



# **Grasp the Shield Firmly the Journey is Hard. A History of Luo and Bantu migrations to North Mara, (Tanzania) 1850-1950**

*Zedekia Oloo Siso*

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This book is a compilation of oral histories about the movement of Luo and some Bantu-speaking peoples. It includes histories of many clans or ethnic groups, and how drought, warfare, disease, and competition over pastoral resources in western Kenya forced them to look for a land that they could call their own. Highly entertaining, the stories cross over from pre-colonial to post-colonial eras, with tales of fooling the colonial officers, winning battles and producing miracles. Although warriors and chiefs play a critical part in the stories so too do unlikely actors such as women, prophets, and common farmers. As one of the elders put it, "Without history you are like wild animals... you need to know where you came from and who you are." People with kinship connections to the ethnic groups represented here will delight in the references to places, people, kin groups and events. Residents of western Kenya will be able to trace some of their genealogies to North Mara and vice versa. Historians and anthropologists will find in this book a rich primary source for their own research. Those interested in cultural change will find this a fascinating case of Luo assimilation: events chronicled in this book are still underway and observable in communities today. Producing the text in both Swahili and English ensures that local people will have access to these histories for their own learning and on-going discussions about the past.

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