

The Intellectual Warfare of Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers and the Battle for Ancient Nubia as a Foundational Paradigm in Africana Studies: Thoughts and Reflections

by

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Abstract

This article is intended to remind Africana scholars about what Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop called the necessary “pluridisciplinary skills” encompassing what he described as three factors: Historical, Linguistic, and Psychological. This has vast implications for the field of Africana Studies. African-Centered scholars engaging in what Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers called “Intellectual Warfare” are struggling against well-financed and organized European intellectual armies preparing to do battle with us to the end. In order to combat these challenges Africana scholars must be grounded in African-Centered theory, methodology and pedagogy. In this article I first explain what led me to become a soldier in this battle for the liberation of the African mind. Then I explain the importance of Nubian Studies to Africana Studies as a form of emancipatory thinking against those interlopers, Black and white, who would dismiss our intellectual struggle. Until we recognize that it was through ancient Nubia that Kemetic civilization flowed, we will continue to engage in debates based on the “modern falsification” of African history (Diop, 1974). Finally, this article is a call to arms for those African-Centered scholars who are seriously engaged in this work to realize that we need many more intellectual warriors in this struggle. It also provides those reluctant Africana scholars who either have never found their way home or

are still groping in darkness with tools to realize that there are African-Centered intellectual warriors waiting to train them in the necessary tools for battle.

Introduction

The field of Africana Studies has been under attack since *Newsweek* published its expose on Afrocentrism in September, 1978 (Adler et al., 1991). It seemed that for the first time European America discovered that African people in the United States had discovered a counter narrative to their meta-narrative that maintained that people of African descent in their neo-colonial possession were indeed, inferior. Our particular narrative is seated squarely in the civilizations of the Nile Valley, particularly ancient Kemet (Egypt) and Kush (Nubia). This was a difficult pill for the European intellectual community to swallow. Were the former colonized and ostracized now standing up for themselves and rewriting history, or what European American scholars referred to as revisionists' history? Even worse, were Afrocentrists actually teaching Black people about their connection to the Nile Valley and that the ancient people of Kemet and Kush were their ancestors? Was it possible that an area located in what has been called the North African Middle East and one of the birthplaces of Western society was now really the locus of African culture and civilization?

Europeans have had a monopoly on the construction of historiography relative to Kemet and Kush since the Napoleonic invasions of Egypt in 1798. From that point on there was a conscious and systematic effort to remove Egypt from Africa and consequently Africans from Egypt, replacing them, in the minds of naïve observers from afar, with an Arab population that did not arrive until 639 C.E. In Europe's haste to whitewash classical African history through the use of curricular and pedagogical planning, whole generations of African people were deprived of their rightful place in the history of humanity. Arguments made by European writers suggested that we fit firmly into the niceties of the Hegelian notion that we had no history or that we fit into G. Stanley Hall's view that we were part of the "great army of incapables" (Kliebard, 2004), who's attempt to know ourselves was impossible since, as a people, we were savages and childlike with no ethical or moral compass to guide us. Unfortunately, writers with these perspectives were mistaken.

We have a long and storied tradition of African scholars who have fought to keep the importance of our link to Nile Valley civilizations alive. These include such people as Martin Robeson Delany, Antonir Firmin, William Wells Brown, David Walker, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Henry Highland Garnet, George Washington Williams, Drusilla Dunjee Huston, and Hosea Easton, just to mention a few from the 19th century. In more contemporary times we have William Leo Hansberry, John G. Jackson, Willis N. Huggins, Chancellor Williams, John Henrik Clarke, Yosef Ben Jochannan, Ivan Van Sertima, Joel Augustus Rogers, Arthur Schomburg,


are still groping in darkness with tools to reCarter G. Woodson, Charles Wesley, W.E.B. DuBois, and J.C. DeGraft-Johnson. These pioneers of what has come to be known as Africana Studies served as forerunners to the contemporary greats such as Cheikh Anta Diop, Theophile Obenga, Molefi Asante, Maulana Karenga, Asa G. Hilliard, and so many more illustrious African-centered scholars along with the one that will be the focus of this work, Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers.

All of the aforementioned are engaging in what Dr. Carruthers referred to as “Intellectual Warfare.” This is an ongoing battle to rescue, reclaim, and restore African history, culture, language, spirituality, and ethos to its rightful place within the scope of African humanity from the clutches of European interlopers who have seized our glorious heritage and claimed it as their own. The field of Africana Studies serves as the only paradigm that meets the needs of African people. Whether we want to call it African-Centered Studies, Afrocentric Studies, or Africana Studies, the most important part of these nomenclatures is that we start with Africa as our center and that the focus of Africana Studies has its location in the Nile Valley, where the first cultural highway served as the womb for so much of African culture.

