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0521857716 - Order and Anarchy: Civil Society, Social Disorder and War

Robert Layton

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## ORDER AND ANARCHY

Through the study of civil society, the evolution of social relations and the breakdown of social order, *Order and anarchy* re-examines the role of violence in human social evolution. Drawing on anthropology, political science and evolutionary theory, it offers a novel approach to understanding stability and instability in human society. Robert Layton provides a radical critique of current concepts of civil society, arguing that rational action is characteristic of all human societies and not unique to post-Enlightenment Europe. Case studies range from ephemeral African gold rush communities and the night club scene in Britain to stable hunter-gatherer and peasant cultures. The dynamics of recent civil wars in the former Yugoslavia, Chad, Somalia and Indonesia are compared to war in small-scale tribal societies. The author argues that recent claims for the evolutionary value of violence have misunderstood the complexity of human strategies and the social environments in which they are played out.

Robert Layton is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Durham. Recipient of the Royal Anthropological Institute's Rivers Medal for his research, Professor Layton has written widely on anthropological themes, including *The anthropology of art* (1991), *Australian rock art* (1992) and *An introduction to theory in anthropology* (1997).

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