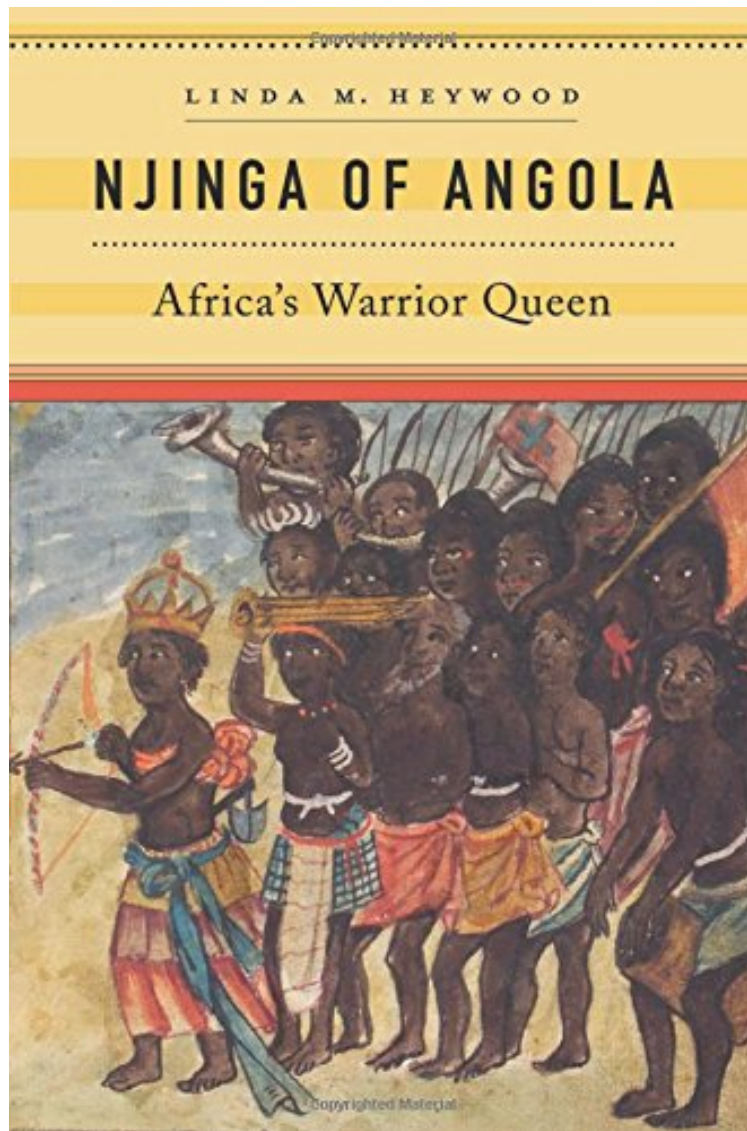


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Njinga of Angola: Africas Warrior Queen

Linda M. Heywood

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Linda M. Heywood : Njinga of Angola: Africas Warrior Queen before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Njinga of Angola: Africas Warrior Queen:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. An Exhilarating Journey into the Life of a Little Known African Heroine By John K Thornton Queen Njinga's story belongs in everyone's list of important people in world history. She managed to secure a leadership role in a country that did not welcome females in positions of authority, waged a heroic struggle to save her country from Portuguese invaders, conducted international diplomacy in Africa and in Europe, challenged the religious world in which she lived, as both a Catholic and a follower of traditional religion. She

