

3.02 Big Picture Africa

During my time in Africa, I visited early kingdoms such as Ethiopia, the Kongo, and Great Zimbabwe. I encountered a lot of different things, and am excited to share them with you.

Let's start in Ethiopia, located in what is known as "The Sahel." This was a very interesting place to visit, as it is very diverse and unique with the way that they operate. Ethiopia is split into four different social groups; high-ranking lineages, low-ranking lineages, castes (group membership ascribed by birth), and slaves. It was formed when people from Axum migrated south to the area which would become Ethiopia, the official founder was Yekuno Amlak. Ethiopia is a very wealthy place, since it is very big into trading (coffee is their specialty, along with other grains such as wheat and corn). This helps everybody, as they have a good supply of essential items, and their economy is stable. In terms of politics, they tend to resist threats from others (such as the Muslim and Portuguese groups).

Now on to the Kongo. It came together in the late 14th century when King Lukeni lua Nimi united several territories together. The kingdom forged ties with the Portuguese through trade and religion (Christianity). Trade is also a big thing here; gold, copper, iron, ceramics, patterned textiles, salt, and dried river fish are their main trading items. The Kongo is comprised of a mix of Portuguese, Bantu, and local people. A lot of the people here are very skilled miners and farmers. They help with the items that help dominate their trading market.

Our final location is Great Zimbabwe. This area is ruled by the Shone elite. Their social structure is different than the other two locations, as they really didn't have one. Instead of having different groups to classify people, here people are classified as either rich or poor. This place is the hotspot for gold, copper, and iron, which runs their booming trading market.