

Foreword

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This volume stems from a conference organized by the Chaire d'études africaines of the University of Louvain at Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium from 11 to 13 March, 2004. Eleven of the chapters consist of reworked papers presented at the conference. The other articles were requested from their authors during the following months.

The contributors come from countries as divergent as South Africa, the Congo, Cameroon, Senegal, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Whether they live there or have carried out their work there, all of the authors have an intimate knowledge of Africa combined with a personal interest in the AIDS issue. The fact that the studies included in this present volume equally concern English-speaking and French-speaking Africa is worthy of mention. Cultural and intellectual barriers continue to separate these two parts of the African continent. In order to facilitate a greater exchange of ideas, the decision was taken to publish the volume in both languages. The French version was published simultaneously by Academia-Bruylant (Louvain-la-Neuve) and Karthala (Paris) in October 2006. The English version is published on line.

We would like to express our thanks to the Chaire d'études africaines at the University of Louvain and the National Research Foundation of South Africa who financed the conference at Louvain-la-Neuve as well as this publication. Our gratitude is also due to Carole Beckett who translated the texts originally written in French.

We dedicate this book to all those, men, women and children who are afflicted with the AIDS virus, in Africa or elsewhere. Their individual and collective stories need to be told and with empathy and respect, bearing in mind the social and cultural context which give them meaning. It is their voice, not yet sufficiently listened to by historians, that we wish to make heard so that it may open up channels towards a future.

October 2006

