

Giants of Africa



Pharaoh Ahmose I: The Founder of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt

A member of the Theban royal line and the son of Pharaoh Tao II, Ahmose I became the founder of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt which is often referred to as the greatest of the Egyptian dynasties. At the age of 7 Ahmose's father was killed, and at the age of ten his brother having only ruled for three years, died of unknown causes. Afterwards, Ahmose assumed the throne and gained the title of Neb-Pehty-Re, meaning "the lord of strength is Re". During his reign, Ahmose I was able to expel the Hyksos which was something that his father and grandfather were not able to accomplish. This success allowed for the 18th Dynasty to become an all-African ruled dynasty.

Ahmose I restored the Theban rule, Egyptian culture and politics, and reasserted Egyptian power in its former territories of Nubia and Canaan. He also reopened quarries, mines and trade routes. Massive construction projects began to take place which allowed for the building of the last pyramid built by native Egyptians. Ahmose I was a visionary, a brave nationalist and a lover of his people and his culture, his bravery opened the doors for an African centered Egypt until the fall of the 18th

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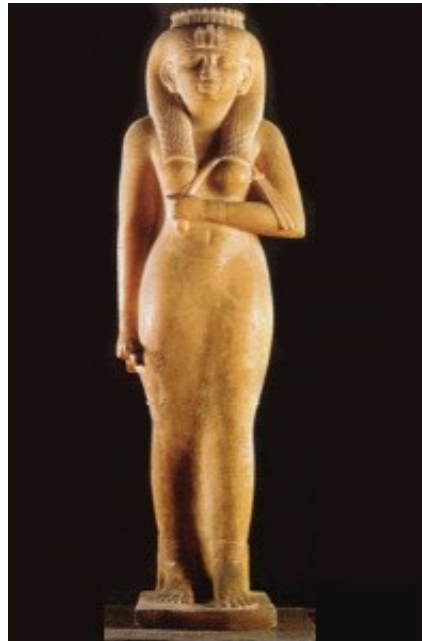
dynasty. Ahmose I stood for justice and freedom which he displayed by removing the foreign invaders known as the Hyksos. He showed pride and courage to free his people from oppression and inspired his people to live free and be proud to be African. Ahmose I, we proudly stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

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The Candace's of Kush

During the period known as the Meroitic period, Kush thrived, and it was often thought of as a nation never ruled by a male. The word Kentake means “queen mother”, so the title was not taken lightly. If a woman was a Candace, she was able to influence the line of succession and consolidate her power. The Candace often played a role in the coronation of a new King. The Candace's are well known for refusing Alexander's entry into Kush, and deterring him on one of his military campaigns causing him to overtake a weaker Egypt. The strength of the Candace rulers also appeared in history as they were able to thwart the roman conquest of Kush. Using brilliant battle tactics, Amanerinas attacked Petronius during Rome's punitive invasions of Napata. They waited until most of his troops were gone off to battle, then Amanerinas attacked the army. When Petronius returned he found his “mighty” army in a standoff with a Nation they considered weaker. The standoff lasted until Augustus Caesar and Amanerinas were able to settle on signing a peace treaty.

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Over a period of 1250 years, the kingdom of Kush was amazing and certainly one of the greatest, if not the greatest, civilization of its time and all time. The title of Candace lasted for 500 years, allowing Kush to become the great civilization it was under female rule. The Candace's set a standard for excellence and stability. A female dominated society with a female warrior class is not talked about much in the pages of history, especially a purely African civilization. The Candace's were brave, brilliant and influential; they were an example of how a strong spirit will not be held back by sexism and male domination. Women, no matter their race or creed, can learn a lot from the Candace's— women who successfully ruled a kingdom and inspired Egyptian culture and prestige. To all of the Candace's, and all the female rulers of Kush, thank you for your brilliance and courage which helped create greatness in the form of a Kingdom. These women are an example of the greatness of the female spirit. To all the Candace's, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

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Hannibal Barca The Great

Hannibal Barca was born in 247 BCE as a son of the Empire of Carthage, which encompassed all of North Africa and Southern Spain. Hannibal was the son of the great Carthaginian military leader

Hamilcar Barca. Hamilcar lead the Carthaginian army in the First Punic War against Rome. Carthage suffered an embarrassing loss to the Romans which included loss of control the city of Sicily. It is widely stated that as a youth Hannibal's father instilled within him an unrelenting hatred for Rome. When Hannibal was 17 Carthage was able to conquer Hispania which is now the modern day Iberian Peninsula. During the conquest Hamilcar drowned and Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal the Fair became the commander of the army. This victory was able to expand the Carthaginian Empire which remained a formidable opponent for Rome. Hasdrubal further strengthened the numbers of Carthage by intermarrying the Carthaginians with the conquered Iberians.

In 221 BCE Hasdrubal was murdered and Hannibal was elected to assume command of the army at the age of twenty-six. His first campaign was the capturing of the city of Salamanca in 220 BCE. Carthage's next conquest was of Saguntum which was a close ally of Rome's. Hannibal's attack on Saguntum was considered to be a violation of a peace treaty signed between Hasdrubal and Rome. They demanded that Carthage expel Hannibal from the empire. As Hannibal's fate was being decided, he continued to conquer territories expanding Carthage as far as he could. Hannibal's brother was appointed as a military commander on the Iberian Peninsula. This move helped the forces of Carthage conquer the peninsula as a whole. Hannibal was determined to bring war to Rome; he remembered what his father told him about the Romans so he launched a military campaign. His conquest of the Iberian Peninsula was an example of his advancement towards conquering the Roman Empire.

