

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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

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.

Elizabeth A. Eldredge is an independent scholar. She has published *A South African Kingdom: The Pursuit of Security in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho* (Cambridge University Press, 1993) and *Power in Colonial Africa: Conflict and Discourse in Lesotho, 1870–1960* (2007).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War,
Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War,
Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828

War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

ELIZABETH A. ELDREDGE



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War,
 Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power
 Elizabeth A. Eldredge
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107075320

© Elizabeth A. Eldredge 2014

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2014

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Eldredge, Elizabeth A., author.

The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power / Elizabeth A. Eldredge.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-07532-0 (Hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-42802-7 (Paperback)

1. Shaka, Zulu Chief, 1787–1828. 2. Zulu (African people)–Kings and rulers–Biography. 3. Zulu (African people)–History–19th century. [1. Zululand (South Africa)–History–To 1879.] I. Title.

DT183 I.C53E43 2014

968.4039092-dc23

2014014323

ISBN 978-1-107-07532-0 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-42802-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> vii
<i>Glossary</i>	x
<i>Map 1 Peoples and Chiefdoms of Southern Africa, c. 1820–1825</i>	xii
<i>Map 2 Chiefdoms of KwaZulu-Natal, c. 1815–1820</i>	xiii
1 Political History in Precolonial Africa: The Case of the AmaZulu Kingdom	1
2 Powerful Chiefs Before Shaka	26
3 Shaka’s Early Life: Oral Traditions, Tales, and History	42
4 Shaka as Warrior	59
5 AmaZulu Expansion and Repercussions: Early Conflicts and Migrations	76
6 Chiefs, Chiefdoms, Violence, and Political Reconfiguration	106
7 Challenges and Consolidation, 1824–1827	139
8 Royal Women: Authority and Subservience	172
9 Zulu Voices, Zulu Meanings: Ancestors, Praises, and History	205
10 Shaka’s Rule: Social Configuration and Social Control	231
11 Shaka’s Ambitions	253
12 The Legacy of Shaka’s Reign	276
<i>Appendix: James Stuart Interviewees</i>	298
<i>Notes</i>	325
<i>Bibliography</i>	388
<i>Index</i>	397

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War,
Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

This book is one of two major projects to emerge from research I conducted from December 1993 to November 1994 when I was based in Durban at the University of Durban-Westville and traveled from there for research stints in Swaziland, Mozambique, and Lesotho. The research for this book was supported by a Fulbright Senior Scholar Fellowship, a grant from the Social Science Research Council, and funds from Michigan State University. I am especially grateful to the faculty in the history departments of the University of Durban-Westville, the University of Swaziland, the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, and the National University of Lesotho. I was proud to be associated with all of the faculty at the University of Durban-Westville during this period of political turmoil and the tremendous historical transition from the apartheid regime to a newly born democracy. Irena Filotova, Mandy Goedhals, and Julie Pridmore were especially gracious and supportive of my research, and my interactions with their students were extremely gratifying. In Durban I spent most of my time at the Killie Campbell Library, and I am grateful for the support I received from the entire staff there over many, many months of daily work with their assistance and support. I am also grateful to the teachers and friends of my children who made their stay in Durban so successful. John Wright, Cara Pretorius, and their family were not only supportive of my research, but also provided my family with unforgettable hospitality as we all hiked through the Drakensberg on several occasions. Thank you all for the welcome and support you provided to my family throughout our stay.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Writing up my previously completed research for my second book on the history of Lesotho has delayed the completion of this work for many years. I nevertheless remain indebted to everyone who assisted me during my yearlong sojourn in southern Africa from December 1993 through November 1994.

This work would not have been possible without the instruction, advice, assistance, and encouragement of many people throughout my career. When I began my doctoral work at Northwestern University, I began my language and linguistic studies with Professor Jack Berry and Professor Wandile Kuse. Dr. Kuse, who was at the University of Illinois at Chicago, taught me isiXhosa intensively, which provided me with the essential linguistic basis for my later field research. I am grateful for the advice and instruction I received at Northwestern University from Professors John Rowe, Ivor Wilks, and Ibrahim Sundiata. My preparation was directed toward research in South Africa, but the cultural boycott for foreigners that had been declared, similar to the sports boycott that was so widely honored, precluded contacting and working with South Africans who were in South Africa and conducting research in the country. On the explicit personal advice of Dennis Brutus whom I met while at Northwestern University, I honored the cultural boycott, and my contact with scholars at South African universities began only many years later after the cultural boycott was lifted in 1992 and I attended a conference that year at the University of Durban-Westville.

