

**TOPIC: FOUNDATION WORKS IN AFRICAN HISTORY: THE WORKS OF B.A.
OGOT IN KENYAN HISTORY.**

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INTRODUCTION

A number of African intellectuals sought tirelessly to offer an apt alternative of reconstructing African History after centuries of tainted images of the African continent. This school of Africanist historians, emerging around the mid-twentieth century, left an indelible mark in laying the foundation of African studies in various fields. Such foundation works, also referred to as canonical work, are referred to again and again, and have formed conspicuous benchmarks in the reconstruction, reinterpretation and recompilation of intellectual realms of African history. The lives of authors of such foundation works have themselves become inspiring as they have emerged as heroes and heroines of the African cause. One such person is Professor B.A. Ogot, a founding and renown historian of Kenyan history in particular and Africa in general.

This proposal sets out to examine the works and contribution of B.A. Ogot as a bation of Kenyan history. He has produced numerous canonical works on Kenyan History including *Zamani and A History of the Southern Luo*. It has not been possible to write an early history of Kenya without referring to the works of B.A. Ogot, particularly *Zamani*; In particular he has done extensive studies among the southern Luo, one of the Kenyan communities in western Kenya and the study of the Luo will never be complete without referring to his work- *A History of the Southern Luo*. His analysis of the origins, migrations and cultural structures of the Luo are indeed canonical in the study of that community. He has variously contributed on the colonial and post-colonial history of Kenya. His interjecting works on literature, religion, culture, politics and many more are innumerable as is his effort to present to Kenyan History. Equally he has transcended the national boundaries and has contributed enormously at the continental level. Notably he was the key person, at one time serving as the president of the UNESCO team mandated to re-write the African history. The seven volumes of the UNESCO series of the General History of Africa has a great measure of his input. He served as the editor of the fifth volum. Altogether B.A. Ogot has contributed hundreds of literary works ranging from published books, articles in books and journals, and papers read in different academic for a. He has held various positions in the world of academia and has dedicated his life to scholarship. At the moment, he is serving as a chancellor of one of the public universities in Kenya. He as not only emerged as a beacon of academic excellence in Kenya, but his works will forever be the foundation of reconstructing Kenyan history.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study attempts to examine the intellectual contribution of Professor B.A. Ogot in the writing of Kenyan History. His published works on history will be examined with a view to discerning his theoretical inclination in the interpretation of Kenyan History. An attempt will be made to examine how widely his works have influenced other scholars in Kenyan history.

OBJECTIVES

This study endeavors to achieve the following objectives.

1. To identify the canonical works of B.A. Ogot on Kenyan history.
2. To examine the contribution of B.A. Ogot in the reconstruction of African history.
3. To examine B.A. Ogot's influence on other Kenyan historians.
4. To discern into the theoretical contribution of B.A. Ogot's canonical works on Kenyan history.

PREMISE

This study is predicated upon the following premises:

1. That B.A. Ogot has written enormous works on Kenyan history.
2. That B.A. Ogot's works are canonical in the reconstruction of Kenyan history.
3. That B.A. Ogot's works have considerably influenced writers on Kenyan history.
4. That B.A. Ogot has made a theoretical contribution in the study of Kenyan history.

JUSTIFICATION

Having grown up reading the works of B.A. Ogot, I was privileged to become his student at the university level. As my mentor and role model, I thought of looking up his academic profile in the internet. But none was available. It struck me as being odd, knowing the person of B.A. Ogot and his enormous contribution in the study and interpretation of Kenyan history. It became apparent to me that such a study was long overdue. This work will therefore attempt to put the great historian in this true position and analyze his canonical works in the study of Kenyan history. It is an attempt to study a scholar who has done so much in the study of history in Kenya.

THEORETICAL FRAM WORK

Having studied in the colonial period within an education system that was racially tainted, B.A. Ogot formed the nascent and embryonic voices of resentment in the intellectual realm. This was expressed with a view to giving African the credence and a voice in the education system. With the nationalist movement of liberation on the way, such Africanist interpretation of history came to counter the misinterpretation and racially tainted works within the modernization school of thought. The modernization school advocated and encouraged the aping of the west for both development and ideas. The African school sought to correct the wrong impressions given on African history while at the same time asserting that Africa indeed has a history, that Africans were neither backward nor primitive. The Africanist school of thought, also known as the nationalist school, reinvented African history as seen by Africanist scholars. Professor B.A. Ogot belonged to this school. It will be worthwhile to examine the extent of this contribution in this regard. His early canonical works were greatly slanted along that theoretical orientation, thus greatly contributing to the Africanist approach in the study of African history.

METHODOLOGY

This research will be based on documentary sources of information. A list of all the works written by B.A. Ogot will be compiled. These will be grouped into various categories such as history, religion, education, economic and political. Two canonical works in history will be indentified and read extensively to earmark their salient contributions and theoretical inclination. Two works from the other categories will be randomly selected from the list and analysed with a view to determining the same aspects i.e. his contribution and theoretical inclination. An attempt will also be made to show the development of ideas in B.A. Ogot's work and determine shifts if any. Lastly, three works by Kenyan historians selected

purposively from those known to have learnt from B.A. Ogot will be analysed to determine the extent of his influence on them. The data will thus be descriptive in nature.

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