Because Hannibal conquered the Iberian Peninsula the Roman government declared war against Carthage. This declaration was the beginning of the Second Punic War. Hannibal and his forces invaded Italy in a surprise attack on the Romans, who expected an attack at Sicily. His next move was to cross the Pyrenees Mountains. Before he could cross, his army had to defeat the tribes who dwelled along the foothills of the mountains. His army crossed the Pyrenees and reached the river Rhone. Along the way he managed to pacify the Chiefs of the Gaul's. This strategic move helped to stall Roman advancement against Carthage. It is said that Hannibal's army consisted of 50,000 infantry men, 9,000 cavalry and 37 war elephants. Next, Hannibal led his army across the treacherous Alps which took a toll on his army. He lost a number of his solders and some of his war elephants. It is said that he led 38,000 soldiers into the town of Turin, Italy. The Romans became aware of the alliance between the Gaul's and Carthage, and sent troops of 80,000 to defeat Carthage and the Gaul's. Their plans were spoiled because Hannibal was able to defeat the forces. This victory gave the Gaul's confidence in Hannibal so they volunteered the join his army. The Gaul's were able to add the strength to the army that Hannibal lost crossing the Alps. His army was able to defeat the Romans a second time in a battle at the river Trebbia.

In 217 BCE Hannibal and his army crossed the Apennines Mountains and conquered modern day Tuscany. During these battles he lost of one of his eyes but not his hatred for Rome. The Romans retaliated with their own attack against Carthage but was defeated once again at the Trasimene Lake. As Hannibal's army crossed the Apennines for a second time, Roman forces attacked Iberia

and cut off his access to his allies and supplies. In the city of Cannae 80,000 Roman soldiers attacked Hannibal's army. Despite being outnumbered, Hannibal's forces were able to once again gain a victory over Rome. This victory caused Roman allies to pledge their allegiance with Hannibal. The Italian city of Capua became Hannibal's new military base. In 214 BCE the city of Syracuse became a city of Carthage. 215 BCE King Philip V of Macedonia pledged his allegiance with Carthage.

The Romans managed to secure a decisive victory against Carthage. Hannibal was not able to capture the port cities of Cumae and Puteoli. His army was not able to receive reinforcements or supplies. Carthage was losing resources and allies fast. The cities of Syracuse and Capua were regained by the Romans, further weakening Hannibal's forces. The four year campaign in Italy was taking a toll on his soldiers. Hannibal sent for his brother located in Iberia to help him fight. Unfortunately Hannibal's brother was defeated crossing the Alps. Rome was able to reclaim Iberia as well as again an ally in the King of Namibia. Aligned with Rome, Namibia attacked Carthage forcing Hannibal to bring his troops home to defend his land. A final battle was fought between Rome and Carthage at Zama in 202 BCE. The Carthaginian forces were weakened from the Punic War and they fell in defeat to Rome. A peace treaty was signed in 201 BCE which forced Carthage to compensate Rome for the damages its forces caused. Also the treaty forced Hannibal to resign as the leader of the Carthaginian army.

The mighty Hannibal was able to instill terror into the Roman empire. Rome was the world power at the time and Carthage was a thorn in their side. The size and arrogance of Rome caused them to underestimate the brilliance of Hannibal. He is considered one of the most brilliant military leaders in history. His crossing of the Alps was a feat many may have envisioned but never attempted. Hannibal was determined to keep his promise to his father and annihilate Rome. Though he did not reach his ultimate goal he accomplished more than many military leaders can only dream of. His Empire covered North Africa, Spain and parts of Italy. Hannibal was a true African warrior and a skilled politician. He will never be forgotten within the pages of history. Hannibal was able to show Rome the full potential of his African might. Hannibal Barca the Great, we proudly stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Hannibal Barca video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=silH6ghP1fw>

Sources:

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The Mino Warriors of Dahomey

The third king of Dahomey, King Houegbadja ruled from 1645 to 1685, and is credited with creating the legendary all-woman Fon of Dahomey. The original purpose of this all female regime was to become 'gbeto', or elephant hunters for the king. Around the early 1700's during the reign of King Agadja, the women were trained to become a unit of guards for the king. They were also called *The Mino*, which means 'Our Mothers' in the native Fon language of Benin. The legend of the Mino began to grow during the battle at Savi in 1727. The women showed their impressive skills which helped the Fon people gain a victory over their opponents. Their presence increased the size and the intimidation factor of the king's Army.

Great emphasis was placed on developing the Mino warriors during the reign of King Ghezo from 1818 to 1858. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade posed a great threat to the Dahomian way of life; the king was set on protecting his people. King Ghezo increased the military budget to develop a well-trained and equipped army. By the mid 1900's the size of the Mino army grew to 6,000 women who were both free women and prisoners of war. The women had to sacrifice marriage and parenthood while serving in the army; ironically they were considered the wives of the king. Their training regimen was rigorous and designed to hone any aggressive behavior the women held. They learned survival skills, discipline, pain tolerance and proper execution of their enemies. Much

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prestige was given to the women because of their service and their bravery. They can be compared to our modern day celebrities.

