



GREAT KINGS & QUEENS OF AFRICA

KING EZANA



The first kingdom in Ethiopia was known as Da'amat and was established in 980 BC in east Africa on modern-day Ethiopia. After the decline of the kingdom of Da'amat in 400 BC numerous smaller African states ruled the area of Ethiopia until eventually the Ethiopians established the Kingdom of Aksum in the year 100 AD. The capital was then moved from Yeha to Axum which was located in northern Ethiopia. The territory the kingdom encompassed modern-day northern Ethiopia, Yemen, southern Arabia, Eritrea and Djibouti. Ezana succeeded his father King Ousanas and became the king and ruler of Aksum in 330 AD. During his reign, the Aksumite Empire was thriving in trade, as it controlled the Red Sea routes which brought the kingdom merchants from other regions. The coin currency of Aksum was used as far away as India in Asia. During this time of prosperity, Ezana was responsible for the expansion of the kingdom to cover new lands in modern-day Sudan and Somalia. King Ezana is credited with introducing and converting Ethiopia to the Christian religion. Originally in Axum, the Ethiopians were monotheistic and worshipped 'Waaq' which is the name of God in the Oromo religion which was in

operation during the early stages and prior to the establishment of the kingdom. The king had been influenced by Frumentius, who was a Christian Syrian slave who the Ethiopian King Ousanas had captured and made a bishop. In 330 AD the official state religion was changed to Christianity by King Ezana.

Ethiopian was described by a Persian writer as:

**“ONE OF THE FOUR GREATEST POWERS
IN THE WORLD AT THE TIME”**

King Ezana minted coins with the sign of cross on them so as to spread his religion throughout the empire and neighboring kingdoms and trading partners. Due to this, the coins are noted as the first coins ever found in the world to possess the Christian symbol. The history of King Ezana is captured in an ancient African monument named the 'Ezana Stone', the stone describes how Ezana established Christianity as the state religion and is written in three languages namely Geez (Ethiopian Semetic), Sabeen (South Arabian) and Greek. King Ezana is remembered as a strong leader and champion for Christianity within the region.