



Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology & Practice

Bruce Lincoln

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One of the world's leading specialists in Indo-European religion and society, Bruce Lincoln expresses in these essays his severe doubts about the existence of a much-hypothesized prototypical Indo-European religion.

Written over fifteen years, the essays—six of them previously unpublished—fall into three parts. Part I deals with matters "Indo-European" in a relatively unproblematized way, exploring a set of haunting images that recur in descriptions of the Otherworld from many cultures. While Lincoln later rejects this methodology, these chapters remain the best available source of data for the topics they address.

In Part II, Lincoln takes the data for each essay from a single culture area and shifts from the topic of dying to that of killing. Of particular interest are the chapters connecting sacrifice to physiology, a master discourse of antiquity that brought the cosmos, the human body, and human society into an ideologically charged correlation.

Part III presents Lincoln's most controversial case against a hypothetical Indo-European protoculture. Reconsidering the work of the prominent Indo-Europeanist Georges Dumézil, Lincoln argues that Dumézil's writings were informed and inflected by covert political concerns characteristic of French fascism. This collection is an invaluable resource for students of myth, ritual, ancient societies, anthropology, and the history of religions.

Bruce Lincoln is professor of humanities and religious studies at the University of Minnesota.

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