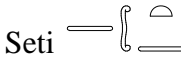

Opening the Way

The Black thinkers who analyzed the core of the European worldview have as it were become intellectual maroons. Like the maroons who declared their freedom in fact through their actions, the intellectual maroons have declared their freedom through their publicly stated thoughts. (Carruthers, 1999, p. 52)

Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers was not only a great scholar and teacher; he was my friend, mentor, and a very wise man. I first met him in 1976 when I attended Northeastern Illinois University’s Center for Inner City Studies (CICS), now officially known as the Jacob H. Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies (CCICS), as a graduate student in Inner City Studies. CCICS has always been a place where scholarly activity has been engaged utilizing an African-Centered worldview as its foundation. It was one of the main reasons that drew me to attend that particular unit of Northeastern Illinois University. At that time I was pretty well versed in several languages: Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish and Ancient Aramaic. I also had a solid background in what was then called Biblical Archaeology and other branches of what was known as Near Eastern Studies and African History. It was that foundation that led me to contemplate the nature and development of everything related to Ancient Egypt (Kemet). After meeting Dr. Carruthers and discovering that he too was interested in studying Nile Valley civilizations and the ancient Kemet language (Medew Netcher), I was encouraged by him to pursue that avenue of study along with several other dedicated CICS students and Black community members. At that point I literally immersed myself in the study of ancient Egypt.

I had been attempting to teach myself Medew Netcher  (Divine Speech),

the language of ancient Egypt, often misrepresented as Hieroglyphics, from the Greek (ἱερο-are still groping in darkness with tools to resacred) and (γραφω-writing) or sacred writing. Later I attended a class in the classical language of the Nile Valley, Middle Egyptian, through the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute at the Field Museum of Chicago in 1977 under the tutelage of Dr. James P. Allen. That summer CCICS started one of its many study tours to the Nile Valley, in which I participated. That trip took us to Dakar, Senegal and the University of Dakar, now known as Universite Cheikh Anta Diop, where we had lectures from several Senegalese scholars including the late Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop. We then traveled to Khartoum, Sudan where we had lectures on ancient Nubian civilization from such scholars as Dr. Yusuf Fadl Hassan. Then on to Nairobi, Kenya, Cairo, and Aswan, Egypt where we visited the temples, pyramids, tombs and monuments of the Nile Valley that we had spent so much time studying and preparing to do field research. Finally, we visited London to see the Egyptian antiquities housed in the British Museum. It was the trip of a lifetime and I subsequently made the journey again the following year in 1978.

It was during our stay in Khartoum that I really became excited about ancient Nubia and Kush. I had been attempting to learn Meroitic, the language of the ancient people of Nubia, Ta-Seti  and Kush  and study their history. While there I was fortunate enough to have full entrée into the National Museum of the Sudan while staying in Khartoum, thanks to Dr. Yusuf Fadl Hassan of the University of Khartoum. During that time I was given complete access to the museum. I was allowed into its research archives to gather whatever information I wanted, and the museum's staff was gracious enough to let me see whatever I wanted to see, ask any questions I wanted to ask and go anywhere in the museum I wanted to go. It was an experience I will always treasure.

From the moment we returned from that excursion to this day, over thirty years ago, I have been studying, researching, writing, and lecturing about ancient Nubian and Kushite civilizations as well as learning the Meroitic language. Since that time Nubia has become a serious new frontier for research and archaeology among European Egyptologists and Nubianologists whom have devoted their lives to the study of ancient Nubia. While some of them have done very honorable work, others have tried to disparage the antiquity of Nubia. Within that context, there are serious issues that need to be addressed by committed Africana scholars willing to devote the time and energy necessary to rescue, reclaim, and restore this vital aspect of classical African civilizations. In some cases European scholars have completely misrepresented this particular aspect of African antiquity.


Out of this experience grew the Kemetic Institute of Chicago (KI) founded in 1978 where I am a founding member and its current Associate Director. The Kemetic Institute is housed at CCICS. It is a scholarly organization for which Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers served as the intellectual thrust. The other founding members were Dr. Cliff Washington of Las Vegas, Nevada, Dr. Anderson Thompson, and Dr. Rekhty Amen-Jones, now of Holly Springs, MS., among others.











