

July 28, 2025



Mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and her ducklings beside [Crescent Lake](#)

News and notes

Before going on to discuss the geology and geopolitics of [Lesotho](#), here are some news items I thought were interesting.

Comments

If anyone has comments on any of my postings, please leave a comment on the LinkedIn page for the posting or email me at raymondreichelt@gmail.com.

Geopolitics

- Sanctions:
 - Iran: [Revealed: the former asylum seeker 'smuggling oil to fund Iran'](#).
 - Russia: [Frontline report: Russia's oil smugglers are running out of ocean as UK freezes 100+ shadow fleet tankers](#).
 - [Russia sanctions have 'completely backfired' – ex-EU commissioner](#).
- From Peter Turchin: [The Deep Roots of Today's Geopolitics](#).
- [Cambodia calls for ceasefire with Thailand as death toll rises](#).
- Whiskey, or maybe tequila, is for [drinking and water's](#) for fighting: [Water wars: a historic agreement between Mexico and US is ramping up border tension](#).
- What could go wrong? [Microsoft says China-backed cybercriminals hacked into US nuclear weapons agency](#).
- [Iran Hit by Power Protests as Oil Exports Surge to 1.9 Million bpd](#).

- [As war rages, Gaza's \\$4 billion gas field remains untapped.](#)

Research and News

- [Rapid mineralisation of carbon dioxide in peridotites.](#)
- Geophysics: [Revisiting the Tremiti Islands structural high in the central Adriatic Sea \(Italy\), new insights from gravity anomaly modelling.](#)
- [Elusive Golden Spikes: When stratigraphers face the technical impossibility of specifying a GSSP in the field.](#)
- Bad science: [Reviewer accused of stealing manuscript and publishing it as his own denies he refereed it.](#)
- [Down in the dungeons: the hidden role of diatom biofilms and microbial activity in the biogeochemistry of a dynamic estuarine point bar.](#)
- [Exploring Seismic Signal Detection and Source Identification of Atmospheric Entries: The Hayabusa2 Sample Return Capsule as a Benchmark](#); Phys.org summary [here](#).
- [Before the San Juan Basin: An Overview of the Upper Cretaceous Western Interior Seaway](#); related by same author: [Stratigraphic Architecture of the Mesa Verde Group in the San Juan Basin Area](#); see also this [LinkedIn post](#).
- [USGS maps the moon for water, supporting NASA mission.](#)
- Fish and calcium carbonate deposits: [Osmoregulation by the gastro-intestinal tract of marine fish at depth – implications for the global carbon cycle](#); Phys.org summary [here](#).

Mineralogy

- Meteorite: [Mineralogical and isotopic constraints on early, high-temperature events and reservoirs recorded in the interior of a Type B Ca-Al-rich inclusion from the reduced CV3 chondrite Vigarano.](#)
- [Raman spectroscopic investigation of ianthinite \$\[U_2^{4+}\(UO_2\)_4O_6\(OH\)_4\(H_2O\)_4\] \cdot 5H_2O\$, a rare mixed-valence uranium oxide hydrate.](#)
- [Molecular-level insights into mechanisms of Li enrichment and occurrence in natural clay-bauxite.](#)

Plate Tectonics

- [An exogenic to endogenic thermal transition on Earth 3.9 billion years ago.](#)
- [Deformation of the Paleoproterozoic Lower Vindhyan Group in Central India: synsedimentary origin or associated with the Mesoproterozoic convergence between the Bundelkhand and Bastar Cratons?](#)

- [How double-slab subduction shaped the Eastern Anatolian Plateau: Insights from geodynamic models.](#)
- [Slab tearing along a subducted oceanic plate joint beneath the Alaska Peninsula.](#)
- [Tectono-Magmatic Processes of the Western Parícut Vela Basin: Insights Derived From Seismic Imaging and Gravity Modeling.](#)

Paleontology

- Amber: [Taphonomy of Fossil Resins: A Petrological and Geochemical Approach Using the Van Krevelen Diagram.](#)
- [A new species of early Oligocene flatfish \(Pleuronectiformes\) from Oregon, USA.](#)
- [Exceptionally preserved epithelial cell-controlled organic templates in Cambrian chancelloriid sclerites.](#)
- [Diversity in a greenhouse world: herpetofauna from the late Eocene \(MP 17A\) of La Bouffie, Quercy Phosphorites \(Lot, SW France\).](#)
- [The first discovery of *Hypsodontus* \(Artiodactyla, Bovidae\) from the Early Miocene of Linxia Basin, Gansu Province, China.](#)
- [A new Early Jurassic dinosaur represents the earliest-diverging and oldest sauropodomorph of East Asia.](#)
- [Palaeocampa anthrax, an armored freshwater lobopodian with chemical defenses from the Carboniferous.](#)
- [Evolutionary escalation in an exceptionally preserved Cambrian biota from the Grand Canyon \(Arizona, USA\).](#)
- [Fascinating fossils at ancient bed near Kamloops.](#)

Mining and Energy



Logo of Sinclair Oil
Credit: ©Sinclair Oil

- I wonder where they got that idea? [Many People Have No Idea Where Oil Actually Comes From. It's Not Dinosaurs.](#)

- [NexGen cements ownership in Athabasca Basin.](#)
- [Demand for magnetic REEs to triple by 2035: McKinsey.](#)
- [The natural diamond industry is getting rocked. You can thank the lab-grown variety for that.](#)
- [US targets mine waste to boost local critical minerals supply.](#)

