



Power and Prowess: The Origins of Brooke Kingship in Sarawak (Southeast Asia Publications Series)

J. H. Walker

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A reinterpretation of Sarawak history, "Power and Prowess" explores the network of power, economic and ritual relationships that developed on the northwest coast of Borneo in the mid-19th century, from which a coalition led by James Brooke established the state of Sarawak. Where many authors placed Brooke in the context of 19th-century British imperialism, this study perceives him in the context of Bornean cultures and political economies. Brooke emerges from the historical record as a "man of prowess", with the author identifying important ritual sources of Brooke's power among Malays, Bidayuh and Ibans, sources which derived from and expressed indigenous cultural traditions about fertility, health and status. Drawing on conceptual frameworks from political science, as well as recent southeast Asian historiography, the book offers a detailed political history of the period and new interpretations of Brooke's career. This study also retrieves from the historical sources previously concealed narratives which reflect the interests, priorities and activities of Sarawak people themselves.

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