

<http://montesquieu.ens-lyon.fr/spip.php?article2615>



# Annex 1 (Preface)

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

Date de mise en ligne : samedi 8 septembre 2018

---

Copyright © Montesquieu - Tous droits réservés

---

### The author's foreword

For the understanding of the first four books of this work, it must be noted that what I call *virtue* in the republic is love of the homeland, in other words love of equality. It is not a moral virtue, nor a Christian virtue, it is *political* virtue ; and this virtue is what drives republican government, as *honor* is what drives monarchy. I have therefore called *political virtue* love of the homeland and of equality. I have thought new thoughts ; it was essential that I find new words for them or give the old ones new meanings. People who have not understood this have put in my mouth absurdities which would be repugnant in every country on earth, because every country on earth wants morality.

Secondly, it must be remembered that there is a very great difference between saying that a certain quality, modification of mind, or virtue, is not what drives a government, and saying that it is lacking under that government. If I said that a certain wheel or cog is not the spring that makes this watch run, would one conclude that they are missing in the watch ? So far is it from being true that moral and Christian virtues are excluded from monarchy, that even political virtue is not excluded. In a word, there is honor in the republic, although political virtue is what drives it ; there is political virtue in the monarchy, although it is honor that drives it.

Finally, the upright man evoked in book III, chapter 5 is not the righteous man of Christianity, but the politically upright man, who possesses the political virtue of which I have spoken. It is the man who loves the laws of his country, and who acts out of love for the laws of his country. I have cast a new light on all these things in the present edition by identifying the notions more clearly ; and in most of the places where I had used the word *virtue*, I have put *political virtue*.