1. Record Nr. UNINA9910807353403321 Autore Kames Henry Home, Lord, <1696-1782.> Titolo Principles of equity / / Henry Home, Lord Kames; edited and with an introduction by Michael Lobban Pubbl/distr/stampa Indianapolis:,: Liberty Fund Inc.,, [2014] ©2014 **ISBN** 1-61487-907-9 Edizione [Third edition.] Descrizione fisica 1 online resource (681 p.) Collana Major works of Henry Home, Lord Kames Natural law and enlightenment classics Classificazione PHI016000 Altri autori (Persone) LobbanMichael 346.41/004 Disciplina Soggetti Equity - Great Britain Lingua di pubblicazione Inglese Formato Materiale a stampa Livello bibliografico Monografia Note generali Description based upon print version of record. Nota di bibliografia Includes bibliographical references and index. ""Lord Kames, Principles of Equity ""; ""Front Matter ""; ""Title Page ""; Nota di contenuto ""Copyright Details ""; ""Table of Contents, p. vii ""; ""Editor's Introduction, p. ix ""; ""A Note on Legal Sources and Citations, p. xxvii ""; ""Abbreviations, p. xxxiii ""; ""Preliminary Discourse Being An Investigation of the Moral Laws of Society, p. xxxv ""; ""Volume I, p. 1 ""; ""Letter to Lord Mansfield, p. 3 ""; ""Preface to the Second Edition. p. 5 ""; ""Preface to the Present [Third] Edition, p. 7 ""; ""Table of Contents, p. 9 ""; ""Explanation of Some Scotch Law Terms Used in This Work, p. 15 "" ""Introduction, p. 17 """"Book I. Powers of a Court of Equity derived from the Principle of Justice, p. 39 ""; ""Chapter I, p. 40 ""; ""Chapter II, p. 71 ""; ""Chapter III, p. 74 ""; ""Chapter IV, p. 117 ""; ""Chapter V, p. 195 ""; ""Chapter VI, p. 224""; ""Chapter VII, p. 240 ""; ""Volume II, p. 243 ""; ""Book I. Powers of a Court of Equity derived from the Principles of Justice, pl. 245 ""; ""Chapter VIII, p. 245 ""; ""Chapter IX, p. 263 ""; ""Part II, p. 274 ""; ""Chapter I, p. 275 ""; ""Chapter II, p. 287 "" ""Book II. Powers of a Court of Equity founded on the principle of Utility, p. 289 """"Chapter I, p. 290 ""; ""Chapter II, p. 292 ""; ""Chapter III, p. 295 ""; ""Chapter IV, p. 297 ""; ""Chapter V, p. 300 ""; ""Chapter VI, p. 304 ""; ""Chapter VII, p. 305 ""; ""Book III, p. 315 ""; ""Chapter I, p. 315 ""; ""Chapter II, p. 324 ""; ""Chapter III, p. 328 ""; ""Chapter IV, p. 333 ""; ""Chapter V, p. 345 ""; ""Chapter VI, p. 379 ""; ""Chapter VII, p. 395 "";

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Sommario/riassunto

"Henry Home, Lord Kames, was the complete "Enlightenment man," concerned with the full spectrum of human knowledge and its social use. However, as a lawyer and, after 1752, as a judge on the Court of Session in Edinburgh, he made many of his most distinctive contributions through his works on the nature of law and legal development. Principles of Equity, first published in 1760, is considered his most lasting contribution to jurisprudence and is still cited. In his jurisprudence, Kames specifically sought to explain the distinction between the nature of equity and common law and to address related questions, such as whether equity should be bound by rules and whether there should be separate courts of law and equity. Beginning with a general introduction on the rise and nature of equity. Principles of Equity is divided into three books. The first two, "theoretical," books examine the powers of a court of equity as derived from justice and from utility, the two great principles Kames felt governed equity. The third book aims to be more practical, showing the application of these powers to several subjects, such as bankrupts. Principles of Equity is significant as an example of the approach of an Enlightenment thinker to practical legal questions and as an early attempt to reduce law to principles. There is evidence that this book was well known in the formative years of the United States and that both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were familiar with Kames's treatise. Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782), one of the leaders of the Scottish Enlightenment, was a judge in the supreme courts of Scotland and wrote extensively on morals, religion, education, aesthetics, history, political economy, and law, including natural law. His most distinctive contribution came through his works on the nature of law, where he sought to combine a philosophical approach with an empirical history of legal evolution. Michael Lobban is Professor of Legal History at Queen Mary, University of London. Knud Haakonssen is Professor of Intellectual History and Director of the Centre for Intellectual History at the University of Sussex, England"--