



Law and Legality in the Greek East: The Byzantine Canonical Tradition, 381-883 (Oxford Early Christian Studies)

David Wagschal

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Byzantine church law remains terra incognita to most scholars in the western academy. In this work, David Wagschal provides a fresh examination of this neglected but fascinating world. Confronting the traditional narratives of decline and primitivism that have long discouraged study of the subject, Wagschal argues that a close reading of the central monuments of Byzantine canon law c. 381-883 reveals a much more sophisticated and coherent legal culture than is generally assumed. Engaging in innovative examinations of the physical shape and growth of the canonical corpus, the content of the canonical prologues, the discursive strategies of the canons, and the nature of the earliest forays into systematization, Wagschal invites his readers to reassess their own legal-cultural assumptions as he advances an innovative methodology for understanding this ancient law. Law and Legality in the Greek East explores topics such as compilation, jurisprudence, professionalization, definitions of law, the language of the canons, and the relationship between the civil and ecclesiastical laws. It challenges conventional assumptions about Byzantine law while suggesting many new avenues of research in both late antique and early medieval law, secular and ecclesiastical.

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