

Lesson 3 The Kongo Kingdom

MAIN IDEAS

Government A Bantu-speaking group settled along the west coast of southern Africa and established the Kongo kingdom.

Culture Kongo developed a strong trading relationship with the Portuguese, which brought great changes to the kingdom.

Culture Kongo became increasingly involved in the slave trade, which eventually caused turmoil and instability in the kingdom.

A Kingdom Arises on the Atlantic

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did the Kongo kingdom begin?

The Growth of Kongo

- **Kongo**—kingdom on southwest coast of Africa settled in 1300s by Bantu
 - nearby Congo River provided fishing, transportation

The Kongo Kingdom

- Rulers ran well-organized kingdom from **Mbanza**—capital city of Kongo
 - divided kingdom into provinces; governor ruled each province
- King ran economy, required provinces to pay taxes twice a year
- Key industries: copper and iron mining, pottery, clothing production

REVIEW QUESTION

How was the Kongo Kingdom organized?

Kongo and Portugal

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did interaction affect Kongo and Portugal?

Cultural Interaction

- Portugal, country west of Spain, led Europe's Age of Exploration
 - explorers sailed Africa's west coast in 1480s, encountered Kongo
- Portugal and Kongo began beneficial trade relationship
- Kongo provided copper, iron, ivory to Portugal
- Portugal offered guns, horses, manufactured goods to Kongo
- Kongo leaders receptive to Christian religion practiced by Portuguese

The Rule of Afonso

- **Afonso I**—ruler of Kongo kingdom (1506); copied many Portuguese ways
 - declared Catholicism official Kongo religion
 - renamed capital city São Salvador; urged wearing of Western clothing
 - restructured political system to reflect European traditions
 - sent many subjects to Portugal for their education

REVIEW QUESTION

How did Afonso increase Portugal's influence in Kongo?

Kongo and the Slave Trade

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What were the causes and effects of the slave trade between Kongo and Portugal?

Growth of Slavery

- Kongo provided slave labor to Portugal in return for European goods
 - Portugal wanted workers for sugar fields in its overseas colonies
- Growing slave trade began to deplete population of West Africa
- Kongo ruler Afonso appealed to Portuguese king to end slave trade
 - king of Portugal refused
 - relations grew strained
 - Kongo cut itself off from Portugal in 1561

The Kingdom Struggles

- Kongo experienced period of instability after Afonso's death in 1543
 - battled nearby group—the Jaga; forced to seek help from Portugal
- Kongo Kingdom slowly regained stability during the early 1600s

REVIEW QUESTION

What event weakened Kongo after the death of Afonso?

Lesson Summary

- During the 14th century, a Bantu-speaking group established the Kongo kingdom.
- The arrival of the Portuguese had a strong impact on the economy, religion, and politics of the Kongo.
- The slave trade caused the collapse of relations between the Kongo kingdom and Portugal.

Why It Matters Now . . .

The African slave trade continued and led to the enslavement of Africans around the world. Their descendants are part of the population in numerous countries.