The Mino were more than warriors they were also involved in the Grand Council of the Dahomey people. They were involved in talking peace with neighboring nations and the trade of palm oil with England. As the threat of the slave trade moved closer to Dahomey, war broke out between Dahomey and France in 1890. Despite the size and fierceness of the Mino women and the Dahomian Army, they were defeated by the French and their superior weaponry. This resulted in Dahomey becoming a French colony, drastically changing the life of the people. This defeat was also the point of dismemberment of the legendary Mino warriors. The last surviving Mino warrior named Mawi died in 1979.

The Mino of Dahomey was considered the women Spartans of Benin. Their skill, size, and intimidation factor gained them victories before they stepped on the battle field. They crushed the idea of women being the weaker sex. They took roles that were traditionally held for men and became legends. The Mino were more intimidating than their male counterparts. These women were the special forces of the Dahomian army. Often compared to the mythical Amazonian women, The Mino were actual historical figures. The legendary Mino Warriors of Dahomey, we stand your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Mino Warriors of Dahomey video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNxq_KVwelo



Tariq Ibn Ziyad

Born in present day Algeria, Tariq Ibn Ziyad was one of the most important military figures in the history of the Iberian Peninsula. In 711 AD as a deputy under the command of Ibn Musa Nusair, Tariq led an army into Iberia as the first attack on present day Spain and Portugal. A nobleman named Julian the commander of a Visigothic outpost in Cueta, became unlikely allies with Tariq. Julian sent his daughter to the court of the King of Spain to receive an education. Instead Julian's daughter was raped by Roderick the King. Enraged by the incident, Julian partnered with Tariq to bring down Julian's kingdom.

In April of 711 AD, Tariq led his army to what is now known as Gibraltar. The name "Rock of Gibraltar" derived from the Arabic name Jabal al Tariq; meaning rock of Tariq. The "Straights of Gibraltar" were also named after Tariq, the Moore who conquered Spain. Tariq's army consisted of 12,000 soldiers and they met the Army of Roderick containing 100,000 soldiers at the Battle of Guadalete.

Before battle Tariq gathered his troops and delivered one of history's most motivating and soul stirring sermons; *The Breath of Perfume*. "If I perish after this, I will have had at least the satisfaction of delivering you, and you will easily find among you an experienced hero, to whom you can confidently give the task of directing you. But should I fall before I reach to Roderick, redouble your ardor, force yourselves to the attack and achieve the conquest of this country, in depriving him of life. With him dead, his soldiers will no longer defy you."

Tariq's army defeated Roderick and his army killing Roderick during battle. Julian advised Tariq to split his army into several divisions. This strategy allowed them to capture cities such as Cordoba, Granada, Toledo and Guadalajara. After Tariq and his allies captured Spain he became the Governor of Hispaniola. He would govern the land until the arrival of Musa Nusair. In 714 AD both Tariq and Musa were ordered to return to Damascus where they lived until their final days. Tariq was a man who said to have been a slave that rose to conquer Iberia. Tariq conquering Iberia was the beginning of the 700 year Moorish rule of Spain. The Moors did not just conquer Spain they revitalized Europe out of the dark ages. A historical figure we never learned about in our history lesson lives on in the essence of history. Europe owes Tariq and the Moors for giving it life once again. Tariq Ibn Ziyad, We stand on your shoulders.

J. A. Ward.

Click below to view the Tariq Ibn Ziyad video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQKugcECbBE>



Dr. Yosef Ben-Jochannan

On December 31st, 1918, Yosef Alfredo Antonio Ben-Jochannan was born in a Falasha community in Ethiopia to an Afro-Puerto Rican mother and an Ethiopian father. He received his education in various countries such as Puerto Rico, Brazil, Cuba, and Spain. Dr. Ben-Jochannan earned his B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Puerto Rico in 1938. In 1939 he received his Master's degree from the University of Havana, Cuba in Architectural Engineering. He also received his doctoral degrees from the Universities of Havana, Cuba, and Barcelona, Spain, in Cultural Anthropology and Moorish History.

Dr. Ben-Jochannan traveled to the United States in the early 1940's. While living in the U.S., he continued his schooling despite the fact that he was working as a draftsman to make a living. In 1945 he was appointed the chairman of the African American studies department at UNESCO; a position he held until 1970. Dr. Ben-Jochannan would later begin teaching Egyptology at Malcolm King College and City College in New York, City, in 1950. The Dr.'s next move was becoming an adjunct professor at Cornell University. He gained notoriety for his authorship of 49 books mostly on the subject of the Nile Valley civilizations. His findings showed that the Nile Valley civilizations had a significant influence on Western cultures. He also affirms that the original Jews were black Africans from Ethiopia, and white Jews took their culture. Since 1957 Dr. Ben-Jochannan has coordinated regular tours to the Nile Valley showing people the truth of the African civilizations.

Dr. Ben-Jochannan moved to Harlem, New York in 1945 and was a mentee of the great George G.M. James the author of *Stolen Legacy*. Despite his busy schedule and many accomplishments, the great doctor still found time to become a trained lawyer. He also has made several appearances on Gil Noble's television series *Like It Is*. In 2002 he donated his personal library of 35,000 volumes, manuscripts and ancient scrolls to the Nation of Islam.

