



Montesquieu' 'The Spirit of the Laws'

A Critical Edition

Edited and translated by W. B. Allen

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An English translation of *The Spirit of the Laws*, the canonical text of modern republicanism, critical to an appreciation of those deliberations that led to adoption of the Constitution of the United States.

The Spirit of the Laws not only systematizes the foundational ideas of “separation of powers” and “balances and checks,” it provides the decisive response to the question of whether power in the nation-state can be limited in the aftermath of the Westphalian settlement of 1648. It describes a civilizational change through which power becomes domesticated, with built-in resistance to attempts to absolutize (or make total) political power. As such, it is the Bible of modern politics, now made more accessible to English readers than it ever has been.

Key selling points

- Shows how humans may choose their political fates rather than being arbitrarily subjected to them
- Turns the tide of absolutism toward liberty
- Turns explanation into portraiture, showing not only how the world is but how it might be
- Turns the sense of history into a present power of humans to shape their development rather than merely to evolve.

Contents

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About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

W. B. Allen studies and writes broadly in political philosophy and history, with special focus on traditions of self-government and liberalism.

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