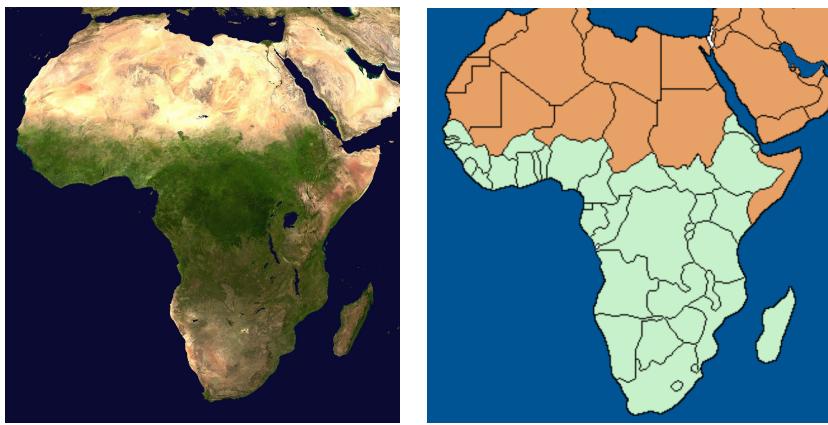


## VI. Africa and the World We Live In

### A. A Focus on *Sub-Saharan* Africa

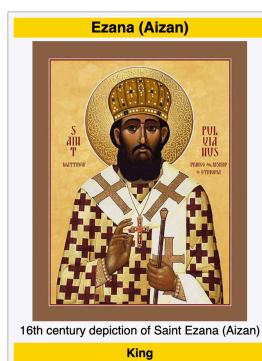
1. Africa is a huge continent, larger than China, the United States, India, and Europe combined! It is also dozens of countries, which makes it complicated to study.
2. One thing that makes it easier, is that Africa is divided into *two* cultural blocks.
3. In the north, there is the Islamic world, and south of the Sahara desert is “Sub-Saharan” Africa.
4. The people of Sub-Saharan Africa lived in tribes before the arrival of Europeans, and they did not write history (they were “a-historical”).



The physical geography (left) and cultural geography (right) are an almost perfect match. Northern Africa is part of Islamic Culture. Sub-Saharan Africa is its own distinct cultural block.

### B. Where Does the Story Begin?

1. The *story* of Africa begins when the Europeans arrive, and Africa is dominated during that story by Europe, like South Asia was dominated by Islam and later Britain.
2. There are bits of information, but they do not permit a meaningful story to be constructed. They only hint at what life was like in certain places.
3. Among the pieces of information about an ancient kingdom in Ethiopia, which was once called “Aksum,” is that a king named Ezana captured some slaves from the Roman world, including a Christian monk named Frumentius, c.350 AD.
4. We know about these events partly because of the *Ezana Stone*, which is similar to the more famous Rosetta Stone of Egypt. The Ezana Stone has three forms of writing on it, including ancient Greek. It records the deeds—especially wars—of king Ezana.
5. After Ezana, an occasional event connects Aksum to other cultures, such as the arrival of Muslims in the early 600s from Arabia, but there is not enough to create a story.



Frumentius (left) was taken as a slave by Aksumites, and became the personal slave of king Ezana (middle) whom he converted to Christianity, as we know in part from the *Ezana Stone*—a stele that records the great events of the kingship of Ezana in three languages, including ancient Greek.