

# African and Mesoamerican Civilizations

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# African Civilizations 1500 B.C.- 700 A.D.

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- Second largest continent in the world
- Largest African deserts: Sahara (north) size of the United States and Kalahari (south)
- Rain forest: dense canopy, deadly insects, and hard to live in.
- Savanna: grassy plains, mountainous highlands, swampy topical stretches, most people live in this region.

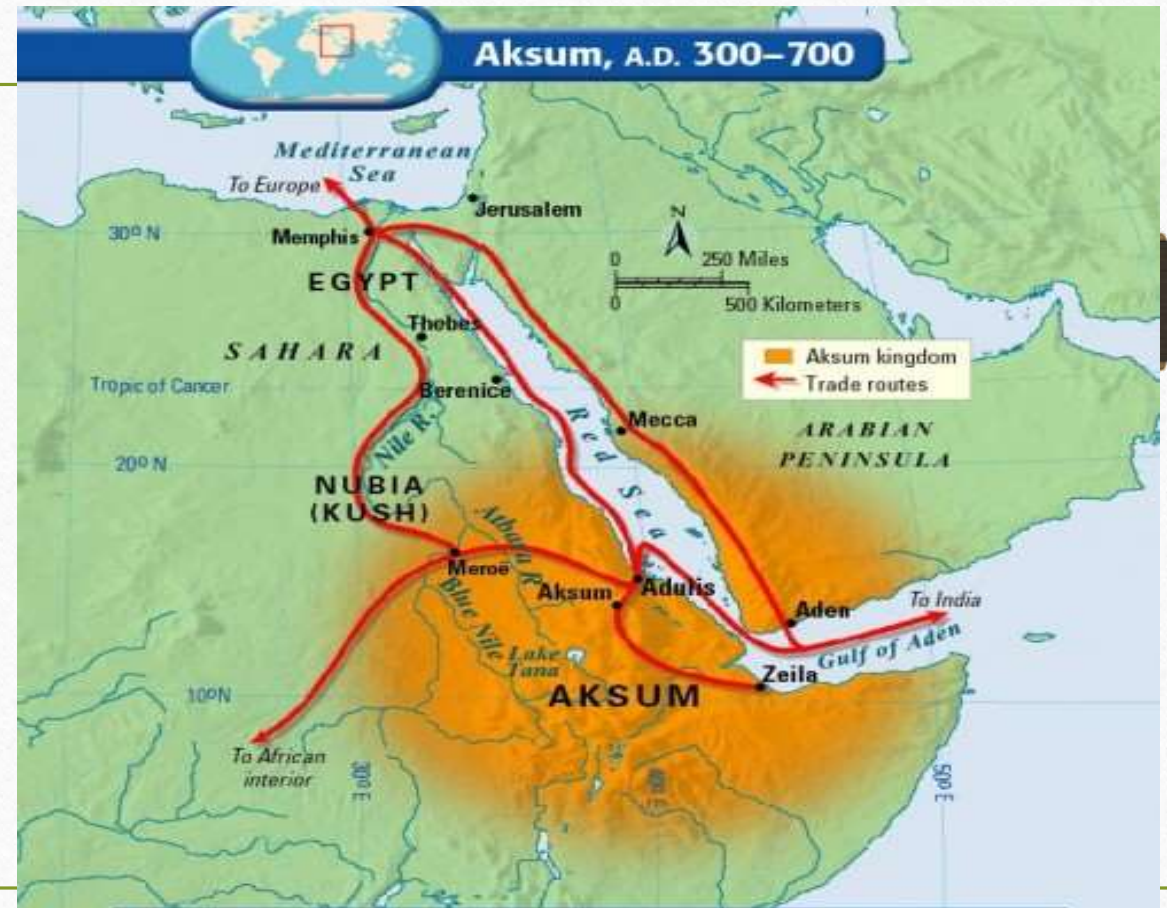


# Early Human Adapt to Lifestyle

- Earliest people were nomadic, some people are still nomadic today.
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- Hunted with spears and arrows.
  - Herders learned to domesticate animals: goats, cattle and sheep.
  - Adapted to regions.
  - Agriculture changed the way of life = permanent settlements
  - Local Religions: Family groups common belief systems, most believed in one god and included animism, spirits play an important role in daily life.

# The Kingdom of Aksum

- Origins: Major trade center. Lasted until 1975.
- Aksum established: trading of silks, textiles and spices. Merchants traded salts, rhinoceros horns, tortoise shells, ivory, emeralds and golds.
- Diverse culture. Egyptians, Arabs, Greeks, Romans. Persians, and Indians.
- Religions: spread Christianity and animists (spiritual offerings).



# Mesoamerica

- Mesoamerica: Stretches south from central Mexico to northern Honduras
- 3,000 years ago the first complex American societies develop



# The Olmec

- First known civilization builders 1200 B.C.
- Jungles of southern Mexico
- Influenced other cultures, “mother culture”
- Geography: Gulf Coast, hot, humid, swamps, jungle and up to 100 inches of rainfall a year
- Geographical advantages: salt and tar for pottery, wood and rubber, stone for tools and monuments, floods for farming.



# Olmec Society

- Archeologist discovered courtyards, mounds and pyramids, columns, altars, giant sculpted heads (44 tons), tombs, and stone jaguars.
- Worshiped the jaguar = rain god, earth, fertility and maize.
- Prosperous trading community: iron, and stones.
- Decline = believed that outside invaders caused destruction.
- Legacy: influenced the Maya, urban design and ceremonies.





# Zapotec

- Zapotec: rise after the fall of the Olmec
- Olmec influences. Located in modern day Oxaca, Mexico.
- Geography: rugged region of mountains and valleys. Fertile soil, mild climate, and enough rainfall to support agriculture.



# Zapotec Society

- Constructed large stone platforms, temples, writing and a calendar system.
- Built first American urban center: Monte Alaban, prosperous city of 15,000 people.
- Legacy: writing system, calendar, cities.



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