

February 3, 1995
Elim International Fellowship
Brooklyn, New York
Black History Month

GREAT BLACK EMPIRES By Randolph Jackson

Egypt

At the height of her power, Egypt was the greatest state in the world.

The Kings of Palestine and Syria sent tribute to the King of Egypt, who known as Pharaoh. Included in Pharaoh's dominion was The Red Sea coast all the way down to Somalia, as were the Tribes of the Sudan. Cyprus, Crete and the Greek Islands were Egyptianized. Egypt's armies raided the adjoining islands of Europe for slaves.

The Egyptian calendar went back to 3285 BC. Egyptian civilization lasted for thousands of years, long enough for its thinkers and scientists to have carried research to a high degree.

The first king of all Egypt was Menes, whose pictures and statues portray him as a dark-skinned Black man.

Thirty-three centuries before Christ, Egypt was divided into two kingdoms, Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt.

The great Black Ethiopian King, Menes, united these two kingdoms by conquest. Subsequent Pharaohs bore the title King of Upper and Lower Egypt.

Menes founded the City of Memphis, named for him, in 3100 BC.

Egyptian civilization crossed the Mediterranean and became the foundation of Greek culture. The Greeks sent their young men to be educated in Egypt. The real father of medicine is not Hippocrates, the Greek, but Imhotep, a Black man, who lived 2,000 years before him.

Imhotep lived about 3000 BC, and was a towering figure. He was an architect, astronomer, poet, philosopher and chief physician to Zoser, the King of Egypt.

Thotmes III, who lived 15 centuries before Christ, built the first real empire in known history. He conquered territories in Asia Minor and along the Euphrates River to Libya and the upper Nile. He is known as the Napoleon of antiquity.

What made Egypt great? Some of the factors were the Nile River, a hot climate, and outlets to the Mediterranean Sea and to the Red Sea.

It is said that Egypt is the Nile. The Nile River, flowing to the sea, brings deposits of black soil; creating land suitable for farming from the desert. The annual flooding of the Nile River was an incentive to learning, leading to the study of astronomy and geometry, which were, in turn, valuable in construction, engineering and warfare.

The Nile River was a source of communication and of transportation, binding together upper Egypt and lower Egypt. The concentration of people around the Nile encouraged ship construction and stimulated maritime trade in the Mediterranean Sea, which connects Africa, Asia and Europe.

The Black African Kings of the Fourth Dynasty built the pyramids. The

Great Pyramid was built in 2590 BC by King Khufu. It is the oldest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World and the only one still surviving. Four hundred and eighty-one feet high, for more than 43 centuries it was the tallest building in the world.

His nephew, King Khafre, built the Sphinx.

The Sphinx is the portrait/statue of a Black King and its African features are unmistakable.

Ethiopia (Cush, Thebes, Nubia, Kush, Axum, Meroe)

The ancient Ethiopian Empire included most of what is now Egypt and extended southward through present-day Ethiopia.

The Cushite Empire in Africa extended far and wide: to the Red Sea, to the Axumite Kingdom in the South, to Lake Chad and Uganda. The Cushites traded with Austria, India, China, Egypt, and Axum. Ethiopia dispatched her ambassadors to the known nations of her day.

The City of Thebes (No or Nowe) was the oldest and greatest center of Black civilization. It was founded in pre-history. Many of its formerly great temples were prehistoric ruins 5,000 years ago.

The Kingdom of Cush was located in the Eastern Sudan near the Red Sea, on both sides of the Nile River, in the territory occupied by the modern nation of Sudan.

There were two civilizations of the Ethiopian people. One was in the highlands of Ethiopia with its capital at Axum/Aksum. The second was located in the region of modern Sudan with its capital, either at Napata, or at other times at Meroe.

In the Eighth Century BC, the King of Northern Ethiopia, Piankhi, left his capital of Napata and invaded Egypt. He conquered Memphis, the capital of Egypt and established the supremacy of Ethiopia over Egypt. In 712 BC his successor, Shabaka, another Ethiopian King, established the 25th dynasty in Egypt, known as the Ethiopian Dynasty. The third king in the 25th Egyptian Dynasty was Taharka, son of Piankhi. He is named in the Bible (Isaiah 37:9) as a King of Ethiopia.

After 661 BC the Blacks were pushed out of Egypt and retreated south from Thebes to Napata. Napata was known for its abundant gold. In 590 Napata was destroyed and the capital moved across the river to Meroe. Meroe, like Napata, was located on the banks of the Nile. It was formerly known as Sheba, or Saba.

In 370 AD the City of Meroe and the Ethiopian Empire were both destroyed by forces from the Kingdom of Axum to the south. King Ezana unified Axum; integrated Yemen into the empire and destroyed Kush.

