For those of us who cut our teeth on the old *Joannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia* edited by Johann-Wilhelm Baum, Edouard Cunitz, and Eduard Wilhelm Reuss, the *Calvini opera omnia denuo recognita* being published by Droz cannot help but feel mildly disappointing. The old tomes were enormous, unwieldy, and ugly, entirely in keeping with the rigors and hardship of proper academic scholarship. By contrast, the Droz volumes are octavo sized and have attractive blue bindings. They are easily slipped into one's bag, backpack, or carry-on luggage. They are lovely and extremely easy to use, which is from the perspective of the surly curmudgeon, sad.

The introductory material of this volume is divided into ten sections, the contents of which discuss both Calvin and Caroli and provide quite extensive background into the dispute between them, which was really between Geneva and Caroli (i.e. it included Guillaume Farel whom Calvin wrote to support in his 1545 treatise).

Assuming most readers know something about John Calvin, we might focus a little attention on the lesser-known figure of Pierre Caroli. He was born in Rozay-en-Brie, which is in the diocese of Meaux. The date of his birth is uncertain but was around 1480. As a young man, he studied at the Collège of Bourgogne, from which he received his M.A. in 1505. Returning to the diocese of Meaux, Caroli began to associate with the Meaux Circle, a group of humanists, which included inter alia Guillaume Briçonnet, the bishop of Meaux, Jacques Faber Stapulensis (also known as Lefèvre d’Etaples), Gérard Roussel, François Vatable, Jean Lecomte de la Croix, and Guillaume Farel. A varied collection of scholars, they represented part of the wave of humanism that was largely the result of people like Erasmus bringing the Renaissance north from Italy. It expressed itself in a keen interest in Greek and Hebrew, a love for classical ‘pagan’ authors (Virgil, Seneca, Cicero, etc.), and an appreciation for evangelical ideas such as those associated with Martin Luther, who by 1520 had become a household name throughout Europe, certainly France and certainly among learned individuals like Caroli.

Carrying the theological ideas and spirit he had appropriated from Meaux to the Sorbonne, where he taught theology in the 1520s, Caroli began to attract trouble to himself. This would characterize his life for a large part of it. He was
associated by the French authorities with the *Affaires de la Placards*, an incident which occurred the night of 17 October 1543 in which placards denouncing the Roman Catholic understanding of the Lord’s Supper appeared all over Paris and the surrounding area. As a result, Caroli fled to Geneva, arriving in 1535 where he became reacquainted with Farel (Caroli having apparently sided with the Reformation). He did not stay, but eventually made his way to Lausanne. After getting into another conflict following a sermon he preached in which he appeared to encourage prayer for the dead, Caroli was encouraged to abandon such views. In response, Caroli accused Guillaume Farel, Pierre Viret, and John Calvin of Arianism. Calvin, Viret, and Farel denied the charge and a synod was called to deal with Caroli. The synod, which met in Lausanne, exonerated the three. During the proceedings, Caroli also accused Farel and Calvin of Sabellianism. In the end, Caroli refused to accept their integrity, was deposed by the synod, and fled Bernese territory.

During the synod, Calvin gave an address which was later published as *Confessio de Trinitate propter Calumnias P. Caroli* (see *Calvini Opera* 9:703–710). It was a clear demonstration of his adherence to Nicene and Chalcedonian orthodoxy, but had the curious quality of not employing the terms *trinitas* or *persona*. In it and in other pronouncements, Calvin explained his unwillingness to make subscription to the three ecumenical creeds obligatory; i.e. the Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds. Calvin explained that it represented a kind of tyranny, which he felt was wrong to enforce. This insistence on what might appear a slightly eccentric position would not be without its repercussions, and so Calvin and Farel would continue to be troubled by the lingering suspicion that they were less-than-reliable Trinitarians.

All of this is explained in the notes for this Droz volume. Detailed discussion of these affairs, of Calvin and Caroli, the theological issues they both address in their writings, and the history of the period are all provided. By 1540, Caroli had returned to the Roman Catholic Church and would remain in this fellowship for the rest of his life. He took up residence near the town of Metz from where he preached and wrote against the Reformation. In a letter from 14 May 1543, Caroli challenged, or perhaps simply offered, Farel to a debate about the Trinity. He might have chosen Farel specifically because this Reformer was to come to Metz with the aim of influencing it towards Protestantism. The Schmalkaldic League was, at this time, trying to gather Metz into their confederation and believed Farel could help in this endeavour. The face-to-face debate never happened.

In 1545, Caroli published his *Refutatio* which was responded to a few months later by Calvin’s *Pro G. Farello et collegis ejus*. Caroli’s text attacked Farel’s views in particular given his plans to come to Metz. It attacked him, and also Calvin
and Viret, for things like eschewing the proper vocabulary of Catholic Christianity and the creeds. Calvin chose to have his reply published under the name of Nicholas Des Gallars, the Reformed minister, friend, and amanuensis for Calvin, apparently in an attempt to strengthen the appearance of objectivity.

Rather than settling matters once and for all, Calvin’s *Pro G. Farello* left the cloud of suspicion hanging over his, Farel, and Viret’s heads vis-à-vis their adherence to western Trinitarian orthodoxy. All of this can be read about in this wonderful book. In addition to the table of contents, it contains a list of abbreviations, index of names, index of Bible quotations, and a detailed bibliography. In short, the volume is well-edited. Helpful footnotes greet the reader on every page. It is a beautiful addition to the *Calvini opera omnia denuo recognita*.

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