



Ethnicity and Empire in Kenya: Loyalty and Martial Race among the Kamba, c.1800 to the Present

Myles Osborne

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This book is about the creation and development of ethnic identity among the Kamba. Comprising approximately one-eighth of Kenya's population, the British considered the Kamba East Africa's premier "martial race" by the mid-twentieth century: a people with an apparent aptitude for soldiering. The reputation, indeed, was one that Kamba leaders used to leverage financial rewards from the colonial state. However, beneath this simplistic exterior was a maelstrom of argument and debate. Men and women, young and old, Christians and non-Christians, and the elite and poor fought over the virtues they considered worthy of honor in their communities, and which of their visions should constitute "Kamba" identity. Based on extensive archival research and more than 150 interviews, *Ethnicity and Empire* is one of the first books to analyze the complex process of building and shaping "tribe" over more than two centuries. It reveals new ways to think about themes crucial to the history of colonialism: soldiering, "loyalty", martial race, and indeed the nature of empire itself.

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