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Dr. Ben-Jochannan is often criticized for promoting black supremacy; but I say he promotes black consciousness. He has dedicated his life to uplifting and empowering the black man across the globe. The information he has presented challenged the more commonly accepted versions of history. These historical stories have conveniently left out the contributions of the African to the civilization of mankind. Because of heroes like Dr. Ben-Jochannan generations of African people around the globe have a stronger sense of pride and history. He's taught us that the African has made a significant contribution to mankind and civilization. Dr. Yosef Ben-Jochannan, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward

Click below to view the Dr. Yosef Ben-Jochannan video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wypFGowF4A4>



Stephen Biko

Stephen Bantu Biko was born in King William's Town, Eastern Cape, South Africa, in 1946. As a child he showed interest and became active in the anti-apartheid movement. He was expelled from Lovedale High School because of his activism, he was said to have anti-establishment behavior. He would later enroll into St. Francis College in KwaZulu-Natal to further his education. After Biko graduated from St. Francis College he attended the University of Natal's Medical School. While

attending medical school, Biko became an active member of the National Union of South African Students, an organization that was dedicated to the restoration of black rights. The union was comprised of many white liberal students and Biko found that the union did not meet the needs of the black students. Biko resigned from the union in 1969 and started his own organization to serve black students, the South African Students' Organization. Biko along with the members of the SASO provided black students and citizens with legal aid, medical care, and also helped develop a cottage industry.

The SASO became the leaders of the black consciousness movement in South Africa under the presidency of Stephen Biko. In 1972 Biko was expelled from St. Francis College; once again his activism for his people compromised his educational aspirations. In 1972 the Black Peoples Convention was co-founded by Stephen Biko and his colleagues; this organization became the new lead organization of the black consciousness movement. They were able to bring together and organize 70 different black conscious groups to help liberate black people. In 1973 as president of the Black Peoples Convention, Biko's activism was banned by the apartheid supporting government. His banishment included restricting him to his birth city only, he could not release any writings or speeches publicly, and he could not support the Black Peoples Convention. Despite facing governmental pressure and resistance, Biko created the Zimele Trust Fund to help aid the families of political prisoners.

Between 1975 and 1976 Biko was arrested four times by the Apartheid supporting government. During his detention in 1977 Biko received a massive head injury during an interrogation session by a corrupt law enforcement officer. Medical Doctors purposely over looked the seriousness of Biko's injuries which caused him to remain semi-conscious until his death. September 12th, 1977 Stephen Biko was found dead and naked on a prison floor in the Pretoria Central Prison. The untreated injury he received to his head caused his death. No one was charged in the death of Biko even though five former guards confessed to killing Biko 20 years later. Biko became an international symbol of freedom and courage. All black conscious groups that were associated with Biko were banned, until the United Nations Security Council imposed arms against South Africa. Biko should be remembered throughout the times for his bravery and love for his people. Even as a child he could recognize the injustices around him; but he not only recognized injustice he oppose injustice. Mr. Stephen Bantu Biko, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below for the Stephen Bantu Biko video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCuEvvopWNE>



Beatrice Kimpa Vita

Beatrice Kimpa Vita was born in 1684 in the Kingdom of the Kongo to a family of nobility after the death of King António I. As a young child she was said to have the gift of vision and the ability to communicate with the spirit world. She received training as an Nganga Miranda (Shaman) to help her improve her communication with the spirit world. During the early 1700's Kimpa Vita received training as a Missionary, her Christian influence along with her uncanny abilities helped improve her abilities as well as her reputation. At the age of 20 Kimpa Vita became stricken by an illness which caused a near death experience. During her near death experience she received visions from St. Anthony of Paudua, and was said to have become reincarnated as St. Anthony. Beatrice Kimpa Vita was now said to be the physical manifestation of St. Anthony, and a force to be reckoned with. She was compelled to reunite the Kingdom of Kongo under one ruler and strengthen her people. Her mission was long overdue for a war torn nation. Kimpa Vita in her efforts to unite and strengthen the Kongo Kingdom created Antonianism; which is a mixture of Konoglese culture and history with Christianity. While moving towards uniting her Kingdom Kimpa Vita began to gain a large following which was seen as a threat to the Catholic Church.

Kimpa Vita and her following opposed the mission of the Catholic Church. She claimed to be a vessel of God completing a divine mission. In 1705 Kimpa Vita resided in Sao Salvador where she won the allegiance of Pedro Constantinho da Silva Kibenga, commander of one of King Pedro IV's armies. Pedro Kibenga's alliance with Kimpa Vita angered King Pedro IV and he was on a mission to eliminate Kimpa Vita. Her Antonian missionaries were sent out to gain converts to their mission, they became successful in South Soyo as well as Mbamba Lovata. Kimpa vita and her followers pushed the ideas that God, Jesus, and his saints were African and heaven was for Africans as well as whites. These ideas were contrary to the historic ideas of Christianity in the Kongo; Kimpa Vita's ideas were revolutionary and truly empowering for her people. In 1706, Kimpa Vita was

captured by King Pedro IV and charged with heresy for attempting to empower her people. She was later bound and burned at the stake. After her death the Antonian movement did not die, her followers continued to fight until they were defeated by King Pedro IV's army in 1709. Kimpa Vita was one of Africa's first warriors to oppose the colonization of Africa. Her ideas and beliefs helped create an all-black Christian movement designed to liberate the people of the Kongo. It is said that her ideas did not die with the movement. Her ideas are said to have become an inspiration to the "Stono Rebellion" in South Carolina as well as the Haitian Revolution. Kimpa Vita lived and died for the freedom of her people, an example we can proudly follow today. Mrs. Beatrice Kimpa Vita, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Beatrice Kimpa Vita video

