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Rice Farming: The Battle of the Bugs

Archaeology & Language

The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins

By Colin Renfrew

"... Renfrew is adept at challenging orthodoxies ... lively and lucid ... the book deserves a wide readership among specialists and non-specialists alike ... a daring thesis ... it is an attempt to move archaeology forward and to break its isolation." — Richard Bradley, *Nature*



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Renfrew points out new links between archaeology and language, looking at the puzzling similarities that are apparent across the Indo-European family of ancient languages, from Anatolia and Ancient Persia, across Europe and the Indian subcontinent, to regions as remote as Sinkiang in China. He initiates an original synthesis between modern historical linguistics and the new archaeology of cultural process, and questions language origins and what they imply about ethnic affiliation — issues seriously discredited by the racial theorists of the 1920s and 1930s and largely neglected since. He comes to a new and persuasive conclusion: that primitive forms of the Indo-European language were spoken across Europe some thousands of years earlier than has previously been assumed. There was, in particular, no "coming of the Celts", but rather a parallel development of Celtic-speaking peoples in much the same areas in which they are found today. In all likelihood, as Renfrew shows, the indigenous roots of the peoples of Europe lie deeper in the mists of time than anyone has ever imagined.

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