

What constitutes the Iron Age period?

Throughout Africa no one is really sure where the Iron Age period first started but there is proof of different communities forming around the element iron. Iron served many different purposes for the people of Africa and shined as the connection of different connections. Many nations would go from the Bronze Age to Iron Age; however Africa was different because they went from the Stone Age to Iron Age so we are going to touch base on what really constitutes the Iron Age in the African continent.

Around 200 - 1000 CE is when Iron centered communities started to take form in Africa and would be the beginning of a new age. In the coming years the inhabitants of Africa had Iron forged tools and weapons, with these new tools they were able to change their way of living. An example of this would be the Toutswemogala Hill which is a well known iron community in the 17th Century. Much like Toutswenmogala Hill many settlements would form upon hills, partake in activities such as pottery, take care of cattle, new forms of farming and trade with other nations. These settlements were able to do this because of the newly discovered iron and broaden their economic and social boundaries. In the case of Leopard's Kopje there is proof that people started to mine gold and this would lead to very valuable trade among the Indian Ocean.

In many cases with the Iron Age period this also meant a change in social structure among African settlements. The people who could raise the most cattle, grow the most crops, and trade the most would tend to live at the top of the hill; while ordinary people would stay at the bottom of said hills. Along with the increase of many different things this also leads to communities moving around due to overgrazing and depletion of resources.

In the end Africa's Iron Age period can be constituted by the use of iron tools, rise of agriculture, increase in trade, hilltop settlements, new arts, and an overall increase of

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urbanization of the African continent. The Iron Age period is important for Africa because it plays a big part in its culture and historical events that are to come.