
Negotiating Cross-Cultural Trade in the Eighteenth Century: From the Atlantic Coast Markets to the Congo River Basin

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Whereas in previous projects I have attempted to make sense of the actors in the transatlantic slave trade at both a collective and individual level, this chapter concentrates on the spaces in which these encounters happen and what happens when those actors meet. In doing so, it will provide a more focused analysis of the mechanisms of the slave trade, the frequency of exchanges, and the functions of those African actors holding key political roles. By tracing the journey of slaves backward from the Loango Coast through the caravans to the slave markets, this chapter will examine the role which European commodities play in African markets and communities. To achieve this end, this chapter will be divided into four parts: the first section explores the role of geographical factors in the slave trade on the Loango Coast; the second section examines the transactions between Middleburg and Loango traders from the arrival to the sailing of the ships focusing on qualitative rather than quantitative data; the third section discusses commodities and demand cycles on the Loango Coast in contrast to other African slave trading regions; and, the fourth section explores the journey of the caravans to the markets of the interior. This chapter explores the relevance of knowledge accumulation in negotiating the barriers and the obligations of trade partners. It is only through the creation of a cross-cultural understanding of limits and expectations that the Loango Coast was able to sustain and expand its supply of slaves into the transatlantic system throughout the eighteenth century.

Furthermore, this chapter argues that it was the Mafouks, rather than the local rulers, who facilitated and controlled the Loango Coast slave trade.¹ This provided a barrier between European

¹ A Mafouk was an appointed administrator of international trade on the Loango Coast.

merchants and the local trade communities, slowing the impact of cross-cultural exchange on the local religious and cultural norms. However, this also allowed the Mafouks to amass enough personal wealth and political influence to undermine the power bases of local rulers.

The Geographical Context of the Loango Slave Trade

By the mid-eighteenth century, Europeans and Africans had developed a complicated protocol for beginning trade on the Loango Coast. Due to strong winds and ocean currents ships arrived on the Loango Coast by one of two routes. The first route was favoured by the Portuguese ships that sailed in a “C” shaped pattern west out of Portugal and then south on the Atlantic Ocean passing close to the Brazilian coast before turning east from there to Benguela and north to the Loango Coast.² Dutch, English, and French captains did not often favour this route as it took them through Portuguese dominated waters. Instead they preferred the second route that held much more tightly to the western African coast stopping first at Mayumba, a small slave trading port to the north of Loango Bay, or even Gabon before proceeding southward to the Loango Bay, Malemba, or Cabinda Bay. This was the most common route in the eighteenth century. This section explores the physical geography which Europeans encountered at these ports.

As already established in my previous work, after a series of failures to maintain permanent settlements on the Loango Coast Europeans had settled into a pattern of ship based trade in the eighteenth century. This meant that European merchants generally set up a temporary trading base on the periphery of Loango Coast towns or ports. The location of these temporary factories, as illustrated below in J. Kip’s 1732 drawing of Cabinda Bay, was often on the fringes of local settlements. Although little information is available about Kip himself, Kip’s diagram of Cabinda Bay is an exceptional document for the western coast of Africa. Although other historians have attempted to reconstruct descriptions and maps of the geography of ports, few have such excellent source material. For example, Robin Law’s meticulous study of the port of Ouidah includes a reconstruction of historical locations onto a modern map of the city and a physical description of where the European factories and forts were likely to have been located. Likewise, Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson use Kannan Nair’s 1972 map of the historical port of Old Calabar in combination with various British sources to reimagine the port of Old Calabar.³

² Candido, *Enslaving Frontiers*, p. 23.

³ Law, *Ouidah*, pp. 11, 31-41; and, Lovejoy and Richardson, “Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic History,” pp. 332, 347-348.

Thus, although historical images of Africa produced in this time period are notoriously unreliable, Kip's diagram is an excellent starting place.⁴ The relative location of the temporary factories at Cabinda is corroborated by Martin's description of the bay:

Cabinda had the most room and safe anchorage on the Loango Coast. The sea was deep close to the shore, the bay was sheltered, wood and water were plentiful. This was the most convenient place for a base for the repair and refitting of ships. There was a village called Cabinda, but around the bay towards the Point of the Palmar were other smaller settlements which were also part of the Cabinda complex. The only disadvantage was that the climate of Cabinda was not as good as that of Malemba and most captains preferred to sleep on board ship.⁵

On Kip's drawings we can see marshy grounds, "wood pyles" [a wall of large pointed sticks], a fishermen's village, and a fresh water river separating the "Town of Cabinda" from the Factories. This seems to indicate that not only were the Europeans on the edge of town, but also that they were separated from town by both natural and manmade barriers. Presumably, these barriers would be for the protection of the indigenous inhabitants rather than Europeans, as they are positioned next to the "Town of Cabinda" rather than around the factories. Robin Law confirms this separation between indigenous towns and foreign merchant spaces both in Ouidah and in the coastal regions of Western Africa as a whole though he does not make mention of a physical barrier between the indigenous towns and the Europeans' lodgings.⁶ Furthermore, Joseph C. Miller supports this interpretation in his analysis of trade in West Central Africa: "Quarantine of the often aggressive foreign traders and their crew of unruly slave guards and bearers within the market settlements helped to insulate the surrounding neighbourhoods from the unsettling influence of foreign trade."⁷

Even farther along the point we find "Negro's Town". Reference to a "Negro's Town" can be found in a drawing of Fort James, the English fort at Accra. The drawing includes a location for both "Negro's Town" and "The landing place".⁸ Perhaps this is where the slaves were housed before embarking. Another possibility is that this is where the local inhabitants lived when they had a labour contract

⁴ For a discussion on the difficulties of representing "others" in art see: Dipti Desai, "Imaging Difference: The Politics of Representation in Multicultural Art Education," *Studies in Art Education*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Winter, 2000), pp. 114-129.

⁵ Point of the Palmar is also known as Pont do Palmar. The editor's note in Andrew Battle's *Strange Adventures* reads: "This is Red Point or Ponta Vermelha, where there is a grove of palms" p. 42. Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, p. 95.

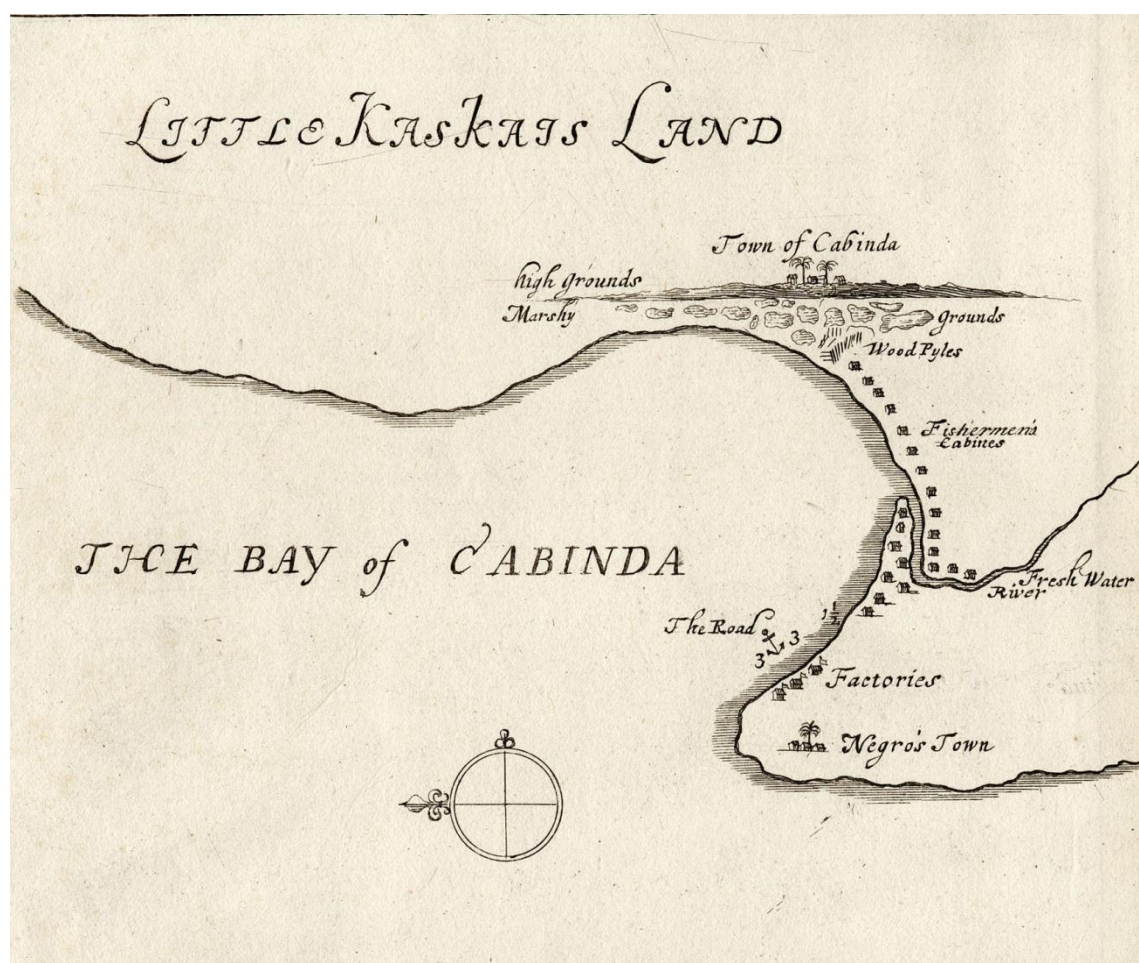
⁶ Law, *Ouidah*, pp. 32.

⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, p. 183.

⁸ "The Fort James, English at Accra A. Negro's town B. The landing place C. A large canoe" (London, Printed by assignment from Messrs. Churchill for H. Lintot and J. Osborn, 1744-46. vol. 5, Available at: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Bibliographic Record Number: 2031576.)

with European traders. These are by no means exclusive options, nor are they the only possible explanation for these “towns”. Whatever the case, these “Negro’s Towns” seem to be directly related to the presence of European forts or factories. Another factor involved in the location of the factories is implicit in the map: the vulnerability of European health. Two features, the proximity of fresh water and the relative distance from the mosquito infested marsh lands, inevitably were negotiated with recognition of poor European adaptation to the climate and the need for fresh water at the end of a long voyage from Europe. While the town of Cabinda is located on high

Illustration 1: Cabinda Bay



Source: Kip, J. Mouth of the River Congo and Cabinda Bay (G241:4/23), Macpherson Collection, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK. Also available at <http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/explore/object.cfm?ID=G241%3A4%2F23> Accessed on 31 March 2011. Reproduced with permission from the National Maritime Museum.

ground, the elevation of the factories is not clear from this diagram; higher ground usually was associated with healthier living conditions. If the factories were located at low elevation, this may account for the unhealthy conditions reported by European travellers.

