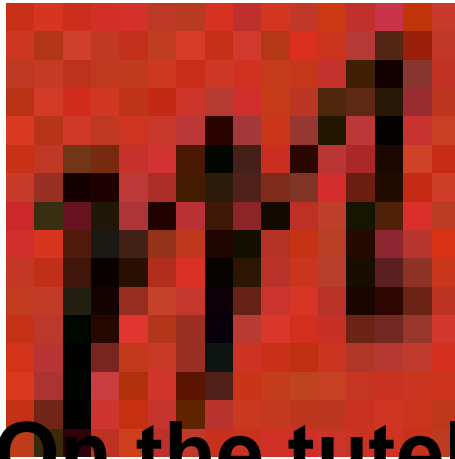


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# VII.12 On the tutelage of women among the Romans

- The Spirit of Law - Book VII. Consequences of the different principles of the three governments with respect to sumptuary laws, to luxury, and to the condition of women -

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## VII.12 On the tutelage of women among the Romans

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The Romans' institutions placed women in perpetual tutelage unless they were under a husband's authority. [1] This tutelage was assigned to the closest relative through the males, and it appears from a popular expression [2] that they were closely watched. That was good for the republic, and was not necessary in a monarchy. [3]

It appears from various codes of barbarian laws that women among the early Germans were also in perpetual tutelage. [4] This custom passed into the monarchies they founded, but did not survive.

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[1] *Nisi convenissent in manum viri.*

[2] *Ne sis mihi patruus oro* ['Please do not play paternal uncle to me'].

[3] The Papian Law decreed under Augustus that the women who had had three children would be exempt from such tutelage.

[4] Among the Germans this tutelage was called *mundeburdium*.