- [U.S. Refiners Rethink Crude Sourcing After Chevron Gets Venezuela Green Light.](#)
- Exploration: [Revealing porphyry mineralization Cu-Au signatures via analyzing aeromagnetic and remote sensing data of Dara-Monqul, area Egypt.](#)
- Petroleum reservoir geology: [Integrated geophysical assessment of the Abu Roash C member for hydrocarbon prospectivity in the Sitra Field Abu El Gharadig Basin, Egypt.](#)
- [3 drillers freed from northern B.C. mine after 60 hours trapped underground, says company.](#)
- Predictions: [\\$18 Trillion or Total Nonsense? The Oil Demand Divide.](#)
- Port for exporting minerals: [Saskatchewan, Manitoba sign Arctic Gateway deal.](#)
- [Central European Petroleum Makes Major Wolin East Oil Discovery Offshore Poland.](#)
- [Iron ore price reaches multi-month highs on mega-dam announcement.](#)
- [How geology can make Canada an energy superpower.](#)
- Safety research: [Rockburst proneness index of surrounding rock considering rock mass quality and excavation disturbance factor.](#)

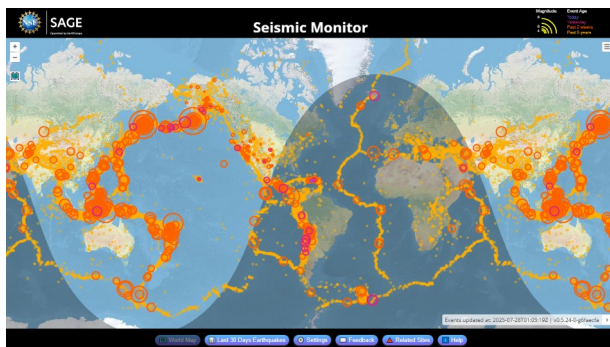
Environmental Geology and Hydrogeology

- 07/26 [Groundwater Pollution in Karst Regions: Toward Better Models.](#)
- Remediation: [Dual-functional metal-organic framework for efficient removal and fluorescent detection of perfluorooctanoic acid \(PFOA\) from water;](#) Phys.org summary [here.](#)

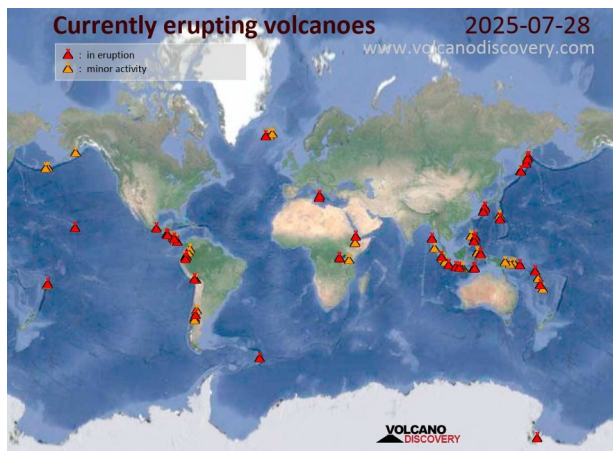
Glaciers and Climate Change

- [Ocean tides trigger ice shelf rift growth and calving;](#) Phys.org summary [here.](#)

Volcanoes, Earthquakes and Geohazards



[Seismic Monitor](#)



[Active Volcano Map](#)

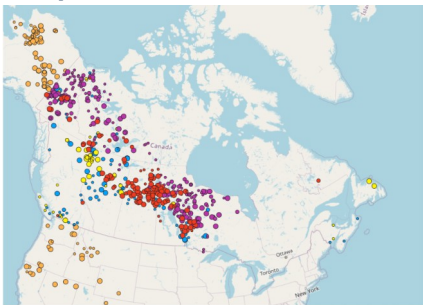
Volcanoes

- [Smithsonian / USGS Weekly Volcanic Activity Report](#).
- United States Geological Survey (USGS) Volcano Observatories:
 - [Cascades Volcano Observatory Weekly Update](#).
 - Volcano Watch – [Ancient volcanoes are critical to our modern world](#).
 - Caldera Chronicles: [How AI helps to solve a big problem with small earthquakes](#)
- Video: [Iceland Eruption Continues After 11 Days: Geologist Analysis](#).

Earthquakes

- [Euro-Mediterranean Seismological Centre \(EMSC\)](#).
- [Earthquakes Monitoring Live Worldwide](#).
- [4.2 ML Earthquake, Grande Prairie AB](#), possible industry related event.
- [Localization of inelastic strain with fault maturity and effects on earthquake characteristics](#).
- [The Mw7.7 Myanmar earthquake: a continental longest surface-rupturing supershear cascading event](#).
- [Earthquake monitoring with drones: Construction and Demonstration of a Seaplane-Type UAV-Based High-Precision GNSS-A Seafloor Crustal Deformation Observation System](#); Phys.org summary [here](#).

Wildfires and Other Geohazards



Interactive Wildfire Map July 27, 2025

[Credit: ©Canadian Wildland Fire Information System](#)

- [Wildfire smoke chokes northern Manitoba air, while hot, humid weather plagues the south](#).
- Landslide research: [Mixed Hydrometeorological Processes Explain Regional Landslide Potential](#); Phys.org summary [here](#).

Free Geology Books and Other Stuff

Free geology books can be downloaded from these sites:

- [OreZone Readers and Experts Telegram Channel](#); the Ore Zone channel also shows employment opportunities for geologists.

