

Veracruz Merchants, 1770-1829: A Mercantile Elite In Late Bourbon And Early Independent Mexico

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New Guinea, he argues that the route from Timor to mainland Australia was more likely. After extensive analysis of ocean depths and prehistoric "lakes" near Java and Malaya (which may have lowered the cost of maritime innovation), he integrates economics into the prehistorians' analysis of migration. Butlin hypothesizes that population pressure and scarce resources pushed Aboriginals to migrate and that subtle indications of nearby resource abundance may have pulled Aboriginals to Australia. The analysis is fascinating, yet the evidence is fragmentary.

Part 2 focuses on the evolution of the Aboriginal economy over 50,000 years. Butlin rightly emphasizes that even if the economy and society changed at a slow pace, considerable changes would accrue over such a long period. Using the location of early settlements, he traces out "hypothetical" migrations that may have been induced by massive climate changes. With the aid of simple models of production and consumption, Butlin hypothesizes an early migration (50 to 30,000 B.P.) into the interior and then a retreat to the coastline in the face of increasing aridity after 20,000 B.P.. Although several chapters take up the traditional task of explaining "traditional" Aboriginal behavior, Butlin also covers such topics as intergenerational transfers, structural change, and technological innovation, including the use of fire to change the environment of Australia to serve Aboriginal goals. His emphasis on explaining how prehistorical economies and societies evolved over time represents a distinct departure (and advance) from the usual static modeling of a snapshot of the prehistorical economy.

In Part 3 Butlin builds on his earlier work, *Our Original Aggression* (Sydney, 1983), which revised the 1788 Aboriginal population from 250,000-300,000 to 1,000,000-1,500,000. He focuses on the subsequent dramatic decline in population and investigates whether it was induced by disease, killing, or resource loss. Although he concludes that smallpox and venereal diseases were the prime sources of depopulation, Butlin also assigns a significant role to resource loss and killing. For example, in Van Diemen's Land, killing reduced a precontact population of at least 7,000 to 8,000 Aboriginals to almost zero. And during the period of rapid colonial settlement of interior lands (1825 to 1845), Aboriginals were forced onto marginal lands.

Parts 4 (Establishment of a Bridgehead Economy, 1788 to 1810) and 5 (Takeover Process, 1788 to 1850) are less satisfactory. They add little to our knowledge of the colonial economy and occasionally engage in flights of fancy that are less justified for periods supported by a more adequate historical record. Notwithstanding the last two sections, Butlin's contribution is substantial and his writing is lively. The book merits attention both from those interested in the economic history and prehistory of Australia and in prehistory generally.

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LATIN AMERICA

Veracruz Merchants, 1770-1829: A Mercantile Elite in Late Bourbon and Early Independent Mexico. By Jackie R. Booker. Boulder: Westview Press, 1993. Pp. xxi, 191. \$45.00.

At the conclusion of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701 to 1714), Philip of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV of France, was recognized as King of Spain and its American colonies. As Philip V of Spain, he instituted the Spanish Bourbon line, whose legacy of administrative and fiscal adjustments was called the "Bourbon Reforms." Like the empire that was neither Holy nor Roman, the Bourbon Reforms were not exactly what they seemed. Intended to reconquer the world the Spanish Hapsburgs had lost, the reforms alienated large segments of the colonial elite. By 1830, what for three

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