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Thomas Sankara

Thomas Sankara was born on December 21, 1949 in Yako, French Upper Volta, French West Africa, which is modern day Burkina Faso. Sankara attended high-school in a city named Bobo-Dioulasso; after he graduated his parents wanted him to become a Roman Catholic Priest. Sankara entered the military in 1966 at the age of 19, at the age of twenty he was shipped to

Madagascar for officer training. While in training he witnessed several uprisings against the government in 1971 and 1972, which would help shape his future. He began reading the works of Carl Marx and Vladimir Lenin; their influence on him would show in his views towards politics. In 1972 Sankara returned home to Upper Volta but his military life would follow, he was involved in a border war against Mali in 1974. His show of military brilliance would earn him fame, but he would later reject his fame and involvement in the war as a result of a paradigm shift. He would become commander of the Commando Training Center in the city of Po.

Later that year he would meet Blaise Compaore in Morocco, they would later meet with Henri Zongo and Jean-Baptiste Lingani to form a secret organization the "Communist Officers' Group." In 1981 Thomas was appointed Secretary of State for Information in the Military; he would resign in 1982 because he was opposed to the views of the regime. The residing governmental regime was overthrown and Jean-Baptiste Ouedraogo became president of the country. Thomas Sankara was named Prime Minister in January of 1983 but was dismissed in May of 1983. He was also placed under house arrest along with Henri Zongo and Jean-Baptiste Lingani; their arrest would lead to an uprising of the people in Upper Volta. Thomas Sankara became president of Upper Volta in 1983 as a result of a coup d'état which was organized by Blaise Compaoré. As president Sankara was inspired by Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and Jerry Rawlings. His ideology focused on riding his country of corruption, restoring his country, preventing famine, and promoting education and health.

Sankara's regime suppressed the power of tribal chiefs to receive tribute payment and obligatory labor. In 1984 Sankara renamed the country from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, which means "the land of the upright people." He changed the name of the country in the two major languages of the country; he also changed the flag and the national anthem. Sankara made women's rights one of his priorities; he banned female genital mutilation, forced marriages, and polygamy. He would also appoint women to positions within his government and encouraged them to work outside the home. He would also encourage pregnant women to stay in school. Sankara's idea was to promote overall equality for men and women within his country. The Sankara led government would be the first African Government to recognize AIDS as a major epidemic to Africa. Sankara became popular with the people of Burkina Faso by making equality between the people and the government a priority. Sankara was named the "African Che Guevara" because he emulated his personal style and politics.

In 1987 Thomas Sankara was killed in coup d'état by his colleague Blaise Compaoré who betrayed Sankara. Compaore reversed Sankara's policies and quickly accepted financial aid from the World Bank. Sankara worked hard to ward off the World Bank and establish a self-sufficient African nation in Burkina Faso. Thomas Sankara was a national hero and a true leader of the people; his sole purpose was to uplift his people at all cost. Governmental leaders who value the people they represent and resist corruption do not exist frequently. Thomas Sankara we proudly stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

click below to view the Thomas Sankara Video

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Queen Anna Nzinga

In 1583 Anna Nzinga was born to King Kiluanji and her mother Kangelá within the Ndongo and Matamba Kingdoms of Angola. She was given the name Nzinga which means to twist or turn, because she was born with her umbilical cord wrapped around her neck. Nzinga's mother was foretold that Nzinga would become a wise and powerful queen in her future. Her father greatly enjoyed her presence and carried Nzinga everywhere he went. She was able to observe how her father governed the Kingdom; she also was able to accompany her father in war. Nzinga lived during the Atlantic slave trade and her land was being threatened by the Portuguese. One of Nzinga's first displays of leadership and superior intelligence was when she accompanied her brother at a peace conference.

They were attempting to persuade the Portuguese Governor Mendes de Vasconcelos to withdraw the fortress of Ambaca from Ndongo land, return fellow countrymen who had been kidnapped and enslaved, and command the Imbangala mercenaries to cease their services. Nzinga was successful in her pursuits, all of her terms were agreed upon and a peace treaty was created. During the negotiations the Portuguese Governor Correia de Sousa offered Nzinga a seat on a floor mat attempting to subordinate her. With royal grace Nzinga declined the floor mat then ordered one of her servants to get on the ground on all fours, and then Nzinga conducted the negotiations sitting on the back of her servant. The Queen's actions showed the governor that she was not lower than he was.

