

mobilised within domestic religious and political controversies in Elizabethan England. There are chapters on Calvin and Shakespeare by Claire McEachern, on Cromwellian Calvinism by Hunter Powell, on John Milton by R. Bradley Holden and on John Owen and Richard Baxter by Tim Cooper. Cooper writes that Calvinism became associated in England with a particular variant of Reformed salvation theology, arguing that Calvinism in England ‘changed and adapted in the hands of those who tried to hold onto it’ (p. 329). Bruce Gordon considers nineteenth-century Scottish spiritual autobiographies as writers tried to recraft a vigorous Calvinism to counter a decline in the Reformed Church’s influence. Some elements in the Anglophone Calvinist tradition (including a stress on individual conversion experiences as discussed by Jonathan Yeager) were rather unusual elsewhere in Europe but of wider significance given the significance of Anglophone Calvinism in colonial contexts. Among chapters on extra-European Calvinism, Kenneth P. Minkema considers the view of angels from Calvin to Jonathan Edwards. Calvin had warned against speculation about angels who were, he understood, messengers and servants of God. Edwards proved more willing to explore in detail the character and meaning of angelic nature and history. Steven M. Harris writes about ‘an eighteenth-century Black Calvinist perspective’ in America. He argues that ‘black Calvinists in the Revolutionary Period possessed ... a more comprehensive, consistent spirit of liberty than many of their Anglo counterparts’ (p. 409). A final group of articles extends this focus on extra-European Calvinism and reviews the modern development of Reformed Churches in Ghana, Korea, China and Brazil. While contemporary Presbyterian Churches in Brazil are products of North American mission efforts, Mark Valeri reminds readers that the first Calvinists in Brazil were Francophone. Jean de Léry’s 1578 account of his missionary voyage to Brazil was in many ways surprisingly sympathetic to local people. However, as Valeri observes, de Léry’s intentions can best be understood as using Brazilians as a foil to highlight the iniquities of French Catholics. Calvinists continued to bring their European concerns and obsessions with them when they travelled to distant shores.

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*Theodore Beza. An introduction to his life and theology.* By Donald K. McKim and Jim West. (Cascade Companions.) Pp. xii + 172 incl. 2 ills. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2023. £20 (paper). 978 1 6667 7164 0  
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Preferably, the audience of a review is the same as that of the reviewed book. Otherwise, the reviewer is in danger of not doing justice to either his audience or the book. The audience of this JOURNAL is, first of all, the academic community of church historians. The audience for this introduction to Theodore Beza is composed, first of all, of those with little or no formal theological background, and second, of those with some theological training (p. 2). In order to do justice to both the readers of this JOURNAL, and to the authors of the book reviewed here, I will first make some general remarks; then I will evaluate the book according to

academic standards, and finally to the standards of an introduction for a non-academic public.

The authors give a brief survey of Beza's life, then devote a chapter to several parts of his theology, i.e. God, Scripture, Christ, the Spirit, sin and salvation, Church, Word and sacraments, the state and the last things, and conclude with the abiding significance of Beza. They correctly note that, although Beza is a lesser known theologian than, for instance, Calvin, his significance for Reformed theology was substantial. They avoid making Beza 'the theologian of predestination', or describing him only or primarily as Calvin's successor, but instead describe him as a theologian in his own right, including the various aspects of his work, like text criticism, and, as a poet, the versifying of the Psalms to be sung in Reformed services.

The book depends heavily, almost completely, on publications in English, as if that is the only significant language in which relevant literature has been written. English is even dominant among the 'primary' sources, which means that the authors treat a translation as a primary source. But a book that pretends to be a gateway to Beza, at whatever level, should mention the original publications and relevant works in other languages as well.