For the remainder of my graduate studies, I moved to the University of Wisconsin where I completed my doctoral dissertation in 1986 under the invaluable direction of Jan Vansina. While there, I continued my language studies under the direction of Professor Daniel Kunene with whom I completed advanced language study in isiXhosa, a cognate language of isiZulu that allowed me to make the transition for my later research. Because of my decision to reorient my doctoral research to Lesotho, I also received intensive language instruction in SeSotho from Dr. Kunene in preparation for my fieldwork. As I read S. M. Mqayi's *Ityala Lamawele* in the original isiXhosa and Thomas Mofolo's novels *Pitseng* and *Moeti oa Bochabela* in the original SeSotho under his instruction, I learned not only the nuances of language use but also the idioms of culture expressed through the works of these early twentieth century South African writers.

Finally, I would like to express special thanks to Ibrahim Sundiata, Jan Vansina, Fred Morton, and Hunt Davis for their support and encouragement over the years. I am grateful to David N. Plank for his support

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War,
Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

ix

and encouragement during the years of research and to my entire family for their constant and continuous support throughout my career. This work would never have reached fruition without the support of Donald H. and Charlotte M. Eldredge, Lucy E. Bailey, Robert M. Eldredge, Barbara D. Eldredge, Michael Eldredge Plank, and James Eldredge Plank, to whom I dedicate this book with love.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Glossary

Only terms used frequently are included in this glossary. For the ease of readers unaccustomed to identifying or searching for words according to their word root without its prefix, the terms below are listed in alphabetical order according to prefix.

Original spellings are retained in quoted passages, including interview notes made by James Stuart. Shaka's name was spelled "Tshaka" by James Stuart in accord with the correct pronunciation of his name according to interviewees born in the nineteenth century. In modern orthography, aspirated consonants are indicated with the letter *h* as in Thukela (Tugela) River; Phakathwayo (Pakatwayo), Bhungane (Bungane). The more commonly used plural prefix for peoples, Ama-, is used in place of the less common prefix *abakwa-* (indicating "people of the place of") for ease of reading.

Aba	plural prefix for people of, or associated with, the root name (i.e., AbaQwabe: "Qwabe people")
abakwa	plural prefix for "people of the place of" followed by the root name
Ama	plural prefix for people of, or associated with, the root name (i.e., AmaZulu: "Zulu people")
assegai	spear; <i>umkhonto</i>
idlozi	ancestral spirit; sometimes appears as (embodied in) a snake (pl. amadlozi)
ikhanda	regimental military barracks attached to a royal homestead (pl. amakhanda)
ilobolo	bridewealth given to the bride's family by the groom's family that establishes her children as belonging to the husband's line of descent; usually paid in cattle

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power

Elizabeth A. Eldredge

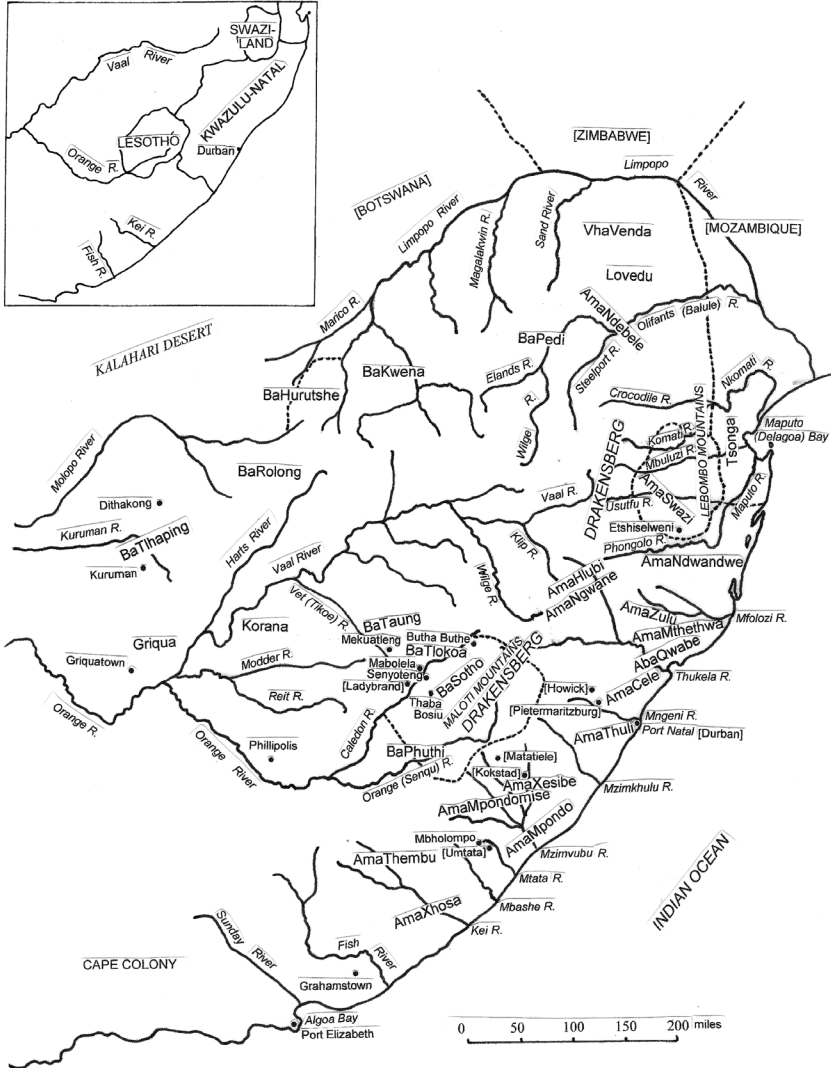
Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Glossary*

