

# Bethwell A. Ogot:

## *A Bio-Bibliography*

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### INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This contribution brings together in one source, Bethwell A. Ogot, the man and his works. It attempts to identify his creative and scholarly works so that they may serve as a guide to the wide range and depth of his intellectual output during an illustrious academic career. It is a tribute to one of the pioneer professional African historians whose ideas and contributions continue to stimulate intellectual exchanges among both African and non-African scholars and researchers.

Ogot and the pioneering generation of scholars that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s reasserted Africa's past as part of universal history. This past had to be studied on its own merit and the methods of study were similar to those of the histories of other societies. It is a generation that exploded colonial myths and distortions about Africa, by producing works that withstood rigorous historical scrutiny and thereby achieved a great measure of recognition for African history.

We salute such pioneer African historians and thinkers as J. F. Ade Ajayi, A. Adu Boahen, Cheikh Anta Diop, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, and Bethwell A. Ogot. They assembled, accumulated, and analyzed historical data, thus setting models which many have since profited from. The solid intellectual foundations they laid were no small contribution to Africa's independence. They continue to serve in Africa's quest for cultural independence through autonomous thinking and historical philosophy, in the wider realm of human history and the frontiers of knowledge.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

#### **The Aspiring School-teacher**

Bethwell Allan Ogot was born on August 3, 1929, at Luanda, Gem Location, in Nyanza Province of Kenya. He was descended from one of the most famous Luo ruling clans. The educational arena, however, was his immediate family's greater interest. His father was a teacher, having been



among the first students to attend Maseno Secondary School. He was actively involved in the establishment of schools in the local community.

Ogot received his early education from Luanda and Ambira Primary Schools before proceeding to the prestigious Maseno Secondary School in 1946. He completed secondary school in 1949 and the following year was admitted to Makerere University College in Uganda, then the seat of higher learning in East Africa. He took a diploma course in education, studying mathematics, history and English. Although his main subject was mathematics, his interests were always divided between mathematics and history. He was deeply interested in history and culture. In 1951 for example, he won the College Arts Research Prize for his essay, "Social Change among the Luo up to 1920." For this essay, he embarked on independent research on the oral literature, culture and rituals of the Luo, mainly through interviews. He did this with hardly any training or experience in research methods.

On completion of the course in 1952, Ogot became a teacher of mathematics at a number of schools in Kenya, including Kapsabet, Kagumo,



and Alliance, following in his father's footsteps. While Ogot was at Maseno school, the British government sent out labor advisers to colonies to recruit young men to train in the labor movement. The aim was to deflate the growing radicalism in the trade union movements. A series of lectures and tests was organized in Nairobi and attended by those involved in organizing trade unions and young men interested in the movement. On completion of the short course Ogot gained the highest marks and was awarded the first Prize.<sup>1</sup> He, however, declined the scholarship to study trade unionism at Ruskin College, Oxford. One of his colleagues on the course was Meshack Ndisi, who went to Ruskin and later became a commissioner for labor and permanent secretary in Kenya, and later, ILO regional director for East Africa.

Nevertheless, Ogot the teacher maintained his contacts with the trade union movement throughout his long and close association with Tom Mboya and Makhan Singh. He was later to assist both in putting their ideas and thoughts in print.

### **From Math to History**

In 1955 Ogot went to St. Andrew's University in Scotland where he enrolled for post-graduate studies in mathematics, philosophy, and history. It was during this time that Ogot's academic pursuits underwent a profound transformation. For African students of history during the 1950s and before, the question frequently confronted was whether Africans had a history or not. Almost rhetorically, they knew that their people and societies had history, social structures, and so on. As Ogot put it, history formed the core in the overall socialization of the individual in society.

It was evident to us that historical consciousness and historical study are as old in Africa as man himself. In nearly all societies, historical details were carefully preserved in one form or another and were transmitted from one generation to another. The past was seen as forming a continuous strand with the present and the future—There was the all-pervading awareness that history had a purpose which had to be thoroughly understood and grasped by all members of the society.<sup>2</sup>

The onset of colonialism had led to outright dismissal of the existence of African history prior to the African encounter with the Western world. The colonial environment was conditioned by racial attitudes and prejudice. Sir Philip Mitchell, a British administrator in East and Central Africa, who was the governor of Kenya between 1944 and 1952, even considered himself a living witness to the "beginning" of African history. As he once said,

The forty-two years I have spent in Africa—cover a large part of the history of Sub-Saharan Africa, for it can hardly be said to extend much back than about 1870.<sup>3</sup>