Like Cabinda, Loango Bay had a reputation for being “unhealthy”, though Martin suggests that “such tales were often a ruse to discourage Europeans from trying to establish more permanent factories ashore.”⁹ As was the case for Cabinda, Loango Bay and Malemba also had small areas for European trade on the periphery of town. At Loango Bay European factories sat upon the top of a small hill referred to as the ‘Point’; at Malemba European factories sat at the top of Malemba Hill, with the northern side being referred to as ‘Dutch Hill’ and the southern side ‘French Hill’. In contrast to Cabinda and Loango, Malemba’s climate was relatively healthy. At least, European traders were willing to risk sleeping on shore and the factories were of a more permanent nature. Perhaps these small comforts had an impact on the growing popularity of Malemba in the late eighteenth century.

Yet even before the boom in the slave trade in the late eighteenth century, European travellers were attracted to the port of Malemba. F. Denis Carli, an Italian missionary to Kongo and Kakongo between 1666 and 1667, offered the following description of Malemba and the Kakongo people:

The first and most famous of these [ports] is that of Loango, the second of Capinda [sic], and the third and last that of Cacongo [Malemba] itself, but which is not very secure. This kingdom for the most part is flat, with air indifferently wholesome, and soil not unfruitful, by reason of frequent showers, and the moulds being generally black, whereas in other parts of Ethiopia [meaning Africa] it is either sandy or chalky. The Inhabitants of this country, considering they have been born pagans, are more courteous and humane than ordinary, and though they are Infidels, they cherish and respect our priests.¹⁰

While admitting the less secure anchorage for ships off the coast of Malemba, Carli’s descriptions of the healthy climate and his warm reception from the Kakongo people are more useful than his moral pronouncements. Though, it seems clear that Carli’s religious motivations did not unsettle the people of Cabinda. This contact occurred seventy years before the arrival of the MCC at Malemba. Just as Carli before them, the MCC found a positive reception at Malemba conducting their most successful slave trading endeavours at this port.

Day to Day Negotiations on the Loango Coast

Using a compilation of travel documents and shipping logs, Phyllis Martin constructs a picture of what Europeans encountered upon their arrival: first the captain fired a volley of cannon shots to signal their arrival; second, the Mafouk either sent a messenger to the ship or went to the ship himself to set the terms of trade, at this point a fixed price might be set; third, the captain went

⁹ Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, p 95.

¹⁰ Angelo and Carli, “Account of the Congo,” p. 736.

ashore to establish the availability of slaves, the level of competition, and to seek news of the other local ports; if the conditions were favourable, his crew would hire local porters and canoes to set up shop on the coast.¹¹ In this context a factory refers to a temporary store house which the Europeans used while anchored off shore and abandoned once the ship was fully provisioned and set sail for the Americas. Johannes Postma refers to the factories of the Loango Coast as “mere trading lodges that could operate only with the approval of the indigenous African authorities.”¹² This description seems consistent with the MCC’s trade patterns on the Loango Coast.

While Martin has given us a solid starting point for imagining how trade proceeded on the Loango Coast, there is a significant problem in her description of these events. While it is evident in her footnotes, Martin does not acknowledge the time differences between her documents which range from sixteenth century to late eighteenth century. Thus Martin does not sufficiently explore the possibility of change over time. Although Dutch trader Pieter van den Broecke, English trader Andrew Battell, British Captain Charles Wilson, and the MCC representatives experienced similar elements in their reception on the Loango Coast, an almost two century time difference undoubtedly resulted in differing expectations between the two men. In his published journals Broecke records asking the Maloango for permission to trade upon arrival but does not mention saluting with a cannon upon his arrival.¹³ Neither does Andrew Battell mention a salute as part of the customs of trade at the Loango Coast.¹⁴

Almost 200 years after Broecke and Battell visited the Loango Coast, Europeans continued to follow a similar, though presumably more institutionalized, protocol. This protocol is described in a 1783 letter from Leyland, Penny and Co. of Liverpool to Captain Charles Wilson of the Brig *Madampookata*: “On your arrival off Cabinda, or should you first fall in with Malimba [Malemba], and find ships there, take care not to approach too near, until you are informed if they are Friends or Enemies – We apprehend you will meet with no ships at Cabinda; on your coming near the Bay anchor without in five Fathom, the canoes will come along beside and by them send for Prince Mambooka Madampookata [Mambouk], and the Mamfooka [Mafouk].” (For a full transcription of the letter see Appendix A below). Although this document also notes the requirement to seek permission to trade before going ashore, it contains a notable difference. By the eighteenth century it was the Mafouk to whom European traders appealed upon their arrival on the Loango Coast

¹¹ Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, pp. 101-102.

¹² Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 65.

¹³ Broecke, *Journal*, pp. 56 & 74.

¹⁴For more details on Battell’s experience and observations on the Loango Coast see: Battell, *Strange Adventures*, pp. 9, 42-50, 86, 104, 166.

rather than the Maloango, or in this case the Mangoyo who was the ruler of Cabinda. Once the office of Mafouks had been established, Europeans only had access to the rulers of the Loango Coast in exceptional circumstances.

Likewise, between Broecke's voyage in the early 1600s and Wilson's voyage in the 1780s, the volume of European trade to the Loango Coast had increased significantly in response to the external demand for captives. Outside of his own trading expedition, Broecke does mention at least one other ship on the coast. This is in contrast to the year the Madampookata arrived on the Loango Coast when the Slave Voyages Database records five other slave trading ship on the Loango Coast. However, during the entire 1604 and 1614 time period of Broecke's travels, the database records no slaving ships on the coast.¹⁵ While the concentration of ships on the Loango Coast was undeniably lower in the early 1600s than it was in the 1780s, it is important to remember that not all ships arriving on the Loango Coast in either period were slaving ships. Prior to 1670, most Europeans trading on the Loango Coast sought redwood, ivory, and cloth. Nevertheless we can conclude that between these two periods, the volume of institutional knowledge about trade on the Loango Coast increased exponentially in Europe, as exhibited in Captain Wilson's letter, while at the same time the people of the Loango Coast were adjusting their trade mechanisms to accommodate an ever growing European demand for trade goods, primarily slaves.

In L. R. Priester's analysis of the MCC records, he found a journal entry from Johannes Bakker, Skipper of the Fregatschip Aurora, in April of 1772. This entry records that upon arrival Bakker ordered the cannons fired: five times to salute the ruler of Malemba and seven shots twice to salute the Mafouk of Malemba. Priester also mentions MCC captains using this signal at Nazareth and Popo.¹⁶ Nazareth was the name for the Ogooué River which is located at Cape Lopez the northern most point of the Loango Coast. Popo was located to the west of Ouidah on the Slave Coast. The diversity of places where this signal was employed raises the possibility that it was a signal arranged by the Europeans rather than the people of Loango. This signal would have expedited gaining the permission required to commence trade.

¹⁵ <http://www.slavevoyages.org> Query: Time Frame - from 1783 to 1783; Principal Place of Slave Purchase - Mayumba, Kiloango, Loango Bay [Boary], Malemba, Cabinda, Congo North [Loango Coast Undefined], Rio Zaire [Congo River],'

¹⁶ L. R. Priester, *De Nederlandse houding ten aanzien van de slavenhandel en slavernij, 1596-1863: Het gedrag van de slavenhandelaren van de Commercie Compagnie van Middelburg in de 18e eeuw* (Middelburg : Commissie Regionale Geschiedbeoefening Zeeland, 1987) p. 129.

Priester found the following description in Hendrik Vandleven's logbook for the *Snauwship de Drie Gezusters* in October of 1758. This is a translation of Priester's argument which is originally written in Dutch:

[African and Europeans] both favour commercial techniques which involve the kidnapping of people and the seizure of goods, to prevent [their trade partners from not] fulfilling their trade promises. When Hendrik Santleven wanted to go from Loango to Cabinda or Malemba to find slaves, the [Loango] traders seized his [Santleven's] trade goods plus a number of crew. Only one month later, when there were over 170 slaves added [to the cargo], both were released.¹⁷

This is an example of Dutch crew members and cargo being taken to ensure Dutch traders would return to continue buying slaves. To describe this relationship Priester uses the Dutch word "bemanningsleden" which translates roughly as pawnship. Although this arrangement could not strictly be called pawnship by Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy's definition as it does not involve an explicit debt nor does it require the seized person to perform labour, this might be better understood as "hostages" being voluntarily offered or "pledged" to guarantee a business arrangement.¹⁸ It is difficult to tell from the source if this was indeed a "voluntary" action or a seizure of goods and persons because the merchants of Loango feared Vandleven [or Santleven] might be tempted to violate an agreement. If the seizure was involuntary, it comes closer to Robin Law's definition of panyarring: "by which a creditor could hold a community collectively responsible for a debt contracted by one of its members, by seizing another member as security for repayment."¹⁹ In fact, Law provided an example of Europeans being seized in a similar manner as the example given by Priester:

On occasion, indeed, African creditors could even invoke the sanction of panyarring against European debtors. In 1722, the King of Allada, pursuing his claim for the debt of 100 slaves' value which he claimed was owed to him by the Royal African Company, thus detained Bulfinch Lambe, an employee of the Company's factory at Jakin, then the port of Allada, and told the Company's chief factor there that "if he did not forthwith pay him this debt, he would make Mr Lambe a slave."²⁰

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹⁸ For a more in-depth discussion of the boundaries of defining a slave see Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy, "Pawnship in Historical Perspective" in Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy (eds) *Pawnship, Slavery and Colonialism in Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003) p. 16.

¹⁹ Robin Law, "On Pawning and Enslavement for Debt in the Precolonial Slave Coast" in Toyin Falola and Paul E. Lovejoy (eds) *Pawnship, Slavery and Colonialism in Africa* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003) p. 62.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

While Law's corroborating example indicates that the use of Europeans as hostages in the negotiation of the slave trade was not an isolated example, we cannot extrapolate from these two examples that this style of negotiation was common place either in these specific ports or in Western Africa as a whole. It does, however, indicate the vulnerability of Europeans while trading on the Loango and Slave Coasts.