The Kemetic Institute is dedicated to the renewal of African civilization through research, artistic creativity, and spiritual development.ⁱ To accomplish these goals, the Institute operates through four primary commissions: Research, Education, Creative Productions and Spiritual Development (Carruthers, 1999, p. 13-14). Through these commissions the KI communicates its ideas and visions in courses, lecture series, seminars, research, publications and study tours. These four commissions also serve as research components of the Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations (ASCAC) established in February, 1984 at Los Angeles, California, of which the KI is a member organization (Carruthers & Harris, 2002).




The Importance of Nubian Studies for Africana Studies





Why is Nubian Studies important for African people on the continent of Africa, those in the Americas, especially the United States, and the field of Africana Studies? Why is the study of this phase of the Nile Valley important from the standpoint of establishing an African worldview? First, we must connect intellectually with the cultures of the Nile Valley to see the cultural continuity of classical African civilizations to the rest of African history (Diop, 1974). To do this requires a major paradigm shift in our thinking. It requires new ways of looking at old ideas. It demands of us a move inclusive of, but not exclusive to, what Dr. Anderson Thompson loves to refer to as “I love America Negro History.” It also requires an African frame of reference and an African-Centered worldview, which should serve as a foundation in the field of Africana Studies. Only then can we begin to mount a challenge and alternative to European hegemony in the field of Nubian and by extension Kemetic studies.

We cannot continue to rely on others, namely European academicians interested in Nubia, to appraise our heritage and define it from the standpoint of their worldview. We cannot continue to allow the European academic consensus, at a table where we have no seat, to validate our classical world simply because they possess hegemony over its research and antiquities. We must also realize that they are not always in agreement concerning substantive issues relative to African antiquity, especially Nubia, contrary to the united front they often appear to have. This can be witnessed by the fact that there are three different conferences held on Nubian Studies by three divergent groups of European scholars. There is one on Nubian Studies, one on Meroitic Studies, and one on Sudanese Studies.ⁱⁱ While there is some cross fertilization of membership, these conferences exist in mutually exclusive formats because of the failure of European scholars to form a consensus on the nature and scope of classical Nubian civilizations in the Nile Valley.

Therefore, it is time for us as Africana scholars and students of ancient African civilizations to present a united consensus on the ontology, history, politics, culture, and language(s) of ancient Nubia. Did we not follow the leads of Drs. Cheikh Anta Diop and Theophile Obenga in redefining Egypt as Kemet  (the Black Community, or Black Town)? This correct definition, of course, is in contrast to the current European Egyptological

definition of the ‘Black Land’, a supposed allusion to the alluvial Black soil which flows from the mountains of Ethiopia in inner Africa (Mertz, 1966). The fact that the determinative for land- Ta-  as used, for example, in the words -Tawi-  - “Two Lands” as in the United Two Lands, Upper and Lower Kemet or -Ta-  - ‘Earth’ or - Ta-Meri-    - “Beloved Land” or Ta-Netcher -  - “Land of the Divinity” or even Ta-Nehesi -    - “The Southern Land,” (Often mistranslated by European Egyptologists as ”Negro-Land”) (Faulkner, 1962, p. 293). Hence, the determinative for “land” does not appear in the word

Kemet, but the the determinative for “Community” or “Town” -niwet-  -does appear in the name Kemet -   . We are also clear that the ancient people of the Nile Valley also defined

themselves as Kemetiou-     - literally “The Black People.” It is also significant for us to recognize that what classical Nile Valley civilizations, which included ancient Nubia, are to Africans, is equivalent to what classical Greece and Rome are to Europeans (Diop, 1974). Greece and Rome represent the crucible of everything that defines Europeans as civilized citizens of the world even if the vast majority of them are not connected to Greek or Roman civilization in any way whatsoever. Hence, ancient Nubia should serve as the pinnacle of foundational culture and heritage for those who are dedicated to the field of Africana Studies for the historical, linguistic, and most importantly, psychological well-being of African people.

Intellectual Warfare and the Battle for Nubia: The Battle Lines

Those of us engaged in the field of Africana Studies can start by dismissing the ‘alphabet soup’ approach to defining ancient Nubian cultures as A-Group, C-Group, and X-Group. What ancient European groups are known by a letter of the alphabet? No matter how steeped in savagery they may have been, they were given dignity and humanity by European historiographers. By assigning letters to these various Nubian cultures rather than names respecting their various communities such as Yamm, Wawat and Irem that properly identifies their regional organizations as well as national names such as Sha’at, Iryshek, Tua, Webet-Sepat, Miu, Karoy, etc. (O’Connor, 1993); these ancient Africans have been relegated to the sphere of nothingness. They have been downgraded to the periphery of civilization when they were originally at the center of civilization in the Nile Valley. The subtle implications of these alphabetical definitions are that Africans had no land, language, or culture of any worth and subsequently, no history (Hegel, 1956).