And as late as 1963 when colonialism was fast disintegrating all over the continent, Hugh Trevor-Roper, the Regius professor of modern history at Oxford could fervently assert,

Undergraduates, seduced, as always, by the changing breath of journalistic fashion, demand that they should be taught the history of black Africa. Perhaps, in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none, or very little: There is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is largely darkness—and darkness is not a subject for history.<sup>4</sup>

Although some institutions of higher learning did incorporate African studies in their curricula, what was called African history was at best no more than a footnote to imperial history. But such history was neither about Africa nor about Africans. It was, as Trevor-Roper would have it, about Europeans in Africa. Teachers of colonial history saw nothing worth studying in Africa's past.<sup>5</sup> At Makerere University College, for example, African history was not introduced in the syllabus until 1951 during the time Ogot was an undergraduate. Even then, the "History of Tropical Africa," as the single paper was called, comprised topics on Arab and American slave-trades and their abolition, African explorers, chartered companies, missionaries, partition and colonialism, and the First World War in Africa. It was not until the 1960s that the initiatives and direction of African scholars brought about revolutionary changes in the syllabi and serious study of African history.

Elsewhere on the continent the situation was not different. At the University College Ibadan, Nigeria, for example, where Kenneth Dike was appointed a lecturer in history as early as 1949, any change in the syllabus was subject to the approval of the University of London, to which the college was affiliated. Despite Dike's efforts as head of department and later, vice-principal, there was little headway in his reforms within the history syllabus. By 1960 only one paper was offered on African history, and the degree structure remained virtually European and English history.<sup>6</sup> As in East Africa, changes had to await Nigeria's independence and the return of Nigerians like J. F. A. Ajayi and J. C. Anene who became involved in the running of the department.

The colonial environment thus posed a special challenge to budding African scholars like Ogot and his contemporaries. Studying Scottish clan history at St. Andrews made Ogot reflect more seriously on the position of African history. Here was history based on oral tradition offered as a university course, while the African history was considered non-existent partly because it was not based on written accounts. How could such contradictions be resolved? Ogot switched from mathematics



to history and philosophy. His master's degree in European history was awarded in 1959. But that was not to be the end.

### **The Search for a Usable Past**

Clear to Ogot was that African history found an integral part of the study of mankind, and its study contributed to universal history. In the pursuit of his academic career, therefore, Ogot was still determined to study and to demonstrate that African history could be reconstructed from oral sources. Toward the end of 1959, he declined an offer to study British colonial history at Oxford and instead enrolled for a doctorate degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, to pursue the subject of his interest. Professor Robert July of the City University of New York has documented in detail the problems Ogot had before both his research topic and research methodology could be accepted.<sup>7</sup> His topic concerned the history of the Luo of Kenya reconstructed almost entirely from oral evidence.

There was the problem of being taken seriously so that he could write a Ph.D. using oral tradition, without written sources. This field of inquiry involved new methods. He had to grapple with problems associated with oral tradition research, including methodology, defining units of analysis, interviewing techniques, dating, and chronology. An added problem was that Ogot was trying to break into a new field where he could not hope to draw on the experience of others. Earlier efforts at the use of oral tradition had been made by the Belgian historian and anthropologist, Jan Vansina, in the 1950s while carrying out research in the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi.<sup>8</sup> But, the English translation of his major work was not published until 1965. Robert July contends that Ogot's sketchy knowledge of Vansina's work was a fortunate omission, since the latter's techniques proved ill-suited to the types of societies under Ogot's investigation.<sup>9</sup>

With the encouragement of some members of the faculty, including Professor Roland Oliver, Ogot was able to embark on his research. Initial background reading and preparation for fieldwork was done in London. Ogot widely read medieval and early European historical and archaeological materials and published literature on the Nilotic people, mainly collected by missionaries. He formulated research techniques, including linguistic studies. In 1961 he went to East Africa for his fieldwork, and for two years he carried out investigations in the Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, and northern Tanzania. He worked among the Luo and Padhola, recording the oral history of the Luo of Kenya (the Southern Luo). He collected by notes and tape recording, genealogies, migration stories, clan songs and histories, tribal cults, and histories of social organization.

