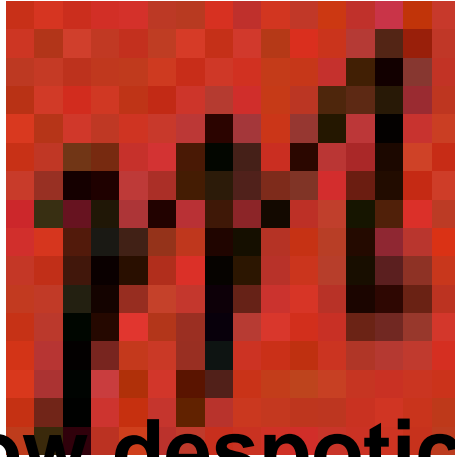


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# IX.4 How despotic states provide for their security

- The Spirit of Law - Book IX. On the laws in their relations to the defensive force -

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As republics provide for their security by uniting, despotic states do so by separating and keeping themselves, in a manner of speaking, separate. They sacrifice part of the country, ravage the borderlands and leave them barren ; the body of the empire becomes inaccessible.

It is accepted in geometry that the more extension bodies have, the smaller, relatively, is their circumference. This practice of laying waste to the borderlands is therefore more tolerable in large states than in medium-sized ones.

This state does to itself all the damage that a cruel enemy could do, but an unstoppable enemy.

The despotic state preserves itself through another sort of separation, which comes from placing distant provinces in the hands of a prince who is its vassal. The Mogol, Persia, and the emperors of China have their vassals ; and the Turks were well advised to place the Tartars, the Moldavians, the Walachians, and formerly the Transylvanians between their enemies and themselves.