

Bernard Coulie, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits arméniens* (Corpus Christianorum), Brepols, Turnhout, 1992, xiv+266 pages.

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The *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits grecs* published by Marcel Richard in 1948 marked an important departure in Greek studies and the initiative so engendered was maintained first by abbé Richard himself and subsequently by the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes. Inspired by this pattern, the Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique in France has coordinated efforts designed to lead to the publication of similar works relating to Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian and Armenian manuscripts. It is the Armenian repertory that B. Coulie of the Université catholique of Louvain-la-neuve has now published. This work, moreover, is the first of a number of *instruments de travail* being sponsored by Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes. Given this background, we may expect that Coulie's book will be extraordinarily useful to Arménisants and to many others as well.

It comprises the following parts:

1. Répertoire de catalogues ou de fonds de manuscrits arméniens (pp. 1-2) — lists of catalogues or collections of Armenian manuscripts.
2. Catalogues spécialisés (pp. 3-7) — lists of catalogues of manuscripts devoted to particular topics, such as biblical manuscripts, illustrated manuscripts, medical manuscripts, and so forth. It is perhaps noteworthy that, in spite of the enormous progress in the cataloguing of Armenian manuscript collections in the past century, this category does not contain many works. Indeed, Archbishop Shahé Ajamian's *Grand Catalogue of Armenian Biblical Manuscripts* (Lisbon, 1992) is the first full work of this type. It appeared too late to be included in Coulie's book, but we may hope that it will be a harbinger of other specialized catalogues still to come.
3. Catalogues régionaux et nationaux (pp. 9-11).

4. Catalogue topographique (pp. 13-229) — the major part of the book. This is organized by cities and in the entry for each city Coulie gives the names of the relevant libraries, a bibliography of catalogues of Armenian manuscripts in those libraries, the number of manuscripts in each, and sometimes a brief history of the collection. In the case of quite a lot of catalogues, he indicates the shelf numbers of the manuscripts they list.

Due to the vicissitudes of Armenian history, changes in political borders and the movements of events and people, many collections of Armenian manuscripts which existed as recently as the start of the First World War, have been dispersed. Fortunately a number of them had been catalogued before that happened. This situation raises special problems for Coulie's *Répertoire* which he solves in an eminently sensible fashion. In such instances he provides indications, where known, of the present location of the manuscripts and if possible lists of concordance of the old and the current locations. Thus, for example, under the entry for Vaspourakan, he records that the old catalogue of Lalayan mentioned 480 manuscripts (E. Lalayan, *C'uc'ak hayerē n jēr_ agrac' Vaspurakani*, Tiflis, 1915). Of these, 284 are known today to have survived, 281 in the Matanadaran, one in St. Petersburg, and two in the H. Kurdian Collection (presumably, therefore, now in the Mechitarist Library in Venice). A list of the concordance of the numbers of these manuscripts in Lalayan's catalogue and their numbers in their present locations is provided.

The final part of the book is an Index of those manuscripts which are cited in the *Répertoire* elsewhere than in their present location.

The value of a work like this is self-evident. It has already become my *vade mecum* when I travel, but of course it is much more than this. It is an essential tool of any scholar working in the area of Armenian manuscripts studies. Coulie has done a very thorough and careful job, not only in the research, but in the production of this book. There are, naturally, some pieces of information it lacks. This is particularly true of certain libraries which have acquisitions or collections that have not been published. Thus, e.g., on a visit to Dublin in July 1992, I was able to view a number

of uncatalogued and unannounced manuscripts belonging to the Chester Beatty Library and, inevitably, there will be more such information turning up from time to time. Its absence from the present volume cannot be held to be Coulie's fault: he is necessarily dependent, predominantly, on printed reports. These, as far as my random checking of some rather obscure references shows, he has dealt with very thoroughly indeed. The present occasion may be taken, however, to call on scholars encountering additional manuscripts, not included in the *Répertoire*, to inform Dr. Coulie. By its nature, this work will see more than one edition and, as new information becomes available, it will be supplemented. It is a most impressive book which will be most useful to us all.