The most complete record of trade on the Loango Coast appeared in series of letters from an American slave trader reprinted in the Brownsville *Valley Sunday Star-Monitor-Herald* in 1938. This unidentified author wrote the following directions for trade on the Loango Coast circa 1812: "In running in for the land in the night, there is no danger to run into nine or ten fathoms of water or any part of the coast. The anchorages are all good. In being seen from the land, in the night, the Natives will immediately come off and show you the anchoring place."²¹ Although there is no mention of a cannon signal, the letter continues to describe a scene very similar to the one outlined by Martin above. This account reinforces and confirms six key themes of trade discussed this far. Firstly, it confirms the role of the Mafouk in greeting foreign merchants, negotiating the conditions of trade, maintaining order, and establishing merchants on the coast. Secondly, this reinforces the suggestion that Mafouks and European merchants engaged in price fixing before transactions began, at least by the early nineteenth century. Thirdly, this account corroborates reports that merchants trading at Loango Bay slept aboard ship at night thus engaging in shipboard trade. This leads us to the fourth theme, the use of local factories only as warehouses rather than as accommodation. Furthermore, this letter confirms the practice of foreign merchants being required to hire local labours as "factory boys" and guards for their factories. Finally, this letter reinforces an emphasis on barter trade in the context of an organized market involving the immediate exchange of goods.²² Although trading protocol inevitably changed with time, Martin's conclusions, in combination with the evidence from Broecke, Wilson, Bakker, and this unknown American slave trader, help to reconstruct a picture of how trade was established in the early seventeenth century and how this trade evolved to the state of trade which existed the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Using this evidence, we can begin to imagine how slave trading occurred between MCC and Loango Coast merchants. In February of 1759 MCC Skipper David Mulders of the *Fregatschip Middelburgse Welvaren II* landed on the Loango Coast to begin slave trading at the port of Malemba. In just over

²¹ Minne Gilbert, "Rare Glimpse of Slavery is Given in Letters Found in Valley Attic," in *Valley Sunday Star-Monitor-Herald* (Brownsville, Texas: 9, 16, 23 January 1938). Many thanks to Bruce L. Mouser for bringing these documents to my attention.

²²Ibid.

two short months, Skipper Mulders embarked 424 slaves and set sail for Curacao. In September of the same year Captain Adriaan Jacobse of the Fregatschip Prins Willem de Vijfde began trade at the same port. By the end of November he had departed the coast for Suriname with 472 slaves on board.²³ Drawing upon these records we can begin to get a clearer picture how trade negotiations proceeded. After anchoring off the coast from Malemba, signaling with their cannons, and negotiating for trading privileges, Skipper David Mulders and Captain Jacobse would have spared no time in establishing themselves on the above mentioned Dutch Hill. This might take days or in best case scenario, a number of hours. Once established, trade negotiations began immediately. Illustrations 2 and 3 below are transcriptions and translations of the first two trade transactions of each of these ships. While the majority of MCC transactions are recorded in a standard format containing very similar information, two examples are given to show the types of slight variations in style between captains. These records have been chosen by four criteria: first and foremost, they were chosen for legibility; second, they were chosen roughly in the middle of the MCC's trading period on the coast; third, they have been chosen from the records of transactions at Malemba Bay; and four, they have been chosen on the first day of trade to control for fluctuations in both slave availability and European trade goods. An analysis of these documents will help us to understand the nature of a business transaction between a European and an African in eighteenth century Malemba.

Several things can be observed by a cross comparison of these documents. First and foremost, although the formats are quite similar, they do include subtle differences which complicate the standardization of data collection. For example, the first document contains details including the date, the Malemba merchant's name, the number of slaves involved, and the rate of remuneration per slave, whereas the second document simply lists the name of the Malemba merchant. The cross comparison of these documents also give us a sense of variation between slave prices and the bundles which these prices represent.

Furthermore, the listing of the number of pieces per slave in Illustrations 2 and 3 suggests a pre-negotiated fixed price. A further analysis of the data for Skipper David Mulders' records shows that with the exception of two male slaves purchased for 14 each and two male slaves being purchased at 7 ½ each, the remainder of 192 male slaves were purchased for 15 pieces; with the exception of

²³ For more information on these voyages see Fregatschip Middelburgs Welvaren II's trading records, MCC 793-799 Fregatschip Prins Willem de Vijfdes' trading records, MCC 989-993. Also see: <http://www.slavevoyages.org> Query: Voyage 10872, Middelburgs Welvaren (1759) and Voyage 10960, Prins Willem de Vijfde (1760).

one female purchased for 15 pieces, the remainder of 113 female slaves were purchased for 14 pieces. For children the statistics are more complicated, presumably due to varying ages: whereas one boy was purchased for 15 and another for 14, the majority of children, including 112 slaves both male and female, were purchased for between 9 and 13 pieces each. These data seem to support the suggestion that Skipper Mulders prearranged a fixed-price for male and female slaves and perhaps even a price range for children, before trading commenced. Other sources indicate the price range for slaves had some flexibility in the negotiation of a fixed price.

British Captain Charles Wilson's 1783 letter of instructions from his employer Leyland, Penny and Co. reads: "make them this offer that if they will agree to give you prime slaves for 14 pieces with 2 or 3 pieces wages you will continue and make your whole purchase, nay rather give them 15 or 16 pieces, with 2 or 3 Pieces wages than go farther for we conceive what you'll gain in dispatch will be adequate to the difference in price."²⁴ Whereas this suggests that fixing slave prices was a common practice, the fixing of prices did not necessarily result in Malemba merchants receiving merchandise worth a fixed amount in guilders, as exhibited in Illustration 2 where Banse receives approximately 164 guilders worth of guns, ammunition, textiles and miscellaneous goods equaling almost 55 guilders per slave, whereas Jan Flink receives less than 54 guilders in trade goods per slave. This letter also suggested that in the 24 years between the sailing of Mulders' 1759 voyage and Wilson's 1783 voyage, prices at Malemba remained fairly stable in terms of the piece currency. However, this does not stand up against a more sustained analysis of price data over time.

While Mulders and Wilson's records are very useful in establishing the nature of transactions, the composition of bundles, and the MCC methods of recording purchases, their information on price data is limited and, it is useful to fit these into a broader context. From an analysis of Appendix A, two major patterns emerge from this appendix: the first occurs from 1732 to 1766, and the second occurs from 1767 to 1776. In the first period prices begin at an average of 17.5 pieces per slave in 1732; they drop to 13.1 in 1748, peak at 26.8 in 1755, drop to 13.7 in 1759, and stabilize between 18.1 and 19.8 for the remainder of the period. During this first period, 1755 stands out as an anomalous year. During the second period, slave prices start at an average of 24.3 in 1767, climbing steadily to 32.6 in 1770, briefly correct in 1771 to an average of 27 pieces per slave, then climb to a high of 48.6 in 1776.

²⁴ See Appendix A below.

Illustration 2: Translation and Transcription of the first two Trade Negotiations of Skipper David Mulders at Malemba, 1759

Transaction No.	Male	Female	Boy	Girl	Quantity	Malemba Merchants / Trade Goods	Pieces	Guilders ¹		
1	1					Mafoeke				
					3	Barrels of Gunpowder	3	12		
					2	Guns	2	6	18	
					1	Blue Guinea [textile]	3	11	6	
					1	Sitz [?]	3	9	5	
					1	Tapseils [textile]	2	9	10	
					1	Company Nicanes [textile]	2	6	5	
					1	Half Ankers ² [alcohol]	1	4	10	
					1	Half Seylone [Silesias, textile]	1 ½	5	5	
					1	Ysene[?] Slave	½	1	10	
					5	Cannen	½	8	8	
					1	E. Baay [textile?]	1	7		
					1	Kelder[Beer]	1	3		
							Subtotal	20 ½	76	17 8
2			1			Jan Klaasen				
					2	Barrels of Gunpowder	2	8		
					2	Guns	2	6	18	
					1	Blue Guinea [textile]	3	11	6	
					1	Fooklas [Folhinas, cotton from Balghat, India]	2	7	15	
					1	Company Nicanes	2	6	5	
					2	Kelder[Beer]	2	6		
					½	Seylone [Silesias]	1 ½	5	5	
					1	Ysene[?] Slave	½	1	10	
					5	Cannen	½	8	8	
							Subtotal	15 ½	53	7 8

Source: MCC 79

¹ The guilder is a historical Dutch currency. It was divided into 20 stuivers, each of 16 penningen. Thus the first subtotal would read: seventy-six guilders, seventeen stuivers, eight penningen.

² An anker is 10 gallon measure of wine, spirits or beer.

Illustration 3: Translation and Transcription of the first two Trade Negotiations of Captain Adriaan Jacobse at Malemba, 1759

Number of Slaves	Male	Female	Boy	Girl	Quantity	Transaction Details / Trade Goods with individual prices	Pieces	Guilders
3	3					1 February 1759 at Malemba from the merchant Banse 3 male slaves @ 15 pieces per slave		
					6	8lbs Barrels of Gunpowder @ 4	6	24,
					3	Soldier's guns @ 3,13	3	10, 19
					3	Blue Guinea Textile @ 11 ¼	9	33, 15
					1	Large Cavalry Chelloes @ 8 ¾	2 ½	8, 15
					2	Long English Nicanes @ 9 ½	4	19,
					1	Compt [possibly VOC or MCC] Nicanes @ 6 3/8	2	6, 7 ½
					3	East India Tapseils @ 9	6	27,
					2	Blue Bajutapauts (textile) @ 9 ½	5	18, 10
					3/17	Ells Bright Blue (textile)@ 48 ½	1	2, 8 ½
					5/16	Ells Blue Piece (textile) @ 48	½	15
					2	Kelders [?] @ 6 jugs malt [beer] @ 2 ¾	2	5, 10
					6 doz	Packages iron knives@ 14	1 ½	4, 4
					6	Glass Tankards @ 6	1	1, 16
					1	Earthenware Pots @ 8 ½	1 ½	1, 5 ½
						Subtotal	45	164, 5, 8
1	1					On the same date from Jan Flink one man slave at 15 pieces		
					2	8lbs Barrels of Gunpowder @ 4	2	8,
					1	Soldier's guns @ 3,13	1	3, 13
					1	Blue Guinea Textile @ 11 ¼	3	11, 5
					1	Long English Nicanes @ 9 ½	2	9, 10
					1	Compt [MCC] Nicanes @ 6 ¾	2	6, 7 ½
					1	Course Blue (textile) @ 5 ½	1 ½	5, 10
					1	Alf Anker malt [beer] @ 4 ½	1	4, 5
					2 doz	Packages iron knives@ 14	½	1, 8
					3	Glass Tankards @ 6	½	18
					3	Earthenware Basins @ 6	½	18
					1	Zere* Slave @ 33	½	1, 13
					1	Earthenware Pots @ 8 ½	½	8 ½
						Subtotal	15	53, 16
						Total Cost	60	218, 1, 8
Total Slaves	4							

Source: MCC 990.