- [The Groundwater Project](#) has many groundwater geology books for free download; also they now have a [Free Online Learning Module: Pumping Test Analysis](#).
- Free Groundwater Modeling Course – [HydroGeoCenter](#).
- From Western Australia: [Carbonatite, lamprophyre and host rocks in the northern Aileron Province](#).
- Two volumes of Geology of Indonesia now can be accessed for [FREE/GRATIS](#). The books can be accessed from: vol 1 <https://lnkd.in/eH6Gcka4>; vol 2 <https://lnkd.in/egTYmpjk>.
- Brett Davis' book on veins in a deforming rock mass: "[The Veining Bible](#)"; also at [this site](#).

Upcoming Events

- [August 3 – 7, Golden, Colorado, 18th Biennial meeting of the Society of Geology Applied to Mineral Deposits](#).
- [Society for Sedimentary Geology conference, Mountjoy IV – August 10-13, 2025, in Montreal, Canada](#).
- [Copper to the World Conference, Tuesday 26 – Wednesday 27 August 2025](#), in Adelaide, Australia; report on 2024 conference [here](#).
- [The 52nd Congress of the International Association of Hydrogeologists, 15-19 September 2025, Melbourne Australia](#).
- [GeoManitoba 2025 78th Annual Canadian Geotechnical Society Conference & 9th Canadian Permafrost Conference, RBC Convention Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba, September 21 – 24, 2025](#).
- [29 September – 1 October 2025, Stuttgart, Germany, Nature Conference on Advancing Perovskite-Based Photovoltaics](#).
- Australia: [12–18 October 2025, Earth Science Week](#).
- [November 3 – 4, 2025 Central Canada Mineral Exploration Convention 2025 Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre, 1808 Wellington Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3H 0G3, Canada](#).
- [5th International Professional Geology Conference \(IPGC\), November 5 to 7, 2025, Zaragoza, Spain](#).
- [Saskatchewan Geological Open House, December 1 to 3, 2025, Delta Bessborough Hotel, Saskatoon](#); Registration for the 2025 Conference will be opening on August 6.
- 2025 [Society of Petroleum Engineers Distinguished Lecturer Schedule](#).
- [List of geoscience events in 2025 from the International Union of Geological Sciences](#).
- [American Geophysical Union List of Upcoming Meetings](#).
- The Geological Society: [Events & Courses](#).
- [“Geology Hour” Online](#), evenings on the 3rd Monday of the Month from the Geological Society of the Oregon Country.

July 28, 2025

Geology and the Fate of Societies – Lesotho

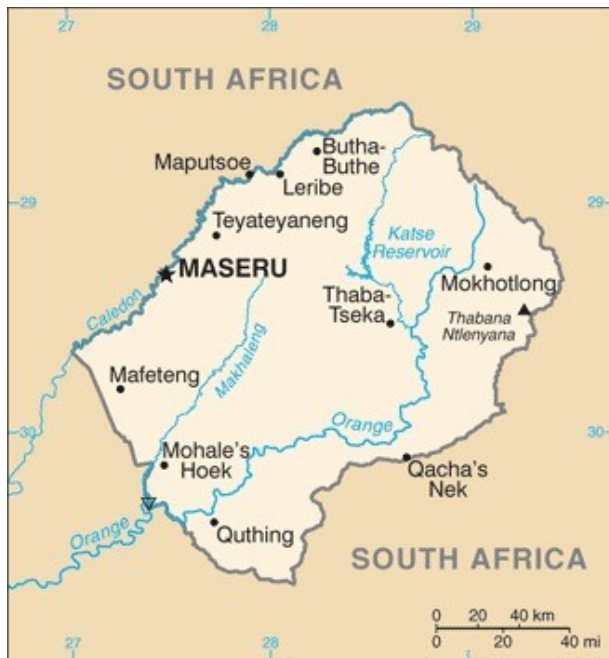


Figure 1a – Lesotho

Credit: [CIA World Factbook](#), public domain



Figure 1b – Location of Lesotho

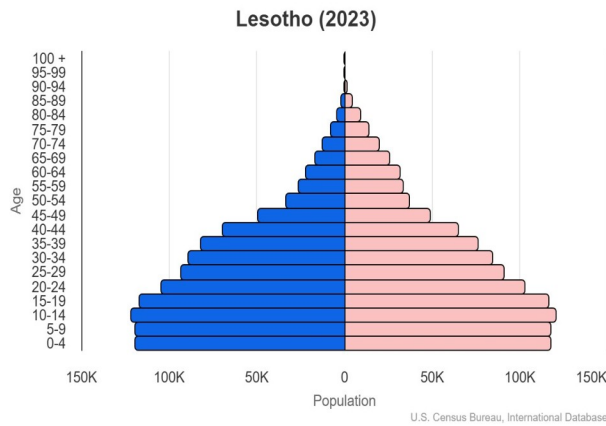
Credit: [CIA World Factbook](#), public domain

Formerly called [Basutoland](#), the [Kingdom of Lesotho](#) is a landlocked country entirely surrounded by the Republic of [South Africa](#) and within the [Maloti Mountains](#). The government of Lesotho is unitary [parliamentary constitutional monarchy](#); the King is [Letsie III](#) and his Prime Minister is [Sam Matekane](#). The legislature has two houses: an upper house, the [Senate](#) and a lower one, the [National Assembly](#). The Capital and largest city in Lesotho is [Maseru](#) (pop. 330,760).

