in legal procedures, they also dealt with money and it can be argued that this was even their position’s main attraction!

Reading this book is doubly important. From the point of view of the history of the judicial system of the ancien régime in France (mostly of Civic Justice, but this represented the main activity of the courthouses of the time), it widens our knowledge of the daily operations of this institution, through a study of its most basic activities. As far as social history (in a wider sense) is concerned, and this is most certainly this study’s most important aspect, it presents us, in a very convincing manner, with a fairly new idea about the significance of such a charge. It was not, contrary to what traditional historiography led us to believe, mostly a source of honours and prestige (the procureurs were indeed at the bottom of the honorific scale) but it did generate indirect financial benefits, by the means of various subsidiary activities that were made possible by the network it implied. This is why a profession which at first sight was not particularly attractive was able to generate so many vocations.

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doi:10.1093/fh/cru004
Advance Access publication 21 February 2014


Jules Racine St-Jacques’ doctoral thesis, now published by Droz, offers a careful reading of several French political treatises published in the 1560s and 1570s. The study seeks to identify ‘l’étallement progressif du tissu conceptuel des Huguenots’ in order to evaluate the importance of the Saint Bartholomew’s Day massacres in justifying Huguenot rebellion. His discussion contributes to the ongoing debate about the radicality of John Calvin’s own political ideas and raises important questions about the usefulness of the term ‘monarchomaque’ to characterise Huguenot resistance literature.

The volume’s three-part structure is intended to establish the links between the political writings of Calvin, the arguments of the Prince de Condé’s supporters during the 1560s, and Huguenot political treatises published after 1572. The first chapter, a close reading of Calvin, demonstrates that, though he argued that temporal rulers must be obeyed, Calvin was sometimes willing to qualify this general principle. Without claiming that Calvin was a monarchomaque himself, Racine St-Jacques argues that Calvin’s ambivalence set the rhetorical stage for French justifications of actions taken against the Guise in the 1560s. The Prince de Condé’s frustration at the dominant influence of the Guise family on the young Valois kings led him to take violent military action in defence of the crown several times after 1560. His supporters justified his actions in terms of the nobility’s obligation to defend the public good, particularly against a king influenced by ‘foreigners,’ a label often used against the Guise. After 1568, some treatises, such as Jean de Coras’s Question politique, went still further, arguing that a king who refuses to listen to reasonable councillors risks becoming in effect a tyrant and thus invites divine punishment. Racine St-Jacques’ third chapter juxtaposes these less known works with the classic texts of the ‘monarchomaque’ canon by François Hotman, Théodore Bèze, and Philippe Duplessis-Mornay.

The author is careful to distinguish between the treatises penned in the 1560s and these later works, and in fact argues convincingly that, even after 1572, only
Duplessis-Mornay is willing to dispense with mediation via the Estates to endorse direct rebellion against a tyrant in God's name. Racine St-Jacques thus destabilises the notion of the term 'monarchomaque' to denote an intellectually coherent and widespread discourse. In addition, by showing that some of these ideas were being developed in the 1560s, well before the king took public responsibility for the murder of Coligny in 1572, Racine St-Jacques builds on the work of Donald Kelley, Denis Crouzet and Hugues Daussy who have suggested that Huguenot resistance discourse after the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacres was the logical extension of writings published during the 1560s.

This volume would however have been stronger had the project had been framed more ambitiously. Racine St-Jacques focuses his analysis on a relatively narrow corpus: eighteen treatises previously identified by earlier historians as texts by 'réformés français.' By linking the argument of Condé's supporters exclusively to Calvin's political writings, the author misses the opportunity to demonstrate how the arguments mounted in the 1560s emerge from a much wider political discourse within France. His claim that the réformés were already constructing a distinctive political voice would have been more convincing if he had been able to point out how Condé's supporters distinguished themselves both from earlier French authors, who had insisted on the important consultative role of the Estates, and from royalist political treatises of the 1560s, such as Jean Bodin's. This study would also have benefited from a more nuanced approach to the relationship between religious faith and political thought. Although willing to accept the possibility that the Prince de Condé himself may not have been motivated by religious faith alone, Racine St-Jacques assumes rather than demonstrates that the anonymous authors of the treatises under consideration would have been aware of and deferential to Calvin's political ideas. Yet our current knowledge of the fluidity of both religious and political allegiances in France during the first decade of the Wars of Religion belies such an assumption.

Racine St-Jacques's study is nevertheless a well-written and evocative contribution to the ongoing debate about the definition, scope, and radicality of the 'monarchomaque' tradition. By raising questions about the usefulness of the term itself, he makes clear how a label can mislead us by implying the coherence of a political discourse that is in fact much more fractured. Racine St-Jacques' insights serve to highlight the internal tensions among the réformés even as their actions propelled France into civil war.

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doi:10.1093/fh/cru019
Advance Access publication 12 February 2014


Often, constricted by the weight of Richelieu's and Mazarin's extraordinary destinies, the historiography of the first half of the seventeenth century in France tends to neglect those lesser characters who nonetheless played an important part in conducting state affairs, in the shadow of both cardinals. By giving a place of honour to one of those lesser figures, Hélène Duccini offers an interesting contribution to the political history of the Grand Siècle.