

9.3 Sub-Saharan Africa :: Living Architecture & Architecture of Stone

- 1) Pre-Colonial Map of African Empires (see images). Modern-day countries of: **Ethiopia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mali**
- 2) **Nubia** in the region of the Upper Nile - and **Axum** in Ethiopia - **Stelae**
 - **Nubia** and **Axum** were **Coptic Christians** by **400 CE**
 - Nubia kept its independence from Islamic rule by supplying slaves to Cairo
 - Axum, in northern Ethiopia, has been continuously occupied for 1000s of years
 - The **Stele** or (plural) **Stelae** were ancient grave markers in Axum. They were like **Obelisks**, except their top was *not* pyramidal like the obelisk, but rather an arch-like crowning element. Pronounced: **STELL-ay**
 - **King Ezana Stele** in Axum (400 CE)
 - **Stelae Park** in Axum
 - **Axum Obelisk** (400 CE - it's name says Obelisk, but it is a Stele). Also known as the **Rome Stele**. Taken by the Italian army in 1935 (it had lain broken on the ground for 1500 years) and reassembled. Eventually came back to Ethiopia.
- 3) Ethiopia: **Bet Giorgis** or **Church of St. George (c 1200) Zagwe Dynasty**
 - Carved from volcanic tufa stone below grade. Hidden entrance.
 - Twelve of them. Meant to be a *New Jerusalem*
- 4) Tanzania: **Kilwa Kisiwani** island off of modern-day Tanzania
 - **Emir of Kilwa Palace** and **Mosque** (c 1200 CE)
 - **Husuni Kubwa** slave market and fort - slaves sold to Baghdad and Southwest Asia (c 1200 CE)
 - Black Death (a.k.a. The Black Plague) sends cities into irreversible declines 1348 CE)
- 5) Zimbabwe: **Great Zimbabwe (1200-1500 CE)**
 - *Zimbabwe* means *stone structures*
 - No known or apparent program as walls are too high and forms don't appear to have been made for shelter
 - Possible religious significance or status symbol or ritual place
- 6) **Living Architecture :: An architecture that requires constant (annual) rebuilding and maintenance due to its banco (mud) construction techniques with wood toron sticks**
- 7) Mali: **Bandiagara Escarpment** and the **Square Huts of Dogon** (c 1500 CE and later)
 - Pushed up against escarpment for protection against capture by Islamic slave traders or for purposes of conversion
 - Anthropomorphic symbolic designs
 - Granaries round w thatched roofs
 - Mosques made of **banco** or **mud**
- 8) The **Sahel** (western edge of the Sahara) Modern-day Mali.
 - **Songhay Empire** with capital at **Gao** (c 800 CE)
 - **Mande** or **Mali Empire** emerged with capital at **Timbuktu** (c 1200 CE)
 - The mud Mosques and other mud structures *melting* and shrank and constantly had to be rebuilt, that is resurfaced with fresh **banco** (mud). Thus: a **Living Architecture**. The building could change dramatically over time.
 - **Toron Sticks** provided reinforcement to the mud structure, provided scaffolding for the constant repairs, and may have had religious significance
 - **Mansa Musa** great leader of the Mande or Mali Empire. Traveled to Mecca and Cairo c 1324 CE and returned to build up **Timbuktu** based on what he'd seen.
 - **Djinguereber (Great Mosque)** in **Timbuktu** (c 1327 CE)
 - **Sankore Mosque** in **Timbuktu** (c 1340 CE)
 - **Songhay** empire then reemerged again c 1500 CE with **Askia Mohammed** as leader and Gao as their capital city.
 - **Tomb of Askia Mohammed** in Gao (1495 CE) (He did not die until 1538)
 - Other ancient city: **Djenne**
 - **Djenne Mosque** in Djenne (c 1300) In ruins in the late 19th century, and French Colonial Government paid for the rebuilding of the Mosque in 1907