The Moors

Who were the Moors? The original Moors, like the original Egyptians, were Black Africans. The word Moor literally means Black, so the Moors were the Black people.

Eurocentric historians argue that Europe gave civilization to Africa, which is a complete inversion of the truth. The first civilized Europeans were the

Greeks, who were chiefly civilized by the Africans of the Nile Valley. The Greeks transmitted this culture to the Romans, who finally lost it, bringing on a dark age of five hundred years. Civilization was restored to Europe when another group of Africans, the Moors, brought this dark age to an end, re-civilizing the Christian Barbarians of Europe.

During the Golden Age of Islam, the Moorish Empire, with territory in both Africa and Europe, was the most advanced state in the world.

A great African General named Tarik successfully invaded Spain in 711 AD at the head of an army of 12,000 men. He landed at a place later re-named in his honor the Hill of Tarik or, in Arabic, Gebel Tarik, which later became corrupted to Gibraltar.

It was because the conquering army in Spain was largely made up of Africans from Morocco that we hear such phrases as "The Moorish Invasion of Spain," and why Shakespeare's hero, Othello, is a Moor, and why the word "Blackamoor" exists in the English language, a word which leaves no doubt as to the color of the army of occupation in Spain.

Moorish monarchs lived in splendid palaces, while the crowned heads of England, France, and Germany lived in big barns, lacking both windows and chimneys, with only a hole in the roof for the emission of smoke.

Education was universal in Moorish Spain, available to the most humble, while in Christian Europe ninety-nine percent of the population was illiterate, and even Kings could neither read nor write.

Scientific progress in astronomy, chemistry, physics, mathematics, geography, and philosophy flourished in Moorish Spain.

By 1492, the Moors had lost all of Spain except the Kingdom of Granada. The Moorish ruler, King Boabdil, was driven out of Spain by the resurgent Christian forces of Ferdinand and Isabella in the year that Columbus visited the New World. Numerous Moors lingered in Spain awhile, but by 1610, through expulsion and migration, about a million of them had returned to North and West Africa.

The decline and fall of the Moorish Empire was a great setback to modern civilization. Had this great African culture been able to survive, the world would be five hundred years more advanced than it is today.

Ghana

The ancient Black Empire of Ghana, known as the Land of Gold, was established in the western Sudan. The northern boundary of this region is the Sahara Desert. The western and southern borders are Lake Chad.

The Niger River flows through this region and was important for trade, travel and war boats.

The King of Ghana had two titles: Kayamaga, meaning Master of Gold and Ghana, meaning War Chief.

The ancient capital of Ghana was Kumbi, located in the southern part of what is now Mali. The known history of Ghana extends for 44 kings before the Christian era.

The pre-eminence of Ghana was based on gold and iron. The use of iron revolutionized the social and military systems.

In 1010 AD, the King of Ghana converted from Judaism to Islam. His

name was Za Kasi and he ruled from the Great City of Gao on the upper Niger River in what is now Mali.

At this time, the King of Ghana was the ruler of a great empire and could organize an army of two hundred thousand men.

The world-renowned University of Sankore was at Timbuktu.

It is believed that the reasons for the decline of the Empire of Ghana (not to be confused with the modern nation of the same name) include: the southward expansion of the Sahara Desert, drought leading to famine, and civil strife over the succession to the throne.

Mali

The Empire of Mali is also called the Mellestine Empire.

The people of this empire were Black Africans of the Mandingo tribe. This tribe was originally situated in what are now Guinea and Sierra Leone and points north. Their capital was called Niani on the banks of the upper Niger River.

The Mandingos were a successful agricultural people. This contributed to a rapidly growing population. The Mandingos developed market towns that later grew into cities and states.

The imperial system in Mali was founded and organized by the Mandinka King, Sundiata, at about 1240 AD. One hundred years later, a great and powerful king emerged in Mali. His name was Mansa Musa. He extended the empire of Mali from the Atlantic Ocean to Northern Nigeria, and from Mauritania to Guinea and the Ivory Coast. In 1326 his forces took Gao, the capital of Ghana or Songhay and he subjugated the Songhay people.

In 1326 Mansa Musa made a famous pilgrimage to Mecca, the Holy City of the Muslims. He had with him 500 slaves, each carrying a rod of gold weighing 6 pounds, and 60,000 mounted warriors for protection. He dispensed his gold liberally along the way and in Mecca as a gift of charity. It was said that, ten years later, the economy of Egypt was still affected by his visit.

The City of Timbuktu in what is now Mali was founded in the latter part of the 1st Century AD. Mansa Musa is remembered not only for his pilgrimage to Mecca and his military conquests, but also for the great buildings he erected in his capital of Timbuktu.

