

Enquiry Question: How far are the developments in the Kingdom of Benin evidence of the West African 'booms' of the fifteenth century? (Green)

Date	Event
900	The kingdom was called Igodomigodo. It was ruled by a series of kings, known as Ogisos, which means 'rulers of the sky'.
1100	There were struggles for power and the Ogisos lost control of their kingdom
1100	The Uzama sent a messenger to Ile-Ife (a neighbouring country) to ask the King of Ife for help to restore order. The king sent his son Prince Oranmiyan to restore peace to the Edo kingdom.
1440	Ewuare became the new Oba of Benin. He built up an army and started winning land. Changes in the way that the country was organised and run (administration) consolidated the kingdom.
1460	Benin Walls completed
1480s	Arrival of the Portuguese
1490	Trade started with Beni pepper which was sold by Portuguese traders in Belgium. The trading post at the existing Benin town of Gwaton was founded by the Portuguese.
1504	Oba Esigie expanded his kingdom eastwards to form an empire and won land from the Kingdom of Ife
1507	The trading post at Gwaton was abandoned.
1514	Esigie set up relationships with the Portuguese, sending ambassadors to Lisbon
1516	Portuguese troops assisting the Oba in a war against Nupe
1551	Oba Orhogbua in. During his reign, the empire reached its largest size. It stretched beyond the River Niger in the east and extended west as far as present-day Ghana.
1601	Oba Ehengbuda died. Benin's empire gradually shrank in size.



Key term	Definition
Civilisation	The stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced.
Administration	The running and management of a government.
Obas	King
Copper manilla	Copper currency
Cowrie shells	Shells used for currency
Benin Walls	Fortified defensive walls with moats and gates
Ambassador	a representative in a foreign country
Sumptuary Laws	laws which controlled what the people of Benin could access, make and use (bronze, coral etc.)

Key Person	Definition
Eweka	1400. First Oba, chosen by Oranmiyan
Ewuare	1440. Rebuilt Benin City and the royal palace. Made changes in administration (palace chiefs, festivals), urban structures,
Esigie	1504. Expanded his kingdom eastward. Created a school in Edo for the teaching of Portuguese
Idia	First great Queen Mother/Iyoba the mother of Esigie. Helped her son defeat his enemies and gain control of the River Niger.
Orhogbua	1551. Empire reached its largest size
Ehengbuda	Last of the warrior kings. Died 1401, empire decreased in size after this.
Olaudah Equiano	A former slave who is said to have been from Benin. He wrote an autobiography, <i>The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano</i> , 1789.
Olfert Dapper	Olfert Dapper was a Dutch geographer. He wrote about Benin in his book titled <i>Africa</i> in 1668 using accounts from sailors