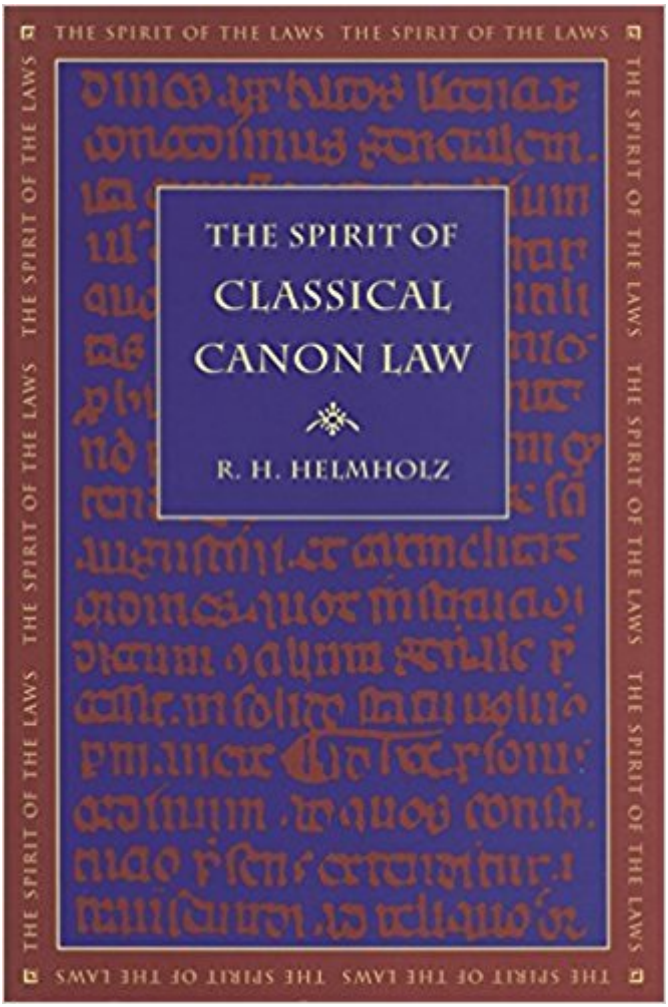
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# The Spirit Of Classical Canon Law (The Spirit Of The Laws Ser.)




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## Synopsis

Despite the long reach of classical canon lawÃ¢â ¬â ¢across Europe, well into modern times, and into such secular subjects as theft, wills, and the sale of goodsÃ¢â ¬â ¢it has been the subject of far too few general studies in English. Illuminating the basic nature of the canon, this work explores the roles of moral, social, political, and religious values in the laws' development through the seventeenth century. At the same time, R. H. Helmholz makes relevant the attitudes and formal techniques of the laws' authors, practitioners, and interpreters.Helmholz first discusses the origins of the canon law; the collection of texts, known as the Corpus iuris canonici, which form its foundation; the basic sources on which the Corpus draws, including the Bible and Roman law; and the body of juristic commentary on the Corpus. He then considers, in turn, fourteen of the major areas affected by the laws such as the governance of the Church (in particular the law of election of bishops), the sacraments (baptism), and legal sanctions (the law of excommunication).In conclusion, Helmholz points to three common themes that characterize the laws and their implementation: their close connection with the goals and ideals of the Gregorian reform movement, a concern for the spiritual health of all concerned parties, and an interest in securing justice and protection for the unfortunate. Helmholz also comments on the lawyerly skill of the men who devoted their careers to the canon law and the law's ambitious goals. He does not shrink from describing its unpalatable aspects, such as its acceptance of slavery, its restrictions on religious freedom, and its use as an instrument of the clergy's agenda.The size and complexity of the body of church law and its jurisprudence have kept historians in many fields from appreciating how this topic might enrich their studies. The Spirit of Classical Canon Law provides them with the ideal entree.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Whereas the focus to date of so much writing on medieval canon law has been that of its systematization, this study shifts that focus fairly and squarely to the substantive law, and in so doing sets the agenda for future work in the field. This book is beautifully produced. (Ecclesiastical Law Review)HelmholzÃ¢â ¬â„¢s book demonstrates that the study of the classical canon law is not simply a matter of historical curiosity, but it may also be a glimpse into our future. (Patrick S. Cheng Anglican and Episcopal History)

The development of Church law between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries was fundamental to the growth of the Western legal tradition. Despite its long reach - across Europe, well into modern times, and into such secular subjects as theft, wills, and the sale of goods - classical canon law has been the subject of far too few general studies in English. Illuminating the basic nature of the canon, this work explores the roles of moral, social, political, and religious values in the laws' development through the seventeenth century. At the same time, R. H. Helmholz makes relevant the attitudes and formal techniques of the laws' authors, practitioners, and interpreters. The size and complexity of the body of Church law and its jurisprudence have kept historians in fields as diverse as law, society, theology, and political thought from appreciating how this topic might enrich their studies. The Spirit of Classical Canon Law provides the ideal entree.

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