



The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815-1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

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This scholarly account traces the emergence of the Zulu Kingdom in South Africa in the early nineteenth century, under the rule of the ambitious and iconic King Shaka. In contrast to recent literary analyses of myths of Shaka, this book uses the richness of Zulu oral traditions and a comprehensive body of written sources to provide a compelling narrative and analysis of the events and people of the era of Shaka's rule. The oral traditions portray Shaka as rewarding courage and loyalty and punishing failure; as ordering the targeted killing of his own subjects, both warriors and civilians, to ensure compliance to his rule; and as arrogant and shrewd, but kind to the poor and mentally disabled. The rich and diverse oral traditions, transmitted from generation to generation, reveal the important roles and fates of men and women, royal and subject, from the perspectives of those who experienced Shaka's rule and the dramatic emergence of the Zulu Kingdom.

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