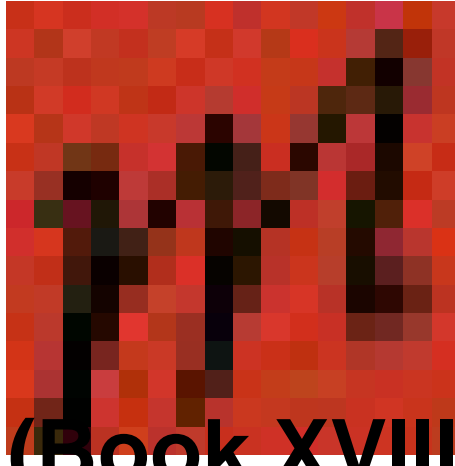


<http://montesquieu.ens-lyon.fr/spip.php?article3195>



Annex 8 (Book XVIII, chapter 27)

- The Spirit of Law - Annexes to the edition of 1758 -

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On adoption among the Germans

As a young man attained majority among the Germans by receiving weapons, he was adopted by the same sign. Thus Guntram, in order to declare his nephew Childebert of age, and also adopt him, said to him : "I have placed this javelin in thy hands as a sign that I have given thee my kingdom." And turning toward the assembly : "You see that my son Childebert has become a man : obey him." Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, intending to adopt the king of the Heruli, wrote to him : "It is a fine thing, among us, that we can be adopted by arms, for men of courage are the only ones who deserve to become our children. There is such strength in this act that he who is its object will always choose to die rather than to suffer something dishonoring. Thus, by the custom of the nations, and because you are a man, we adopt you with these shields, these swords, and these horses which we send to you."