Ogot's thesis, "Migration and Settlement among the Southern Luo Peoples, 1500–1900: A Case History of Oral Tradition as a Historical

Source," was submitted and the doctorate awarded in 1965. It was later revised and published as a book under the title, *History of the Southern Luo: Vol. 1, Migration and Settlement* (1967), which was hailed as a serious attempt to reconstruct the history of East Africa, and "the beginning of a long story." It was not just a history of the Southern Luo for it also "traced the movements of many other peoples with whom the Luo came into contact," including the Luyia, Iteso, Gusii, Kuria, Soga, Padhola, and the Luo of Uganda. In the long introduction, Ogot demonstrated the inadequacies of written accounts on Africa, oral traditions as history, the question of chronology in historical accounts, African historiography, and the methodology he used in the study. The tradition had thus been established, and many followed suit in the study of various societies in Africa. Vansina was to remark later that,

No one can imagine any longer a history of Africa reconstructed without any recourse to oral traditions. They have proved too valuable. Much of what they have to say no other voice can tell.<sup>10</sup>

Critics have pointed out the inadequacies in some of the original approaches and methodology. Some even see them as irrelevant to current trends in African scholarship. But whatever the critic's choice, Professor T. O. Ranger put the matter in perspective:

The first African academic historians—the Dikes, the Ajayis, the Ogots—were even more essential; if they had not existed they would have had to have been 'invented' . . . it was fortunate that they *did* exist with all their energies and abilities. Still, it was not to be expected that they would be challenged by the sort of criticism valuable for growth; the very considerable growing they have done has come from the demands they made upon themselves.<sup>11</sup>

For Ogot the search for Africa's past is not over. It is the duty of African historians to produce histories of humanity which accord their continent its proper place. Such works of synthesis dealing with world history will facilitate meaningful comparative studies and ultimately lead to a more meaningful history of mankind.<sup>12</sup> Thus the search for historical relevance is the search for a philosophy of African history in terms of African needs and aspirations, independent of foreign systems of thought. Cultural and intellectual independence must follow and support political freedom. Then the present will be clarified and Africans will recapture a usable past.<sup>13</sup>

### **Academic Career**

When the department of history was established at Makerere in 1950, Ogot was among its pioneer undergraduate students. After graduating from St. Andrew's University with an M. A., Ogot went back to Makerere



as an assistant lecturer, the first professional East African historian among a team of European expatriates. Later on he was promoted to lecturer and while teaching continued work on his doctorate. At Makerere he was not only actively involved in trying to change the teaching of history from a Euro-centered to an Afro-centered syllabus, but was also involved in other activities and programs.

Among the many programs, he served on the committee of African studies which was launched in 1963 with the aim of providing a multi-disciplinary graduate course in a wide range of subjects. This program also provided the college and the public with academic activities ranging from regular colloquia to public lectures and discussions on research and current issues. Between 1962 and 1964 he served as a member of the Makerere College Council.

In 1964 Ogot joined the University College Nairobi, as a special lecturer. Later he was promoted to senior lecturer. In Nairobi he was among the small group of young lecturers who became instrumental in changing the syllabus by putting more emphasis on African history, as had already been done at Makerere. In 1965 Ogot took over the chairmanship of history. In 1966 he became a reader and a year later, a professor of history. Other academic positions to which Ogot was appointed include: Dean, Faculty of Arts (1967–69), Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi (1970–72), and Director of the Cultural Division of the Institute for Development Studies (1965–75). This Division was later renamed the Institute of African Studies. Its aim was to promote and conduct original research in the fields of African history and pre-history, ethnography and anthropology, musicology and dance, arts and crafts, religion, and beliefs.

During Ogot's chairmanship of the department of history, African historical studies at the University of Nairobi continued to flourish. This was achieved by establishing a number of research programs and projects staffed by members of the faculty and involving students as well. The results of such original research projects were published in several series. The "Nairobi Historical Series" comprised studies in all fields of social sciences and humanities. Authoritative works on the East African history, including regional studies, archaeology, and historical biographies, were published during this time.

The "African voice series," under the general editorship of Ogot and Professor T. O. Ranger, produced proto-nationalist books, presenting what Africans were thinking and saying about such issues as "primary resistance to colonial rule, and the emergence of modern nationalist movements. To this end several books were published covering countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. Another important series under Ogot's editorship was the "Peoples of East Africa," which also consisted of definitive historical studies of the peoples inhabiting the region. Most of



these studies, which were undertaken by eminent scholars, drew heavily on oral sources and skilled analysis of the evidence gathered. They were not only important for the areas covered, but were also sources of new insights into the historical methodology. They showed the value and limitations of oral sources in the study of African history.