Comparing these data to Mulders data we find that Mulders purchased his cargo of slaves at the cheapest rate obtained by the MCC in the eighteenth century. In contrast Wilson's letter comes 10 years after this data, we can draw one of three conclusions: first, it is possible that the British were obtaining slaves at lower prices than the Dutch; second, it is possible that events of the late eighteenth century caused prices to drop; third, it is possible that Leyland and Penny were working with old information, dating from before the explosion in slave prices circa 1766. Phyllis Martin's 1972 analysis of slave prices on the Loango Coast, compiled from French, English and Dutch sources, corresponds with the price trends exhibited in the MCC records and extend into the 1780s at which time prices range from 40 to 54 pieces per slave. This suggests that Captain Wilson likely encountered prices between 25 and 30 pieces per slave rather than the 15 or 16 pieces Leyland, Penny and Company led him to expect.²⁷

Moving beyond slave prices to method of payment, a careful reading of the samples from the Mulders and Jacobse records suggest that the date of the negotiation was also the date of the exchange of slaves for goods. Here it is important to note that the format of the original documents has been preserved in the transcription and translation of these documents. Each transaction included a date. Multiple entries are given for each week. If merchants were accepting credit, it would seem most likely that multiple slaves would be contracted at a time and the merchant would not return for multiple days. However, in these transactions it is not unusual to see the same merchants recorded making multiple within the same month. For example Skipper Mulders engages in 29 transactions with Malemba merchant Tate and 76 transactions with Prins Tom. Furthermore, while the price slaves could have been fixed before the Middelburg merchants arrive on the shore, the composition of a bundle was not. There is no reason to suppose that these bundles were negotiated in advance of the transfer of slaves. Equally, if these goods are not being exchanged at the time of negotiation, why is there no mention of goods being owed at a later date nor any further documents remarking that these payments have been made? Negotiating for such specific bundles without immediate distribution would require meticulous running inventories of Dutch merchandise. Promising goods that were not available would have created difficulties in maintaining trust. Additionally, no records of delayed payments are available in the extensive records of the 31 MCC ships on this coast.

²⁷ Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, pp. 113-114.

This runs contrary to Martin's description of trade on the Loango Coast:

When the slave trade was completed by a ship, the gong was rung to advise all the brokers to come for the payment of their fees. This was often a time of much hard bargaining on both side and the Mafouk and other captains might be needed as mediators. The adjustment of payments in relation to advances and to hostages was a particularly thorny problem. A broker frequently asked for advances in order to commence the purchase of slaves from inland merchants, and captains usually had to comply since they would be outplayed by their competitors if they did not. Sometimes a captain was able to insist on hostages as surety and the broker, if he was in debt, might have trouble in recovering a member of his family or a friend detained by a European.²⁸

Although Martin presents a compelling and colourful description here, unfortunately she does not offer corroborating evidence in the form of footnotes. Martin may have evidence from other sources; however, the MCC financial records remain silent on the issue of pawnship, with the notable exception of the 1772 voyage of the *Aurora*, discussed above, which records the seizure of European goods and crew by local merchants who feared the *Aurora* would not honour their agreements.

Thus, in the absence of evidence of Loango Coast merchants seeking credit from European traders and in light of multiple transactions between the same parties in a concentrated time frame, we can conclude that MCC slave traders in the eighteenth century exchanged goods for slaves on the transaction date. Furthermore, evidence from the letters of an unidentified American slave merchant above and from English Commander James Fraser provide more evidence for a barter based trade than a trade based on the extension of European financing of African slaving expeditions. Martin's conclusion that slaves were transferred immediately after an agreement was struck, also support this hypothesis of barter trade: "Once in the hands of the European buyer, the slave was usually kept over-night in the prison below the factory, and then transferred by canoe to the ship the next morning."²⁹ As soon as slaves were loaded onto the ships the slaves began their Middle Passage even if the ship did not leave the coast for several months. From this point MCC merchants were responsible for the nutrition and health of the slaves; any slaves who died would result in a loss of profit. Thus, fast procurement was the highest priority.

In the Western African slave trade, profits also depended on a series of costs beyond the individual payments for slaves. Portuguese sources suggest that the taxes demanded from African authorities

²⁸ Ibid., p. 103.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 104.

who controlled the trade from Ambriz north to Mayumba, including the key ports of Loango Bay, Cabinda and Malemba, were substantially lower than their Portuguese counterparts in Luanda and Benguela.³⁰ Also unlike their Portuguese counterparts to the south, there was some flexibility in the negotiation of taxes on the Loango Coast. Captain Wilson is instructed by his employer Leyland, Penny & Co.: “you may with much propriety plead (being a small vessel you cannot afford to pay the same customs and presents and let the aforementioned gentlemen ratify such agreement ~ All this must be done before you send your Boat onshore.”³¹ This is not to suggest that such payments were avoidable, simply negotiable.

As not to overstate the importance of the evidence arrived from the analysis of two MCC records, we should further contextualize our knowledge of these two voyages in our earlier discussion of the Dutch transatlantic slave trade. Upon their departure from the Loango Coast both ships had been loaded in approximately two months, well under the 4.3 month average. While Mulders embarked an above average number of 424 slaves, Jacobse embarked a substantially higher 464 slaves. Both ships also maintained a relatively low death rate, with Jacobse’s crew only losing zero point two per cent of slaves on the middle passage, and Mulders’ crew losing zero point nine per cent.³² Yet, even if these voyages are exceptional in the broader context, they still describe the processes taking place in 1759 and can thus be compared with other sets of data to create a more complete view of the Loango trade.

The purchase of slaves involves three levels of knowledge and three corresponding power relations: the establishment of a price in a local currency, pieces, where the local merchant has the advantage; the exchange of pieces for European goods, where Middelburg merchants know the value of the goods in Europe and Loango Coast merchants know the value of goods in the internal market; and, the calculation of the bundle in guilders, where Middelburg merchants have the advantage. These records indicate that the Mafouk successfully negotiated a fixed price for slaves, which balanced his exclusive access to knowledge of internal slave markets and his desire to keep European merchants from moving on to more profitable slave markets. Equally, if the Europeans did not agree to these terms, they risked prolonging their voyage and a loss of reputation with the local Mafouk. In the case of both the Loango and the Middelburg merchants, experienced traders had the edge in these

³⁰ Martin, “Family Strategies in Nineteenth-Century Cabinda,” p. 73.

³¹ See Appendix A below.

³² See Fregatschip Middelburgs Welvaren II’s trading records, MCC 793-799 Fregatschip Prins Willem de Vijfde’s Vijfdes’ trading records, MCC 989-993. Also see: <http://www.slavevoyages.org> Query: Voyage 10872, Middelburgs Welvaren (1759) and Voyage 10960, Prins Willem de Vijfde (1760). For further details on the average cargo sizes and mortality rates of ships see Chapter 3 of my thesis.

negotiations. Yet by the eighteenth century, inexperienced traders on both sides had access to larger bodies of institutional knowledge, which helped to protect them from rash decisions.

Commodities

These bodies of institutional knowledge included an understanding of European demand for slaves among Loango Coast merchants and an understanding for the demand for textiles, guns, and alcohol on the Loango Coast commonly held among merchants of the MCC. To trade on the Loango Coast, a Middelburg merchant must have been aware of both the traditional cloth market and the demand for new and innovative trade goods. Despite the abilities of both trade parties to manipulate their institutional knowledge to their best advantage, the illustrations of trade negotiations above indicate a regular pattern in the distribution of goods involved in each “package” or “bundle” of trade goods exchanged. Joseph Miller suggests that the “assortment” of these bundles was dictated by the African consumers and that offering the appropriate assortment was integral to successful trading transactions.³³

In Illustrations 2 & 3, above, I have included two samples of trade transactions to establish the variables involved in each exchange of a bundle for one or more slaves. In both sets of transactions the sample is taken from the first day of trade and thus the quality of slaves and variety of European merchandise should both be relatively good. Presumably, having chosen one year from which to examine these transactions will control for the influence of both African and European political events as well as the relative fluctuations in market demands. Thus, from these transactions we can make the following assumptions about an average bundle circa 1750.

First, each transaction contained at least one barrel of gunpowder (each barrel containing eight pounds of gunpowder) and one firearm (referred to by Jacobse as a soldier’s gun). In each case, the barrels of gunpowder were valued at one barrel to one piece, and each gun was obtained in the Netherlands for four guilders. This suggests that there was little flexibility for European profit on these goods, as the cost and the exchange rate remained fairly stable. In contrast, while guns were equally valued at one gun to one piece, Jacobse reported the cost of each gun at 3,13 guilders whereas Mulders reported a cost of 3,9 guilders suggesting that Mulders made a marginally higher profit on guns. An average male slave could be purchased for 15 guns or 15 barrels of gunpowder.³⁴ These items are consistently listed at the top of each list and therefore presumably the first items offered

³³ Miller, *Way of Death*, pp. 66-70.

³⁴ See Illustrations 4 & 5 below.

or requested. However, they only made up an average of 21 per cent of the value of each of the four trade bundles above. This finding is slightly lower than the combined figure of 23 percent which combines Unger's figures for guns, at 9 per cent, and gunpowder, at 14 per cent.

The sale of guns on the Loango Coast did not seem to stem from a desire among Dutch merchants to arm their enemies, as Postma suggested was the case on the Gold and Slave Coasts.³⁵ On the Loango Coast there is little evidence of armed forces above 200 men, yet each slaving ship delivered an approximate ration of one gun and one to two barrels of gunpowder per slave purchased.³⁶ This raises the question, why did Loango Coast merchants want guns? Miller argues that one of the driving forces behind the composition of a bundle on the West Central African Coast was the demand for assorted goods at Malebo Pool (also known as Stanley Pool).³⁷ Miller, Newson, and Minchin emphasize the continued reluctance of the Portuguese to trade guns and gunpowder to African merchants.³⁸ With limited supply of munitions available at the trade port of Luanda and the perpetual conflict in the interior of Angola, this may have stimulated some of the demand for guns on the Loango Coast which found their way into Angola markets.³⁹ In addition to war, Alpern suggested several non-war-related motivations for purchasing firearms including hunting, protection from wild animals, noise making, as well as projecting an image of prestige and power.⁴⁰

The second set of items to appear is textiles. While at least nine different varieties of cloth appear in these lists, Blue Guinea, Tapsiels, and Company Nicanes are the only varieties traded in both sets of documents. As with the guns, Blue Guinea cloth is valued differently between Jacobse at 11,6 guilders per cloth and Mulders at 11,5 guilders per cloth, while both are valued consistently at one cloth for three pieces. For Tapsiels, Jacobse reports a cost of 9,10 guilders per cloth and Mulders reports a cost of 9 guilders per cloth, while Tapsiels consistently traded on at Malemba for one cloth for two pieces. Company Nicanes cost Jacobse 6,5 while Mulders paid 6,7½. Again, value was more consistent at the Malemba market where Company Nicanes was exchanged in both cases at one

³⁵ Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 92.

³⁶ See Chapter 4 of my thesis regarding army size.

³⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, p.180.

³⁸ In the 1770s, the sale of gunpowder was banned in Luanda to protect the local Luso-African merchants from attacks from the interior, *Ibid.*, p. 607. This is consistent with reports that the Portuguese were reluctant to sell firearms to their African trading partners in the earlier centuries of trade. See: Linda A. Newson and Susie Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) p. 45.

³⁹ Miller, *Way of Death*, p. 77. For a description of conflicts in Angola in the eighteenth century see: Thornton, *Warfare in Africa*, pp. 122-124.

