

2008

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Alawi, M. H (2008), The history of Nyamwezi migration to Zanzibar, from 1890s to 1960s, Masters dissertation, University of Dar es Salaam, Dar es Salaam.

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The history of Nyamwezi migration to Zanzibar, from 1890s to 1960s

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This dissertation examines the history the Nyamwezi migration to Zanzibar, from 1890s to 1960s. very little is known about the problems and strategies of the Nyamwezi in Zanzibar. This study seeks to investigate first, the Nyamwezi transformations in their homeland and second, problems and coping strategies in Zanzibar. The study starts by tracing Nyamwezi settlement in Tabora in three phases. First the pre-Arab phase, lasting from 1600s to 1825: second, the Arab phase spanning the period from 1825 to 1890s when the Nyamwezi actively participated in the caravan trade and the majority were porters. The third was German phase, lasting from 1890s to 1916 when the Nyamwezi portage profession was undermined by the German's actions and policies. From 1890s the Nyamwezi had no alternative but to work as migrant labourers. The Nyamwezi migrated to various areas including Zanzibar. Colonial measures and policies forced them to migrate to Zanzibar, hence, the presence of a large community of Nyamwezi in Zanzibar. After the Nyamwezi arrived in Zanzibar, they faced several problems like poverty and segregation based on the colonial social structure. Consequently, the Nyamwezi worked out strategies to overcome the problems. The majority became labourers and weeders while the minority was landowners and traders. The Nyamwezi established a union in an attempt to overcome their problems. Therefore, the Nyamwezi migration during the nineteenth century has an important contribution to the history of Zanzibar and the role of people in shaping history of a nation.