

**GLOBAL HISTORY I  
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS  
DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2009**

**I. Powerful African Kingdoms**

Answer the questions at the bottom of the page on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper.

**Egypt's early civilization was not the only one to develop in Africa. Powerful kingdoms also appeared in Kush (or Cush) and Axum (or Aksum) toward the end of ancient times.**

**Kush was located in the upper Nile Valley, where Sudan is today. It was the first civilization to develop south of the Sahara Desert. During its existence from 1000 B.C. to A.D. 150, Kush traded with India and Egypt. Its culture, in fact, was amazingly similar to that of Egypt.**

**The Kushite capital city of Meroë bore evidence of the architectural skills of its people. The Kushites built great temples and beautiful brick mansions, as well as reservoirs and tanks for storing water. They constructed pyramids in the manner of the Egyptians, except their pyramids were flat at the top instead of pointed. Because their written language has yet to be deciphered, little else is known of Kushite culture.**

**The other early African kingdom, Axum, existed from about 900 B.C. to A.D. 600 in what is now Ethiopia. It was centered southeast of Kush near the Red Sea. The Axumites were a trading people who sold ivory and other goods in Persia, Arabia, India, and Asia Minor. One of their kings, Ezana, conquered the Kushite city of Meroë, as well as parts of Arabia. To commemorate his victories, he built several needle-shaped obelisks, which still stand today. King Ezana and the Axumites converted to Christianity in the 4th century. Today, over half the population of Ethiopia belongs to a Christian church that is similar in its beliefs to the Greek, or Eastern, Orthodox Church.**

**Later, even greater empires like those of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai appeared on the coast of west Africa. But these empires, for the most part, spanned the years of the Middle Ages rather than those of ancient times.**

*Circle the letter of each correct answer.*

1. An early African civilization that was located in what is now Ethiopia was
 

a. Kush	b. Mali	c. Axum
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2. Present-day Sudan was the site of ancient
 

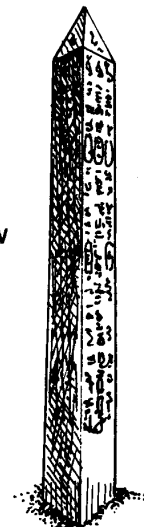
a. Kush	b. Ghana	c. Axum
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3. Meroë was
 

a. a king of the Axumites	b. the capital city of Kush	
c. a river west of the Nile		
  
4. In the 4th century, Christianity became the state religion in the area that is now
 

a. Ethiopia	b. Sudan	c. Songhai
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5. Ezana was a king of the
 

a. Kushites	b. Egyptians	c. Axumites
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6. The Washington Monument in our nation's capital is an example of a needle-shaped pillar called a (an)
 

a. pyramid	b. aqueduct	c. obelisk
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## II. King Ezana of Axum

Answer the “Questions to Think About” at the bottom of the page on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper.

King Ezana ruled Axum, now Ethiopia, for several decades in the middle of the fourth century. Although relatively little is known about Ethiopia before the twelfth century, the period of Ezana’s reign was preserved, in part, because of the many inscriptions he left behind. Ezana’s conversion to Christianity transformed his kingdom into one of the world’s first Christian states but isolated the area from the Islamic states in Africa. ♦ *As you read, note how Ezana’s conversion to Christianity affected the history of Axum. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

### King Ezana of Axum (mid-fourth century)

While he was still a child, Ezana succeeded his father as king of Axum. His mother, Sofya, served as his regent, or acting ruler, until he was old enough to rule the country himself.

King Ezana ruled over a prosperous kingdom. He also built a military force that conquered neighboring lands. He recorded information about the vast territory of his kingdom and his extensive military conquests in the form of inscriptions, which are words or letters that are written or engraved on a surface. He made inscriptions on stone monuments, or stelae, and also on coins.

As king, Ezana extended the boundaries of Axum and increased its control of the Red Sea trade. He led a campaign to the west toward the Nubian state of Kush, which is today southern Egypt and northern Sudan. Some scholars believe he sent forces to conquer the ancient city of Meroë, the capital of Kush. This contributed to the downfall of that kingdom.

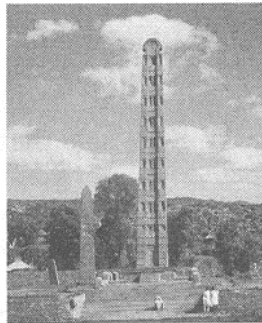
One of the most historic aspects of Ezana’s reign was his conversion to Christianity in 333. After his conversion, he made Christianity the state religion. Also as a result

of his conversion, Axum was brought into closer contact with Christian nations of the eastern Mediterranean and became allied with Christian Rome.

Like his military conquests, Ezana’s conversion was documented in inscriptions. He covered stone monuments in Geez (Ethiopia’s first written language), South Arabian, and Greek, praising God for his military victories. Ezana also inscribed gold coins with the Christian Cross. Before this, coins in Axum were usually inscribed with symbols of Axum’s traditional religions or an image of its king.

Ezana is noted for leading building efforts in his kingdom’s capital and may have been responsible for the construction of the great obelisks—tall, slender, four-sided stone pillars that rise to a pyramid at the top—which can still be seen in Ethiopia today.

With the rise of Islam several centuries later, Christian Axum, now Ethiopia, became isolated from the other African states. Even today, Ezana’s influence on the region is still evident: more than half of all Ethiopians—nearly 30 million people—are Christians.



**The tallest stela still standing at Axum**

### Questions to Think About

1. How was information about King Ezana’s reign documented?
2. What are some of King Ezana’s contributions to Axum?
3. **Recognize Cause and Effect** What impact did Ezana’s conversion to Christianity have on his reign and on modern-day Ethiopia?