

Dissin' Blacks in the Name of Science

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Part 9

Those race scholars that argue that Blacks are less intelligent than Whites buy into the racist notion that Black people have created no great civilizations. They point to poverty-stricken nations in Africa and the Caribbean as evidence that Blacks are, and always have been, incapable of producing great nations.

However, these scholars are woefully and willfully ignorant of the tremendous role that Blacks have played in the world. What is worse, many of these scholars try to hide Black contributions to the world. The fact of the matter, though, is that many people would be shocked to learn the truth about Black history and highly impressive Black achievement.

The best place to start would be in ancient times. Nubia (modern Sudan, known during ancient times as Cush or Kush) might have given the Egyptians the idea of the pharaoh. Indeed, Nubia was deeply interlinked with Egypt. Homer, the Greek poet, saw the Nubians as a glorious people. As was the case with Egypt, White scholars simply could not believe that Blacks were capable of producing such an outstanding civilization.

However, Timothy Kendall, associate curator of Egyptian and ancient near-Eastern art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts said: "Nubia became rich and powerful, something like oil states of today. Eventually, they became so powerful they were a threat to Egypt, and it became simpler for Egypt to take control." ("Ancient Nubian Empire getting a place in the sun," by Herbert G. McCann, Associated Press, *The Buffalo News*, April 5, 1992.)

Ancient civilizations, including the Egyptians, were astonished by the Nubians' prosperity. The Nubians not only had tremendous wealth in gold, but they had impressive gold processing technology. They built about 50 pyramids (which racist scholars at first dismissed as mere "mounds"), and scholars have discovered in recent years that the Nubian empire was as big as Egypt's.

King Tut's family was originally from Nubia. The famous bust of his mother, Queen Tiye, displays "characteristic negroid [sic] features," and depictions of his father Amenhotep III, and his brothers, King Smernkhare and King Ahkenaton have been referred to as "decidedly Negroid" by many scholars. Moreover, to quote McCann from the Associated Press article once again: "Most of the well-known treasures of Egypt, including those from the tomb of King Tutankhamen [Tut], were from Nubia, says Emily Teeter, curator at the Oriental Institute." (ibid.)

As a fascinating aside, it is not only racist scholars that have sought to erase the truth about Black people in history. Indeed, in the 1970s, White comedian Steve Martin had a song called "King Tut," in which he joked, "King Tut, he's funky, funky. funky. King Tut, he's my favorite honkey." Thus, under the supposedly harmless guise of humor, Black history is whitewashed, and the joke is on Black people.

Sub-Saharan Africans have long been described as people with no script or writing. However, that myth has been smashed to pieces. According to a BBC news story in 2008:

Three ancient statues, engraved with a little-understood sub-Saharan language, have been unearthed in Sudan. The ram statues symbolise the god Amun [also worshipped by the Egyptians], and include the first discovery of a complete royal dedication in Merotic script, only found before in fragments. It is the oldest written sub-Saharan language and dates from the Meroe period of 300 BC to AD 450. (“Sudan statues show ancient script” December 16, 2008 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7786361.stm>.)

On April 9, 2001, Ron Grossman of the *Chicago Tribune* reported on written works from the fabled city of Timbuktu, a leading seat of learning. Scholars were examining:

...3,000 manuscripts ranging from letters and fragments of works to complete books and covering a range of subjects that include theology, jurisprudence and history....Until recently, even distinguished scholars would have pooh-poohed the idea that such a cache of historical documents could exist in the heart of Africa....Black Africans were supposed to be illiterate, at least until 19th-century Christian missionaries taught them how to read and created written forms for native languages....in some cases [Black Africans] used the Arabic alphabet to create...written forms of local languages, such as Fulani. This process...was remarkably similar to the transmission of writing among European peoples. The Romans adopted their alphabet from the Greeks, for example, and in turn the Latin alphabet was adopted by the French, Spanish, English and German speakers and others to give written form to their languages. (“U.S. scholar proving that writing was present in African societies.”)

The South African government has aided in the preservation of 30,000 manuscripts from Timbuktu, to the tune of eight million dollars. According to a story on the Website of the BBC:,

Most of the manuscripts are in Arabic script, but contain many local languages. They provide unique insight into Timbuktu’s emergence as a trading post, and by the 1500s as a famous university town, full of students and scribes....Some of the documents discuss social and political problems, usually in an Islamic context, while others offer medicinal advice.... (Andrew Harding, “Saving Africa’s precious written heritage,” November 30, 2009, <http://news.bbc.uk/2/hi/africa/8386866.stm>)

Altogether, there are over 100,000 manuscripts in Timbuktu. According to the Website of *The Christian Science Monitor*:

The manuscripts in Arabic and African languages cover almost every conceivable subject from history and medicine and law and human rights, from astronomy and philosophy to conflict resolution and literature. It’s a Who’s Who of ancient kingdoms. Some are close to a thousand years old, written on paper, tanned gazelle skin, or tree bark, and they provide a rare glimpse into a pre-colonial African history of intellectual endeavor, historians say. (“In Timbuktu, a new move to save ancient manuscripts,” by Tristan McConnell, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0205/p01s02-woaf.html>.)

Mali was part of the mighty Songhai empire in the late 1500s. Other west African cities such as Kano and Gao also housed impressive manuscripts. Many historians believe that Africa was on the cusp of another golden age before the continent was ravaged by invasions of Arab and European conquerors. But you will never hear about any of this from bigoted scholars that are psychologically mortgaged to the idea that Blacks are hopelessly stupid.