Nzinga would later convert to Christianity, it is said that she made the conversion to help strengthen her alliance with the Portuguese. Nzinga and her people would learn that the promises of the Portuguese were empty promises. They did not keep their word despite the negotiations and the peace treaty. Cracking under the pressure of the Portuguese, Nzinga's brother committed suicide and Nzinga became regent of her land because her brother's son Kaza was too young to rule. In 1641 she aligned with the Dutch to help her fight the Portuguese. She gained a victory over the Portuguese in a battle at Ngoleme in 1644. In 1646 she would gain another victory in a battle at Kavanga. While gaining a victory one of her sisters was captured as well as records of her alliance with the Congo. Her sister was drowned by the Portuguese for her helping correspond with the Congo. Nzinga gained another victory over the Portuguese army with the help of Dutch reinforcements, her next step was to take the Portuguese capital of Masangano. The Portuguese was able to recapture the city of Luanda from the Dutch, which caused Nzinga to retreat to Matamba and continue her resistance from there. Nzinga was able to fight off the Portuguese from capturing her land until she reached her sixties.

In 1657 she signed another peace treaty with the Portuguese, after the wars she began to rebuild her nation from years of battle. On December 17th, 1663 Queen Nzinga died at the age of eighty, leaving behind a kingdom weary from battle. After her passing the Portuguese overran her kingdom eventually taking them over as part of the slave trade. Queen Nzinga was the definition of Beauty, class, wisdom, royalty, courage and leadership. She was able to hold off a superior army and maintain the freedom of her people and their culture. Queen Nzinga gave the Portuguese more than they bargained for, as well as set an example of the power of a woman. Queen Anna Nzinga, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Queen Anna Nzinga video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HG43NFWp4Uc>



Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti

On October 25, 1900 Francis Abigail Olufunmilayo Thomas was born in Abeokuta, Nigeria, to parents Daniel Olumeyuwa Thomas and Lucretia Phyllis Omoyeni Adeosolu. Kuti attended grammar school as a child in Abeokuta; she furthered her studies as a teen and young adult in England. As she completed her studies in England she returned home to serve as a teacher in her city. Around January of 1925, she married a man named Reverend Israel Oludotun Ransome Kuti. Mr. Kuti was a noble man who fought for equality for his people and he successfully established the Nigeria Union of Teachers and the Nigerian Union of Students. In 1965 Funmilayo Kuti received a national honor of membership within the Order of Nigeria; the honors were instituted by the National Honors Act No. 5 of 1964, during the Nigerian First Republic to honor Nigerians who have rendered service to the benefit of the nation.

In 1968 she received an honorary doctorate of laws from the University of Ibadan. Kuti was a renowned activist and noted educator, as well as a leader within the women's rights movement along with Elizabeth Adekogbe during the 1950's. Kuti would also establish a women's organization for the women in Abeokuta which holds a membership of over 20,000 women from all walks of life. Her next step was to raise public awareness about women's rights when it comes to unfair pricing towards female merchants, the prices were not even and trade was a major economic component of the city. Kuti started the public protesting against the native authorities and the Alake

of Egbaland; she presented the authorities with documents proving abuse by the Alake authorities. The documents proved that the Alake granted Colonel Suzerain a member of the Government of the United Kingdom, the right to collect taxes. A separate tax rate was given to Nigerian women; as a result of the documents the tax rates were abolished and Colonel Suzerain gave up his position. Kuti founded the Federation of Nigerian Women Societies; the federation would later merge with the Women's International Democratic Federation.

As a long-time member of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, she advocated strongly for women's rights. Kuti was subsequently expelled from the organization when she was not elected to a federal parliamentary seat. The spirit and will to fight for human rights earned Kuti an elected seat within the Nigerian House of Chiefs. Kuti was a world traveler but her travels caused the Nigerian Government to question her moves. She visited the USSR, Hungary, and China; because of this her passport was not renewed by her government. Her travels also caused the United States to refuse her entrance into the country.

Kuti would later become one of the delegates who negotiated Nigeria's independence from the British Government. In 1978 Funmilayo Kuti was thrown from a second floor window when her son Fela Kuti's compound was raided by military personnel. She would later die as a result of her injuries on April 13, 1978. August of 2012, Funmilayo Kuti's grandson Seun Kuti demanded an apology from the Nigerian government for the death of his grandmother, before they used her likeness on the N5000 Note which is Nigerian currency. Kuti was a dynamic woman who dedicated her life to helping others and fighting injustices, all while raising three remarkable sons. She was brilliant, relentless, fierce and nurturing. She helped make the life easier for Nigerian women by either starting or becoming a part of a number of women rights organizations. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

View the Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti video below

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LKLFWTNCRg>



Pharaoh Taharqa

In 690 BC Taharqa was born in Nubia as a member of the Royal family of the kingdom of Cush; he was the fifth ruler of the 25th Dynasty, which was an African lead dynasty. Taharqa is regarded as the last pharaoh to unite the lands of Nubia and he is also regarded as the pharaoh to lose the lands to the Assyrians. Taharqa was the son of Piankhi the Pharaoh and Abar the Queen of The Sudan. For twenty six years he ruled Egypt, his reign started in 668 BC after the death of his brother Shabakta. After becoming Pharaoh he spent a considerable amount of time rebuilding Egypt and venerating the God Amon. After Taharqa became Pharaoh he moved his throne to the Delta of Tanis, this move helped him keep an eye on his Asian neighbors. As the new Pharaoh Taharqa faced a well-oiled machine in the Assyrian Army led by Esarhaddon at the Sinai Desert and was defeated in 671 BC. Taharqa lost control of Memphis and Lower Egypt; the Pharaoh fled to Upper Egypt with what was left of his army. In 673 BC Taharqa returned to Lower Egypt with a rebuild army and defeated Esarhaddon, regaining control of the Delta area. Shortly after Esarhaddon's successor faced Taharqa and defeated his army, which never again tried to regain Lower Egypt.

