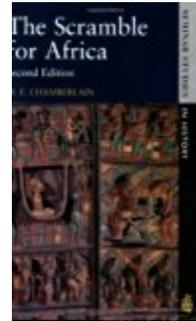


# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

M. E. Chamberlain. *The Scramble for Africa*. London and New York: Longman, 1999. 144 pp. \$15.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-582-36881-1.

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## The Scramble Again

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This book was originally published in 1974 and has since become a very popular textbook for college courses dealing with nineteenth century European history as well as with African relations with the Europeans. The format for this book has remained the same as it was in the first edition. Its first section is comprised of three parts. The first part describes how Europeans have viewed Africa throughout history, but especially during the nineteenth century. The second part relates the development of the “scramble” on a regional basis, starting with the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, followed by West, East and South Africa, and ending with the Fashoda “incident” and subsequent Anglo-French agreement of 1904. The third part is a conclusion called the “Assessment Section”, and is an overview of academic thinking regarding the scramble, why it occurred and in what ways it was of significance. Most of the authors cited are British, just as the thrust of the book is on British imperialism, although other major European players, especially France and Germany, are included.

The second section of this book, as with the other titles in this series, is comprised of a number of short selections from “documents” referred to in the body of the text and which are intended to give the student a first-hand feeling for the period under consideration. Some were included because they were particularly illustrative of a point the author was trying to make and some because they would be quite difficult for an average student to obtain. Many are contemporary with the pe-

riod under study; others are from academic studies published throughout the twentieth century. Also included are three maps, an index and a bibliography. There are not the customary footnotes to which one is normally accustomed, but rather citations to the appended documents.

The publisher states that for this revision, the author has taken the opportunity to update the text where necessary, in particular the Assessment Section, and the bibliography which is said to have been redone from scratch. The first two parts have actually been changed very little since the first edition. Many of the paragraphs in the revised edition read verbatim from the first. The revised bibliography includes an additional forty citations, most of which, as one would expect, have been published after the original edition.

Only the conclusion (“Assessment”) shows any major degree of having been revised, and the author’s revisions have primarily focused on updating some of the arguments put forth since 1974. For example, in her discussion of the reasons for the expansion of British imperialism at the turn of the century, she cites ideas found in P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins’s important work, *British imperialism: innovation and expansion, 1688-1914* (v.1, Longman, 1993). The Cain and Hopkins text also provides four paragraphs as the only new “document” added to the second section of this revised edition.

While Chamberlain’s book is directed primarily towards introductory courses at the college level, it could be used by advanced high school students. It is gener-

ally quite readable and does a good job of summing up important issues and relevant arguments. One should be cautioned, however, that the author assumes a greater knowledge of the politics of nineteenth century Europe and Africa than the ordinary American student may have. One minor example of this is the author's reference to the "Khedive" (p. 35) when discussing the Anglo-French Joint Note of 8 January 1882. Many a student might take a while (or longer) to realize "Khedive" was an Ottoman title referring to the hereditary Pasha of Egypt,

Tawfiq at that time, mentioned but in passing in the previous paragraph. But this is a cautionary note only and not intended as a major criticism of a work which has held its scholarly and teaching value for over a quarter of a century now and whose revised edition should prove useful to yet another generation of teachers and students.

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