that are cited were all published in the first half of the twentieth century. Since then our understanding of St. Ignatius, the Spanish *alumbrados*, and the *Exercises* has developed and changed (See, for instance, the essays collected in Robert Aleksander Maryks, ed., *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola: Life, Writings, Spirituality, Influence* [Leiden: Brill, 2014]). It is to be hoped that this significant book will focus attention on the early history of the *Exercises* in Spain and prompt others to explore it.

Terence O'Reilly
University College Cork
Terence.oreilly@ucc.ie

DOI:10.1163/22141332-00701009-02

Radu Mustață

Sermon on Saint Thomas, the Beloved Apostle: A Syriac Catholic Panegyric from Seventeenth Century Malabar. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2019. Pp. 112+viii. Hb, \$65.00.

Radu Mustață's critical edition and translation of an early seventeenth-century Syriac sermon celebrating the Apostle Thomas is a window into the accommodative practices of early modern missionary Catholicism on one hand and the rich continuities of Syriac Christianity on the other. As Mustață explains in the introduction, little is known of the Christian communities of India, commonly called Malabar Christians or the Saint Thomas Christians, before the arrival of the Portuguese. These communities, which see their origins in the arrival of the Apostle Thomas, had slowly integrated themselves into the wider Syriac Christian community that constellated around Syria and Iraq. Their first contact with the Portuguese in the fifteenth century, so Mustață contends, had the potential to radically alter the future of these Christian communities.

Yet, as scholars such as Pamila Gupta, Ângela Barreto Xavier, Ines Županov, and others have shown, Portuguese missionaries, almost invariably Jesuits, who arrived in Malabar were quite acculturative in their approaches. The result was not a thorough Latinization of Malabar Christians, but a Catholicization that hinged on the preservation of their traditions and the ossification of Syriac as a spiritual, literary, and liturgical language. It is in this context—the constellation of early modern global Catholicism, Portuguese empire building, the missionary efforts of the Society of Jesus, and Syriac Christian cultural preservation—that this sermon on Saint Thomas came into being.

Mustață convincingly argues that this sermon, written in Syriac for a Syriac audience, was in fact written by an unnamed Jesuit, most likely from Portugal, sent to Catholicize the local population through an acculturative, accommodationist approach. Mustață's exploration of the syntax, literary motifs, structure, and exegetical layers of the sermon demonstrates that this sermon was most likely a part of a Jesuit missionary toolkit that aimed to present traditional Syriac Christian beliefs and customs as wholly compatible with Tridentine Catholicism. He discusses, for example, how "some parts of the text make sense syntactically only if one tries to understand them according to some *formae mentis* specific to Latin rather than through the grammatical norms of classical Syriac" (11), suggesting that the author learned Syriac later in life, after mastering Latin, which would have only occurred had the author been a European visitor. In turn, by attending to the needs and desires of locals in constructing this sermon, its Jesuit author facilitated the Society's work to push the local Christians toward accepting Catholicism while also allowing for the preservation of key aspects of their Christian identity. This local desire and Jesuit agreement to maintain the use of Syriac instead of Latin in their books and liturgy without rejecting Catholicism wholesale allowed Syriac to become a conduit of communication between Chaldean Christians and the wider world, including missionaries from Europe.

After discussing the historical context in which the sermon was written, Mustață's introduction turns to the manuscript itself. His exploration of the myriad confluences of traditions—biblical exegesis; patristic writings; Christian mysticism; reconciliation of differences and incongruences between the Vulgate and Peshitta (Syriac scriptures)—allows Mustață to explain why the text was so effective as a missionary tool because it was seen as both Catholic and Syriac Christian. For example, on one hand, by exalting Thomas above the other apostles, this sermon plays to its audience's great admiration of the saint whom they saw as their founder; on the other hand, by stressing that Thomas was a missionary, much like the very Jesuit who presumably wrote the sermon, the Jesuits' efforts were normalized in the community. It is a reminder that, while the Jesuits fully understood that their goal was to Catholicize the Saint Thomas Christians, doing so was contingent upon their ability to bend Catholicism to local traditions.

For readers of Syriac, the critical edition includes a useful discussion on the provenance of manuscripts and other sources included in archival collections. As Mustață is working from two extant but often divergent manuscripts—one from the early seventeenth century and one from the nineteenth, respectively—he notes and accounts for differences between the two. Likewise, each of the

manuscripts gets its own appendix with further details on contents, structure, order, and authorship.

Mustață's lucid translation provides non-Syriac readers access to the major themes that he highlights in the introduction. Not only is the original Syriac beautifully rendered into a very readable English, but the fifteen-page sermon contains nearly one hundred notes that highlight important lexicographical points, exegetical interventions, and literary references that allow the reader to see the ways in which the sermon's author read synchronically, compiled sources, and built layers of meaning. While this text will be of great use for scholars, such a readable translation has the potential to be a wonderful teaching tool. It is often dishearteningly difficult to find complete stand-alone texts in English on Eastern Christianity that are digestible for novice students yet still elucidate so many important elements of cross-cultural interaction and religious accommodation in the context of a global early modern Christianity. This sermon would fit in well in courses on topics ranging from the history of Christianity to early modern globalization to Catholic missions.

On the whole, this edition makes an important contribution to several historiographical conversations. First, regarding Jesuit studies, if Mustață's assumption is correct and the author is a Jesuit (which seems all but certain, given the context), this sermon is further evidence of the great lengths that Jesuits went to conduct missions, including mastering foreign languages and using them to present Catholicism and local religious traditions as not only compatible but historically interlinked. Second, this sermon highlights the nature of interfaith dialogue, intellectual collaboration, and sympathetic readings of cultural difference that typify early modern religious exchange and cross-cultural interaction. Third, including Malabar Christians in a conversation that has tended to focus on relations between Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, and Jews expands our understanding of the richly colored mosaic of the cultural and religious landscapes of the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds. Lastly, this text should serve as a reminder that philological work can still bear wonderful fruits beyond producing critical editions and translations; rather, philology, lexicography, and translation are essential in our efforts to see the ways in which cultures interact, reflect on one another, make room for difference, and build space for understanding.

Robert John Clines

Western Carolina University

rjclines@email.wcu.edu

DOI:10.1163/22141332-00701009-03