Outnumbered and facing military forces with superior weapons, Taharqa as the second to last male Pharaoh of Egypt's 25th Dynasty helped the African culture of Egypt reign for nearly 1,000 years. The Pharaoh was able to build a plethora of temples in Cush, along with monuments at Karnak, Thebes, and Tanis. For at least eight of his twenty six year reign as Pharaoh, Taharqa fought off the oppression of the Assyrians and promoted the beauty of the culture of his people. Egypt

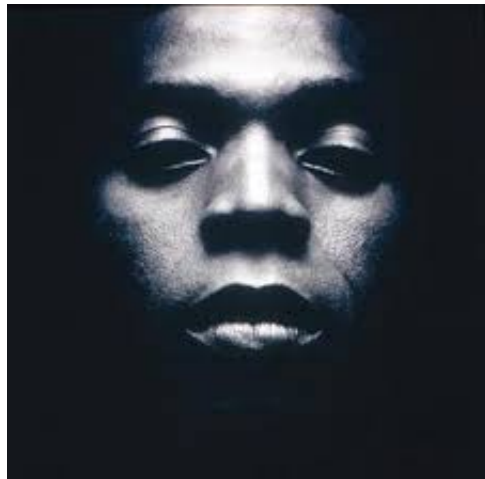
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flourished under his reign, he is very important because of the ability to maintain culture as it was passed on to his nephew and lastly Cleopatra. The 25th Dynasty is the last of the African ruled dynasties. Taharqa helped black Egypt survive and became a formidable foe to the Assyrians. The Pharaoh is also famous because of his mention in the Holy Bible; Kings 19:9 and Isaiah 37:9. Taharqa stood for freedom and the love of his people and the land , Pharaoh Taharqa we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.



Fela Kuti

Olufela Olusegun Oludotun Ransome-Kuti was born October 15, 1938 in Abeokuta, Nigeria to parents Funmilayo and Reverend Israel Oludotun Ransome-Kuti. Kuti was blessed with greatness in his genes; his father was a Protestant Preacher and School Principle, his mother was a feminist activist in the anti-colonial movement; she was said to be the inspiration behind Fela's political activism. In 1958 Fela was sent to Trinity College in London, England to study medicine, but made the decision to study music instead. In College he formed his first band Koola Lobitos, a band that played a fusion of jazz and highlife. In 1963 Kuti moved back to Nigeria and reformed his band, he also trained as a radio producer for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. In 1967 Kuti traveled to Ghana and developed Afrobeat.

Afrobeat is a complex fusion of Jazz, Funk, Ghanaian/Nigerian High Life, psychedelic rock, and traditional West African chants and rhythms. Kuti's music also incorporated call and response, and he was also known for making songs that could last up to forty five minutes. Fela developed a reputation for being a showman, his concerts were very extravagant, and he called his stage act Underground Spiritual Game. In 1969 Fela Kuti arrived in the United States to engage in some recording sessions, while recording in Los Angeles authorities were tipped off by a sour promoter that the band was recording without a permit. The band recorded the sessions in a hurry and later released the sessions as "The '69 Los Angeles Sessions".

When Kuti returned to Nigeria he renamed his band the Africa '70, he also changed his lyrics from music about love to music about political issues. He formed the Kalakuta Republic, a place where he housed a commune, a recording studio, and a home for many that connected to the band that later declared independent from the Nigerian State. Kuti became very popular through his music; he made the decision to sing in Pidgin English so his music reached a large number of people. With fame came problems, he was often raided by the ruling Government labeled as a problem.

In 1977 Kuti released the album "Zombie", an attack on Nigerian soldiers using zombie as a metaphor for methods the military used. The album was a smash hit, and an insult to the Nigerian Government. The Government retaliated with an attack on the Kalakuta Republic, during the attack one thousand soldiers attacked the commune, Kuti was severely beaten and his mother thrown from a window causing fatal injuries. Kuti's studio was destroyed and burned down; they lost all their music and the masters to their recordings. In response to his mother's death Kuti delivered his mother's coffin to the Dodan Barracks in Lagos, Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo's residence. He wrote two songs in addition to delivering his mother's coffin, "Coffin for head of state" and "Unknown Soldier".

In 1978 Kuti married 27 women to mark the attack on the Kalakuta Republic, later he adopted a rotation system, keeping only 12 wives at a time. He also had two notorious concerts because of riots; one led to him being banned from Ghana, the other in Berlin the Jazz Festival where his musicians deserted him because of rumors about money. Despite setbacks Kuti pushed forward, he formed his political party which he called "Movement of the people". He put himself forward for President in Nigeria's first elections, but was refused. He used his time to create a new band

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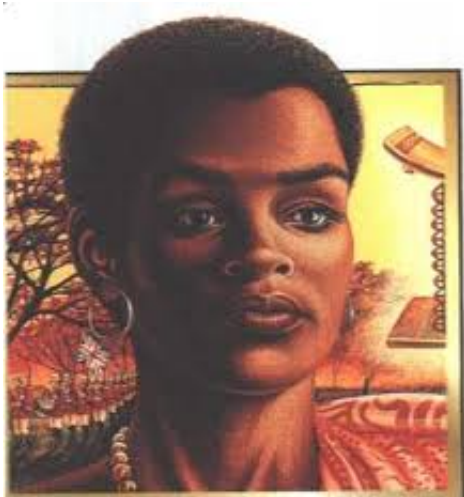
Egypt '80, and further infuriated the Government by dropping names of ITT Corporation vice-president Moshood Abiola, and then General Olusegun Obasanjo. In 1984, Muhammad Buhari's government, Kuti's opponent jailed him on a charge of smuggling currency.