According to the [Central Intelligence Agency](#) (CIA) [World Factbook on Lesotho](#), the country has a total area of 30,355 square kilometres (km²), all of which is land. Also according to the CIA, 2,227,548 people, generally called Basotho, live in Lesotho, 30.4% in urban areas. Ethnically, Lesotho is an [ethnostate](#) where 99.7% of the people are ethnic [Sotho](#). [Sesotho](#) and [English](#) are the official languages. Most, 92.1%, Basotho are [Christians](#); 47.8% are Protestant, 39.3% are Roman Catholic, 9.1% are other Christians. 6.6% of the population follow [traditional faiths](#) and 1.3% have either no religion or something other. 86.2% of the population can read and write; schooling is generally for 12 years.

Economically, the per capita [GDP \(PPP\)](#) is \$3,234; the [Gini](#) coefficient is 44.9, indicating medium inequality; and the [Human Development Index](#) is medium at 0.550. In 2023, the top [exports of Lesotho](#) were diamonds (\$539m), non-knit men's suits (\$70.9m), wool (\$62.8m), knit women's suits (\$61.4m), and knit t-shirts (\$45.1m). The top destinations were South Africa (\$351M), Belgium (\$295M), United States (\$228M), United Arab Emirates (\$95.4M), and India (\$86.3M). Also in 2023, the top [imports of Lesotho](#) were refined petroleum (\$203m), light rubberized knitted fabric (\$71.4m), delivery trucks (\$50.3m), electricity (\$44.1m), and cereal flours (\$40.1m). The top origins were South Africa (\$1.34B), China

(\$168M), Chinese Taipei (\$54.9M), Japan (\$18.8M), and India (\$17.2M). The main industries in Lesotho, according to the CIA, are food, beverages, textiles, apparel assembly, handicrafts, construction, and tourism.



Lesotho is a relatively young country with a growing population. The median age is 23.9 years; 32% of the population is under 15 years; 62.7% are between 15 and 64; and 5.4% are over 65. The total fertility rate is 2.88 births per woman; the death rate is 10.8 deaths/1,000 population; the under 5 mortality rate is 61.6 deaths/1,000; and the net migration rate is -4.5 migrant(s)/1,000 population. The resulting population growth rate is 0.76%/year. Life expectancy for both sexes is 59.9 years (58.1 for men, 62.3 for women).

Figure 2 – Lesotho Demographics

Credit: U.S. Census Bureau, International Database, public domain

Geology

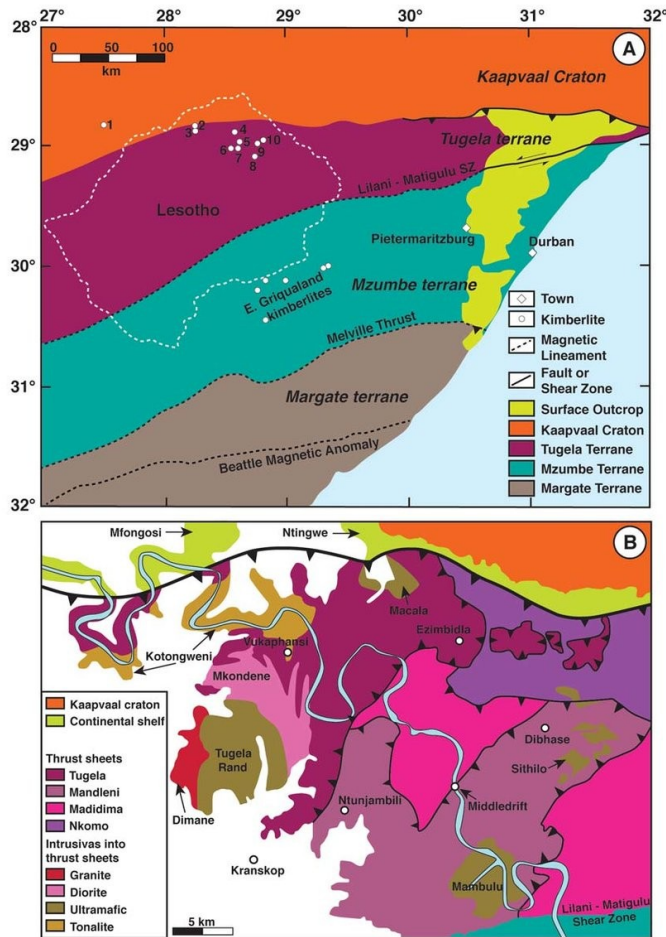


Figure 3 –Tectonic Framework of Lesotho: Sheet A shows the Terranes and Sheet B shows the thrust sheets and intrusive rocks

Credit: Figure 2 in Sommer et al, 2013

- Bordy, E.M, Ericksson, P., *Lithostratigraphy of The Elliot Formation (Karoo Supergroup), South Africa*, South African Journal of Geology (2015) 118 (3): 311–316, <https://doi.org/10.2113/gssajg.118.3.311>

Kimberlites



Figure 5 – Diamond in Kimberlite **Credit:** Géry PARENT, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license

Among the most economically significant rocks found in Lesotho are [kimberlites](#). This is because [diamonds](#) are found in these deposits. [Kimberlites](#) are named after the region of [Kimberly, South Africa](#). [Henry Carvill Lewis](#) coined the word was in 1887 to describe the diamond-bearing [ultramafic](#) rocks that he found near Kimberly. The typical mineral composition of a [kimberlite](#) is mostly [olivine](#), often altered to [serpentine](#) together with variable amounts of [phlogopite](#), [carbonate minerals](#), pyrope [garnet](#), [pyroxenes](#) ([orthopyroxene](#) and [clinopyroxene](#)), [chromite](#) and [oxide minerals](#). Kimberlites are generally highly [altered](#), with a [porphyritic](#) texture, and occurring in intrusive [pipes](#), [dykes](#), and [sills](#).

