

The Gift

The Gift explores how objects of prestige contributed to cross-cultural exchanges between Africans and Europeans during the Atlantic slave trade. An eighteenth-century silver ceremonial sword, commissioned in the port of La Rochelle by French traders, was offered as a gift to an African commercial agent in the port of Cabinda (Kingdom of Ngoyo), in twenty-first century Angola. Slave traders carried this object from Cabinda to Abomey, the capital of the Kingdom of Dahomey in twenty-first century's Republic of Benin, from where French officers looted the item in the late nineteenth century. Drawing on a rich set of sources in French, English, and Portuguese, as well as artifacts housed in museums across Europe and the Americas, Ana Lucia Araujo illuminates how luxury objects impacted European–African relations, and how these economic, cultural, and social interactions paved the way for the European conquest and colonization of West Africa and West Central Africa.

Ana Lucia Araujo is a professor of History at Howard University, Washington, DC. A specialist on the history and memory of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade, she has authored and edited thirteen books.

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The Gift

*How Objects of Prestige Shaped the Atlantic Slave
Trade and Colonialism*

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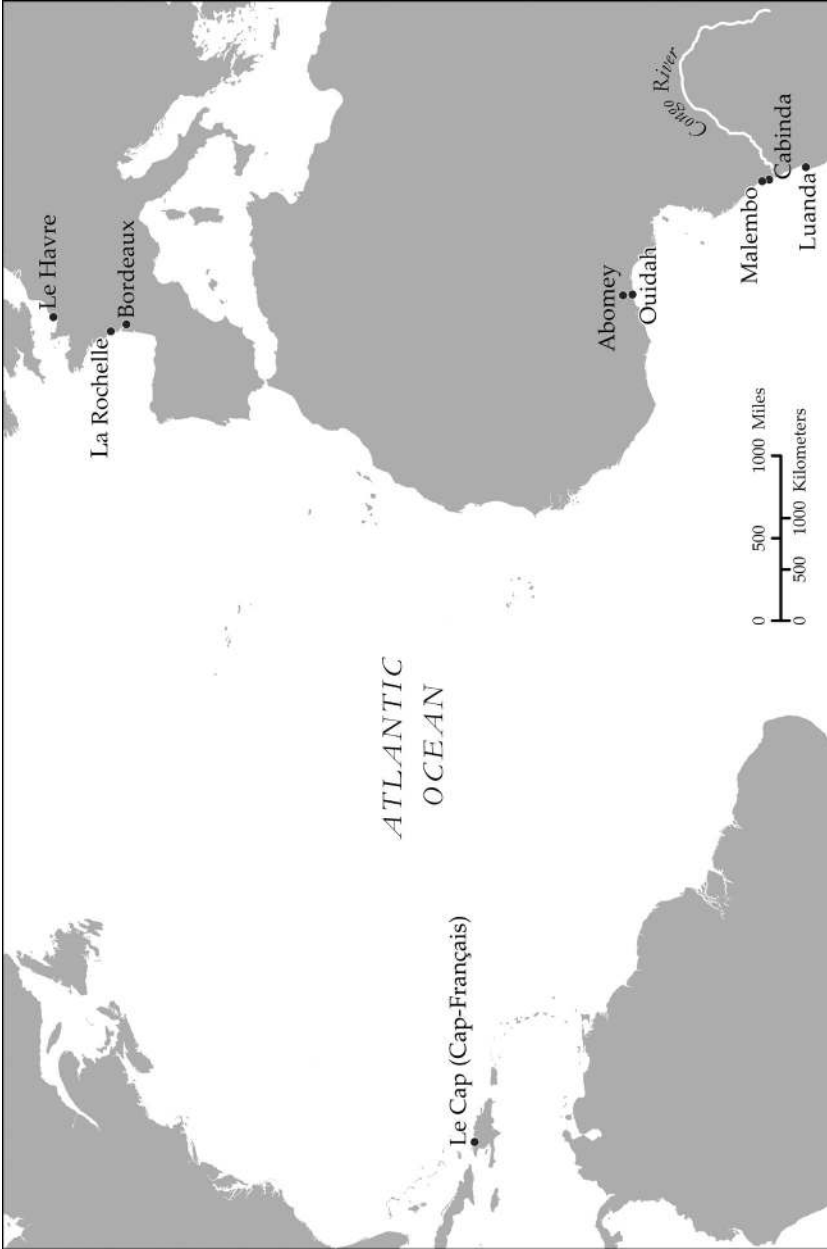
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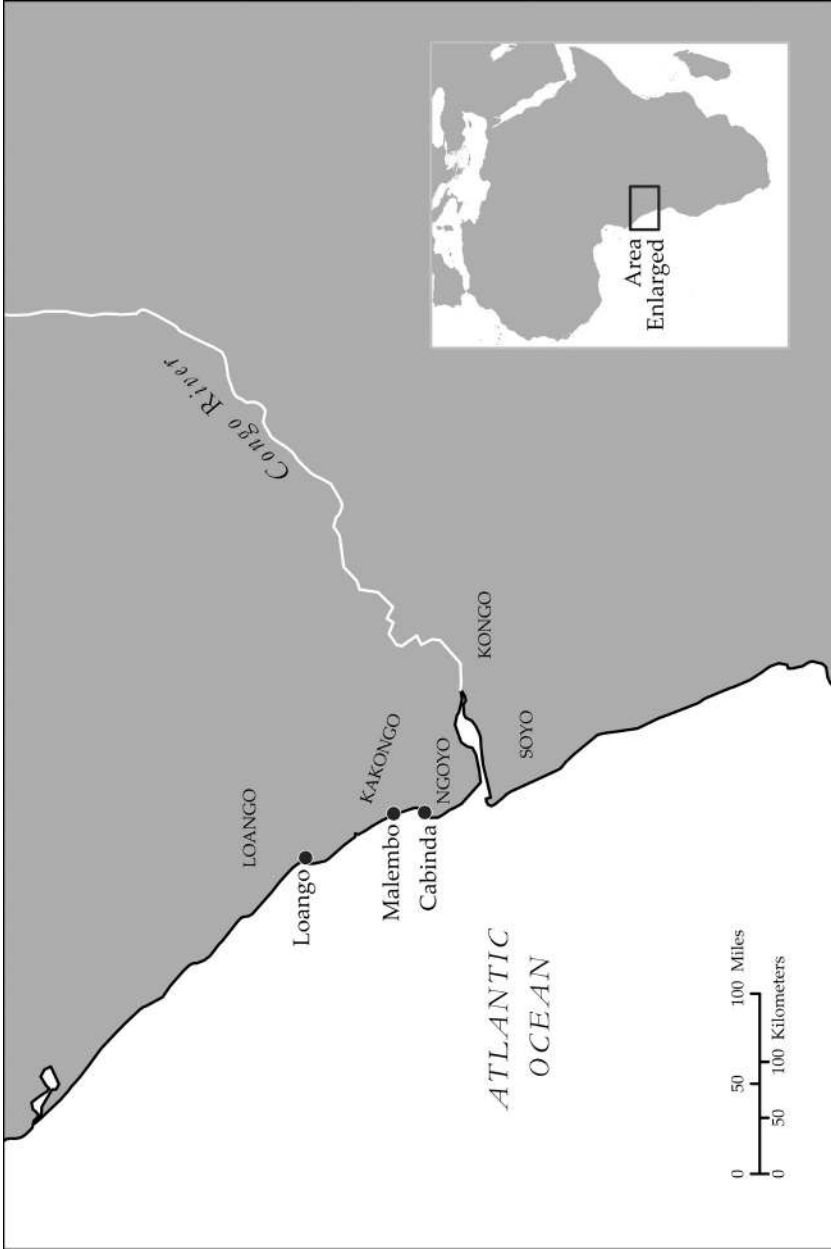
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MAP 2 The Loango coast kingdoms of Loango, Kakongo, and Ngoyo and their ports Loango, Malembo, and Cabinda.
Map by Tsering Wangyal Shawa, Geographic Information Systems and Map Librarian, Princeton University.

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