

THE  
LONDON  
LIBRARY

# A guide to the Religion collections

## Scope of the Collection

The Library's extensive religion collections cover most of the world's living religions. Theology and the Christian tradition are particularly well represented, but it has also been the Library's aim over the years to acquire important sacred texts, key commentaries and scholarly studies of Eastern religions and other non-Christian traditions. The main areas of interest are: history, literature, doctrine, practice, institutions, key figures, contemporary issues and comparative religion.

## Understanding shelfmarks

The collection is divided into broad subject areas (History, Literature, Topography, for example) and then into smaller areas, arranged alphabetically. Within each section, books are generally arranged by author name but edited titles are filed under the book title instead. Check the Catalyst record for the 'shelved under' information.

In order to make the most effective use of space, the collection is also shelved by size. Check the end of shelf marks for the notations 4to (quarto), Folio and Folio Extra Large that may indicate a different place to look for the books.



BOOK  
**The Black Madonna in Latin America and Europe : tradition and transformation**  
Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, Małgorzata, 1954-  
c2007  
**Shelved Under:** Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, Małgorzata,  
 [Available at London Library Religion \(Religion, 4to.\)](#) >

Above is an example of a book record from the catalogue. Here you can see that the book is shelved under the author's name and that it is available (i.e. on the shelf) in the Religion 4to section as it is an over-sized book, and then shelved under Oleszkiewicz-Peralba.

Books may be requested and put aside for ready for collection, but we would always encourage members to browse the shelves for themselves and discover the books they did not know they needed. Items from the Library's Special Collections that cannot be borrowed, can be consulted in the Library under supervised conditions with 72 hours' notice.

## Shelving Arrangements

The Religion section of the book-stacks is located on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Central Stack. All books shelved here have a shelfmark beginning with 'R.'. There are over 200 subject subdivisions within the Religion section, arranged on the shelves in alphabetical order starting with R. 'Action Française' Case and ending with R. Zoroaster.

Oversize books have a size indicator included in their shelfmarks: either '4to.' (quarto) or 'Folio'. The smaller number of very large Folio volumes are housed in secure accommodation and can be consulted on application to the Enquiries Desk.

## Religions

Each of the major religions has its own shelfmark:

eg R. Buddhism

R. Hinduism

R. Jainism

R. Mohammed &c. (for Islam).

There are 2 exceptions:

1. **Judaism** is divided instead between:

H. Jews in the main History section on

Level 3; and

L. Hebrew in the main Literature section on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor.

2. There is no single shelfmark for **Christianity**, which is broken up into its many constituents:

eg R. Bibles

R. Jesus

R. Liturgies

R. Church (The)

and branches:

eg R. Eastern Churches

R. Presbyterianism

R. Protestantism

R. Roman Catholic Church

The history of Christianity in England can be found at:

R. England, Eccles. Hist.,

and there are similar shelfmarks for other countries or regions such as Africa, France, Germany, India etc.

Works covering several religions are shelved at:

R. Religions of the World.

## Religious belief and practice

Many aspects of religious belief and practice have their own shelfmarks:

eg R. Angels

R. Dissent

R. Fanaticism

R. Mysticism

R. Persecutions

R. Sacrifice.

## Bible

The Library has an extremely rich collection of Bibles dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. These are located at:

R. Bibles

(with some larger-format copies at Religion 4to. and Religion Folio).

As well as the Hebrew, Greek and Latin texts, the collection includes translations into languages as diverse as English, Eskimo, Finnish, French, German, Swahili, Tahitian and Tamil.

The individual books of the Bible additionally have their own shelfmarks, where specific commentaries can be found. Commentaries on the whole Bible are shelved at R. Bible Comms. (before R. Bibles).

## Religious literature

Apart from the Bible and the Koran, which have their own shelfmarks in the Religion section (R. Bibles and R. Koran), other religious texts, translations, commentaries and accompanying historical studies can be found under the relevant language in the main Literature section.

Eg L. Hebrew (Literature 4<sup>th</sup> Floor) – for translations of the Jewish Talmud, Midrash, Mishnah, Kabbalah, the works of Moses Maimonides, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

L. Sanskrit (Literature 4<sup>th</sup> Floor) – for the Vedic literature and the Mahabharata of Hinduism.

L. Tibetan (Literature 4<sup>th</sup> Floor) – for the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Translations of Buddhist texts can be found at R. Buddhism but there is also a set of Pali Text Society translations at L. Pali (Literature 4<sup>th</sup> Floor). The Library also has the 50 volume set *Sacred books of the East*, edited by F. Max Muller, which comprises English translations of the great texts of Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Jainism, Taoism and Zoroastrianism, and the Koran. This is shelved at L. Oriental (Literature 4<sup>th</sup> Floor).

