The Kongo kingdom, which arose in the Atlantic Coast region of West-Central Africa, is a famous emblem of Africa’s past yet little is still known of its origins and early history. This book sheds new light on that all-important period and goes on to explain the significance of its cosmopolitan culture in the wider world. Bringing together different new strands of historical evidence as well as scholars from disciplines as diverse as anthropology, archaeology, art history, history and linguistics, it is the first book to approach the history of this famous Central African kingdom from a cross-disciplinary perspective. All chapters are written by distinguished and/or upcoming experts of Kongo history with a focus on political space, taking us through processes of centralisation and decentralisation, the historical politics of extraversion and internal dynamics, and the geographical distribution of aspects of material and immaterial Kongo culture.

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The Kongo Kingdom

The Origins, Dynamics and Cosmopolitan Culture of an African Polity

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