

*A History of the Pacific Islands.* By I.C. Campbell. University of Canterbury Press, Christchurch, 1989. 239 pp. NZ price: \$29.95 pbk, \$39.95 hbk.

*Island Kingdom: Tonga Ancient and Modern.* By I.C. Campbell. University of Canterbury Press, Christchurch, 1992. 257 pp. NZ price: \$29.95.

GENERAL or survey books on regional history are always problematic — is the choice of subject matter too broad or too narrow? Is it sustainable with the available sources? Can adequate coverage be given to significant events and individuals? Is it representative of the specialist research of the topic? Is it representative of the region? How much detail should and can the author provide?

Ian Campbell's two recent books demonstrate the equivocal nature of general histories with very differing results. The first publication, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, attempts to cover the entirety of the Pacific Islands region (Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian) from first inhabitation to independence. However laudable in theory, it is my opinion that this grand plan is far too much for any one individual to accomplish credibly. The region is too vast and, more importantly, did not and arguably does not (except in university curricula and the makers of atlases) function as an integrated entity. In addition, the source material needed to accomplish the task is immense, far too much for one individual to master sufficiently.

Campbell approaches his subject matter in 17 chapters in chronological order as well as geographical themes, although his overall approach is of political change through European contact with the Pacific. After an initial chapter on indigenous culture of expansive latitude, he presents a synthesis on Austronesian colonization. This is followed by three chapters on Polynesia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and two on Melanesia in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Micronesia, before the twentieth century, is relegated to one chapter of six and one-half pages. From here, Campbell moves on to a discussion, over several chapters, on annexation, demographic change, colonial rule and eventual independence.

Unfortunately, one learns more about Europe and its imperialistic designs from the book than about the Pacific and its past. It seems to me inevitable that this would be the case in a book of this kind because, as previously mentioned, the Pacific did not exist as a distinct entity until Europeans entered the area. While each island or island group clearly has its own past and its own way of reconstructing that past the recognition of a regional identity of the scale on which Campbell writes simply did not exist until it was created in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Even then, the Pacific was an area of basically European geographical designation with broad European invented cultural categories and very distinct island histories.

If the subject matter is too broad and the approach essentially too foreign in *A History of the Pacific Islands* to be satisfying, Campbell's general history of one Pacific island group, *Island Kingdom: Tonga Ancient and Modern*, is another story. Here, Campbell is on familiar ground and his knowledge is apparent in his writing. Once again, Campbell begins at the beginning — in this case, with the settlement of the Tongan islands, followed by an essentially chronological survey of the political history of the islands to the present day. But, unlike *A History of the Pacific Islands*, this book reads confidently and with a careful balance of generality and detail. Campbell clearly knows his material and can make it available to his reader. More importantly, Tongans, themselves, have a sense of a changing geographical and historical collectivity, which Campbell is able to identify and to place his study in, thereby creating a history of a meaningful entity.

Campbell intends the book for 'both the serious and casual inquirer', 'who want a

comprehensive knowledge of the pattern of Tongan history' (p.xii-xiii). Campbell is quick to exclude the Tongan specialist from this reading public, too quick perhaps because although I do not agree with all of Campbell's interpretations (it is difficult to imagine a general text where all specialists would), the comprehensiveness of his material is to be commended and I am sure that Tongan scholars will consult his work.

In deference to his intended non-specialist readers, Campbell has deviated in both books from conventional academic rules of citation. Instead, Campbell provides general sources or recommended further readings at the end of each of his chapters. This is to be lamented for while Campbell is convinced that students and scholars will not read the books and that general readers do not want references in the books they read, it is my experience that students and scholars do read books of this kind and that a general reader interested in a book of this nature will not avoid it because it is referenced. While scholars may be able to read between the lines and do their own referencing (although why they should have to is beyond me) it is unfortunate that Campbell has provided students with a clear, academic example of ignoring the good rules about the adequate acknowledgment of sources.

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*Pacific Neighbours: New Zealand's Relations with other Pacific Islands.* By Ron Crocombe. Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury and Institute of Pacific Studies, University of South Pacific, 1992. 290 pp. NZ price: \$25.00

*Culture and Democracy in the South Pacific.* Edited by Ron Crocombe, Uentabo Neemia, Asesela Ravuvu and Werner vom Busch. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1992. 280 pp. NZ price: \$38.00

*PACIFIC NEIGHBOURS* reviews New Zealand's relationship with the Pacific Islands. It concentrates on the present and the recent past, with a look to the future in a concluding chapter. The book brings together a range of relationships with which few would be familiar, and is presented as a mixture of detailed statistics and legal information interspersed with the perceptions of one who has spent a lifetime observing and participating in events in Oceania. As a New Zealander who worked for the New Zealand administration in the Cook Islands before embarking on an academic career which took him to Australia and Papua New Guinea, and then to the position of foundation (now Emeritus) Professor of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific, Ron Crocombe was ideally placed to carry out this study, and his own views show through in anecdotal asides and in explicit recommendations on educational and other matters.

The broadly thematic organization of the book permits further subdivision to provide more manageable coverage. Thus Section I, 'Movement and Interaction of People', includes consideration of both permanent settlement and short-term migration. Section 2, 'Resource Flows', includes commercial and non-commercial transfers, including official and private aid, and the role of churches and other organizations. 'The Transfer of Ideas' looks at education, communications, tourism, cultural activities and sport. There is also a section dealing with bi-lateral and multi-lateral political relations and security issues. The book also includes useful appendices on Pacific Islands countries, organizations within New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, and diplomatic representation.