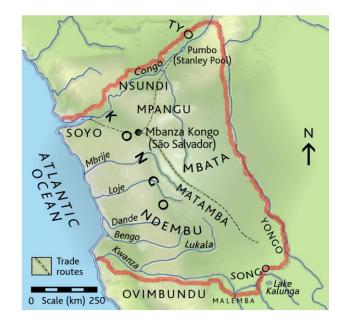
Visual Analysis: Kingdom of Kongo

Central Question:

• Evaluate the extent to which the arrival of the Portuguese affected the kingdom of Kongo.

Visual 1: Map of Kongo

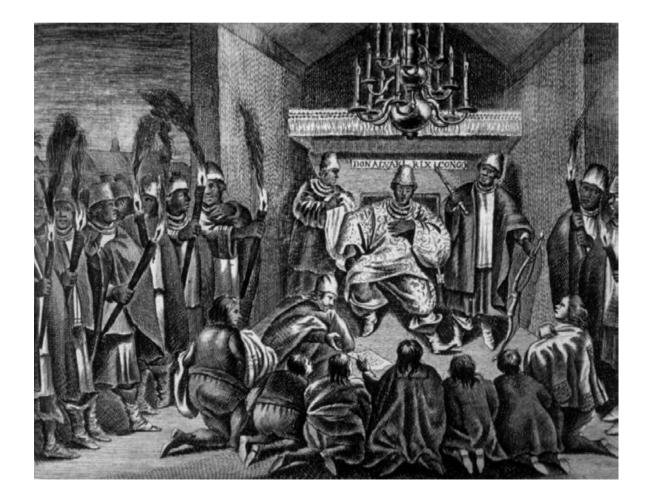
• 1. Why might Kongo have been attractive to Europeans?





Visual 2: King of Kongo receiving envoys

- 1. What impression do you get of the King of Kongo?
- 2. What conclusions can you draw about the kingdom itself?



Visual 3: Portugal and the Kongo

- 1. Why did King Manuel want to build a relationship with the Kongo?
- 2. How did he attempt to do this?



Copper manilla

Source 4

'Most powerful and excellent king of Manycongo,' King Manuel wrote from Lisbon in 1512. Davidson 1996: 138

Source 5

In c. 1506 the king of Kongo, Afonso, sent 500 manillas of copper to King Manuel of Portugal, the first of a series of gifts intended to cement the alliance between the two kings.

Herbert 1984: 140

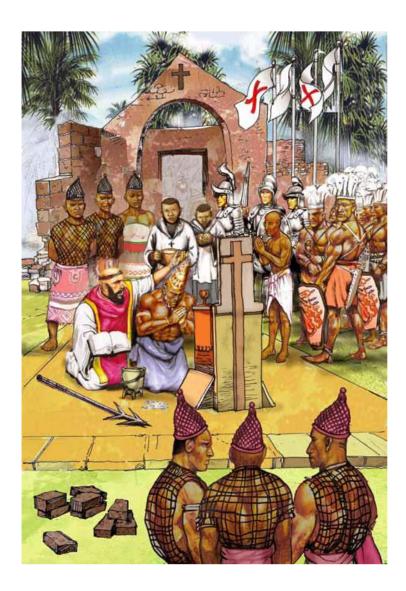
Source 6

The 6 greatest chiefs [of Kongo] were to be dukes; lesser notables were to be marquises, counts and barons; while the children of the king were to be princes and princesses.

Regimento or instructions of King Manuel of Portugal (1512), quoted in Davidson 1996: 140

Visual 4: Joao I and Religion

- 1. What is happening in this visual?
- 2. Why do you think it is happening?



Visual 5: Afonso and Religion

• 1. Why did Afonso convert to Christianity?

Source 8

King Afonso I of Kongo read religious books far into the night, often falling asleep over them, and astounded the priests with his knowledge.

An account by Portuguese vicar, Rui d'Aguir, in 1516, quoted in Thornton 1984: 155



Visual 6: Trade

• 1. Did the Portuguese force the Kongo to trade in captives?



Source 12

This expedition has cost us much: it would be unreasonable to send it home with empty hands. Although our principle wish is to serve God and the pleasure of the king of Kongo, none the less you will make him understand – as though speaking in our name – what he should do to fill the ships, whether with slaves, or copper, or ivory.

Instructions of King Manuel of Portugal to his envoy (1512), quoted in Davidson 1996: 139–140

Source 14

It is quite clear that King Afonso, and probably Kongo law in general, had little problem with either the holding of slaves, or their export from the country. Thornton: King Afonso and the Slave Trade

Source 15

Since slaves were not readily available inside Kongo, the kings began at an early stage to seek captives from outside. Border raids became a regular feature of the kingdom, and may have led to territorial expansion. Birmingham 1977: 550

Source 16

At one stage, Afonso considered the [slave] trade so destructive that he threatened to end it. He informed the king of Portugal that he wanted Portuguese teachers and priests, but he no longer wanted traders and merchants 'for it is our will that in our kingdom there should no longer be a trade or export of slaves.' Hilton 1985: 58

Visual 7: Politics of the Kongo

- 1. How did the king of Kongo benefit from the Portuguese?
- 2. What was the harm in this?



Source 17

The Portuguese, settled in São Salvador, reinforced the royal power materially and spiritually. They altered a delicate balance in favour of royalty. They supplied the advantage of their technology and their manufactured goods, and they introduced incentives to trade. They were the carriers of a new religion, which was all the more warmly welcomed because it seemed to be extremely powerful.

Balandier 1968: 46

Source 18

The king used the whites in the internal power struggle, receiving them with open arms. Ekholm 1972: 18

Visual 8: Impact of Portuguese

- 1. What advantages did the arrival of the Portguese bring to the Kongo?
- 2. What disadvantages?



Source 20

Growth was stimulated by new Portuguese contributions to the ruling group in the form not only of goods but also of services by teachers, artisans, lawyers and priests.

Birmingham 1977: 548

Source 21

With the aid of Portuguese mercenaries and firearms Afonso was able to extend and consolidate his influence over the region. Reader 1997: 366

Source 22

By the 16th century, rulers became increasingly separated from their subjects, and traders became an increasingly powerful middle class. These changes were closely connected with the arrival of the Portuguese.

Birmingham 1977: 547–548

Source 23

In 1665, at the great battle of Mbwila, King Antonio I and most of his nobles, court officials and 5000 Kongolese troops were killed [by the Portuguese invaders]. The kingdom of Kongo dissolved into petty chiefdoms and never recovered.

Collins & Burns 2007, 188

Visual 9: Depiction of European by Kongo craftsman

- 1. What does he have in his hand?
- 2. Why might the craftsman have this POV of Europeans?