is certainly well known in Angola, and in Brazil, where she survives as a character in folklore, but few know her story outside those two countries. Linda Heywood has produced, at last, a biography of Njinga which can elevate her to that place. It is based on an amazingly rich and diverse set of original sources, that include not only reports by Portuguese and Italian priests and missionaries, soldiers or governors, but even on a parcel of letters that Njinga herself wrote. It is not because of a lack of first hand eyewitness accounts of her life that we do not know about her, but rather because Africa and African leaders have gotten short shift in world history. This is a compelling story, well-told with dozens of fascinating anecdotes and first-hand accounts of her derring-do. Heywood shows her climbing down cliffs on a flimsy rope ladder to escape the Portuguese who are pursuing her, of her remarkable gender role reversals, in having her male concubines dress as women and sleep chastely among her serving maids, or writing a letter of recommendation for a Portuguese ambassador who negotiated a peace treaty with her. We couldn't have a better introduction to her life and times than Heywood's breathtaking story, that even committed readers of fiction would enjoy. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Heywood's book showcases Njinga's greatness with elegance and incredible depth. By Jos Carlos Costa Queen Njinga is an Angolan hero, seen widely as the symbol of resistance to foreign domination and idolized in present day Angola, other African nations and among African diaspora in the Americas. However, despite her influence and standing in 17th century Central Africa there are not many in depth works on her long and eventful life and Linda Heywood's well researched and written Njinga of Angola is easily the best book on Njinga I've ever read. Her story is full of roses and blood but truly remarkable and reading this book one can learn that Queen Njinga knew, like no other leader, how to navigate and adapt to the political changes and idiosyncrasies of the time. Queen Njinga was smart and oddly can be described as flexible and implacable. However, her legacy, tenacity, stubbornness and political acumen justify the scores of admirers across the globe. I highly recommend the book to those who are seeking to understand how the Atlantic World worked, how African rulers and European explorers interacted and how the slave trade reshaped African polities of the time. It is certainly a contribution to the history of the world in general and the poorly known history of the peoples of Angola. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One Tough Warrior Queen. By Theresa252630 Amazing story about one tough woman. Njinga was a clever, hard working leader who was more Henry V of England than Elizabeth I. I have read a lot of books regarding European royalty, but none of the rulers come as close as Njinga does to being a true warrior queen. I may not have liked how she succeeded, although slavery was a common practice in that era, but I admire her skill and ability to survive during the Portuguese and Dutch conquests.

Though largely unknown in the Western world, the seventeenth-century African queen Njinga was one of the most multifaceted rulers in history, a woman who rivaled Elizabeth I and Catherine the Great in political cunning and military prowess. Linda Heywood offers the first full-length study in English of Queen Njinga's long life and political influence, revealing how this Cleopatra of central Africa skillfully navigated and ultimately transcended the ruthless, male-dominated power struggles of her time. In 1626, after being deposed by the Portuguese, she transformed herself into a prolific slave trader and ferocious military leader, waging wars against the Portuguese colonizers and their African allies. Surviving multiple attempts to kill her, Njinga conquered the neighboring state of Matamba and ruled as queen of Ndongo-Matamba. At the height of her reign in the 1640s Njinga ruled almost one-quarter of modern-day northern Angola. Toward the end of her life, weary of war, she made peace with Portugal and converted to Christianity, though her devotion to the new faith was questioned. Who was Queen Njinga? There is no simple answer. In a world where women were subjugated by men, she repeatedly outmaneuvered her male competitors and flouted gender norms, taking both male and female lovers. Today, Njinga is revered in Angola as a national heroine and honored in folk religions, and her complex legacy continues to resonate, forming a crucial part of the collective memory of the Afro-Atlantic world.

