

10,800±173 B.C. — a serious error to my mind, just because it is all too easy to accept this as a vagary of radiocarbon. On the other hand, Koonalda cave's position '17 kilometres' below the Nullarbor plain (p. 253) merely suggests that Britain is in for serious trouble when it finally plunges into decimalization. Otherwise the book is well printed and the maps and tables of radiocarbon dates are particularly useful. There were occasions when I felt that a newcomer to the subject would have wanted illustrations of sites and tools, but given the necessary restrictions on size, the half-tone plates of prehistoric man, seen almost entirely through the eyes of ancient artists, are most attractive. It is probably only a personal taste, but the skull of Peking man looks excessively like what it is, a plaster reconstruction. The amazing advanced Palaeolithic engraved portrait from La Marche deserves to be added to the gallery. When all such comments have been made, the fact remains that the new outline of *World Prehistory* is a very valuable book and I think the reason is basic: its author is exceptionally good at judging the values of prehistory.

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*The Traditional Trade of Asia.* By C. G. F. Simkin. Oxford University Press, London, 1968. Pp. xiii, 417. Plates, Statistical and Chronological Tables, Bibliography, Maps and Index. U.K. price: 50s.

THE TASK OF writing a book of this title is obviously monumental. There is no definition of period except that hidden in the elusive word 'traditional', and no limitation of the area save the general term 'Asia'. The title also engenders great expectations of a new line of interpretation or a new emphasis to the already known facts and developments. Questions of sources also spring to mind: have new ones been tapped, or known ones in inaccessible languages been used?

The first three chapters deal with the early developments of Asian trade routes of commercial movement from pre-Christian times to the period immediately prior to the coming of the Europeans at the end of the fifteenth century. The text is very much of a narrative and has an emphasis on presentation of the facts in chronological order in their proper political setting. It is hurried, as if it is a shortened version of a longer manuscript. All the chapters begin and end abruptly without summation or introduction, and dealing with the trade partners country by country gives a rather broken narrative. Chapter IV deals with the coming of the Europeans up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the Asian reaction. The sources available are more abundant; the author seems more at ease with the subject and the interpretative patches increase in frequency. But it is still rather hurried and uneven. The Spaniards and Portuguese are given summary treatment; on the other hand the English and the Dutch are given much stronger representation. There is still as much political history as trade history and at the end one still wonders what the author wants to say that is new and what he means by 'traditional'. But it is obvious that much careful and hard work has gone into these four chapters.

It becomes clear after two pages of the last chapter that this is the *pièce de résistance*. In twenty succinctly written pages, the author sums up what he has to say in the first two hundred and fifty pages. 'Traditional' takes on an explicit meaning. The pattern of commercial movement between land and sea emerges as a triply triangular trade of India and Western Asia, China and Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. State interest, the self-sufficiency of Asian trade based on the handicrafts of India and China, long-distance trade commodities and short-distance ones, transportation problems, all find their place in the first ten pages of this chapter. The agents of change are next dealt with: fire-arms, European shipping including the steamship and the opening of the Suez Canal, the decline of traditional handicraft and the effects of plantation and mining activities accompanying western colonial expansion.

The author might well add to these, the change of Asian tastes and its effects on European trade in consumer goods in Asia. There is also the point that commodities like tin and rubber are not only new commodities of export to Europe but they are not in the luxury or handicraft category. Thirdly, European colonisation and development of Southeast Asia have stimulated Chinese immigration which has superimposed a second level of trade activities. This new trade has operated often with western enterprise and local production, but often independently of both.

Part of the difficulty is intrinsic in the size of the subject and its coverage. But the author's aims are modest: 'to write in a straightforward way on the great theme of trading relations between all the countries of Asia from remote beginnings to the momentous changes which came in the nineteenth century.' The book does achieve this limited aim. It is an extremely informative book and within its covers provides the general reader with information which he may otherwise have to look for in a dozen monographs. But its use for the specialist is limited, as there is little new information, there is no new interpretation and no use is made of special sources.

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*The New Cambridge Modern History, III. The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution 1559-1610.* Edited by R. B. Wernham. Cambridge University Press, 1968. xvi, 599 pp. U.K. price: 60s.

RECENT REFLECTIONS on the nature and practice of history have made much of the difference in editorial policy between the two versions of the *Cambridge Modern History*. In his general introduction to the new series Sir George Clark expressly dissociated himself and his colleagues from Lord Acton's vision of 'definitive history'. The cautious relativism of the new outlook has been set against the positivism of the old. Yet those who have drawn attention to this contrast have taken Clark's remarks out of their context. No one who compares the recently issued third volume with its sixty-four year old predecessor will conclude that, unlike their grandfathers, the new contributors write as if they expected 'their work to be