At the same time, Ogot's efforts to promote historical studies in Kenya and East Africa as a whole did not remain within the confines of the academic community. In 1966 Ogot became the founder-president of the historical association of Kenya, whose membership was open to the Kenyan public. Among its aims was to enhance the study and teaching of history, and to encourage research and publishing in all aspects of historical interest. The association, which Ogot headed for two decades, made an impact on the intellectual and academic growth of many young scholars and professionals. It organized regular seminars and annual conferences. The proceedings of the annual conferences were published in the series, *Hadith*, meaning history. In 1972 the *Journal of the Historical Association of Kenya*, later renamed *Kenya Historical Review*, was launched. Over the years the journal has remained an important publishing outlet.

The Historical Association also encouraged research and publication of the results by non-academicians. On the history of Kenya's nationalist movements, for example, the association encouraged and assisted people like Makhan Singh, Bildad Kaggia, and Waruhiu Itote to write and publish their experiences, for posterity. After heading the department of history for over a decade, Ogot decided to move into other areas outside the University of Nairobi, to broaden African historical studies.

In 1977 he was appointed the first director of The International Louis Leakey Memorial Institute for African Prehistory (TILLMIAP) based in Nairobi. The institute was established to honor Dr. Louis Leakey for his outstanding investigations of the origins of man at sites in East Africa. It sought to further scientific research into the origin and evolution of man. This was also a reflection of the worldwide upsurge of interest in prehistory. The institute was to provide an international focus for research, to coordinate and to integrate research, and to disseminate the knowledge on a worldwide scale. Under Ogot TILLMIAP firmly established its wide programs of research, training of African scientists, and the construction of the necessary physical facilities.

Ogot left TILLMIAP in 1980 and thereafter worked as a consultant on Unesco's "General History of Africa" project. The project had been conceived in the 1960s and Ogot was among those who had been involved all along in its planning stages. In 1964 the General Conference of Unesco decided to prepare and to publish a *General History of Africa*, as a contribution to the mutual understanding of the peoples and nations. The proj-

ect sought to identify factors of cultural continuity among the African people throughout their history. To achieve this, an International Scientific Committee of 39 members was set up in 1970 for the drafting of the history. Between 1970 and 1984 Ogot served on this committee as vice-president and later, president. As he says in the presidential address describing the project, the challenging task was to "produce a continental history of Africa, covering the last three million years, using the highest canons of scholarship, and involving scholars drawn from diverse countries, cultures, ideologies, and historical traditions." The approach to the project is a continental perspective of African history, the history of ideas, civilizations, societies, and institutions. It "attempts to place the contributions of Blacks in Africa and elsewhere within the totality of human endeavor."<sup>14</sup>

In his assigned capacity, therefore, Ogot has coordinated the eight-volume project, in liaison with the editors of each volume, who include such eminent scholars as Joseph KiZerbo, Gamal Mokhtar, Mohammed El Fasi, D. T. Niane, J. F. Ade Ajayi, A. Adu Boahen, and Ali A. Mazrui. Ogot himself has edited the fifth volume *Africa from the 7th to the 8th Century*.

In 1984 Ogot became professor of history at Kenyatta University in Kenya. In his teaching career he has supervised many M. A. and Ph.D. candidates. He has been a visiting professor and external examiner at many international universities. The bibliographical section of this contribution attests to his wide research and publishing, and continuing contributions at conferences, seminars, and symposia. Apart from his teaching and research assignments, Ogot continues to be actively involved in other professional, community, and national activities as well.

### **With Professional and Learned Institutions**

An eminent African scholar once lamented the inequality in world manpower needs, particularly in developing countries where a somewhat disproportionate burden is placed on pioneers in every field or profession. Whether one views the situation in terms of teaching loads, assignment with professional bodies, consultancies with specialized organizations and institutions, or appointments to positions of community or national service, there are just not enough people to go around. There ought to be more people available to serve not just their own societies, but the external audience as well.<sup>15</sup> Bethwell Ogot, like many of his generation, was no exception. His talents and experience have been called upon for the service of many national and international organizations and institutions.

As soon as he joined Makerere University College, Ogot became a member of the Uganda Society, and served on its executive committee.



In 1963 he was a founder-member of the East African Academy, an organization of university teachers and researchers of East African universities. He later served as its vice-president, and treasurer of its Uganda branch. The same year he became a member of the University of East Africa Council, and served on a number of its committees until 1969, when separate national universities were being formed in each of the three East African countries.

