

region of France. There at the start of the thirteenth century, an untoward expression of religious syncretism threatened the overall well-being of the area. The Cathars had developed an alternative narrative that distorted both the Christian worldview and its value system. Neither piety nor authority had succeeded in countering the malevolent influences exercised by Catharism. Dominic the priest produced another tool from the Christian armory. He corrected errors by speaking the truth. And he did so persuasively, as the rapid development of his band of preaching brothers illustrates.

Dominic enacted a revolution in clerical life. Earlier, monks and canons stayed home. Dominic's preachers, while maintaining a form of life, moved about. The Order of Preachers, confirmed on December 22, 1216, welcomed clerics who would preach the truth across diocesan limits. The preaching of the Gospel rarely proceeds without opposition. Preachers need support. Dominic, probably with the assistance of a bishop who had been his superior in Spain, established a contemplative convent for women. Inclusiveness marked the Dominican spirit from the start. Once the Order of Preachers enjoyed standing in the church, Dominic spent the last five years of his life tending to its growth and development. He died outside Bologna on August 6, 1221.

The author has provided a readable account of St. Dominic's life. One does not have to be a Dominican to profit from it. For those who wish to discover more about Dominic, the author usefully provides information about the major resources in English. Who would presume to have written the definitive study of Francis of Assisi? Or Ignatius Loyola? Likewise no one account captures everything edifying about Dominic Guzman.

Romanus Cessario, OP  
St. John's Seminary, Boston

*Ernest turned Arnos: Ernst Hanxleden, Linguist par Excellence.* By Abraham Adappur, SJ. Bengaluru, India: Asian Trading Corporation, 2015. Pp. 172. Rs 199.

This short volume is the latest work by Abraham Adappur, SJ, an Indian Jesuit from Kerala who in his long career has published 15 volumes in Malayalam exploring the history and culture of his native region, as well as numerous articles in English on the relationship between religion and culture. Kerala is the historic home of the Thomas Christians, one of the world's most ancient Christian communities, but also one whose history, following the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries, was characterized by painful divisions and schism. While the existent literature often focuses on the difficult relationship between the local Christian communities and the Latin church, A. chooses to focus on a figure who is hardly known in the West: the German Jesuit John Ernest Hanxleden (1680–ca. 1732), who in the early eighteenth century came to Kerala as a missionary, learned Malayalam as well as Sanskrit, and authored a number of treatises on comparative linguistics, as well as a slew of devotional poems that continue to be read and chanted throughout Kerala during the Holy Week

celebrations. Rather than trying to enforce Latinization, Hanxleden immersed himself in the language and culture of Kerala as no other Western missionary before—and perhaps after him—ever managed to do.

A. offers a biographical overview of Hanxleden's life, while also offering brief insights into the activities of the Jesuit order in the region and the situation of the Malabar church in the eighteenth century. Of particular interest are the complex history of Hanxleden's Sanskrit grammar, as well as the discussion of his sacred writings, such as the devotional poem *Puthenpaana*, an epic retelling of the life of Christ in Malayalam verse, an excerpt of which—in English translation—closes the volume.

This is a compelling and ground-breaking monograph, which will finally introduce the English-speaking public to yet another great figure from the centuries-long history of Jesuit dialogue with Asian culture.

Thomas Cattoi  
*Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University*

*Theology aus anthropologischer Ansicht. Der Entwurf Franz Oberthürs (1745–1831) als Beitrag zum dogmatischen Profil der Katholischen Aufklärung.* By Michael Seewald. ITS 93. Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2016. Pp. 348. € 34.

The habilitation thesis of the newly appointed chair of dogmatic theology in Münster, which Karl Rahner once held, investigates the contribution of Franz Oberthür to eighteenth-century Catholic systematic theology. Despite the fact that a number of publications deal historically with the Catholic Enlightenment, Seewald transcends the gulf between systematic and historical reflection. The result is a real systematic dialogue with Oberthür especially in the fields of theological anthropology and ecclesiology.

One of the most fascinating findings is that for Oberthür, ecclesiology—and he published his in six volumes!—is not only centered on biblical imagery but also is always a sacramental theology and theory of culture (39). Thus, he refutes the widespread myth that Catholic theologians did not develop ecclesiologies deserving that label before the twentieth century. Oberthür was in the nineteenth century a lonely fighter for an open-minded church (he was friends with Henri Gregoire) in the era of conservative church politics. His biblical anthropology is one of the first attempts to bring anthropology and modern exegesis together and to develop a practical, almost pragmatic, approach to theological reflection. The basic insight is not that the human being is the “hearer of the word” but rather is the one cherishing and observing the divine law (and here, Oberthür tends to overemphasize, in almost Kantian manner, the importance of ethics). Yet, Oberthür did not translate scholastic language into the vernacular but recovered their meaning with new imagery and style that anticipated the language of Scheeben, Passaglia, or Newman, though lacking their precision. Also because of his approach to dogmatic theology as an open process (318) between teacher and student, the comparison with Rahner is opportune.