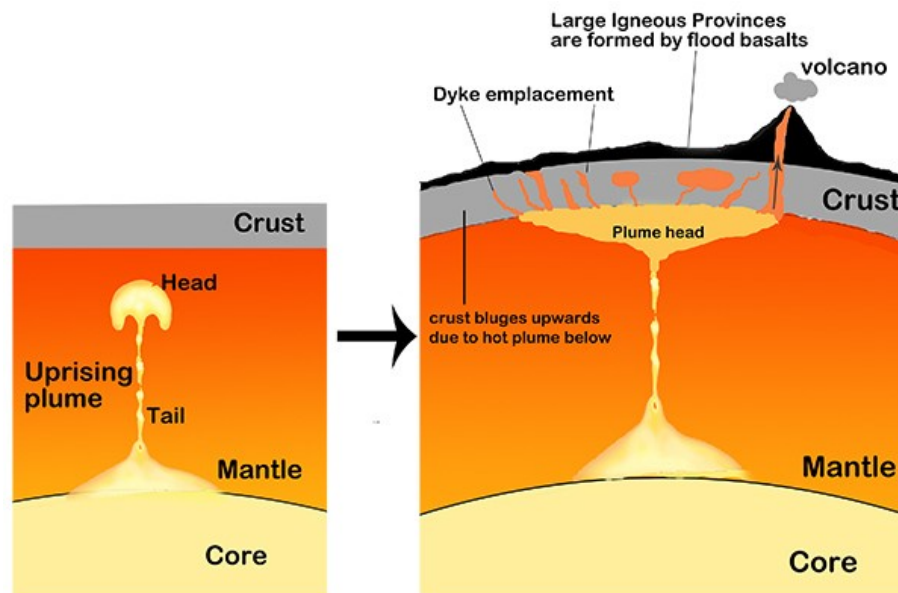


Figure 6 – Mantle Plume

Credit: Christyyc, [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](#) license

The [origin of kimberlites](#) seems to be intimately connected to the [phenomena of mantle plumes](#). Mantle plumes [originate deep in the earth](#), possibly near the boundary between the core and the mantle, some 2,500 km beneath the surface. They have been [proposed as the origin](#) of [volcanic hotspots](#), [large igneous provinces](#), and [kimberlite deposits](#).

The mechanism for kimberlite emplacement begins with the a [rising mantle plume](#) encountering the base of the thick continental lithosphere beneath a craton, around 150 km below surface. The interaction between the rising plume and cratonic material generates a kimberlite magma melt. The kimberlite magma rises through the lithosphere and, if it encounters carbonaceous material such as diamonds, the plume will carry them along. The Kaapvaal Craton, where the Lesotho diamond deposits are found, has had [multiple episodes of kimberlite emplacement](#) associated with crustal movements over the a hotspot.

It is really a fascinating subject that I have only scratched the surface of here and there is lots of ongoing research in the field. So keep an eye on this [research](#) if you like bright, shiny, rocks like diamonds.

Resources

Agriculture



Figure 7 – A Farm in Lesotho, 1994

[Credit: K. Kendall, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license](#)

According to the CIA, 74.8% of the land in Lesotho is used for agriculture (8.8% arable land, 0.1% permanent crops, 65.9% permanent pasture). There were 12 km of irrigated land when last measured in 2013 (=0.04% of the total land area). Of the remainder 1.1% is forest and 24.1% is something other. Also according to the CIA, agriculture makes up 6.6% of the country's GDP and the top ten agricultural products, based on tonnage, are milk, potatoes, maize, vegetables, fruits, sorghum, wheat, game meat,

beans, wool. Production statistics from the [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO) can be found [here](#).

Also according to the FAO, [56.7% of the population](#) suffered from moderate to severe food insecurity 2021-2023. The traditional [diet of many of the people in Lesotho](#) consists largely of beans, grains, and vegetables with grilled [meats](#).

Mineral Resources



Figure 8 – Letšeng Diamond Mine

Credit: Lschefa, [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](#) license

According to the latest USGS report on the [mineral industry of Lesotho](#) the main mineral products of Lesotho are industrial minerals: clay for making bricks, aggregate for construction, and especially diamonds.



Figure 9 – Lesotho Legend Diamond

Credit: Lschefa, [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](#) license

