

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

HISTORY DEPARTMENT

THE STATE IN PRE-COLONIAL EAST AFRICA: a discussion
of Nkore c.1500 - 1850,. Shambaa c.1700 - 1875 and
Urambo c.1860 - 1884. ' /

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by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation seeks to discuss the question of the state in pre-colonial East Africa with specific reference to Nkore c.1500 - 1850, Shambaa c.1700 - 1875, and Urambo c.1860 - 1884.

In the first place, and by way of introduction, the question of the state in African historical study is discussed as a problem. There have been two main sets of literature in this discussion: the anthropological and the historical works. The anthropological work on the state is distinguished by its trend toward imperialist rationalisation. The historical work may itself be divided into four categories, namely, the problematic of enlargement of scale, the liberal school, the pseudo-marxist school and the Marxist problematic. Of these, the Marxist problematic seems to be the most advanced in the discussion of pre-colonial state.

The theoretical framework employed in the subsequent study is the Marxian one and the aim is to discuss the state in the three social formations above. Each of these social formations has its own trajectory and the discussion takes place in this context. The effect, then, is to give a Materialist depiction of the state in each of these social formations. From this discussion conclusions are made.