Queen Njinga of Angola has long been among the many heroes whom black diasporians have used to construct a pantheon and a usable past. Linda Heywood gives us a different Njinga, one brimming with all the qualities that made her the stuff of legend but also full of all the interests and inclinations that made her human. A thorough, serious, and long overdue study of a fascinating ruler, Njinga of Angola is an essential addition to the study of the black Atlantic world. (Ta-Nehisi Coates, author of *Between the World and Me*) Njinga's time has come. Heywood tells the fascinating story of arguably the greatest queen in sub-Saharan African history, who surely deserves a place in the pantheon of revolutionary world leaders, male and female alike. (Henry Louis Gates, Jr.) Heywood gives us a biography well worthy of its complex subject: an insightful portrait of the person, smoothly narrated, with an eye for telling details, and solidly historical in its thoughtful probing of the currents in the African and Portuguese worlds Njinga skillfully navigated for more than four decades. This welcome book is a good read and a great story. (Joseph C. Miller, author of *The Problem of Slavery as History*) Heywood offers a complex and layered narrative that significantly enhances our knowledge about Njinga, the memorable ruler who defied colonial power in seventeenth-century central Africa. In addition to being a tour de force of historical analysis that will mesmerize scholars, this powerful and moving book will delight Njinga's many admirers, for the African queen occupies a vital place both in the national identity of Angola

and in the memory of people of African descent in the Americas. (Roquinaldo Ferreira, author of *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*) In her biography of this fascinating character, Linda Heywood seeks to blow away the smoke of infamy and adulation. She reveals a figure no less protean in life than her reputation has proved to be in the three and a half centuries since her death an individual who overstepped boundaries of religion, gender and nationhood. Like its subject, Heywood's book defies simple categorization, mixing anthropology, gender studies and history. This stimulating biography of a queen and resistance leader offers a timely reminder that gender fluidity is not something unique to the present age. (David Gelber *Literary* 2017-03-01) Historically, various authors have demonized Njinga or downplayed the importance of her reign. Heywood, however, does a beautiful job of clearly depicting her subject and setting the context for her decisions. More than simply providing facts, the author humanizes Njinga, turning her into a sympathetic figure. In the end, it is clear that she is to be appreciated in both African and world history. A great book for any history buff. By taking up the mantle to write such a biography, Heywood ensures that Njinga will not be forgotten. (Sonnet Ireland *Library Journal* 2017-02-15) Over her decades-long reign in the 17th century in central Africa, Queen Njinga was by far the most successful of African rulers in resisting Portuguese colonialism, argues Heywood. What's more, as this detailed and engaging study with walk-on parts for Vatican plotters, Dutch traders and Brazilian slavers shows, she rivaled Elizabeth I and Catherine the Great for political nous and military prowess. Tactically pious and unhesitatingly murderous; a subverter of gender norms, in the inevitable formulation; a national heroine in today's Angola; a commanding figure in velvet slippers and elephant hair ripe for big-screen treatment; and surely, as our social media age puts it, one badass woman. (Karen Shook *Times Higher Education* 2017-03-09) Maintaining independence in the face of colonial encroachment, the seventeenth-century African queen Njinga fascinated Europeans. This fine biography attempts to reconcile her political acumen with the human sacrifices, infanticide, and slave trading by which she consolidated and projected power. (New Yorker 2017-03-20) Njinga's consummate skills as charismatic ruler, warrior, and diplomat enabled her to survive and eventually triumph over her foes, securing peace and making her a potent national symbol for modern Angolans. Heywood tells a thrilling story of pitched battles mixed with truces, internecine conflicts, strategic migrations, hair-raising escapes, and deft international relations, including allying with the Dutch against Portugal. Njinga is among the best biographies of any African. It deserves a wide readership. (T. P. Johnson *Choice* 2017-08-01) Heywood has written a complete and focused account of Queen Njinga. Njinga of Angola seamlessly knits together the complete set of sources on the Queen, which include missionary accounts, letters, colonial records, previous histories of Angola and Dutch West India Company records. Heywood has cleared away the noise of [the] mostly fantastical accounts and assembled as straight a biography as is possible. Indeed, Njinga of Angola, which took nine years of research, sets out to replace interpretation and sensationalism with facts. Heywood preserves all of the complexity of Njinga and her politics in a book that provides the most complete and foundational history of Queen Njinga. (Delinda J. Collier *Times New Literary Supplement* 2017-06-09) About the Author Linda M. Heywood is Professor of History and African American Studies at Boston University.