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SECOND EDITION

ROBERT ROSS



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*PULA!*

And in celebration of the release  
of Nelson Mandela from gaol  
and its consequences

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Cartographer: John Hall

## PREFACE

The first edition of this book was written during my tenure of a fellowship at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study, Wassenaar, during the 1996–7 academic year. I would like to thank the Institute for the support and conviviality it gave, and also the Faculty of Arts of Leiden University, my employer, for allowing me leave of absence. I would also like to thank Dmitri van de Bersselaar, Jan-Bart Gewald, Janneke Jansen, Adam Kuper and Barbara Oomen for their critical comments on various of the chapters, and Robert Edgar for his comments, which helped enormously with the rewriting for the second edition.

## TERMINOLOGY AND ORTHOGRAPHY

Terminology and orthography are the bugbears of South African historians, as they are often highly contested signs. I have done my best to render personal names in the orthography used by the individual concerned or his or her descendants. The prefixes of words in the Bantu languages have been added for ordinary nouns, and for ethnonyms and their derivatives. Thus Sesotho is the language of the Basotho (singular Mosotho), who live in Lesotho, isiZulu that of the amaZulu in KwaZulu, and so forth. (The apparently eccentric capitalisation is that of current orthographies.) Where I have used these as adjectives, I have not provided prefixes, which would, of course, depend on the class of the noun so modified. Thus I write of the Tswana people, but of the Batswana. Place names are generally the modern ones, thus Maputo for Lorenço Marques. I have used the names of the post-1994 provinces where appropriate to designate geographical areas, but where the area I wish to describe is included in several modern provinces, I have not hesitated to use older appellations. Thus I write of Mpumalanga rather than the Eastern Transvaal, but of the Southern Transvaal to refer to an area now included in the provinces of Gauteng, part of Mpumalanga and part of the North-West Province. I have also written of the Transkei and the Ciskei to describe the regions in question, although the Bantustans with these names have, thankfully, disappeared. The names were, of course, older than the Bantustans. The titles of certain acts of legislation have been retrospectively changed to accord with modern sensibilities. Thus the Natives Land Act of 1913 is now generally known as the Black Land Act. I have tended to maintain the original description, out of a dislike for anachronism. I appreciate that the names were somewhat insulting (though there were many worse), but so were the acts.

The various African languages all have their own orthographies, which are not consistent with each other, nor even between the Sesotho of Lesotho and that of the republic. Four points need to be made. Firstly,

in isiXhosa and isiZulu, the letters ‘c’, ‘q’ and ‘x’ refer to the dental, palatal and lateral clicks peculiar to these languages (though the palatal is also found in Sesotho) and above all to the Khoisan languages (where they have specific signs). The unskilled should pronounce them all as ‘k’. Secondly, the sound of the ‘ch’ as in the Scottish ‘loch’ is written as ‘g’ in Setswana and in other languages, but as ‘x’ in some Sesotho variants and as ‘r’ in isiXhosa. Thirdly, Lesotho Sesotho has orthography derived from the French, in which in particular an ‘o’ before another vowel is pronounced as ‘w’; thus the repeated syllable in ‘Moshoeshoe’ is pronounced, *mutatis mutandis*, rather like the drink firm Schweppes. Fourthly, ‘h’s generally signal the aspiration of the previous consonant, to demonstrate a phonemic difference most Europeans do not hear, although it is essentially that of the old distinction in English, now heard only in the mouths of Scottish speakers, between ‘where’ and ‘wear’. This, however, is not the case with ‘sh’ as in ‘Shaka’ or ‘Moshoeshoe’, which is pronounced as in English.