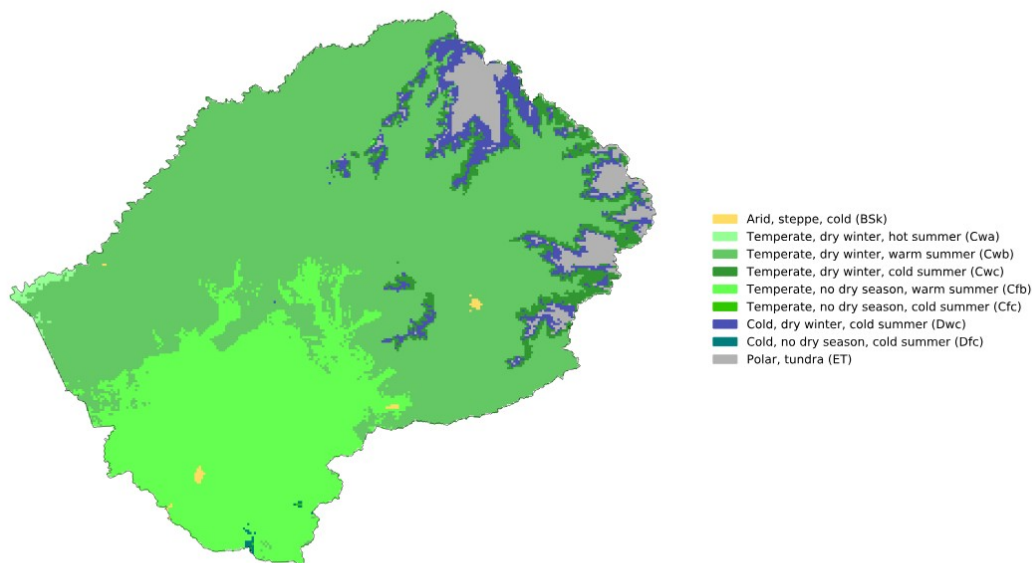
Diamonds are produced from four mines in Lesotho:

- [Letšeng Mine](#), about 140 kilometers, east-northeast of Maseru;
- [Liqhobong Mine](#), about 120 kilometers east-northeast of Maseru;
- [Mothae Mine](#), about 135 kilometers east-northeast of Maseru; and the
- [Kao Mine](#), about 115 kilometers east-northeast of Maseru.

In 2022, 548,150 [carats](#) of gem quality diamonds were produced in Lesotho. Recovered in 2018, the [Lesotho Legend Diamond](#) (Figure 9) weighed 910 carats.

Climate

Köppen-Geiger climate classification map for Lesotho (1980–2016)



Source: Beck et al.: Present and future Köppen-Geiger climate classification maps at 1-km resolution, Scientific Data 5:180214, doi:10.1038/sdata.2018.214 (2018)

Figure 10 – Köppen-Geiger Map for Lesotho

Credit: [Beck et al, 2018](#), [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](#) license

The climate of Lesotho varies with elevation and rainfall. In the highest elevations are polar tundra ([ET](#)), below which are cold weather climates ([Dwc](#) and [Dfc](#)). At lower elevations still temperate climates ([Cwa](#), [Cwb](#), [Cwc](#), [Cfb](#), and [Cfc](#)). In a few isolated spot, cold arid steppe ([Bsk](#)) conditions occur.

So, is Lesotho worth visiting? The official [tourism development corporation](#) thinks so and suggests many interesting sites to see and things to do. These include a variety of [outdoor activities](#), such as [skiing](#), a rarity in Sub-Saharan Africa. [Organized tours](#) of the country are available. The [Letšeng Diamond Mine](#) is also listed as a [tourist attraction](#), although you may have to hike or ride a donkey to see it.

Travel advisories ([here](#) and [here](#)) recommend extreme caution when visiting Lesotho due to various kinds of crime such as armed robbery and car-jackings. Political demonstrations are also a danger. If Lesotho interests you, check out [Climates to Travel](#) and [Lonely Planet](#).

