'Uluakimata I and Ngata were more or less contemporaries and that the changes of that period were so far reaching as to suggest a social revolution or even an invasion by a claimant to the kingship.

Like most of the early historians of Tonga, Campbell perpetuates the legend of the golden age of the Tu'i Tonga followed by a period of civil war—a peculiarly Eurocentric notion. The dynastic history of Tonga was marked by warfare from early times and certainly from the time of Kau'ulufonua II. Significantly, Campbell omits the history of Tokemoana, holder of a fourth royal title, Tu'i Ha'a'ulufonua.

Known errors of fact are few and tend to occur in areas where the author probably felt he knew the facts without checking them. Campbell states (42) that none of the London Missionary Society missionaries was a clergyman, yet four ordained ministers sailed in the Duff and another missionary, Kelso, was ordained in Tahiti to serve in Tonga. Whether or not Kelso had better educational qualifications than the others is not recorded, though certainly the majority of the missionaries were deficient in that respect. Rowland Hassall (50) was never a missionary in Tonga, but was at Tahiti. Also, William Shelley did nominally reopen the Tongan mission for several years before the Wesleyans, though his action was not authorized from London.

The book is well presented, with maps, drawings, and photographs. A useful feature is the short list of sources at the end of each chapter. The title lists provide a brief outline of Tongan history and enable the reader to see which versions of Tongan history have influenced the selection. The index, which is not exhaustive, will at least help students find those topics they are likely to study. Island Kingdom will fill a long-felt need in the Tongan schools; already six booklets for secondary school students based on the book, prepared by Ian Campbell and Helen Boutell, with the title Tuku'laumea, have been published in Tonga in 1992–1993. These are recommended for wider use and should be in all school libraries in the Pacific.

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Described as the first study to analyze contemporary Tongan society “using the concepts of the mode of production and the mode of thinking” (2), Van der Grijp’s ethnography promises much. The author, a social anthropologist from the Netherlands, gathered most of his material between 1982 and 1991 in Vava’u, the main northern group of islands in Tonga, and made comparative studies in Tongatapu and Ha’apai. His application of “the mode of thinking” in the analysis involves “a specific concept of ideology” (2), one
that is significant to the production and reproduction of contemporary Tongan society (3). This concept, he believes, opens up "the confrontation between an original mode of production and mode of thinking and a capitalist one" (4).

One difficulty in the project is, however, that he never establishes what the "original" state was. Preferring a "historical hypothesis" to "historical reconstruction" (4), he identifies what might have been (before the end of the eighteenth century), through its manifestations in present-day relations. For example, "an important manifestation of the (supposed) original mode of production is ... the role of kinship" (4). These relations are still primarily operative within the subsistence and gift economy and are accompanied by typically Tongan notions on the place of individuals and groups in society (4).

His procedure largely avoids confronting the political configuration that ordered Tongan society and mode of production in the past. Kāinga is a term that has come to refer primarily to the "extended family." Formerly, however, it also denoted a chief's political support group composed of the people who gave him allegiance, tribute, and service. Furthermore, the political nature of contemporary relationships is clearly apparent in Van der Grijp's discussion of the motivations for giving, particularly the gifts of money and goods to noble landholders in return for their "gift" of land allocation. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine an ethnographic description of Tonga that did not include the dimensions of differential power and status. They are intrinsic to the central notion of the respect that socially inferior individuals (tu'a) in Tongan society ideally show to their social superiors (‘eiki), a topic he deals with in chapter 9, on "hierarchical principles."

Although the book is supposedly to focus as much on ideologies as on the forces and relations of production, there is a curious lack of conjuncture between them. The chapters' headings indicate the wealth of factual material that is presented in discussions of Tongan society, the expansion of agriculture from subsistence to export crops, the commercialization of fishing, the manufacture of subsistence goods and the change to the production of commodities, "small-scale economics" and daily life, and the case histories of three Tongan entrepreneurs.

Not until chapter 7, in the middle of the book, however, are we introduced to the Tongan kinship system in flux, although we have been told repeatedly by then that kinship was the basis of the original mode of production and that its principles now contradict those of modern commodity production in important ways. The author turns to aspects of modern migration (particularly migration overseas) in chapter 7, before returning, in chapter 9, to the subject of traditional hierarchies and the way these are now being altered by personal achievement.

The acquisition of wealth by those not favored in terms of hierarchical principles has caused some reestimation and evaluation of individuals and nuclear family units, and is reflected also in the transfer of property and land (chapter 10), and in the concepts of reciprocity and social inequality.
(chapter II). How people are meshing the contradictory principles of ascription and achievement remains largely undefined, except in terms of a theoretical model of the ideology of gift exchange advanced by the author. The model suggests both asymmetrical exchange, from social inferiors to their superiors, and also generalized exchange, in which the ultimate beneficiary, God, gives property to the people in return for everything they give through their “free gifting” to the church (207).

The evidence that all or most Tongans think like this, however, is inconclusive, and the model is by no means universal. To be fair, it is a difficult question, and, it should be stressed, Van der Grijp has provided a wealth of detailed and hitherto unpublished data to support his hypothesis. Particularly valuable are the numerous case studies that quote people’s reflections on the rights and wrongs of behavior in the light of particular values or precepts.

Other difficulties arise in the organization of the book and in its proofreading. Some authors’ names have been repeatedly misspelled, the Tongan macron is missing in all cases, while the glottal is used in some Tongan words, but not in others, and is often placed where it should not be. There is also an unfortunate imprecision of expression where precision is most required, for example, in the discussion of land transactions. Many legal mechanisms of land transfer are never explicated. The puzzling statement that, “[a]lthough Tongan land law explicitly prohibits the sale of land, there is still an increasing tendency for

plots of land to be sold” (224), remains contradictory.

The use of the ethnographic present throughout is also often confusing, when data gathered in the early 1980s that refer to decades earlier are described as changes that “Tongan society is undergoing at the present time” (102). Similarly, frequent reference is made to the vital role of the Tonga Commodities Board, although it was under review in 1989–1990 and dismantled in 1991. The Free Wesleyan and other Wesleyan Churches are often incorrectly referred to as “Methodist,” the Church of Tonga as “the Tongan Church,” and so on.

These inaccuracies, however, may be problems of production alone, a case of something definitely being lost in translation. Equally, much has been given to Tongan scholarship for those who cannot read Dutch by the long-awaited publication of this author’s work in English.

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