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"In the preface to my recent book, *The Sociology of Knowledge*, I expressed the hope that I had not only provided an introduction to, and reappraisal of, the subject which is known under that name, but also laid the foundations for a systematic study of its history. Indeed, I went even further: I said that I had already made a beginning to this study myself and analysed and assessed the contribution of one of its prime pioneers, the Baron de Montesquieu. My intention at that time was to incorporate this investigation of Montesquieu's doctrine into a more broadly conceived work on "The Origins of the Sociology of Knowledge". This plan have now abandoned. An adequate discussion of the beginnings of the sociology of knowledge would presuppose a time-consuming search for its ultimate roots in both the empiricist and the rationalist traditions of philosophy as well as an account of at least Vico and Comte in addition to that of the Baron de la Brède. A book dealing thoroughly with this broad field- and, needless to say, nothing but a thorough investigation would ever satisfy me- would take years to write, run to something like 600 pages and prevent me from making, for a very long time, any contribution to the more topical discussions going on in the social sciences. I have therefore decided to publish my study of Montesquieu on its own, and here it is. " W. Stark