



### ***Law and Revolution – revisited***

Thirty years ago, in 1983, Harold Berman's "*Law and Revolution. The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition*" was first published. His work had an enormous impact on legal scholarship all over the world. Many aspects of his central thesis—that there was something akin to a “papal revolution” in eleventh century Europe; that this ‘revolution’ set a pattern for future epochs of transformation; that the special relation between Religion and Law was a distinct feature of the “Western Legal Tradition”—were largely discussed by legal historians, historians and social scientists. Others, like his “Social Theory of Law,” received less attention. Although there had been strong criticism by scholars, especially medievalists, on some aspects of Berman's work, it has become a standard reference in scholarly writings, not least outside of Europe. Since its appearance in 1983, *Law and Revolution* has been translated into German, French, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Lithuanian. Ten years later, in 2003, with his project entitled “*Law and Revolution II: The Impact of the Protestant Reformations on the Western Legal Tradition*,” Berman presented the second volume of what was thought to be a trilogy. Twenty years had gone by, the political world order had changed, but Berman's main point, the importance of analyzing the role of Religion and Law, and the specific constellation these two modes of normative thought, had gained new actuality. In 2007, Harold J. Berman passed away, but not without having opened his historical and legal thought to the challenges of a globalized world.

Berman's work, thus, has not only become part of our discipline's history, raising questions, for example, about the historical context of his construction of a “Western Legal Tradition” in the 1970s and 1980s, or his way of interrelating religion and law. It has also shaped the image of the “Western Legal Tradition,” in- and outside of Europe, inciting us to re-read his works, and to enter into a dialogue on a global scale, especially with those reading Berman from a different cultural perspective, such as Asian colleagues, who are highly interested in many of Berman's texts. Thirty years might provide us with sufficient distance to undertake such readings, and to make an account of his impact on different fields and areas, often linked with the translation into different languages. This distance might also make it more possible to sum up new perspectives opened by his work, explore different interpretations and applications of the picture Berman drew, and to look back on the results of the scholarly debates that followed. Do we see things the way he did, thirty years later?

*Rechtsgeschichte - Legal History* invites you to participate in this endeavor, with short texts up to 12.000 characters (incl. spaces), to be published, after the usual peer-review, in the *forum* of our now open-access Journal *Rechtsgeschichte - Legal History* N° 21 (2013). The general aim of this *forum* element is to present a variety of opinions, sharpen positions and thus permit an open dialogue, with no fear of appraisals or criticism. The deadline for contributions will be June 30, 2013. *Rechtsgeschichte - Legal History* N° 21 will appear in fall (October/November) 2013. All major languages are admitted.

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Frankfurt, February, 2013