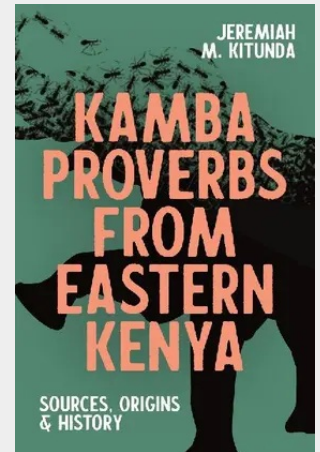


Kamba Proverbs from Eastern Kenya

Sources, Origins & History

A unique historical and linguistic resource for those in anthropology, art, folklore, history, linguistics, literature, psychology, religion, sociology, and environmental studies, as well as performers and poets. Not simply relics of the past, proverbs are an oral tradition containing historical and anthropological knowledge missing from conventional sources, and as micro-histories, provide a valuable source for the reconstruction of the manners, characteristics, and worldviews of societies. While only a few hundred Kamba proverbs have ever appeared in print, thousands have circulated over time, from the monsoon exchange era of the Roman Empire through the advent of Islam, European imperialism and colonialism to independence. Today, a resurgence of interest in the form has been generated via social media, songs and vernacular radio programmes. This book provides the first, comprehensive collection of Kamba proverbs from Eastern Kenya in their original Kikamba language and in translation. Analysing 2,000 proverbs drawn from oral interviews, archival collections, museum artefacts and published sources, the author traces the origins of each and explores their meaning, interpretation and use. Covering a diverse range of subjects that ranges from plants, animals, birds and insects, to weather, land, the roles of men and women, cosmology, ritual and belief, healing, trade, politics and peacemaking, the book offers new insights into Kenya's rural world and the expansion of Kamba society, East African history, language and culture of vital significance for the social sciences. A valuable comparative work for societal change elsewhere in Africa and beyond, the book also suggests an innovative, alternative approach to the study of the African past.

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