

While the complete [Christian Bible](#) was first published in Kikongo in [1905](#), Kikongo was the earliest [Bantu](#) language which was committed to writing and had the earliest dictionary of any [Bantu](#) language. A catechism was produced under the authority of Diogo Gomes, a Jesuit born in Kongo of European parents in 1557, but no version of it exists today. In 1624 Mateus Cardoso, another Jesuit edited and published a Kikongo translation of the Portuguese catechism of Marcos Jorge. The preface informs us that the translation was done by Kongo teachers from São Salvador (modern Mbanza Kongo) and was probably partially the work of Felix do Espirito Santo (also a Kongo). The dictionary was written in about 1648 for the use of Capuchin missionaries and the principal author was Manuel Robredo, a secular priest from Kongo (who became a Capuchin as Francisco de São Salvador). In the back of this dictionary is found a sermon of two pages written only in Kikongo. The dictionary has some 10,000 words.