⁴⁰ Stanley E. Alpern, "What Africans Got for Their Slaves: A Master List of European Trade Goods" *History in Africa*, Vol. 22 (1995) pp. 20-21.

cloth for two pieces. In this sample of transactions, textiles represent 64 per cent of the average bundle. This is approximately eight per cent higher than Unger's findings. This concurs with Jan Gewald's findings that the proportion of textiles was higher in bundles negotiated on the Loango Coast.

This dominance of textiles in trade bundles is consistent with broader patterns throughout Western Africa. Drawing upon English, Dutch, and French sources, Marion Johnson described the importance of textiles: "The item imported into Africa most regularly and in the largest quantities was cloth in various forms."⁴¹ In Linda Newson and Susie Michin's study of seventeenth century trade on the Upper Guinea Coast, they also suggested that cloth was the primary trade commodity. They calculated that cloth made up 40 per cent of the cargo for slave ships between 1617 and 1618. However, it is difficult to know how this compares to the percentages of bundles discussed above. Stanley Alpern provides an extensive, but by no means exhaustive, list of European, Indian, and African textiles and clothing items that were included in slaving ships' cargos in his articles "What Africans Got for Their Slaves: A Master List of European Trade Goods."⁴²

The dominance of cloth as an import good into the Loango Coast might be surprising given the availability of high quality locally produced cloth. In the early sixteenth century, Andrew Battell observed the production of palm cloth, or raphia cloth, on the Loango Coast. He observed: "The men in this kingdom make good store of palm-cloth of sundry sorts, very fine and curious."⁴³ This cloth industry supported not only the local market but also markets as far away as Luanda where pieces of Loango textiles were used as currency (see the discussion on cloth as currency above).⁴⁴ However, European and Indian textiles found a ready market on the Loango Coast. Colleen Kriger, in *Cloth in West African History*, has argued that in areas such as the Guinea Coast where cloth production was a staple of the economy prior to European contact that: "far from being new trendsetters that offered long-overdue variety to a dreary local market, imported textiles were for the most part preselected to conform to established tastes and cultural values."⁴⁵ This pattern of European adaption to African demands also characterized the import industry on the Loango Coast.

⁴¹ Marion Johnson, "The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Economy of West Africa" in Roger Anstey and Paul E. H. Hair (eds) *Liverpool, the African Slave Trade, and Abolition* (Bristol: Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Occasional Series Vol. 2, 1976) p.16.

⁴² Alpern, "What Africans Got for Their Slaves," pp. 6-12.

⁴³ Battell, *Strange Adventures*, p. 50.

⁴⁴ Miller, *Way of Death*, p. 181-2, 274; Broecke, *Journal*, p.102.

⁴⁵ Kriger, *Cloth in West African History*, p. 39.

The analysis of slave prices provided by these data requires an understanding of Loango Coast currency. The cloth currency on the Loango Coast was a sophisticated currency which transformed to meet the demands of increasing cross cultural exchange from the earliest period of contact to the late eighteenth century. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Vili made cloth currencies called the libongos panos or panso sambes were in common circulation as far away as Luanda. However, the value of this currency diminished in Luanda when the Portuguese began using copper as currency in 1694. In Phyllis Martin's article "*Power, Cloth and Currency on the Loango Coast*" she describes a 'piece': "The basic piece of cloth was used for currency, a libongo [the plural of libongo is mbongo], was about fourteen inches square and describes as about the size of a large handkerchief."⁴⁶ Martin argued that in this early period the production of cloth was limited to the households of the elite in Loango, thus being a "carefully standardized" currency. Furthermore she suggested: "The Maloango, himself, may have been the chief guarantor of the currency."⁴⁷ In the seventieth and eightieth centuries, another type of cloth was in circulation on the Loango Coast called a macoute. This was different from the macoute used in Luanda by the Portuguese. Circa 1700, 350 macoute could purchase one slave. By this time a third measure of cloth currency came into use: the piece. This is the currency which appears alongside guilders in the MCC account books. A piece was a locally spun cloth measuring "six yards of material, and could be subdivided into four fathoms or twelve sticks."⁴⁸ In addition to being an actual cloth, a piece could also be a standard unit of measure to value trade goods as we see in the MCC records. In 1700 one piece had the same value as a gun, a barrel of gun powder, or two cutlasses.⁴⁹

A large and highly specific demand for certain European textiles developed out of a more historical demand for cloth on the Loango Coast not only as currency but also as a key commodity. Cloth was one of the oldest and most valued commodities of the Loango Coast. Understanding the peculiarities

⁴⁶ Martin, "Power, Cloth and Currency on the Loango Coast," p.2.

⁴⁷ Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, p. 38.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁴⁹In his work on WIC sources Henk den Heijer found that the Dutch also purchased cloth on the Ivory Coast and in Benin for resale on the Gold Coast although it is unclear whether this cloth was used as currency. See Henk den Heijer, "West African Trade" in Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven (eds) *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Shipping, 1585-1817* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) p. 154 . For a description of the historiography of Cloth-Currency on the Guinea Coast of Africa see Carlos F. Liberato's "Money, Cloth-Currency, Monopoly, and the Slave Trade in the Rivers of Guiné and the Cape Verde Islands, 1755-1777," in Catherine Eagleton, Harcourt Fuller, and John Perkins (eds.) *Money in Africa* (British Museum Press, 2009) pp. 9-29. Joseph C. Miller describes the use of cloth as currency in the Angola slave trade in *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade*, pp. 81-82. Cloth was not only used as currency in Africa during this period. Walter Hawthorn reports that cloth currency was also used in the Portuguese colonies of Pará and Maranhão in Amazonia in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. See: Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil*, p. 147. For more information on the use of cloth currencies on the Loango Coast see: Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, pp. 36-39, 60, 61, 106, 107, 165; Curto, *Enslaving Spirits*, p. 58.

of the demand for cloth on the Loango Coast is fundamental to understanding the intersections between the Loango markets, their links to the interior, and the willingness to supply slaves for European consumption. Thus a more in-depth discussion on the production and social significance of cloth in Loango society and how the influx of European cloth affected these traditions is needed.

In her earlier works on Loango Coast in the seventeenth century, Martin suggests that weaving offered an occupation for a free man who did not have access to the wealth of the aristocracy in addition to the possible professions of copper smith and salt-making.⁵⁰ Drawing on Portuguese sources, David Birmingham emphasizes the central role of cloth in the expansion of trading networks throughout West Central Africa: "In the early seventeenth century much of the slave trade was conducted in two stages. In the first stage salt and shells as well as European trinkets and beads were used to buy palm-cloth from the people of the forest regions to the north and east of Kongo. In the second stage this cloth, which was used for clothing as well as being the most widely accepted currency in Angola, was exchanged for slaves. Pombeiros were sent to 'Congo de Batta' (or 'Gogon and Batta' in Battell's terminology) to buy the cloth. According to Pedro Sardinha this trade had expanded enormously in the first decade of the seventeenth century."⁵¹ Birmingham goes on to describe in more detail the cloth bought on the Loango Coast: "a number of cloths called 'exfula' where imported from the Loango coast. Each year two or three small vessels went there to fetch cargoes of six or seven thousand a piece. A rarer and more valuable Loango cloth was the 'ensaca' of which only about 300 were obtained each year, costing 1,200 *reis* apiece." According to Birmingham 'ensaca' is twice as expensive as the highest grade cloth 'painted cloth' which was available in Angola.⁵²

Martin describes the role of cloth on the Loango Coast which went far beyond a currency or basic clothing: "Clothing and accessories were little associated with utilitarian needs, since neither climate nor work conditions made them necessary. Rather, dress conveyed identity, status, values and a sense of occasion. The association of power and wealth, ostentatiously displayed, was deeply entrenched in equatorial African societies from the earliest times."⁵³ She goes on to suggest that certain types of cloths could be worn only with permission of the ruler.⁵⁴ These laws are reminiscent

⁵⁰ Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, pp. 27-28.

⁵¹ Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*, p. 79.

⁵² Birmingham, *Trade and Conflict in Angola*, p. 79. Also see Battell, *Strange Adventures*, pp. 43-44.

⁵³ Phyllis M. Martin, "Contesting Clothes in Colonial Brazzaville" *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 35, No. 3. (1994) p. 401.

⁵⁴ Martin, "Contesting Clothes in Colonial Brazzaville," pp. 402-3. Also see Battell, *Strange Adventures*; Brun, *Schiffarten*; Dapper, *Naukerige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten*.

of similar European sumptuary laws which forbade peasants to wear brightly coloured clothing or that governed the size of a ruff in correspondence to wealth and political position. Interestingly, while the people of the Loango Coast only allowed certain powerful members of society to wear specific types of high quality, locally produced cloth, they also developed somewhat contrary laws in regards to the consumption and display of European textiles. Thus, European textiles, and later Asian textiles imported by Europeans, added complexity and texture to a thriving textile trade on the Loango Coast. These imported textiles would have had to be competitive with the internal textile market by offering superior prices, quality, or variety.

Just as the production of superior quality of cloth offered significant economic potential within Loango Coast markets and in external trade, so did the importation of European cloths. The scarcity of European and East Indian cloth on the Loango Coast in the seventeenth century meant that it had more prestige value. The prestige associated with cloth resulted in constant demand for new varieties to distinguish the wealthiest members of society. As the profits of merchants rose, the wealth of the traditional rulers remained fairly constant. Thus, shifting cloth preferences came to symbolize the shifting power base on the Loango Coast.⁵⁵

The third set of items to appear is alcohol. Alcohol is measured in two ways: by “kelder” and by “anker”. As malt is the only type of alcohol explicitly mentioned, calculations are made assuming both measures kelders and ankers refer to malt in these documents. Jacobse paid higher prices for both kelders and half ankers, spending 3 and 4,10 guilders respectively while Mulders paid 2,15 and 4,4 respectively. Alcohol represented seven per cent of the merchandise in these bundles. This is three per cent less alcohol than Unger finds for the MCC in Western Africa. This could suggest either that the demand for alcohol was slightly lower than the West African Coast, or that these bundles under-represent the total demand for alcohol on the Loango Coast. In contrast to these figures, José Curto has calculated that of the 1.2 million slaves shipped from Angola between 1710 and 1830, almost 300,000 were purchased using Brazilian alcohol.⁵⁶ This works out as 25 per cent of each bundle. This is substantially higher than either Unger’s calculations for MCC trade in Western Africa and the sample given in this chapter. Furthermore, Miller concluded: “British muskets and French brandies off-loaded at Loango only partially satisfied hunters and chiefs in the interior near that part of the coast; buyers there also demanded secondary contacts with traders who could deliver

⁵⁵ See Martin, “Contesting Clothes in Colonial Brazzaville,” pp. 403-404; and Martin, “Family Strategies in Nineteenth-Century Cabinda.”

⁵⁶ Curto, *Enslaving Spirits*, p. 129.