History and Geopolitics

History

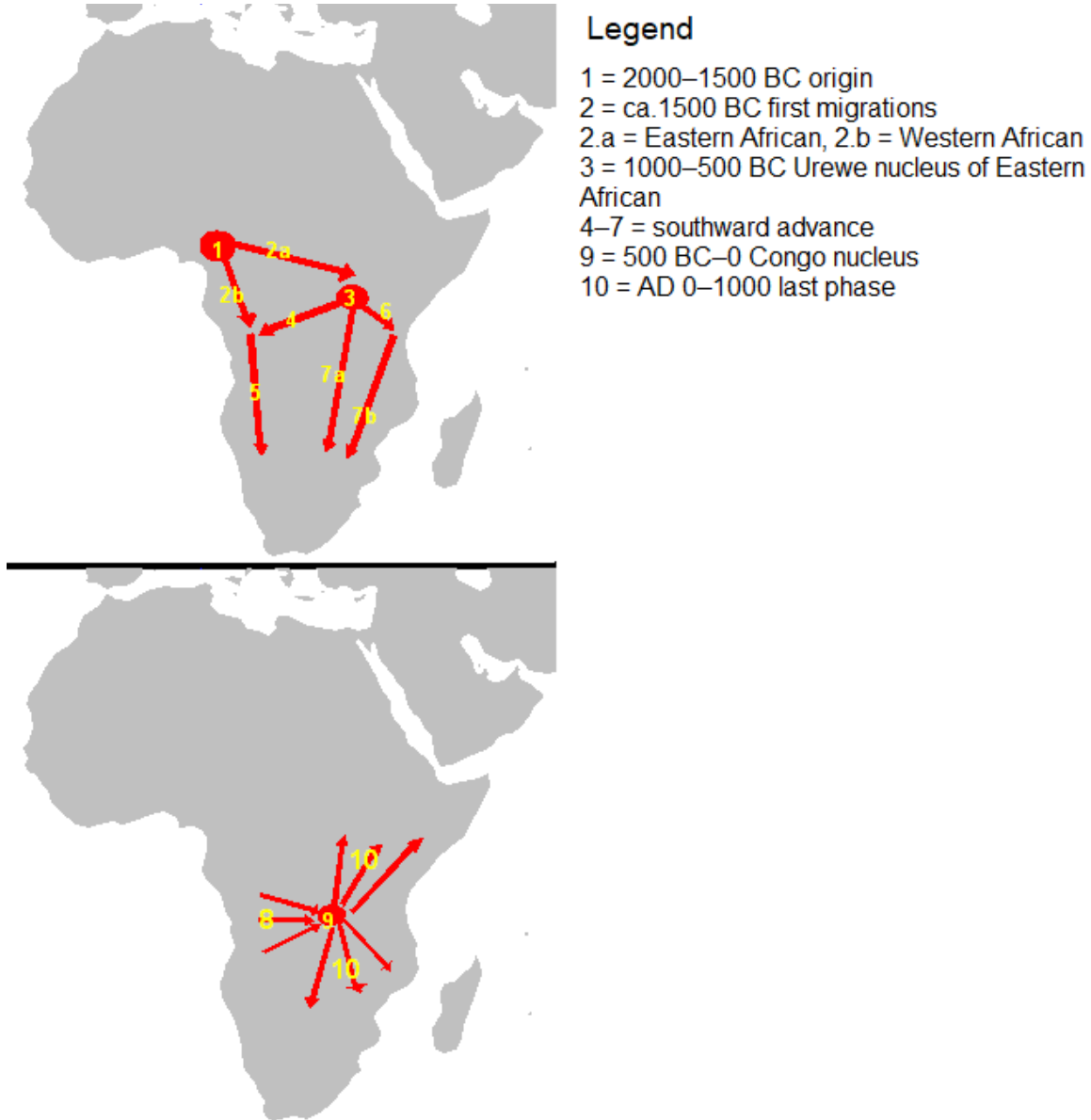


Figure 11 – Map of Bantu Expansion, 2000 BC to 1000 AD

Credit: [Derek Nurse](#), [Gérard Philippson](#), public domain

While [early human species](#) and [modern humans beings](#) have lived in Lesotho since the [Paleolithic](#), the Sotho people are descended from [Bantu agriculturalists](#) who arrived in the country some 1000 years ago, during a great migration known as the [Bantu Expansion](#). Little is known about the previous inhabitants who are presumed to be related to the modern [Khoisan hunter-gatherers](#) based upon the [rock art](#) they left behind. While still being researched, the key to the success of the Bantu peoples appears to have been:

- The development of an [agricultural system](#) suitable to tropical conditions; and

- The invention and/or adoption of [iron tools](#) for agriculture and war.

The earliest Bantu speakers in the [history of Lesotho](#) are called the AmaZizi out of which the modern Sotho people arose around 400 years ago in early modern times, largely as an unorganized group of clans. The trigger for unification of the Sotho clans into a single polity appears to have been a period of famine and conflict called the [Mfecane](#). [King Moshoeshoe I](#) is credited with forming the first Lesotho kingdom in 1822. The main external adversary for the Sotho people in this time was the expansionist [Zulu](#) tribe, under the leadership of [Shaka Zulu](#).

More troubles awaited the Sotho through contact with [British](#) and [Dutch Afrikaner](#) (sometimes called Boers) people living in the adjacent [Cape Colony](#). King Moshoeshoe I [invited Christian missionaries](#) into his domain in 1832. He also bought guns from the Cape Colony – he was going to need them. Trouble began after some Afrikaner people in the Cape Colony got tired of dealing with the British rulers of the colony and left for new lands in the [Great Trek](#) to the [Transvaal](#) and [Orange River](#) regions. This put the Afrikaner into direct conflict with existing inhabitants of those lands. One result of this was the [Free State-Basotho War](#), which lasted from 1858 to 1868. However, the war was costly and, fearing defeat, in 1867 King Moshoeshoe appealed to [Queen Victoria](#) to make the country a British protectorate. This was done in 1869 and the borders of the new [Basutoland](#) protectorate were settled in an agreement signed with the Boers at [Aliwal](#) that same year.

