

ABSTRACT

The writing of history as academic discipline in Kenya is relatively very recent. This is however not to deny its invaluable antecedents characterized by oral histories as well as written accounts. This paper thus provides an appraisal of this historiography highlighting critical issues and concerns at each moment, which either succeeded in pushing historical writing backwards or forward. The impetus for writing this paper derives from the consensus among Kenyan historians that the discipline faces at critical empirical, ethical and theoretical crisis. This crisis is however not new; it has been part of historical writing in Kenya. It has however been accentuated by the limited historical writings by Kenyan historians and the very question of who should legitimately speak about the Kenyan past? Should it be left to "discoverers of the field" or to what Ibrahim Abdullah in the preface of Jacques Depelchin's book refers to as "Africa's most dangerous marabouts."