Portuguese gunpowder and Brazilian rum from Luanda or Benguela.”⁵⁷ José Curto has argued that within a West Central African context, alcohol played both a practical role, being consumed with meals, and a social role, being present at “occasions, social gatherings, commercial transactions, feasts, marriages, rituals, ancestor worship, and possibly even the display of the rulers’ power.”⁵⁸ Thus, it is unlikely that there was less demand for alcohol on the Loango Coast. If indeed alcohol was a less important part of a bundle on the Loango Coast than elsewhere, the extraordinary amount of cheap alcohol available through Luanda trade networks may have been part of the cause.

The final products to be listed in the MCC transactions include pots and basins. These appear only in Jacobse’s transactions, suggesting that Jacobse provided a more diverse set of trade goods than Mulders. Perhaps this can be attributed in part to Jacobse’s greater experience trading on the Loango Coast.⁵⁹ As not only the captain, but also as the chief factor, an MCC captain was responsible for overseeing the complete provisioning of the voyage.⁶⁰ Numerous bills of sale for provisions purchased in the Netherlands are kept in each MCC ship’s records. Each bill is endorsed by the captain or his representative. Two items conspicuously absent from the MCC records for the ships trading in Loango are cowry shells and beads which were in high demand in the Niger Delta, Gambia and the Gold Coast and cowry shells which were in high demand in Angola.⁶¹

By comparing the common elements of these four transactions we can draw the following conclusions. First and foremost, Mulder was more successful than Jacobse at obtaining the best prices on trade stuffs in the Netherlands, paying a rate equal to or below Jacobse price on seven of eight items listed (see Illustration 4 below.) Second, prices of good fluctuated more in the Netherlands during the provisioning of these two ships than on the Loango Coast, where exchange between these two voyages remained steady. This would suggest more state control in the markets of the Loango Coast, and more flexibility to individual traders in the Netherlands during the same period. Third, by comparing the exchange values of guilders to pieces on eight key trade commodities, we can calculate a rough exchange rate of 3,15 Dutch guilders to one Loango piece in 1759. Four, textiles were clearly the most valued commodity on the Loango Coast contributing to 64

⁵⁷ Miller, *Way of Death*, p. 78.

⁵⁸ Curto, *Enslaving Spirits*, p. 40.

⁵⁹ Jacobse had already made a voyage to the Loango Coast in 1756, see <http://www.slavevoyages.org> Voyage ID 10958.

⁶⁰ Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 150.

⁶¹ For more information on the demand for beads and cowry shells, see: Johnson, “The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Economy of West Africa” pp. 17,18, & 20; Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa*, pp. 238,240, 242, 246, 252, 258, 263, 312-319 & 326; Miller, *Way of Death*, 77, 78, 86, 183.

per cent of the four bundles listed below, weapons following at a distant 21 per cent, and alcohol and sundries contributing seven and eight per cent respectively (see Illustration 5 below).

Illustration 4: A Comparison of Trade Goods

	Gilders/ Jacobse	Gilders/ Mulders	AVG Gilders	Quantity	Piece	Exchange Value for a 15 piece Male Slave	Gilders/ Piece
Gunpowder	4.00	4.00	4.00	1	1	15.0	4.00
Gun	3.65	3.45	3.55	1	1	15.0	3.55
Blue Guinea	11.30	11.25	11.28	1	3	5.0	3.76
Tapsiels	9.50	9.00	9.25	1	2	7.5	4.63
Company Nicanes	6.25	6.38	6.31	1	2	7.5	3.16
Kelder	3.00	2.75	2.88	1	1	15.0	2.88
Half Anker	4.50	4.20	4.35	1	1	15.0	4.35
						AVG Exchange:	3.76

Source: These figures are calculated using Illustrations 2 & 3.

Illustration 5: Distribution of Goods in Bundles Sorted by Piece Values

Transaction No.	1	2	3	4	Totals	Percentage
Weapons	5	4	9	3	21.0	21.4%
Textiles	15.5	8.5	30	8.5	62.5	63.8%
Alcohol	2	2	2	1	7.0	7.1%
Sundries	1	1	3	2.5	7.5	7.7%

Source: These figures are calculated using Illustrations 2 & 3.

To measure changes in bundles over time, Mary Henrietta Kingsley offers a point of comparison. She identified three types of trade goods that were in demand on the Loango Coast in her 1883 book *West African Studies*. Here she describes broad patterns for the demand for trade goods at “Congo and Cabenda” in 1700. First and foremost, she lists textiles: Blue bafts, Guinea stuffs, Tapseils, Nicanees, Black bays, Annabasses, Painted callicoes, Blue paper Slesia, Scarlet, Pentadoes, Blue perpetuanas; second, she lists weapons: Muskets, Powder (in seven pound barrels), and Dutch cutlasses; and third, she list miscellaneous goods: Brass basins, Pewter basins of four, three, two and one pounds, and Coral.⁶² Almost 60 years later Mulders and Jacobse list similar items in their trade receipts with Merchant Banse, Jan Flink, Mafoeke, and Jan Klaasen.

⁶² Kingsley, “Trade Goods Used in the Early Trade with Africa,” pp. 631-632.

Several consistencies appear between Kingsley's list from 1700 and the 1759 MCC trading receipts. In both cases gunpowder, guns, textiles, and basins rank among items of value on the Loango Coast. However, we find a slight change in the price of gunpowder. Whereas Europeans could trade seven pounds at the value of one piece in 1700, by 1759 the ratio was eight pounds of powder to one piece. It is more difficult to judge the change in textile prices as Kingsley specifies the measure of cloth that is exchangeable for a piece whereas Mulders and Jacobse do not include a measure. The exchange of one gun for one piece seems to remain consistent. Thus by comparing the MCC transaction records of 1759 to Kingsley's reports we can conclude, over a 60 year period demand for cloths such as Guinea stuffs, Tapseils, and Nicanees remained in high demand on the Loango Coast, as did demand for guns and gunpowder, though the value of gunpowder diminished slightly over this time period.

In Phillip Unger's analysis of the MCC slave trading records for the Western African Coast, he provided a breakdown of key commodities present in an average bundle. Based on his data, textiles were most important making up an average of 57 per cent of each bundle, gunpowder represented the next largest demand making up approximately 14 per cent of each bundle, alcohol accounted of 10 per cent, and guns and luxury goods accounted for nine per cent each.⁶³ While Unger's analysis included data from the West and West Central African Coasts, Postma suggested that the proportion of textiles were higher in bundles traded on the Loango Coast. Postma qualifies this statement, acknowledging a small sample which Jan Gewald used to calculate these figures.⁶⁴

Caravans

In examining supply chains in the transatlantic slave trade from the Loango Coast, it is import to remember two things: first and foremost, this is a trade developed, controlled, and at least to some extent financed by African traders. There is no evidence of European middle men operating in these supply chains; indeed, there are no African middlemen in the sense of Africans working at the behest of Europeans but only African agents and traders. Second, these trade networks were not formed by the demand for slaves but rather through the demand for copper and ivory. In describing the procurement for slaves who were sold at the Loango Coast, Martin asserts:

Unlike some other African kingdoms such as Dahomey, Loango had had a previous and long-established prosperity based not on the slave trade, but on a long-distance trade in copper and ivory. Thus, for the Vili, it was perhaps easier to

⁶³ W. S. Unger, "Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse slavenhandel II," p. 68.

⁶⁴ Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, p. 105.

obtain slaves through traditional trading methods rather than by other means [such as waging war or as a sentence for committing a crime].⁶⁵

Although Martin acknowledges the limitations of the sources on the supply routes running from the Loango Coast to slave markets in the interior,⁶⁶ she is confident that many of the caravan leaders originated in the Loango Coast.⁶⁷ It is very possible that this absence of information on slave caravans to the Loango Coast can be directly linked to European detachment from the process. This detachment could have sprung from an active policy among the Vili to protect their dominance of the trade, or it could have simply been a byproduct of the impermanent presence of Europeans on the coast.

Due to this relative lack of European involvement in slave procurement on the Loango Coast, very little work has been done on the topic. Jan Vansina's work remains one of the most substantial contributions to our understanding of these networks. In his 1962 article "Long-Distance Trade-Routes in Central Africa," he begins by dividing "the structure of indigenous trade in Central Africa" into three different categories:

- 1) **Local trade:** "trade from village to village within a given population" which is based on local resources and skills
- 2) **Trade between 'chiefdoms':** "conducted over greater distances either between culturally different peoples within a state, or between neighbouring peoples" which involves the trade of locally produced items in exchange for long-distance trade items such as European imports, salt, copper, and luxury goods which have passed through many hands.
- 3) **Direct trade over long distances:** "consisted mainly of the exchange of European goods-such as cloth, cowries, beads, fire-arms, powder, wine and, in some instances, iron or copper objects for slaves, ivory and copper, and , in the later seventeenth century, wax, and in the late nineteenth century, rubber."⁶⁸

In terms of local trade networks on the Loango Coast, Vansina traces the Loango Bay trade of ivory, redwood, and oyster with Mayumba, and an ivory and redwood trade with Sete Cama. More likely in the trade between 'chiefdoms' was the trading networks established via the Portuguese with communities further afield:

Moreover the Portuguese had established a regional network between San Tome, Benin, Calabar, and the Rio del Rey, Loango and Pinda and Luanda. From Loango they exported to Luanda, elephants' hair, redwood, and raphia cloth. This raphia cloth was also used as currency in Angola. Copper from Loango and Pinda was

⁶⁵ Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, p. 118.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.119.

⁶⁸ Vansina, "Long-Distance Trade-Routes in Central Africa," pp. 376-77.

exported to Luanda and turned into manilas which were exported to Benin, Calabar, and the Rio del Rey, where blue cloth would be bought to be sold again in Loango and Pinda.⁶⁹

However, for the purposes of this chapter it is the last category, direct trade over long distances, in which we are most interested. In Joseph Miller's 1989 article "The Numbers, Origins, and Destinations of Slaves in the Eighteenth-Century Angolan Slave Trade," he suggest there were three long distance commercial networks in West Central Africa: "The same African suppliers who sent slaves toward Luanda also sold captives to both of the competing trading networks, one to the north that reached the Atlantic bays along the Loango Coast and beyond the mouth of the Zaire River and a southern one at the Portuguese town of Benguela."⁷⁰ Miller insists that these were "distinct commercial networks."⁷¹ These networks drew slaves from regions of dense population around the Kwanza River, the Kwango Valley, the Kunene River, and even as far away as the Kasai River; whereas the Zambezi River, the Kubango River, and the Kunene River specifically served only the southern network. Likewise, slaves originating in regions north of the Congo River were sold exclusively through what Miller describes as the northern network. In addition to these trading networks, Eugenia W. Herbert identifies trading routes between Loango and Mindouli (east of Loango, across the Niari River).⁷²

Vansina explains the logistics involved in organizing this sort of long distance trading route: "The trade was conducted by caravans, and currencies, standards of value, and means of payment for services were extensively used." Vansina refers to the provisioning centres as 'stables' where caravans were outfitted and the bulk of goods and slaves were stored. For the Loango Coast trade, the ports of Loango, Malemba, and Cabinda served as both the markets of cross-cultural exchange and stables which sent caravans into the interior.⁷³ The exceptional nature in terms of proximity of African rulers to "stables" and the outfitting of long distance caravans by African merchants delayed the permanent settlement of European factories on this part of the western African coast as African not European traders directed the trade and controlled the physical area up until the time of colonialization.