When assessed as an academic publication, this book falls short and has little added value, which is significantly due to its dependence on English literature. The biographical sketch depends on Baird's 1970 biography of Beza, which they themselves call outdated. That important nineteenth-century biographies of Beza in German by Schlosser (1809), Baum (1843) and Heppel (1861) are not mentioned might be reasonable for this small introduction (although these authors might be better than Baird in some respects, for instance in judging him against the background of his own time). But that Dufour's 2009 French biography is not mentioned anywhere is incomprehensible and indefensible. The same holds for not even mentioning the valuable – for a work on Beza even indispensable – publication of his *Correspondance*; a great source for students of Beza. Even when the authors did not use it themselves, a book that pretends to be a gateway to Beza should at least mention this series.

The dependence on translations sometimes becomes bizarre, for instance in this sentence: 'What he asserts in the *Summary* in 1566 he maintains in the mid 1570s and later' (p. 39). References here are made to the date of publication of the translations, as if this was the year wherein Beza actually published the original editions of the works in question. In fact the original date of the publications was several years earlier in both cases.

The authors correctly treat Beza's doctrine of predestination as one of many doctrines and have avoided the pitfall of various earlier scholars who made this his central dogma. Nevertheless their treatment of this doctrine in Beza's theology shows two shortcomings. Recent relevant literature with new insights is missing. If I may be so immodest I would call my own study *Predestination and preaching in Genevan theology from Calvin to Pictet* (2017) relevant literature, as it includes a chapter on Beza. More regrettable is that Beza's very compactly written explanation of his predestination table has not been read carefully enough, or in fact has been read in a very free translation or rather paraphrase only. The authors seem to quote Beza in asserting that the first cause of the damnation of the

reprobate is only God's just will in predestination (p. 110). But this is exactly what Beza avoided saying. In the very aphorism quoted (chapter ii, aphorism 5), he stated that predestination precedes all causes of damnation ('illud mysterium ... quod omnes damnationis illorum causas ordine antecedit'), which excludes predestination itself from being a cause of damnation. God's just will is the cause of this mystery of predestination, but predestination is not the cause of damnation. This erroneous interpretation depends on the use of an erroneous English translation of Beza's explanation of the table of predestination, which indeed has the sentence 'this high secret, which by order is the first cause of their damnation', but this is not a faithful rendering of either the original Latin words or the intention of Beza. Translations are useful, but scholars need to read works in their original language, or run the risk of misinterpretation.

Now most of these critical remarks have little relevance for an audience that is not academic-theological. For them, the book for the most part does what it should do: it gives a survey of Beza's life and a summary or introduction to his most important writings and ideas. It can serve as a gateway to Beza's theology and to publications on this Reformer, albeit that even then a gateway should also open a road to publications in other languages. Nevertheless, as a first introduction and gateway to Beza, it can raise interest in the man and his ideas, and in that way even indirectly serve the academic community of church historians by being the means by which new students become interested in Theodore Beza.

The *Cascade Companions* series aims to 'combine academic rigor with broad appeal and readability'. This volume is not characterised by the first feature, but it is certainly a readable book and hopefully will have a broad appeal among non-academic readers and maybe even among beginning students of church history. As McKim and West themselves conclude in their acknowledgments (p. xi): 'If Beza is a little better understood and a little more appreciated in the English speaking world, this little book will have served its purpose well.'

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*Zinoviy Otenskiy and the Trinitarian controversy in sixteenth-century Russia. Introduction, texts, and translation.* Edited by Viacheslav V. Lytvynenko and Mikhail V. Shpakovskiy. (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 239; Texts and Sources, 13.) Pp. xviii + 506 incl. 2 colour figs and 4 tables. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2023. €165. 978 90 04 22210 6; 1573 4188  
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It is a view of Russian culture that got its first major spokesman in Pëtr Chaadaev, in his 'Philosophical Letters' (composed between 1826 and 1831): Russia is backward in every way, and the reason it is backward is because of the Russian Orthodoxy that underpinned much of its culture and politics. Russia had, says Chaadaev, no Reformation, no Counter-Reformation, no Scientific Revolution and no Enlightenment; and, consequently, the moderating and transformative impulses that channelled the intellectual and religious currents in the West never spilled over into the East. Chaadaev's opprobria had a very nineteenth-