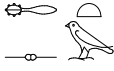
This alphabet soup of European academic consensus about ancient Nubia and Kush has stood since George Reisner of Harvard University established these definitions after his 1907 archaeological survey of Nubia proceeding the heightening of the Aswan High Dam in the years


1908-1910 (Shinnie, 1996). This is another example supporting the reality that the people, who live in the Nile Valley today, those descendants of the Arab invaders of 639 C.E., have absolutely no affinity with the antiquities of the past. What people who value their history would have it destroyed by creating a lake to drown its past? For the Arabs this is a no brainer. In the psychology of Islamic Arabs, the period prior to the Hegira, 622 C.E. is viewed as the Period of Ignorance. In Arabic it is called Jahaliyat- جهالة or Ignorance. Anything that was of historical importance before this time is considered of little or no importance. That includes peoples whom they have ‘Otherized’ and marked for genocide and menticide. Menticide is a term coined by the late Dr. Bobby E. Wright to define “the deliberate and systematic destruction of a group’s mind with the ultimate objective being the extirpation of that group” (Wright, 1981, p.16). Essentially, the terms mean the destruction of the minds of African people.

This sort of highjacking of classical African civilizations by European scholars and their Arab minions must stop. It would seem to me that a part of our obligation as dedicated Africana scholars interested in classical Nile Valley civilizations is to stop being defined by others and start defining ourselves. Isn’t that what the word Kugichagulia (self-determination) means: to define ourselves, name ourselves, and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created and spoken for by others?

Ancient Nubia has been slowly gaining significance among European academic sages interested in that portion of the Nile Valley known as Upper Egypt and the Sudan for some time now (Friedman, 2002; Midant-Reynes, 1992; O’Connor, 2011; Rice, 1990; Teeter, 2011; Wengrow, 2006; Williams, 1998). Part of their argument for a very long time has centered on the idea that the ancient Nubians were borrowers of ancient Egyptian civilization. Fortunately, those concepts are crumbling to the ground as recent publications and each deepening thrust of the spade is disproving these arguments with every new digging season (Wilkinson, 1999; Wilkinson, 2003). The notion that the Nubians were a population of uncivilized Southern ‘others’ waiting for the superior Northerners, viewed as white, and at best near eastern Asians, to impart the blessings of civilization upon them, is an intellectual and historical travesty. These blessings included spirituality, language, architecture, customs, and traditions (Redford, 2004).

Furthermore, they defined these ancient Nubians in the ancient texts as “wretched,” a term implying dejection, cowardice, profound unhappiness, misery, poverty, unsatisfactory abilities, contemptibility, and despicability. These classifications were based on the European

misinterpretation of the Medew Netcher word Kheset-  (Faulkner, 1962, p. 204). That word has assumed the legacy of a mantra in some European Egyptological circles when defining

Nubia. A more appropriate name for them is the term Nehesy - . It is often translated as “Negroes” in many books written by European Egyptologists (Breasted, 1909; Breasted, 2002). It is a word that should be properly defined as “Southerners” yet it is sometimes used in conjunction with Khset as a purjorative. This defamation of character implies

that Nubians were incapable of civilization and have the putrefaction of White Supremacist thinking so typical of western academicians concerned with this and other aspects of ancient African historiography. One author exhibited this notion in a recent book in which he describes the ancient Nubians, referring to them as Kushites, by explaining the nations the ancient Egyptians were familiar with in antiquity. He stated:

Differences in phenotype were rendered artistically on a large number of Egyptian monuments, but in the most systematic way, in scenes from the tombs of Ramesses III and Seti I showing the basic divisions of humankind. The depictions separated people into four ethnoid, each with stereotypical skin color, coiffure, and dress. The Egyptians are simply referred to as "people." They appear with red-brown skin, black shoulder-length hair, a simple white kilt and small trimmed beards....Asiatics (specifically Syro-Palestinians) appear with yellow-skin, a black bobbed hairstyle with a headband tied at the back, elaborately decorated kilts, and ample beards and mustaches. Nubians are shown with Black skin, broad flat noses, short hair in trimmer ringlets, hoop earrings, and decorated leather sashes over white Egyptian-style kilts. Finally Libyans appear with the lightest complexions, geometric tattoos, braided/ringletted hair with side-locks and two ostrich feathers, and wearing a loincloth under a long leather cloak showing the natural patterns of the cow's fur. (Tyson-Smith, 2003, p. 22)

