

Orderly Anarchy: Sociopolitical Evolution in Aboriginal California (Origins of Human Behavior and Culture)

By Robert L. Bettinger

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Orderly Anarchy delivers a provocative and innovative reexamination of sociopolitical evolution among Native American groups in California, a region known for its wealth of prehistoric languages, populations, and cultural adaptations. Scholars have tended to emphasize the development of social complexity and inequality to explain this diversity. Robert L. Bettinger argues instead that "orderly anarchy," the emergence of small, autonomous groups, provided a crucial strategy in social organization. Drawing on ethnographic and archaeological data and evolutionary, economic, and anthropological theory, he shows that these small groups devised diverse solutions to environmental, technological, and social obstacles to the intensified use of resources. This book revises our understanding of how California became the most densely populated landscape in aboriginal North America.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Extraordinary and orginial . . . A terrific book!"
(W. S. Simmons *CHOICE* 2015-09-01)

"Well written, tightly reasoned, and intellectually stimulating."
(*American Anthropologist*)

From the Inside Flap

"*Orderly Anarchy* is possibly the most important contribution to California anthropology since Kroeber's 1925 handbook. It is a wholly original, thought-provoking synthesis of theory, ethnography, and archaeology. If it doesn't become a singular focus of anthropological research in California for decades to come, people are not paying attention."
~Terry Jones, Professor of Anthropology at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and editor of *California Archaeology*

"Bettinger advances a bold claim about the dynamics of California aboriginal populations, one that is novel and surprising . . . *Orderly Anarchy* is an important book."
~ Samuel Bowles, Director of Behavioral Sciences at the Santa Fe Institute, and coauthor of *A Cooperative Species: Human Reciprocity and Its Evolution*

"*Orderly Anarchy* provides a new and innovative perspective on the evolutionary trajectory of California aboriginal groups by explaining how small politically autonomous groups developed, and how intensive adaptations--such as the use of bow and arrow--were adaptive peaks in their own right and not way stations on route to agriculture."

~William Hildebrandt, President, Far Western Anthropological Research Group

About the Author

Robert L. Bettinger, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis, is an authority on ethnographic and archaeological hunter-gatherers and the author of *Hunter-Gatherers: Archaeological and Evolutionary Theory*, *Hunter-Gatherer Foraging: Five Simple Models*, and many peer-reviewed book chapters and journal articles. He is also the recipient of the Society for American Archaeology Award for Excellence in Archaeological Analysis and the Society for California Archaeology M. A. Baumhoff Special Achievement Award.

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