After 1700 escalating conflicts in the hinterland of the Loango Coast radically increased the supply of slaves to Cabinda, Malemba, and possibly even Loango. This influx of slaves was timed perfectly to

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁷⁰ Miller, *Eighteenth-Century Angolan Slave Trade*, p. 383.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁷² Herbert, "Portuguese Trade Patterns," p. 417.

⁷³ Vansina, "Long-Distance Trade-Routes in Central Africa," pp. 377.

meet a sharp increase in demand driven the the appearance of French traders on the coast. Vansina suggests that it was in this context that the Vili began to expand their trading routes further into central Kongo:

There they would meet the Hum, who organized the trade from the Pool to this area. The other major trade route from the old kingdom of Okango or Kwango – which had been destroyed, also around 1700, and replaced by the kingdom of Yaka – had been taken over by the Zombo, who exported either to the harbors of the north [the Loango Coast] or via the Loje valley to Ambriz.⁷⁴

As early as 1550 Vansina suggests that the Hum were trading slaves, who he identifies as “the Teke and prisoners-of-war originating from countries beyond the Teke kingdom, far to the north or the north-west of the Pool.”⁷⁵ However, it is unlikely that many of the slaves from this period left for the Americas through the Loango Coast ports as the slave trade on the Loango Coast did not really begin to take off until the end of the seventeenth century:

By 1580 the caravans were also bringing ivory and raphia cloth from the Teke at the Pool in exchange for salt, which came from salt-pans in Ambriz and Pinda, *nzimbu* shells, and probably cowries. *Nzimbu* shells were used as currency in the kingdom of Kongo and in most of the areas lying to the east of it, whilst raphia cloth was the unit of currency in Angola.⁷⁶

It is odd that Angola and Loango should rely upon raphia cloth as their currency during this period, while Kongo, which was situated between the two, should rely upon *nzimbu* shells. Perhaps raphia cloth was the form of currency on this whole stretch of coast prior to extensive trade to the east, as these *nzimbu* shells most definitely came from the east. Then it is possible that European trade interrupted this transition and reinforced the cloth currency in some ports where cloth imports supported an internal production network whereas in other ports, such as Ambriz where there was not a local cloth industry, European trade strengthened an inclination towards *nzimbu* shells.

Vansina writes of the trade on the Loango coast: “The trade was almost entirely in the hands of the Vili, the people of Loango, who manned the caravans and directed them. The few Portuguese traders used to send their *pombeiros* inland. The main trade-route went from Loango to Stanley Pool, to the Teke town of Monsol. The Teke exported slaves and ivory. Copper came from the Mindouli mines, which first belonged to the Teke and were taken later by Kongo from Nsundi, and

⁷⁴ Vansina, *Kingdoms of the Savanna*, p. 194-195.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, The Pool refers to Pool Malebo, which was formerly Stanley Pool; it is also known as Malebo Pool, or Lake Nkunda.

⁷⁶ Vansina, “Long-Distance Trade-Routes,” p. 378.

north-east of Mayumba, where pygmies hunted it.”⁷⁷ In his 1974 analysis of the Niger River Basin, Thurstan Shaw suggested the possibility that Vili copper may have made it all the way to the Niger River Basin before the European arrival on the coast.⁷⁸ Vansina continues: “The Vili brought European goods and salt inland as well as big iron knives which they bought in Mayumbe to sell them to the Jaga just east of that area. The slaves were used as carriers and thus the entrepreneurs did not have to pay for the carriage of copper and ivory.”⁷⁹ Although the evidence of a Portuguese presence on the Loango Coast prior to 1810 is scarce or non-existent, it is possible that Vansina is drawing his evidence from a later time period.

Vansina traces the main caravan route from the Loango Coast along the north side of the river through Kwilu Nyari to Kimbede and finally to Stanley Pool. Here, he suggests, the Vili caravans could purchase Teke, Hum, and Bobangi slaves in circa 1787, thus drawing slaves from as far as the “lower reaches of the Ubanghi River.”⁸⁰ Goods traded by the Vili at the Pool could easily be purchased by traders from Luanda. In describing demand for European goods in Luanda, Vansina argues that other European goods were “cheaper and better quality” than Portuguese goods.⁸¹ José Curto reinforced this argument in his study on the importance of alcohol to the Luanda slave market: “Without [cheap Brazilian alcohol], the Luso-Brazilian slave traders based at Luanda were unable to have their caravan leaders attract the business of African slave suppliers who would otherwise illegally seek better quality and lower priced goods provided by their English and French competitors.”⁸² This reinforces the idea that by the 1800s the Portuguese dominated the Kongo/Angola trade by military force not through superior economic bargaining. However, in Loango the political center was much closer to the coast and Europeans were not allowed to build permanent trading post or military post, nor were they able to procure caravans or actively participated in trade with the interior. Here the Vili peoples were more discriminating of European goods and drove a harder bargain.

Despite his extensive coverage of what he describes as two parallel and intersecting phenomenon of European demand for slaves and a changing value system in the Kongo River basin which promoted the enslavement of large groups of people, Vansina stop short of suggesting a causal link. Nor does

⁷⁷ Vansina describes *pombeiro* as follows: “Pombeiro come from Mpumbu, the name applied by the Kongo to Stanley Pool. The name is derived in the Kongo from the Kikongo name for the Hum or Wumbu, living on the south bank of the Pool. The use of the term in 1584 as a generic name for trader in the interior indicates then that the trade had been in existence for some time and that the caravans were frequent.” *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Thurstan Shaw. “Those Igbo-Ukwu Radiocarbon Dates: Facts, Fictions and Probabilities,” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 16, No. 4. 1975, p 513.

⁷⁹ Vansina, “Long-Distance Trade-Routes,” p. 380.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 380-1.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

⁸² Curto, *Enslaving Spirits*, p. 158.

he argue that the European trade had a significant demographic impact on Central Africa. His analysis is more interested in the growing connectedness of West Central Africa, describing it at the end of the nineteenth century as “covered by a web of regional trade systems.”⁸³ In addition to the Loango Region’s links to the vast slave trade markets south of the Congo River, the Atlantic slave trading markets of Loango, Cabinda, and Malemba also engaged in slave procurement in markets to the east of the Loango Coast.⁸⁴

One major piece of the puzzle of the Loango caravan which is missing is the time it would take for the caravan to complete a round trip. However, Andrew Battell’s *Strange Adventures* estimate a shorter trade route between Loango Bay and Congo which Battell suggests takes a 14 day journey. Ravenstein, Battell’s editor, provides a map at the end of the volume. Ravenstein’s map suggests that Congo was a community to the north east of Loango Bay. Phyllis Martin corroborates this location.⁸⁵ If Ravenstein’s estimations about the location of Congo are correct, the direct distance between the two places is approximately 90 direct miles (as opposed to the actual distance travelled).⁸⁶ The actual route was presumably longer as it would follow local paths, roads, and river crossings as well as detour around obstacles of a geographical or political nature. If this route indeed took 14 days to travel, a caravan could expect to cover approximately 6.5 direct miles a day. Now, by the same map, Loango Bay is approximately 240 direct miles from Malebo Pool [Stanley Pool]. In William J. Samarin’s 1985 book chapter “The State’s Bakongo’s Burden Bearers,” he provides a map tracing nineteenth century caravan routes from Loango, directly east over land through Ludima and Boanza to Brazzaville on the western side of Malebo Pool.⁸⁷ This journey is likely similar to the journey plotted by caravans in the eighteenth century. If the obstacles are comparable to the trip to Congo, a one way trip to Malebo Pool would have taken approximately 37 days. Return travel to the Pool and back would have taken almost two and a half months. If this is the main caravan route to collect slaves, as Vansina suggests, it would be difficult to procure slaves in less than three months assuming that the actual transactions and provisioning of the caravan would also take some time.

⁸³ Vansina, “Long-Distance Trade-Routes,” pp. 387 & 388.

⁸⁴ Miller, “The Numbers, Origins, and Destinations of Slaves,” p. 383.

⁸⁵ See “Map 2. Loango and its neighbours in the seventeenth century” in Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, p. 12.

⁸⁶ Battell, *Strange Adventures*, p. 52. Ravenstein identified the geographical location of Congo [also known as Nkanga or Chinkanga] as 3°9’S, 12°3’E and the location of Stanley Pool as beginning at 4°16’S, 15°17’E when heading East along the Congo River.

⁸⁷ See Map 12.1 in William J. Samarin, “The State’s Bakongo Burden Bearers,” in Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and Paul E. Lovejoy (eds.) *The Workers of African Trade* (London: Sage, 1985) p. 270.

In the Congo River basin where the food staple was cassava, Robert Harms estimated that preparing enough food to provision a long distance trade expedition in the late nineteenth century could take several days.⁸⁸ Just as voyages from Europe had to consider harvest times and the availability of food stuffs in provisioning their long distance trade ventures, caravans from the Loango Coast likely travelled most often when foodstuffs were in good supply. Cassava was harvested in the Congo River basin at the end of the wet season and prepared for consumption in the early dry season.⁸⁹ Thus, caravans leaving the Loango Coast in April/May would have found it easiest to procure adequate foodstuffs to provision a caravan quickly. Previous studies have shown that ships arriving on the Loango Coast between September and October were able to find a cargo most quickly. If caravans were influenced by the supply of foodstuffs on the Loango Coast and set out for the slave markets of interior in April/May this may account for the low number of ships on the coast during these months. If caravans returned approximately four months, allowing for travel, trade, and a return journey, caravans would have begun to return in August/September. However, this cycle of supply and demand does not allow for European investment. This suggests that caravans set out on speculation, hoping for the arrival of European slaving ships.

This brings us back to the issue of credit: if indeed Europeans were financing these slaving expeditions, the negotiation of credit would presumably also take some time. The two voyages mentioned above are able to procure between 424 and 474 slaves in two months' time, even given the rough and speculative nature of the time taken to travel this distance, it seems highly unlikely that European credit could have resulted in such speedy provision of slaves, at least not from the Malebo Pool. It is also unlikely that one caravan could procure as many as 474 slaves, thus multiple caravans would have to be outfitted. Furthermore, in other studies I have suggested that 75 percent of merchants trading with the MCC over a 27 year period traded less than 10 slaves, with the average procurement rate of 2.8 slaves per year. It is improbable that European traders would have financed such minor transactions. Furthermore, the absence of permanent MCC agents on the Loango Coast eliminates the possibility of longer term credit arrangements outside of the shipboard documentation. These factors, combined with the absence of evidence of credit the MCC data and James Fraser's testimony that he engaged barter to procure slaves suggest that previous authors have overestimated the use of European credit to procure slaves on the Loango Coast.