What is wrong with the picture he just painted? Well, there are several things wrong with it. First, anyone who has visited the Valley of the Kings and viewed the iconography on the walls mentioned above in KV 17 (Kings Valley), the Tomb of Seti I or KV 11, the Tomb of Ramesses III, in particular, would see the flaws in this statement (Diop, 1977). Each of the depictions he outlines is grouped into images of four apiece making sixteen total images. Seti I's tomb does show depictions of the ancient Egyptians with reddish-brown skin; but this is nothing unusual as many African people exhibit various phenotypes including reddish-brown. What Tyson-Smith fails to say is that KV 11, the tomb of Ramesses III shows the Egyptians and the Nubians with identical complexions and phenotypes, i.e.; Black skin. In the pyramid tomb of Tanutamun in Kush, this Pharaoh is depicted with reddish-brown skin. Does this imply that he was not a Nubian? The distinction between the Nubians and the Kemites can only be made by reading the names of each group in Medew Netcher separating them. This too is not unusual as there are many tombs that show the same iconographic depictions. In fact, if one were to visit the Valley of the Nobles and view Tomb TT40 that is for Amenhotep, also known as Huy – Viceroy of Nubia during the 18th Dynasty reign of Tutankhamon, they would clearly see the Nubians with both Black and Brown complexions.


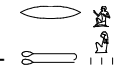
The unfortunate issue with so-called phenotypic descriptions is that the Black people of the Nile Valley in antiquity exhibited the same varieties of complexions seen among Black people walking the streets of the South Side and West Side of Chicago today. If one walked the streets of Nubia in the area of Luxor or even Khartoum or Shendi in the Sudan today the same

phenotypes and complexions would be observed. These so-called phenotypes have not changed since antiquity (Firmin, 2002). Interestingly enough, Tyson-Smith never addresses the aquiline noses and thin lips of the Libyans depicted in the tombs of Seti I and Ramesses III. Are they descendants of ancient European interlopers or Asian invaders? Tyson-Smith even seems to imply a superior aspect to them. The point to be made here is that during the period of time shown by the iconography in KV11, the Tomb of Ramesses III of the so-called 20th Dynasty, ancient Egyptians and ancient Nubians saw themselves as the same people physically and culturally.

Next, let's deal with Tyson-Smith's description of the Nubians with "Black skin and broad flat noses." This harkens back to the 18th and early 19th centuries when Europeans were conquering and colonizing the African continent and creating justifications based on imagined "racial" features to support the oppression, suppression, and repression of African people by creating stereotypical phenotypes. Thanks to the created field of anthropology these mythological notions are still taught as indisputable facts, thanks to Johannes F. Blumenbach, Arthur Joseph de Gobineau, Josiah Nott, and Samuel Morton Smith, among others, along with the American and British Schools of Anthropology (Painter, 2010).

Many of these ideas go back to the so-called Curse of Ham mythos perpetuated by Judeo-Talmudic literature and continued through Christian and Islamic discourses. First, starting with the collection of Jewish oral traditions called the Babylonian Talmud from the 2nd to the 6th century C.E. (Goldenberg, 2003; Harris, 1972) and later the works of Arab writers such as Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Kisai in his book "Tales of the Prophets" written in the 6th century (Al-Haqq, 2006). Later European thinkers such as David Hume, Charles Montesquieu, George W.F. Hegel, Thomas Jefferson, John Calhoun, Immanuel Kant, Jean Jacques Rousseau and others supported these false notions about African people and their supposed inferiority.

It is well known by those who are capable of reading and writing the ancient language of the Nile Valley called Medew Netcher or "Divine Speech" that the ancient Egyptians did not call themselves Egyptians. One of the key terms they used to describe themselves was Kemetioui-

 -Black People. They also used another term for themselves as a collective national entity. That term in Medew Netcher is Remetch-  -or "People," in the sense of "We the People." This term was used in connection with the idea that they were the "Original People." Of course, they called their country Kemet, the Black Community or Town. But it could just as easily translate as the "Community or Town of the Blacks."