In 1964 the East African Institute of Social and Cultural Affairs was established to promote research on social, economic, and political issues in East Africa. To disseminate information in the region the institute operated through programs of seminars, publishing, and mass media. Ogot served as secretary-general of the institute from 1964 to 1969 and also edited its influential monthly, the *East Africa Journal*. In 1964 the Institute launched a publishing concern, the East African Publishing House, aimed at catering to the requirements of local people and at mirroring the African heritage by encouraging and supporting local authors. Ogot was the founder and chairman of the board of directors of the publishing house (1964–74). When the Jomo Kenyatta Foundation was established as a state corporation to promote indigenous publishing to meet the educational needs in the country, Ogot became its first secretary-general (1968–69).

Between 1967 and 1974 Ogot served as a member of the East African Examinations Council, the supreme authority of all national school examinations in East Africa. Other appointments included: Member of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum of Kenya and the Kenya Museum Society (1967–74); Member of the Governing Council of British Institute of History and Archeology in East Africa, representing the University Community (1969–78); Executive Committee of the Association of African Universities (1972–78); Director, The International Louis Leakey Memorial Institute for African Prehistory (1977–80); First president of the Panafrican Association for Prehistory and Related Studies (1977–84); Executive Board of the International African Institute, London (1977–84); Founder-Member, and President of the Club of Africa (1980); and Founder-Member Kenya National Academy of Sciences (1983), and member of its Governing Council, Editorial and Awards Committees.

Ogot's association with Unesco spans decades in his professional career. Since 1968 he has been a member of the Kenya National Commission for Unesco and has served on its cultural committee. In 1987 he was elected on the Unesco Executive Board, to represent Kenya and the East Africa region. As mentioned before, his other contribution to Unesco was through his role in the organization's General History of Africa Project, conceived in the 1960s and implemented throughout the 1970s and 1980s.



Apart from Ogot's involvement with professional bodies, he has also been honored by a number of appointments by the head of state in Kenya. In 1974 he was nominated to the East African Legislative Assembly. He has been appointed chairman of the following state corporations: Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (1984–86), Kenya Railways Corporation (1986–88), and Kenya National Oil Corporation (1988). He has also served on the executive Board of the Kenya National Library Services since 1983. In 1985 Ogot was appointed vice-chairman of the Presidential Working Party on education and manpower planning in the country. The party's task was to review with recommendations, the whole educational philosophy, policies, and objectives to ensure that these were in consonance with changing social, cultural, economic, and political demands of the country in the coming decades.

Apart from the official duties, Ogot has been involved in other voluntary and community development activities. For example, he was one of the brains behind the establishment in 1971 of Ramogi Institute of Advanced Technology in Kenya. He served as secretary to its Projects Committee.

### Editorial Assignments

Ogot's editorial interests go back to his undergraduate days at Makerere when, together with others, he started a simple journal mainly for community brainstorming on current issues through questions, puzzles, and humor. His editorial contributions have since spanned his entire career. He has had many publications produced under his editorial direction. He has also assisted and guided many budding scholars in their publishing efforts. The many tributes to Ogot in numerous publications aptly attest to his exertions in this area.

Ogot has served in various capacities on editorial boards of professional journals and learned institutions. Some of these include *Africa Zamani* (Yaoundé), *Bulletin of the Association of African Universities*, East African Academy, Kenya National Academy of Sciences, *Journal of African Studies* (Los Angeles), *Journal of Asian and African Studies* (New Delhi), *Journal of African History* (London), *Mawazo* (Kampala), *Tarikh* (Ibadan), and *Transafrican Journal of History*.

Perhaps the most important editorial contribution is from Ogot's long association with the *East Africa Journal*, both as editor and contributor. The journal was published by the East African Institute of Social and Cultural Affairs, of which, as mentioned before, Ogot was the secretary-general. The monthly was launched in 1964 as a forum in which economic, political, social, and cultural matters pertaining to the Eastern African region could be discussed openly. It was begun during a particularly significant historical era in Africa, as the immediate post-independence

search was going on for national direction and meaningful independence. The journal provided the forum for debate and discussion on such matters as national ideologies, nation-building, academic freedom, democracy, pan-Africanism and related topics. It attracted wide contributions and generated lively debates among statesmen, bureaucrats, and intellectuals. The journal also served as a medium for the exploitation of local literary talents. Through its special literary edition, *Ghala*, most of today's accomplished literary writers in East Africa made their first appearance in print. The journal was thus at the center of intellectual, artistic, literary, and political ferment at the time.