⁸⁸ Robert Harms "Sustaining the System," p. 99.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

Conclusion

This chapter expands upon the themes of barriers, trust, and knowledge accumulation which appear throughout this thesis. By the eighteenth century, English, French and Dutch merchant ships had established a pattern of trade with the people of the Loango Coast which both facilitated trade while balancing the conflicting objectives of each party. Solutions to these conflicts ranged from the exclusion of permanent factories, to the construction of barriers between local communities and cross-cultural trading spaces, to the fixing of slave prices. Over time, trading practices were streamlined to accommodate growing trade. While the Maloango was able to regulate the trade himself in the early seventeenth century, making negotiations and granting trade permissions, by the eighteenth century the increased volume of trade required more complicated systems. Thus a set of conventions evolved which included the firing of cannons to open negotiations and the appointment of Mambouks and Mafouks to represent local rulers. Most important to the negotiations was the establishment and maintenance of trust. While some authors have suggested that the supply of European credit for the facilitation of trade was at the heart of this issue of trust, this chapter suggests a different perspective. This chapter has argued that while some Europeans may have offered credit to facilitate slave trading transactions, this does not appear to have been central to the slave supply chains of the eighteenth century slave trade on the Loango Coast. Instead, the slave trade at the Loango Coast was dominated by barter transactions within an organized market system. However, further research is required to establish how the provisioning of the caravans to the interior occurred. It is clear that Loango Coast merchants were able to procure substantial numbers of slaves and to provide these slaves in increasing quantities and at reasonable prices. In return, their European trading partners were expected to continue to provide Loango Coast merchants with high quality trade goods. When Europeans did not appear, large number of slaves continued to accumulate on the Loango Coast further reinforcing the evidence in this chapter that African merchants provided the majority of capital for the slave caravans.⁹⁰

The successful trade between European and Loango Coast merchants was driven by the ability of both partners to supply the other's demands. From the European perspective, this required a slightly different approach in each different trading region. In an examination of the bundles exchanged for slaves in the day to day transactions of the Loango Coast slave trade, three key categories of trade goods emerge: guns, textiles, and alcohol. The demand for guns on the Loango Coast, though slightly lower than other regions, was still substantial at a ratio of one gun per slave. This demand for

⁹⁰ Martin, *The External Trade of the Loango Coast*, pp. 90, 139-140.

weapons in a relatively peaceful region suggests that guns were valued beyond their utility in war for their resale value in the interior, their utility in hunting and protection from wild animals, their utility as noisemakers, and their significance as prestige signifiers. While the broad patterns of bundles traded on the Western African Coast included a large percentage of textiles, the popularity of textiles was most pronounced on the Loango Coast. For alcohol, the demand on the Loango Coast was relatively low compared to the other ports of the transatlantic slave trade. This may be explained in part by the incredibly high imports of cheap Brazilian alcohol in Luanda. This would have diminished the demand in the Congo River basin for more expensive Dutch, English, and French alcohol supplied through the Loango Coast. These goods were traded in exchange for slaves, driven by an ever increasing demand by Europeans. Expanding upon trade routes which were developed in the sixteenth century or before, European guns, textiles and alcohol gradually begin to supplement and perhaps at times even to surpass demand for local production of salt, raphia cloth, and copper which were traditional monopolies of the Loango Coast that were dispersed by caravan traders.

Although the Loango Coast developed different patterns of consumption and trade regulation, it shared substantial sources of slaves with the Angola Coast markets, while also importing small numbers of slaves from the northern and eastern regions. Yet Loango traders are able to supply trade goods of greater quality and variety than those offered by traders from the closer port of Luanda. The strategy of traders on the Loango Coast in trading with all Europeans is therefore consistent with their desire to obtain the best quality goods. One key to this superior supply is firearms. In maintaining their relationships with Europeans as trade partners rather than military competitors, as happens in Kongo, Angola, and Benguela, the sale of firearms posed no significant risk to European traders. Equally, by keeping competition open, Europeans were encouraged to compete with each other driving up the price of slaves while also keeping the quality of goods higher. Thus the Dutch, English, and French goods supplied to Loango Coast traders offer something unique at the internal markets, which in turn justify longer and more costly caravans.

Appendix A: Transcription of a Letter from Leyland, Penny and Co. to Captain Charles Wilson of the Brig Madampookata⁹¹

The Brig Madampookata sailed on the 8th of Febr[uar]y 1783

Captn Chas Wilson

Liverpool 4 January 1783

Sir

You being appointed to the command of our Brigantine Madampookata are directed to embrace the first opportunity and proceed thro[ugh] the South Channel for Cabinda on the coast of Angola – make a large allowance for the in draft set[t]ing on the Coast of Spain of Barbary (especially at this season of the year) and in passing the Island Madeira keep at least by your reckoning 4^o Degrees to the Westward of it, and in all probability you will see it – from thence steer for the Cape de Verd[e] Islands, and take your departure from those Islands ~ We recommend to your perusal the annex [sic] directions for making the quickest passage to Angola.

If you should be so fortunate to capture any vessel from our Enemies, on this side or near the Latitude of Cape Finisterre, direct the Prize Master to keep well to the Westward until he gets to the Northward of Cape Clear, then proceed into the first safe port in Ireland, from thence immediately write to us, and wait our orders; but should you capture a vessel near the Latitude of Lisbon, with a Cargo suited for that market, give your orders to proceed there, and that we may be informed of the event as soon as possible – too much cannot be said as to all vessels that are, or appear to be Neutral, and we pray you will not meddle with them on any consideration ~ From the confidence we entertain of your knowledge and experience we need not be very particular in our other Instructions; yet we cannot avoid recommending to you to be strictly careful to guard against accidents by Fire, to be equally attentive to your Gun powder and Spirits, particularly where trading in Africa ~ be also uniformly watchful to guard against Insurrections, as they always proceed from Neglect, and will inevitably ruin the Voyage.

You cannot too forcibly impress on the minds of your crew officers (who are unacquainted with the African Trade) how necessary it is to establish among the crew a steady uniform discipline to be duly careful to keep all Edge Tool and Iron from the Slaves, but above all guard against Drunkenness which is the source of every tumult and disorder on board, therefore when you dispose of Liquor to the Sailors, let it be only in small quantities at a time ~

On your arrival off Cabinda, or should you first fall in with Malimba [Malemba], and find ships there, take care not to approach too near, until you are informed if they are Friends or Enemies – We apprehend you will meet with no ships at Cabinda; on your coming near the Bay anchor without in five Fathom, the canoes will come along beside and by them send for Prince Mambooka

⁹¹ MS 10.47 Harold Cohen Library, Liverpool, Dumbell papers.

Madampookata [Mambouk], and the Mamfooka [Mafouk], acquaint them you are bound to the River Ammoris, and desire them to let you have a young man the son of Prince Peter Sweat for a Linguist, from whose assistance and Captn Lawsons's directions you will benefit - (We imagine at Ammoris you will buy slaves at 10 pieces or 12 at the most) – inform them you intend to finish your Trade on your return at Cabinda, at the same time make them this offer that if they will agree to give you prime slaves for 14 pieces with 2 or 3 pieces wages you will continue and make your whole purchase, nay rather give them 15 or 16 pieces, with 2 or 3 Pieces wages than go farther for we conceive what you'll gain in dispatch will be adequate to the difference in price ~ you may with much propriety plead (being a small vessel you cannot afford to pay the same customs and presents and let the aforementioned gentlemen ratify such agreement ~ All this must be done before you send your Boat onshore ~ You will be remarkably choice in the quality of your Negroes, buy none but those that are in the full Bloom of youth and health, full chested, well limbed, without defect; in short you must be far more particular than its usual on the Windward Coast of Africa, where you have been generally employed a superior attention is also necessary to be paid to Angola Slaves, they being more tender and delicate ought to be treated accordingly ~ On their first coming on board feed them sparingly, the sudden change from green vegetable diet, to dry good is apt to make them costive, which the Surgeon must guard against ~ You'll not fail to point out to your officers how necessary it is to be kind to the Slaves, to endeavour to cheer their spirits, and give them all comfort consistent with safety~

When you have completed your purchase proceed with a press sail for the Island St. Lucia where you will find Letters lodged for your Government with Messrs Gudgeon and Wildmen, follow those of the latest date, but if contrary to our expectations you should not meet with any letters from us, apply to Ducan Campbell Esq.

If he will engage to take you up at the average of £38 Sterling certain with the benefit of Sales, Bills on the Sales being closed at 3,6 & 9 months, or not exceeding 6, 9 & 12 months fix with him ~ if not, then proceed without loss of time for Tortola, there apply to Messrs Capstick and Nelson and Messrs Hagart Allison and Co. at St. Thomas for Letters, put your cargo into the hands of the latter house, who we have a guarnte [sic] for and will give you Bills at 6, 9 & 12 months ~ If the War continues w hop you will average upwards of £42 Stirling, it will require all your address and management to procure a fair sale, for its now become too much the custom among the Factors to be both buyers & sellers of Slaves ~ You will receive from the House who sells the Cargo your Coast Commissions £4 at £104 on gross Sales (first deducting your and the Mates Privilege Slaves) with two average slaves on each and every hundred sold in the West Indies with £5 per month, subject to ships articles, your chief Mate Mr Molineaux is to have one privilege Slave, on an average with the Cargo and £4.10 per month, your Surgeon Mr Murray is to have £4.10 per month and head money, one Shilling currency on each Slave sold ~ We must likewise remark neither you, or any person on board, will be permitted to buy or otherwise receive any Slave or Slaves on your or their accounts, on forfeiture of all your Coast Commissions and Privilege.~

The Madampookata in point of sailing and construction is particularly suited for the West Indies, such Vessels have sold for Eighteen hundred Guineas, if the War continues she will fetch a good price, you'll get all you can for her and consult with the house who sells the Cargo, if they should want her give them the preference, if their offers are equally good to others, but do not sell her if

you can't get £1260 Sterling, or upwards, ~ If it should be peace and you find you cannot dispose of her, then sell your Water cash[e]s, plat form, boards etc. and fill her with Cotton only it being the safest remittance ~ here we be to inform you should you sell the Vessel it must be to a person residing in the British West Indies and a subject of Great Britain, otherwise both you and we are liable to pay treble the value of the Vessel for which Bond is given, therefore you will take strict care to have a Certificate from the Collector of the Customs to cancel this Engagement ~ You will pray use the utmost economy in the Ships Disbursements in the West Indies ~ no part of the business of the Voyage marks the good character of an African Captain so much as this ~ We are etc.

Leyland, Penny and Co.