In the September/October issue of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, the late Frank J. Yurco of the Field Museum wrote an article titled, "Were the Ancient Egyptians Black or White?" He made the following statement:

In summary, the people of the Nile Valley present a continuum from the lighter northern Egyptians to the browner Nubians and Kushites and the ultra-dark brown Nilotic peoples...Some modern Afro-Americans, particularly those of mixed ancestry, will find that they look like some of the ancient (and modern) Egyptians. Should they travel to Egypt, they may find that in terms of their complexion they resemble people of a particular region of Egypt. (Yurco, p. 58)

While I take issue with some of his statements in his article, the conclusions are evident. The ancient people of the Nile Valley looked just like Black people in the United States and other parts of the Americas where African people were brought after our forced removal from our homeland. Even though Yurco tries to assert that the lightening process of Africans in America came from some intermixture, as if there has ever been a “pure” ancestry, this concept too is problematic. While it is highly probable that some intermixing did occur in antiquity, much of that can be attributed to the Greek invasion under Alexander the Macedonian in 332 B.C.E., the Roman invasion in 40 B.C.E. and the Arab incursion into the Nile Valley under the leadership of Amir ibn al-As in 640 C.E. The ultimate consequences of these key historical invasions upon the indigenous populations of the Nile Valley are beyond the scope of this article, but were negligible (de Graft-Johnson, 1954). What is certain, however, based on Yurco’s statement above is that their impact on the population of the Nile Valley was minimal at best. Nonetheless, that does not change the fact that their African nature was not changed any more among the ancient European and Asian invaders than our enslaved ancestors’ interaction was with what Dr. Francis Cress Welsing refers to as the “fondling fathers” in this country during the period of chattel slavery. That relationship never changed us from being Africans in America no matter what our so-called “phenotypes” may have been.

Furthermore, in 1998 one of our Kemetic Institute brothers, Professor Charles Grantham, confronted Yurco about the phenotype of ancient Egyptians. After ducking and dodging him at the Field Museum where Brother Grantham volunteered as a docent in the African Hall, which includes an exhibit called “Inside Ancient Egypt,” Mr. Yurco had to concede the obvious. Ancient Egyptians were Black People of African descent, which is documented very well in the chapter “Unwrapping of Egyptology” in his outstanding work, “The Battle for Kemet” (Grantham, 2003, p. 33-34).

Since the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) 1974 Cairo Conference on “The Peopling of Ancient Egypt and the Decipherment of the Meroitic Script,” there has been a lot of discussion concerning the African origin of the ancient Nile Valley civilizations of Egypt and Nubia. At that conference Drs. Cheikh Anta Diop and Theophile Obenga engaged some of the worlds leading European Egyptologists on the question of the Africanness or Blackness of the ancient Egyptian population that settled in the Nile Valley during antiquity, leading to the development of ancient Egyptian civilization. While the conclusion was triumphantly apparent on the side of Drs. Diop and Obenga, as evidenced by the

first chapter in volume 2 of UNESCO's eight volume *General History of Africa* (Mokhtar et al., 1990) in which Dr. Diop's article on the origin of the Ancient Egyptians (Mokhtar et al., p. 15-32) is prominent, much debate still exists. Nonetheless, even while the battle seems to have been won in the struggle for classical African historical truth, detractors in European, African, and African-American academia abound (Berlinerblau, 1999; Howe, 1998; Lefkowitz, 1996).

The Call for Champions in the Field of Africana Studies

This paper has been an attempt to establish a template for the rescue, reclamation, and restoration of ancient African civilizations in the Upper Nile Valley and present day Sudan. There is so much more to be covered from the standpoint of chronology, female divine rule, architecture, monuments, spirituality -as it relates to the concept of Amun in Kush, pottery analysis, artistic renditions, conflict resolution, analysis of texts, and linguistic studies, for example. These are a few areas that should concern scholars of Africana Studies interested in Nile Valley civilizations. But this will require Africana scholars whom are dedicated to the liberation of the African mind from the vice-grip of Eurocentric intellectual and academic hegemony. It will require intellectual warriors who are not afraid to take bold steps and stand in their own African shoes against a formidable opponent. As Dr. Carruthers used to always tell us at the Kemetic Institute, "the reward for good work is more work." In order to properly engage in this work we must come fully armed. We must have what Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop called the necessary pluridisciplinary skills. These have to be supported with what he described as three factors: Historical, Linguistic, and Psychological (Diop, 1974, p. xiii). Without them Africana scholars will be looking down the barrels of powerful, well financed and well organized European intellectual armies preparing to do battle with us to the end (D'Souza, 1995; Lefkowitz, 1996; Schlesinger, Jr., 1992). Dr. Carruthers puts it this way in his seminal work, *Intellectual Warfare*:

Thus, those who have been waging the long war to liberate African history and culture have been fighting the following two battles: (1) an international war against the European intellectuals and (2) a civil war against the colonized African spokespersons who are trained by Europeans to undermine African independence. (Carruthers, p.4)

The fact that ancient Egyptians and Nubians came from one essential African genus was completely unthinkable to most Europeans, then as well as now. The discovery of Nubian culture in 1907 so close on the heels of the development of Egyptology and the period of the European colonial and imperialist enterprise, made it impossible for Europeans to even fathom a civilization in the Nile Valley that was the genius of ancient African people. Consideration was never even given to its possibility. How on earth were they to justify the enslavement and colonization of millions of Africans they considered to be wretched and savages? C. F. Volney stated the primary issue very well when he wrote:

That an imaginative and superstitious race of black men should have invented and founded, in the dim obscurity of past ages, a system of religious belief that still enthralled the minds and clouds the intellects of the leading representatives of modern theology, - that still clings to the thoughts, and tinges with its potential influences literature and faith of the civilized and cultured nations of Europe and America, is indeed a strange illustration of the mad caprice of destiny. Of the insignificant and apparently trivial causes that oft produce the most grave and momentous results. (Volney, p. iv)

To complete this justification they had to take Egypt out of Africa and thereby take the Africans out of Egypt. Once Egypt was removed from the African continent and placed in the mysterious Middle East, a term that was invented by Europeans at the beginning of the 20th century (Lewis, 1998, p. 3), or the Near East, thanks to the development of the Suez Canal by the French in 1865, the geographical and paradigmatic shift was simultaneously accomplished. It is time for willing and courageous Africana scholars to reclaim this ancient past.

One way to do that is to use the descriptions that were culturally specific to the people being studied. In this case, we mean the ancient Nubians. Or at least return to the source of their original names. By reclaiming their original names we can give dignity back to our ancient ancestors. The monumental texts and iconography in the tombs, particularly KV 17, Seti I and KV 11, Ramesses III clearly identify them by the collective term *Nehesiu*, the plural of the singular form *Nehesy*. Therefore, we should use this term as an identification marker. The same thing is true of Egypt. Let us refer to their national home as *Kemet* and the people as the *Kemeti*. Let us desist from the alphabet soup concepts of A-Group, C-Group, and X-Group. These terms relegate our ancient ancestors to the status of non-humans and objectify their history, placing them in the trashcan of our psyches. If we give them the names they used for themselves, then we would be doing what Dr. Carruthers always suggested that we do and that was, "Let the ancestor speak." When we let the ancestors speak for themselves, they will tell us what we need to hear and what we need to know about them.

In our quest to reclaim, restore, and reconstruct ancient African history and humanity we must reconnect with the Nile Valley. We must stand up and proclaim, "African for the Africans" (Garvey, 1969). In order to do that there are several aspects of African historiography that must be addressed from an African-Centered Worldview. Ancient Nubia is just one of those areas. But it is an essential one. Until we recognize that it was through ancient Nubia that Kemetic civilization received much of its impetus, we will continue to engage in debates based on the falsification of African history. We have to understand when, where and how the European thinkers colonized African history and strike a fatal blow against their pogrom of menticide against the worldwide African community. While Kemetic civilization has its merits and its significance speaks for itself, Nubia also played a major role in world history above and beyond that already recognized. But in order to rectify misconceptions about Nubia we have to prepare ourselves. We as Africana scholars have to tool-up! This will require grounding our studies in

the classical academy. That grounding will comprise not just learning the history of the Nile Valley alone. We must also invest ourselves in the study of ancient Greece, Rome, Arabia Petrea, Palestine, Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley too. Only then can we fully appreciate the impact that Nile Valley civilizations had on other world civilizations. Only then will we be able to understand such events as the retreat of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 B.C.E.) in 701 B.C.E. from Jerusalem, under King Hezekiah of Judah (II Kings 19:9), after the destruction of such places as the cities of Libnah and Lachish in ancient Palestine, that was due to the intervention of Pharaoh Taharqa and a Kushite army that terrified the mighty Assyrian army and obliged them to return home to Mesopotamia, where Sennacherib was assassinated by his son Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.E.) (Aubin, 2002). The consequence of this Nubian intervention was the survival of ancient Jerusalem and ultimately Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as the world religions we have come to know (Aubin, 2002).

