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HISTORY OF

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SOUTH
AFRICAN
LITERATURE

EDITED BY
DAVID ATTWELL
AND DEREK ATTRIDGE

THE CAMBRIDGE
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SOUTH AFRICAN
LITERATURE

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521199285

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First published 2012

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

The Cambridge history of South African literature / edited by David Attwell and Derek Attridge.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 978-0-521-19928-5 (hardback)

I. South African literature – History and criticism. I. Attwell, David. II. Attridge, Derek.

PL8014.S6C36 2011

809'.8968 – dc23 2011037990

ISBN 978-0-521-19928-5 Hardback

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF
SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE

South Africa's unique history has produced literatures in many languages, in oral and written forms, reflecting the diversity in the cultural histories and experience of its peoples. The *Cambridge History* offers a comprehensive, multi-authored history of South African literature in all the country's eleven official languages (and more minor ones), produced by a team of over forty international experts, including contributors drawn from all of the major regions and language groups of South Africa. It will provide a complete portrait of South Africa's literary production, organised as a chronological history from the oral traditions existing before colonial settlement to the post-apartheid revision of the past. In a field marked by controversy, this volume is more fully representative than any existing account of South Africa's literary history. It will make a unique contribution to Commonwealth, international and postcolonial studies, and serve as a definitive reference work for decades to come.

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Acknowledgements

The editors wish to thank the British Academy for a significant contribution to the costs of this research. Our thanks for support are also due to the University of York and the F. R. Leavis Fund, which is administered by the university's Department of English and Related Literature.

The editors owe a particular debt of gratitude to Hedley Twidle, who has served not only as one of our authors but who has been an astute and tireless web technician, research assistant and copy-editor, working closely with us from the inception of the project. Hedley's versatility and resourcefulness have been, quite simply, indispensable.

We also wish to thank Wendy Williamson, who provided additional web support, and Karlien van der Schyff, who contributed to the copy-editing. Mbongiseni Buthelezi, also one of our authors, was generous with his time and expertise when we needed additional guidance with regard to oral culture and literature in some of the African languages. Many of our contributors played a role in the shaping of the volume, either through the initial workshop or in subsequent correspondence, making this history a genuinely collaborative project.

Note on racial nomenclature and languages

The history of racial classification in South Africa makes it necessary to use terms referring to different racial groups; this is done without any implication that these categorisations have a scientific basis. The terms 'black' and 'African' are used to refer to the indigenous Bantu language speakers and their descendants, 'white' to European immigrants and their descendants, and 'coloured' (without capitalisation or quotation marks) to what the apartheid legislators called 'Coloured' or 'mixed-race' peoples. The largest group of Asian South Africans identify themselves as Indian.

In opposition to the official vocabulary of apartheid, "'coloured'" in quotation marks and 'so-called coloured' were widely used, but the term can now be employed without any stigma. During the ascendancy of the Black Consciousness movement, 'black' or 'Black' was often used collectively with reference to African, coloured and Indian peoples, but that is less frequently the case today.

The earliest inhabitants of the country, when encountered by European settlers, were called 'Hottentots' (a pastoral people of the western and northern Cape) and 'Bushmen' (hunter-gatherers widespread through the country). The former are referred to as the 'Khoikhoi', the latter as the 'San' or 'Bushmen' (see Chapter 1, note 2, on these terms). The two groups are closely related and are known collectively as the 'Khoi-San' or 'Khoisan' peoples. Only small populations survive in South Africa today.

Numerous languages are spoken in South Africa, eleven of which have been declared 'official languages' (see Introduction, p. 2, and note 2). The names of the indigenous languages are formed with prefixes: thus the Zulu people speak isiZulu. Similarly, Xhosa: isiXhosa; Ndebele: isiNdebele; Swazi: Siswati; Tswana: Setswana; Tsonga: Xitsonga; Venda: Tshivenda. The Sotho language, Sesotho, is distinguished from Northern Sotho (Sesotho sa Leboa), which is also referred to as Sepedi.

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