There is a large section of Christian literature - theological and devotional writings, sermons and commentaries - at R. Religious & Theol. Lit. The works of thinkers such as Origen, St. Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Wesley, Soren Kierkegaard, Hans Kung, and many others can be found here. Titles in the *Corpus Christianorum* series are also shelved here.

The Library also holds the complete sets of J. P. Migne's *Patrologia graeca* and *Patrologia latina*, shelved in Religion 4to.

Please note that lives of the Saints are shelved in the main Biography section (on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Floors) under Augustine, Francis, etc.

The *Acta Sanctorum* is kept in Religion Folio, available for consultation on application to the Enquiries Desk.

### **Religious art and architecture**

Studies of religious art and architecture can be found in the main Art section. Christian art has its own shelfmark (A. Christian Art), but books on the art of other religions are shelved under the broader categories used in the Art section.

Architectural studies of religious buildings are shelved at A. Architecture (and 4to., Folio, etc). More general books on churches, mosques, temples, etc will be found in the main Topography section (Level 1) under the relevant countries. There is also a unique shelfmark, T. England, Cathedrals.

Please note that studies of cathedrals as *institutions* are shelved at R. Cathedrals; studies of monastic life at R. Monasteries, and historical-archaeological studies of the Jerusalem Temple at R. Temple (The).

### **Reference works**

A wide range of religious reference works are shelved in the Library's Reading Room (1st Floor); the collection includes works in English, French, German, Italian and Russian.

The number of works relating to Christianity and the Bible is notably large; the following is a small selection: *The book of saints; A Catholic dictionary of theology; The Coptic encyclopedia; Cruden's complete concordance to the Old and New Testaments; Dictionnaire de theologie catholique; Dictionnaire d'histoire et de geographie ecclesiastiques; Encyclopedia of early Christianity; Encyclopedia of heresies and heretics; Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls; A new dictionary of liturgy and worship; The Oxford companion to the Bible; The Oxford encyclopedia of the Reformation; Who's who in the New Testament; Who's who in the Old Testament.*

Reference works on comparative religion and non-Christian traditions include:

*A dictionary of comparative religion; An illustrated encyclopaedia of mysticism and the mystery religions; Macmillan dictionary of religion; The Oxford dictionary of world religions; Oxford dictionary of the Jewish religion; Hindu world; Historical dictionary of Hinduism; Zen dictionary.*

All of the above are shelved at R.R. Dicts., Religion (on the left-hand gallery of the main Reading Room).

The Library also has several major multi-volume encyclopaedias covering aspects of religion and theology.

The following can be found at R.R. Encyclopaedias:

*Encyclopaedia Hebraica; Encyclopaedia Iranica; Encyclopaedia Judaica; The encyclopaedia of Islam; Encyclopedia of religion; The Oxford encyclopedia of the modern Islamic world; Dictionary of Jewish lore and legend.*

Current editions of the following directories and yearbooks are shelved at R.R. Annuals (main Reading Room): *The Catholic directory; Crockford's clerical directory; The Jewish year book; London Diocese book; The official year-book of the Church of England.* The Library has retained its holdings of the earlier editions; these are shelved in the main Annuals section (in the Front Basement), together with the holdings of titles that have ceased publication, such as the *Clergy list* (1841-1914).

## **Periodicals**

The Library holds several periodical titles that complement the religion collection. Some of these titles are either no longer subscribed or are defunct but the Library retains back issues in its collection. Titles include: *Alcuin Club collections; Ars orientalis; Canterbury Cathedral chronicle; Catholic Record Society; Church monuments; Church times; Church of England Record Society; Concilium; Culture & Religion; Downside review; European Judaism; Heythrop journal; Journal of the American Academy of Religion; Journal of stained glass; Journal of theological studies; Middle Eastern studies; Modern Asian studies; The month; Reformation; Religious studies; Revue Bénédictine; Revue Biblique; Revue ecclésiastique; Scottish journal of theology; Theology; Traditio; Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft.*

Current and recent back issues are available for consultation in the Reading Room. Earlier issues of most titles are available for loan in bound volumes, from the main Periodicals and Societies sections in the Basement or in our off-site storage; please check the catalogues for precise shelfmarks.

## **Online sources**

The following relevant websites can be freely accessed:-

**The American Theological Library Association - Center for Electronic Resources in Theology and Religion, including the ATLA Serials Project**

<https://www.atla.com/>

**Virtual Religion Index**

[virtualreligion.net/vri/](http://virtualreligion.net/vri/)

**Internet Sacred Text Archive**

<https://www.sacred-texts.com/>