xi

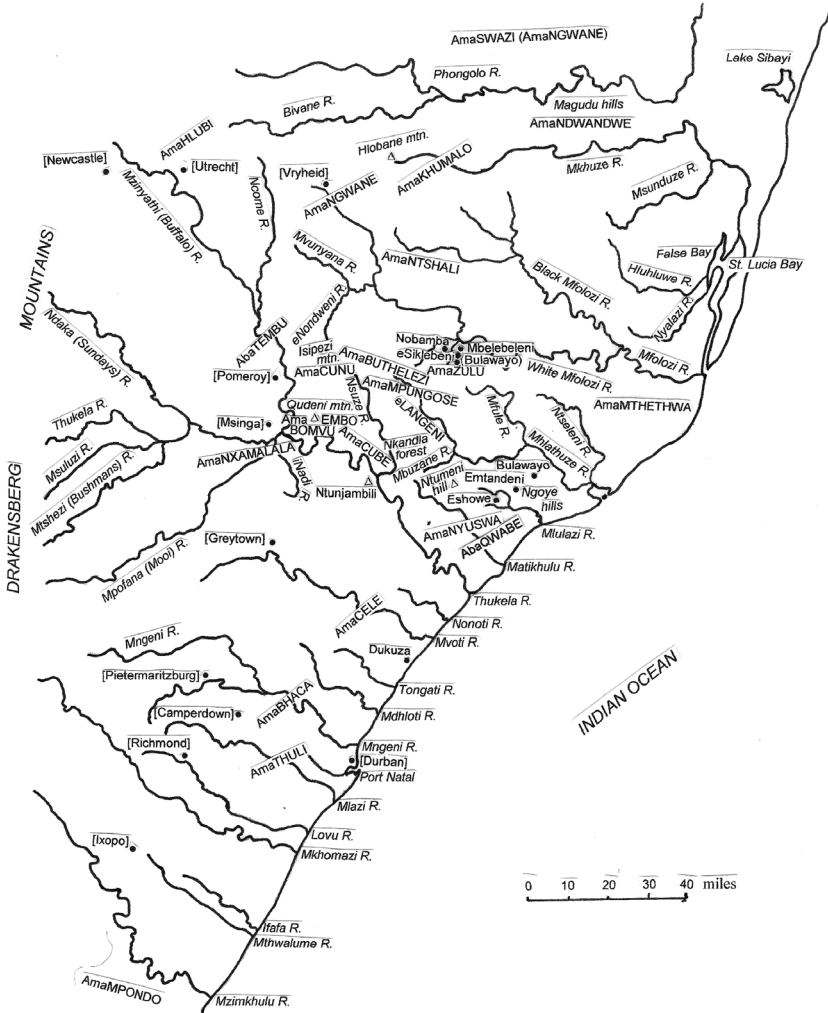
ibutho	military regiment; men's or women's age grade group (pl. amabutho)
impi	military expedition; army; military force (pl. izimpi)
inceku	personal attendant; servant to a chief (pl. izinceku)
induna	person of authority; principal man/headman in a homestead; commander (pl. izinduna)
inkosi	chief, paramount chief, king (pl. amakhosi)
inyanga	traditional "doctor"; healer (pl. izinyanga)
isibongo	composed and recited praise; praises (pl. izibongo)
isigodlo	secluded women's quarters in the royal homestead; king's quarters located in the women's quarters (pl. izigodlo)
isikhulu	person of importance; great person (pl. izikhulu)
isithakazelo	praise-greetings used for persons according to their ancestral line of descent (pl. izithakazelo)
izwe	<i>ilizwe</i> country, territory; <i>isizwe</i> nation
ka	by; son or daughter of (used in names)(e.g., Shaka ka Senzangakhona)
uku-giya	to dance with fighting gestures as if in battle
uku-khonza	to offer allegiance and accept a subordinate tributary status to a chief; to offer loyalty and tribute (uku-konza)
umkhonto	spear
umuzi	homestead (pl. imizi)

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power
 Elizabeth A. Eldredge
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)



MAP 1 Peoples and Chiefdoms of Southern Africa, c. 1820–1825

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-07532-0 - The Creation of the Zulu Kingdom, 1815–1828: War, Shaka, and the Consolidation of Power
 Elizabeth A. Eldredge
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)



MAP 2 Chiefdoms of KwaZulu-Natal, c. 1815–1820