

Origins of the just war

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Résumé ou extrait : "As two of the fundamental social forces that shape human life - war posing the greatest existential threat to communities, and justice being the principle that makes complex communal life possible in the first place - the relationship between war and justice is crucial to understanding the development of Western civilization. The central argument of this book is that theories of justified violence were not created ex nihilo as exercises in abstract ethical reasoning, but rather emerged as a result of communities responding to the reality of war. Communities developed concepts of normative warfare from a desire to legitimate and to control armed conflicts in which they consistently engaged. Scholars have repeatedly overlooked the very simple fact that war predates just war doctrine, and that early archaeological and textual evidence indicates that ancient societies were more inclined to glorify

warfare than to condemn it. It is the contention of this study, therefore, that the presumption of war is the essential characteristic and common denominator of the just war tradition. Underscored by this compelling thesis, the book will demonstrate that, over the course of three millennia, Western societies displayed a remarkable degree of affinity in their attitudes to the relationship between war and justice" "A groundbreaking history of the ethics of war in the ancient Near East. Origins of the Just War reveals the incredible richness and complexity of ethical thought about war in the three millennia preceding the Greco-Roman period, establishing the extent to which ancient just war thought prefigured much of what we now consider to be the building blocks of the Western just war tradition. In this incisive and elegantly written book, Rory Cox traces the earliest ideas concerning the complex relationship between war, ethics, and justice. Excavating the ethical thought of three ancient Near Eastern cultures-Egyptian, Hittite, and Israelite-he demonstrates that the history of the just war is considerably more ancient and geographically diffuse than previously assumed. Cox shows how the emergence of just war thought was grounded in a desire to rationalise, sacralise, and ultimately to legitimise the violence of war. Rather than restraining or condemning warfare, the earliest ethical thought about war reflected an urge to justify state violence. Cox terms this presumption in favour of war *ius pro bello*-the "right for war"-characterizing it as a meeting point of both abstract and pragmatic concerns. Drawing on a diverse range of ancient sources, Origins of the Just War argues that the same imperative still underlies many of the assumptions of contemporary just war thought, and highlights the risks of applying moral absolutism to the fraught ethical arena of war." (éd.)

Sujet - Nom commun : Histoire militaire -- Antiquité

Guerre juste -- Histoire

Guerre (droit international) -- Histoire

Guerre -- Aspect moral

Histoire militaire -- Moyen-Orient