Africana scholars must develop skills in archaeology so that we as African people can start excavating sites in the Upper Nile Valley that are being slowly destroyed by the damming up of the region around the 4th and 5th cataracts of the Nile River. Consequently, building these dams is destroying thousands of years of ancient African history and displacing thousand of residents. Although excavating sites in the Upper Nile Valley will require significant financial resources, we must nonetheless lobby those with means within the Black community, especially those financially secure Black people, and convince them that this is a worthy investment toward our ultimate goal of mental liberation. We must learn the tools and techniques necessary to be active participants in this fieldwork rather than passive spectators.

We need to immerse ourselves in ancient languages such as Medew Netcher, Meroitic, Greek, Coptic, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Sumerian, Akkadian, and Harappan as well as other African languages. The question might arise as to why we should do all of this? Well, for those of us engaged in the field of Africana Studies it should be obvious. These were the languages spoken in that world. Various ancient nations communicated with one another through diplomatic and trade relations in these languages. They also wrote annals in these languages that show the relationships they developed with contemporary cultures of the Nile Valley. For example, in the ancient Akkadian texts, Kemet is called Magan and Nubia or Kush is called Melukka (Hansen, 1973). The Akkadian texts include material from the ancient Assyrian, Babylonian, Hittites, Ugaritic, Eblite, and Mitannian cultures. Without knowing these languages, we will not be able to understand the social, cultural and political relationship between Nile Valley civilizations and other ancient civilizations. Dr. Theophile Obenga points out the significance of studying ancient languages in his excellent work *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period: 2780-330 BC* (2004). While first illuminating the importance of learning African philosophy, he states:

So the news is that a history of African philosophy is possible. The catch is that the production of such a history is a particularly exacting task. For it requires nothing less

than a fluent knowledge of ancient Egyptian, Greek, Latin and Arabic, in addition to mastery of the techniques and methods associated with the history of philosophy. Without Greek, no scholar can acquire a genuine grounding in the Western philosophical tradition. Without ancient Egyptian, the restoration of the authentic tradition of black African philosophy, in its most ancient chronological aspect, its most fundamental manifestation, remains impossible. (Obenga, p.16)

We also need botanists, geologists, physicists, etc, who share our passion for Africana Studies so that we can have every aspect of Nile Valley civilizations covered in its most minute details. Only then can we fully arm ourselves to engage in intellectual warfare. When Dr. Cheikh Anta Diop referred to the need for pluridisciplinary skills supported by the three factors he outlined- historical, linguistic, and psychological- he was suggesting to us the implications of being grounded in those intellectual enterprises and more. We as Africana scholars can subsequently reclaim our fame in a way that cannot be taken from us. Consequently, we will no longer allow ourselves to be fooled again into accepting the myths and suppositions so easily perpetrated by those who would profit from our lack of knowledge in the area of Nubian Studies.

In fact, Dr. Anderson Thompson, Professor Emeritus at CCICS, has initiated a call for a Nubian Studies Institute so that we might begin this enterprise. He has spent more than two decades traveling to various archaeological sites in the Sudan and attending many of the international conferences on Nubian and Meroitic Studies. He is also one of several Africana scholars at the forefront of the struggle to reclaim ancient Nubian civilization for African people. I not only salute him in his endeavor; I have joined him along with a small group of dedicated Africana scholars around the country to make this enterprise a reality.

By connecting the history of Nubia with its origins in the Southern, Eastern, and Western regions of the Nile Valley as well as the deserts and the hill countries, we can see the cultural continuity between the various populations that ultimately led to the development of Kemetic civilization and by extension other civilizations and cultures on the continent of Africa. We know their names and where they lived so we can now give them a collective identity as Nehesiu and not label them with alphabets. We have a good foundation in the languages of the Nile Valley so we can allow them to come alive again and speak to us from afar. This will allow us to engage in a research enterprise yet unknown in the annals of contemporary African people. It will allow us as Africana scholars to engage in an inter-generational and trans-generational discourse and transmission of knowledge that will permit us to drink from our ancestors' deep well of African thought. Dr. Jacob H. Carruthers summed up this task for Africana scholars well when he stated:

The Research Commission's task is to take over the production of knowledge not only about us but about the world - at least that which is disseminated to African people. Not only do we need to correct the misinterpretations of our oppressors but we also need to

restore the messages of our ancestors so that we can have access to the deep well of African wisdom and guidance as we continue our upward march. The winning of the research battle is thus a vital phase of the war. (Carruthers, 1999, p. 13-14)

Notes

ⁱ See <http://www.ki-chicago.org/>.

ⁱⁱ See http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Newsletters/ssa_abt.html,
<http://www.univie.ac.at/afrikanistik/meroe2008/program.html>,
<http://www.nubiansociety.org/nubianconference.htm>.

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