Orthodox libraries. I will undoubtedly identify more as I continue to catalogue SCMOI library's collection.

One last point that this work highlights is the important role cataloguers play in ensuring that the classification system they use adequately suits the collection on which it is imposed. This paper has restricted its discussion to classification systems, but subject headings, such as those maintained by the Library of Congress, are another catalogue feature where controlled vocabularies tend to favour certain terms over others—in the case of Christian religions the bias is again in favour of Protestantism. What terms would better suit Orthodox libraries is a potential topic of future research. Not all classification systems are a neat fit for a collection, and cataloguers should consider how theirs might need to be tailored to create a better fit. What I have advocated for throughout this paper is that the library's collection should be structured in a way that meets the needs and expectations of its patrons. This is, after all, an aspect of a cataloguer's work that is not easily replicated by a machine and highlights their relevance in an increasingly automated world.

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