

WHO WAS KING EZANA?

The king who made Ethiopia and Eritrea Christian — and whom almost nobody is taught

1. He ruled Aksum in the fourth century

c. 320–360 CE — the kingdom of the stelae, the port of Adulis, and Africa's first gold coinage.

2. He was raised by a shipwrecked Syrian

Frumentius and his companion Aedesius, from Tyre, were taken to the Aksumite court. Frumentius became tutor to the young prince.

3. His family has names

His father was Ousanas, whom Ethiopian tradition calls Ella Amida. His mother is remembered as Sofya. His brother Saizana was baptised with him.

4. Around 328–330, his tutor sailed to Alexandria

Frumentius asked Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, for a bishop for the Christians of Aksum. Athanasius consecrated Frumentius himself.

5. He and his brother were baptised

The first Christian kings of Ethiopia. The church remembers them as Abba Atsbeha and Abba Saizana — saints of the Tewahedo church.

6. The proof is on the coins

His father's coins carry the disc and crescent: the sun and the moon. His carry the cross. The same mint, one generation, one reign.

7. Christianity came in the FOURTH century — not the first

The official baptised in Acts 8 served the kandake of Kush, in what is now Sudan, and went home to Meroë. The highlands had no church before Ezana.

8. His kingdom was not small

It wrote in three languages — Ge'ez, South Arabian, and Greek. Its coins are found as far away as India. The Roman emperor Constantius II wrote to him by name.

The church he founded is seventeen centuries old. His name is not taught. It should be.

From THE KING WHO GAVE US THE CROSS · HAILE OKBASION