

Violence and Civilization: Studies of Social Violence in History and Prehistory (Oxbow/Joukowsky Institute Publication)

Roderick Campbell



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This collection of essays begins with the premise that violence, in its relationship to order, is a central element of history. Taking a broad definition of violence, including structural and symbolic violence, the contributions move beyond the problematic of civilization's mitigating or foundational role, instead seeing violence as inherently social, and, perhaps, socially inherent (if variable). The question then becomes what forms of harm are authorized or banned in which social orders and how they change over time. Beginning with a theoretical introduction, this interdisciplinary volume includes seven papers representing cultural anthropology, history, archaeology and international relations. The papers range from China to the Americas and from the 2nd millennium BCE to the 21st century CE. Some deal with long-term developments while others focus on a single time and place. Many treat the issue of the visibility/invisibility of violence, while all in one way or another deal with the role of violence in the re-production of community. Together, the volume aims to paint, with a few strokes, the outlines of a deep historical anthropology of social violence. The volume is based on the proceedings of a symposium hosted at Brown University.

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