The Songhay Empire

Also Known As the Empire of Timbuktu

The Songhay Empire arose in the 15th Century AD, on the foundations of the earlier Empire of Mali, and lasted until approximately 1590 AD. The Songhay Empire was even greater in land area than the Empire of Mali. At its peak, it stretched from the Atlantic Ocean past Lake Chad to the Sudan.

The Songhay Empire was founded in 1464 by Sonni Ali, a common soldier of the Songhay people. His center was Gao, the Capital of Ghana or Songhay. He rebelled against the rule of Kankan Musa who had subjugated his people and he conquered all the territory from Timbuktu to the Atlantic Ocean.

After the death of Sonni Ali, the Songhay Empire was further expanded and consolidated by his greatest General, Mohammed Ben Abu Bekr, who became known as Askia the Great. Askia took his name, which means "usurper",

from the fact that he seized the throne from the son of Sonni Ali, whom he considered unworthy.

Askia established harmony among the conflicting religious and political elements of his vast realm. He divided the empire into four parts, placing a Viceroy over each. He constructed harbors and dug canals along the mighty Niger River and its tributaries. He built a merchant fleet and a war fleet to facilitate commerce and to protect it.

His ships traded with Portugal and the Mediterranean. His land caravans went to Cairo, Egypt, Algiers, Morocco and Baghdad.

Timbuktu, the cultural capital of Songhay, became the center of the Mohammedan world and was known as the "Queen of the Sudan" and the "Mecca of the Sudan". Science and learning flourished. Wise men of whatever color or religion were welcomed at Timbuktu, where they were handsomely subsidized and honored. Timbuktu was one of the world's great centers of learning and commerce.

About 1495 Askia emulated Mansa Musa of Mali and made another famous pilgrimage to Mecca and the holy cities of the east with a huge entourage of many thousands of foot soldiers and horse men.

In 1591 El Mansur of Morocco defeated Songhay

Other Great Black Empires: Makuria and Monomotapa

Makuria

From 700-1200 AD, Makuria was more empire than kingdom.

It was organized into 13 major states with a Sub-King over each and the "King of Kings" over all.

The capital was Dongola in what is now Sudan.

In 1323 Makuria came to an end, due to Arab domination.

Monomotapa (Zimbabwe)

Advent: 1400 AD

People: Vakaranga immigrants

Land Area: North — Zambezi River and Rhodesia. West — to the Kalahari. East — past Mozambique to the Indian Ocean. South — into the Transvaal in South Africa.

Iron technology, diversified economic activities, interstate trading, foreign commerce over the Indian Ocean, terrace farming, iron, gold, copper, tin mines.

Founder: Mutota

Date: 1440 AD.

Construction of Note: The Great Zimbabwe

Decline and Reasons: Death of Matope – 1480. Rise of Zulu Empire under Shaka.

Bibliography

Bernal, Martin. *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*. Vol I, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987.

Davidson, Basil. *The Lost Cities of Africa*. 1959. Rev. Ed., New York: Little, Brown, 1987.

Diop, Cheikh A. *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, Chicago Review Press, 1974.

Diop, Cheikh A. *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, Chicago Review Press, 1991.

Dunston, Alfred G. *The Black Man in the Old Testament and Its World*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1992.

Harris, Joseph E. *Africans and Their History*. New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1972.

Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Houston, Drusilla D. *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Cushite Empire*. Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 1985.

Jackson, John G. *Ethiopia and the Origin of Civilization*. Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 1939.

Lane-Poole, Stanley. *The Story of the Moors in Spain*. Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 1990.

McCray, Walter A. *The Black Presence in the Bible*. 2 Vols., Chicago: Black Light Fellowship, 1990.

Parker, George W. *The Children of the Sun*. Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 1981.

Redford, Donald B. *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Robinson, W.R. *Roots, Race and Religion, Vol. I*. Republic of Trinidad & Tobago: The College Press, 1987.

Rogers, J.A. *The Real Facts about Ethiopia*. Baltimore, Maryland: Black Classic Press, 1936.

Rogers, J.A. *World's Great Men of Color, Vol. I*. New York: McMillan Publishing Company, 1946.

Snowden, Jr., Frank M. *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco Roman Experience*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Van Sertima, Ivan & Rashidi, Runoko. *African Presence in Early Asia*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1985.

West, John A. *Serpent in the Sky: The High Wisdom of Ancient Egypt*. New York: The Julian Press, Crown Publishing Group, 1987.

Williams, Chancellor. *The Destruction of Black Civilization*. Chicago: Third World Press, 1987.

Windsor, Rudolph R. *From Babylon to Timbuktu*. Smithtown, NY: Exposition Press, 1969.

Copyright © 2003 by Randolph Jackson

All rights reserved.

Not for redistribution without the author's written permission.

To obtain copies please go to:

<http://www.blackpeopleinthebible.com/works.html>