Editing such an interdisciplinary journal had its moments of joy as well as frustration. They came when a contributor or intellectual or ideological combatant could acknowledge the opportunity to discuss issues with a wider and specialized level of readership. The editor could also note with satisfaction that many young and budding creative writers were coming up fast to erase what hitherto was a virtual "literary barrenness in East Africa."

But there were also trying moments in the editorial saddle. Such moments posed a personal challenge for the ideals and principles for which the journal stood. Ogot faced such a challenge in the wake of the assassination in July 1969 of Tom Mboya, a prominent minister in Kenya. Two months later Ogot published a special commemorative issue on Mboya, with contributions from prominent statesmen, scholars, politicians, trade unionists, and journalists, all of international repute. In the editorial "Kenya without Mboya," the editor reviewed the strife and reverberations that followed Mboya's assassination which threatened the very survival of the nation. He lamented the fact that leaders had sunk so low as to seek refuge in ethnic solidarity while the nation was crying for a statesman who could rise above such parochialism, champion the course of national unity, and save the nation from disintegration. He challenged the Kenyan leadership to rise to the challenge.

The government reaction was predictably prompt. For days Ogot had to spend hours at security offices, making statements, undergoing interrogation and demands for withdrawal of the issue or retraction of the views.<sup>16</sup> But he stuck to his guns. It should be noted that earlier in the year in neighboring Uganda, Rajat Neogy, the editor of *Transition*, the only other leading monthly journal in East Africa, had been put into detention for publishing views that were critical of the government.

In taking a principled stand on national issues, Ogot was not without a history of personal political involvement. After all, his interest in the political fortunes of his country was demonstrated right from his student days in the United Kingdom, when he was president of the Kenya Students Association. As Kenya braced itself for independence, Ogot fre-



quently communicated with his countrymen through the press on such issues as the constitutional development, multi-racialism, and the background to the various political interest groups, if the country was to benefit from its immediate past and plan for a better future under self-rule.

### Honors and Awards

Ogot's list of honors and awards dates back to his days in high school. As mentioned before, while at Maseno School he won first prize in the course organized for the trade union movement and was offered a scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, which he declined. As an undergraduate student at Makerere, Ogot collected awards every year. In 1951 for instance, he won the Arts Research Prize for his essay on social change among the Luo people. In the same year he emerged the best student in the faculty of arts and was awarded the Archer-Sturrock Prize. In 1952 he graduated with a diploma in education and the college awarded him the First Madhvani Prize in Education the following year. While at St. Andrew's University as a student in philosophy, Ogot won the Sir Henry Jones Memorial Prize in Philosophy in 1956 and the Grieve Prize for Moral Philosophy the following year.

When Ogot embarked on his doctorate at the School of Oriental and African Studies, he was awarded a Rockefeller Research Fellowship. He further received a Research Fellowship of the British Institute of History and Archaeology in East Africa in 1961 for work on his doctorate. Years later, in 1969, the Institute made him an honorary fellow. He thus received recognition for his contributions to the study of East African history. In 1972 he was awarded another honorary fellowship from the Historical Association of Ghana, in recognition of his contributions to African history.

At home, in Kenya, Ogot is a Fellow of the Kenya National Academy of Sciences, established in 1983. He has also served on the Academy's Awards Committee. In December 1986, to mark the twenty-third Anniversary of Kenya's independence, President Daniel Arap Moi bestowed on Ogot the national honor, "Order of the Burning Spear." More recently, a group of scholars decided to publish a book in honor of Ogot "as the father of Kenyan history, not only because of his personal research but also because of the number of scholars and teachers he has trained." A *Modern History of Kenya* (London: Evans Brothers, forthcoming), is a scholarly resource textbook that covers the history of Kenya from stone age to the present. It is edited by Professor William Ochieng and carries contributions from leading scholars on African affairs and history.

Over the years Ogot has also been honored by being included in a number of reference works and biographical sources. Among such sources are: *Who's Who in East Africa* (Nairobi, 1964), *Dictionary of*



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### The Family Man

Bethwell Ogot married Grace Emily Akinyi in 1959, and they have four grown children. Grace Ogot, a renowned writer in her own right, has a long list of published novels, short stories, and articles to her credit. The two have collaborated in literary ventures, with nascent fusion of their seemingly divergent academic backgrounds and careers. Grace, a trained nurse and journalist, has been a member of Parliament since 1983. She represents Gem constituency and is an assistant minister in the government. Here again one can see Ogot's contributions in the background, for the clock of the history of Kenya, nay, of mankind, has not stopped.

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