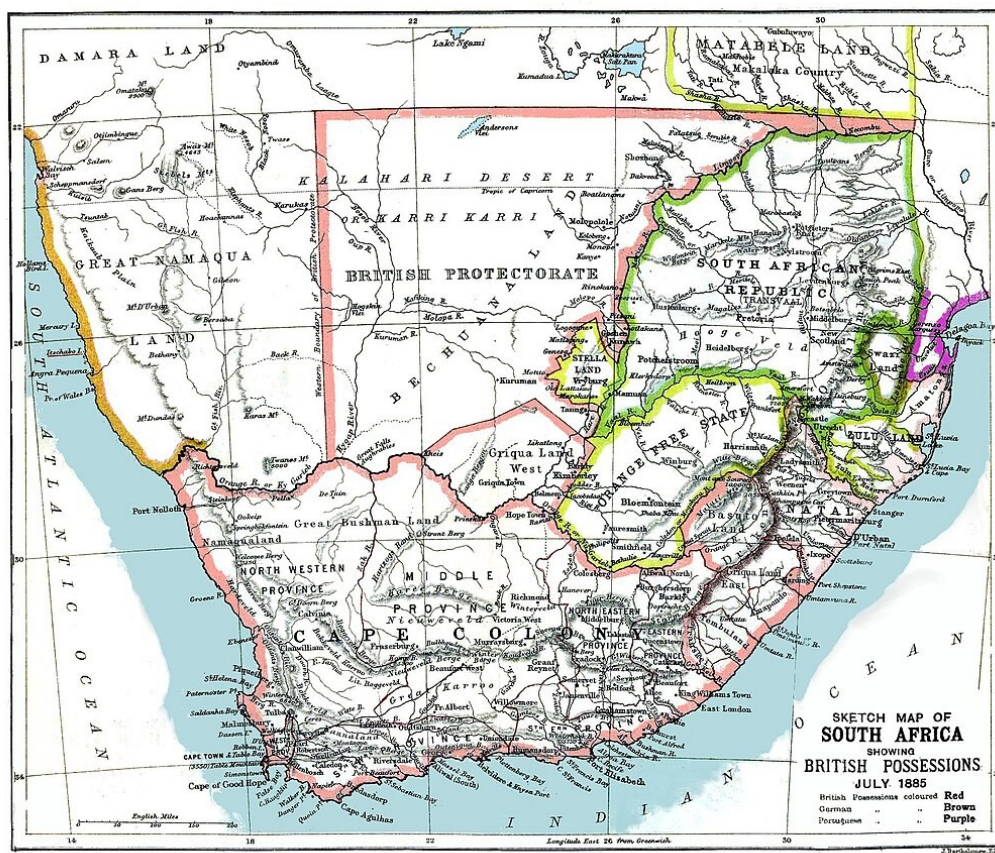


Figure 12 – South Africa in 1885

Credit: [John George Bartholomew](#) (1860–1920), public domain

Despite an attempt by the Cape Colony to annex Basutoland in 1871 together with subsequent revolts and civil war, Basutoland returned to its status as a British colony in 1884 under the [Treaty of Basutoland](#) and remained a British colony/protectorate until 1966, when the Kingdom of Lesotho attained full independence.

Since independence, Lesotho has had a rough time establishing a peaceful, functioning state. In the initial period after independence, the King had considerable executive authority. In response to popular agitation, a new [constitution](#) was proclaimed in 1993 that limited royal authority. An [election in 1993](#) did not entirely settle things. In 1994 there were [mutinies](#) by police, prison guards, and soldiers followed by a short lived coup d'etat by King Letsie III and some loyal army officers.

The return to democratic government did not lead to stability. In response to the incipient civil war, armed forces from member of the [Southern African Development Community](#) (SADC), led by the [South African National Defence Force](#) occupied [Lesotho in 1998](#) and restored order. The SADC forces left Lesotho in 1999. Since then, while not without controversy and the usual democratic churn, Lesotho has remained relatively stable.

Geopolitics



Figure 13 – Maseru from Parliament Hill

[Credit: OER Africa, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license](#)

Lesotho's internal problems include poverty, political stability, and corruption. Poverty is the most pressing problem, as shown in the low per capita GDP of \$3,234 as well as more dire outcomes from poverty such as an infant mortality rate of 45.7 deaths/1,000 live births and a maternal mortality ratio of 478 deaths/100,000 live births (for comparison, Canada has an infant mortality rate of 4.3 deaths/1,000

live births and a maternal mortality ratio of 12 deaths/100,000 live births). Some people, are just leaving the country, often the most skilled and ambitious.

Grinding poverty is an invitation to political instability. Poor people with little to lose are an easy mark for ambitious politicians seeking office. And what do they do when they get into office? Help themselves to generous opportunities for [graft and corruption](#), of course. Lesotho ranks 99/180 in terms of corrupt governments, according to [Transparency International](#) with politicians being accused of getting away with all sorts of crime and corrupt practices. But there are limits, in 2017 Prime Minister [Thomas Thabane](#) had his former wife killed following a messy divorce. Although charged, Thabane was not [convicted of the murder](#). Still it was a step in the right direction.

There have been other improvements in the corruption front as well, a Lesotho government agency, the [Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences](#) (DCEO), [documented](#) 220 reports of alleged corruption, money laundering, and related offences totalling M203.8 million in the 2024/2025 fiscal year.

Externally, Lesotho has only one main issue – [South Africa](#). South Africa is Lesotho's biggest trading partner. Also, while not a bad neighbour, the South Africans have intervened in Lesotho affairs in the past and could conceivably do so in the future. This is where cleaning up their internal affairs is important so as not to give the South Africans an excuse to intervene.

Further afield, [China](#) has been building political and commercial relations with African countries, and [Lesotho is no exception](#). In 2023 Lesotho imported \$168M worth of goods from the Peoples Republic of China as well as \$54.9M from Taiwan. Given Chinese interest in Africa, it is worthwhile keeping an eye on developments in Chinese investments and trade in Lesotho and neighbouring South Africa.

That kind of wraps up this brief look at Lesotho. It is hard to see how the country can easily break out of the poverty trap, but it is not impossible or inconceivable. Taking the revenues from diamond production and investing them in education and infrastructure could go a long way to improving people's lives. As it stands now, the money siphoned off by corrupt politicians can only be seen as the kind of malinvestment that guarantees future misery in the country. The struggle for transparency and an end to corruption is thus critical for the future of ordinary people in Lesotho. It could get interesting.

Standard Caveat

[J. Robert Oppenheimer on freedom and scientific inquiry](#)

The purpose of my weblog postings is to spark people's curiosity in geology. Don't entirely believe me until you've done your own research and checked the evidence. If I have sparked your curiosity in the subject of this posting, follow up with some of the links provided here. If you want to, go out into the field and examine some rocks on your own with the help of a good field guide. Follow the evidence and make up your own mind.

In science, the only authority is the evidence.