

The thesis can be defended that the dynastic officialdom of the 18th century, constituting a noble class that was the guardian of the fundamental law of the nation, acting as intermediary between people and king, and checking any tendency towards despotism, was almost exactly what the Monarchomachs would have embraced if that system had existed in the 16th century, i. Actually, however, the kinds of institutions which the Monarchomachs had to invoke as restraints to the king were ephemeral or plain anachronistic--the feudal council of nobles, the peers, the Estates General--and so there was no viable institutional basis for Monarchomach theory. All they had of truth was that the kingdom had had a much less authoritarian basis in times past, when corporate privileges or territorial seigneuries checked the jurisdictional rights of the king. Those things were rapidly passing but the Monarchomachs had no idea what to do about it except to appeal historical to their restoration.

In so far as the monarchomachs "institutional" checks could be appealed to in the 18th century, they were transformed into conservative forces rather than revolutionary ones. The *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*'s peers are the most obvious--viz., the *synodie*, ineffectual and aimless--and the Estates General defunct, although ultimately it was the recourse that the state had to go to, in 1789, and Hotman's *Francogallia* got an airing in the preparatory literature that came out in 1788. The noble council that Hotman sought has no clear equivalent, for the kind of council that the King got in the later 18th century was not from old nobility but from new state management types. There is some great irony, of course, in the fact that a Protestant would be one of the most energetic ministers fighting for reform: Necker. Indeed, the predominance of Protestants in the group of Banquiers upon whom the crown became dependent for foreign loans, although those Banquiers did not often become French nobles or join the noble establishment in 18th-century France, is a true irony. What Hotman served was the a very conservative *thèse nobiliare* of Boulainvilliers, and in lesser measure Montesquieu. These are not the revolutionary positions in the 18th century, but the conservative ones. But Hotman was a true revolutionary in his time. And the dynastic officialdom that I believe would have been a wonderful answer for him in the 16th century, and perhaps functioned in favor of the common good for the first two-thirds of the 18th century, became the source of reactionary conservatism at the 18th century--or at least so it seemed to many at the time, and to most historians since.