

colonialism in Madagascar, while pertinent, are hardly of such importance as to claim that he is a major figure of French anti-colonialism who has been unjustly forgotten. Besides, as Paillard points out, he was not against colonialism as such, only the manner in which it was carried out. Like many of Laroche's staff, he resented the ruthlessness with which Gallieni and the military men carried out their task in the Great Red Island.

Laffaille/Carol's original book has never been an important source of first-hand information for students of Malagasy anthropology or history, unlike some works by foreign travellers, missionaries and administrators. His main first-hand observations concern court life in the last days of the Merina monarchy, and he is an important witness to the intrigues which preceded Queen Ranavalona's dethronement. But these occupy rather few pages of a book mostly concerned with late nineteenth-century reflections on society.

*Afrika Studiecentrum, Leiden*

STEPHEN ELLIS

*Bismarck, Europe and Africa: The Berlin Africa Conference, 1884-1885, and the Onset of Partition.* Edited by STIG FORSTER, WOLFGANG MOMMSEN and RONALD ROBINSON. London: Oxford University Press, for the German Historical Institute, 1988. Pp. xviii + 569. £55.

This weighty volume is the product of a conference held to mark the centenary of the Berlin Conference of 1884-5. The book contains thirty chapters divided into four main parts: European interests in Africa; the origins of the conference; the issues at the conference; and African reactions to imperial invasion. In addition, Ronald Robinson contributes a substantial introductory chapter, while Wesseling and Uzoigwe make heroic attempts to reach general, though in the event, differing conclusions. As the size of the book suggests, the authors have carried out a successful partition of their own: diplomatic, economic, ideological and legal aspects of the Conference are covered, as are the national interests of Germany, Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal and the United States.

Since the standard work on the Berlin Conference remains S. E. Crowe's study, published in 1942, the editors had good reason to suppose that the centenary ought not to pass without serious scholarly review. Moreover, as the second half of the title suggests, a number of contributors follow scents which take them beyond the Conference itself and into the antecedents and consequences of partition. If one result is a loss of focus on the main subject, another is the presence of studies which must be referred to in future by specialists on the scramble for Africa. Not surprisingly, the contributors differ on the question of the exact significance of the Conference, but there is general agreement (the main exception being Uzoigwe) that it did not cause partition and that Crowe was broadly correct in minimizing its influence. It is worth noting, too, that these studies lend little support to the view that Britain's power was failing in the 1880s: her main interests, including Egypt, remained untouched, and the principle of free trade was accepted. One of the refreshing qualities of this volume, however, is that it sees the problem from international as well as from national perspectives. This is particularly appropriate, given that one of the chief aims of the Conference was to co-ordinate access to Africa. There is no space here to consider individual contributions, which vary in length and depth, but a good number are substantial and original essays: historians of late nineteenth-century imperialism are advised to consult this volume and make their own selections.

*Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva*

A. G. HOPKINS