His case was taken up by human-rights groups, and after 20 months, he was released from prison by General Ibrahim Babangida. A condition of his release was him divorcing his remaining twelve wives. Kuti continued to release albums with Egypt '80; he performed in Giants Stadium at the Conspiracy of Hope concert with Bono, Carlo Santana, and The Neville Brothers. In 1989, Kuti released the anti-apartheid "Beast of a nation" album, depicting Ronald Regan, Margret Thatcher and Pieter Willem Botha on the album cover. Album output slowed then stopped in the 90's, and he and four members of his organization were arrested for murder. His battle against military corruption took its toll, it was said that he was suffering from illnesses but refused treatment. Fela died August 7, 1997; more than a million people attended his funeral. Fela left a legacy of servant hood, activism and relentlessness. He was a, musical genius, who used his talents to uplift his people, Fela Kuti we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Fela Kuti video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhAOJR4dlzY>



Yaa Asantewaa

Yaa Asantewaa was born in 1840 in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipal District, Ghana. She is widely known for leading the Ashante Rebellion against British colonialism. Yaa was appointed Queen Mother by her brother Nana Akwasi the ruler of Ejisu, an ethnic group in present day Ghana. Akwasi died after a civil war in Ghana in 1888, after his death Yaa Asantewaa used her influence to nominate her grandson as the ruler of Ejisu. In 1896, her grandson as well as the King of the Ashante (Premhp I) were exiled to Seychelles by the British.

The British often used this tactic to weaken the people they wanted to dominate. They repeatedly looted the lands of the exiled Kings, this lead to the discoveries of a lot of Africa's valued arts and crafts in the British Museums. To this day Africa has been unable to recover its stolen art. To add insult to injury the arrogant British Governor-General of Ghana Fredrick Hodgson, demanded the sacred Golden Stool of the Ashante. That Stool is an important symbol of the Ashante Nation; this prompted a meeting of the elders of Ejisu. At this meeting the Chiefs were discussing going to war with the British, forcing them to bring back the Ashanteehene King (Nana) Premhp I. Yaa noticed that a great number of the chiefs were afraid, some rejected the idea of war, they proposed going to the Governor and begging him to bring back the King.

With the greatest passion Yaa Asantewaa stood and spoke; "Now I have seen that some of you fear to go forward to fight for our king. If it were in the brave days Osei Tutu, Okomfo Anokye, and

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Opoku Ware, chiefs would not sit down to see their king taken away without firing a shot. No white man could have dared to speak to chief of the Ashante in the way the Governor spoke to you chiefs this morning. Is it true that the bravery of the Ashante is no more? I cannot believe it. It cannot be! I must say this: if you the men of Ashanti will not go forward, then we will. We the women will. I shall call upon my fellow women. We will fight the white men. We will fight till the last of us falls in the battlefields.”

Inspired by her speech the men were fueled for battle. In 1900 the famous uprising broke out and for months they fought bravely and kept the British at bay in their fort. Outnumbered by British troops numbering 1,400 soldiers at Kumasi, Yaa was captured and sent into exile along with the other leaders. Yaa eventually died in exile on October 17th, 1921. Her uprising against the British was Africa’s last major revolt led by a woman. Her body was later returned to Ghana and given a proper burial; to this day she is still honored. The Yaa Asantewaa Girl’s Secondary School was constructed in her name. She was the epitome of a leader, a great symbol of strength and womanhood. She gave herself to free her people and fought in the face of oppression, even when the men around her were afraid. Yaa Asantewaa, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Yaa Asantewaa video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB-IOalfFpg>



Hatshepsut

The fifth Pharaoh of the 18th dynasty and regarded as the greatest pharaoh of the 18th dynasty; Hatshepsut reigned longer than any woman of any of the Indigenous Kemetian (Egypt) Dynasties. Born of royal lineage in 1508 BC in Ancient Kemet the daughter of Tuthmose I and Aahmes; Hatshepsut was destined to become great. With the death of her two brothers and the death of her father, Hatshepsut was favored to become Pharaoh, but Tuthmose II ascended to the throne after his father. Tuthmose II only served for three years after dying because of a skin disease. Hatshepsut became Queen Dowager; although Tuthmose III was in line to become Pharaoh he was too young.

After gaining control of the reigns in Kemet, Hatshepsut had to be smart enough to keep her control. Her Nephew Tuthmose III was becoming older and wanted to rule; Hatshepsut used acute political skills to remain in power. To decrease fear amongst her people she made herself Pharaoh in all statuary and relief during her twenty year reign. Dressing as a Pharaoh she even wore the beard the Pharaohs wear; she also gave the people of Kemet fifteen years of no war. Hatshepsut was widely known for her expeditions to the land of Punt in search of Ivory, animals, spices, gold and aromatic trees. With no war she was able to expand the kingdoms economic power and restored the Monuments of Kemet and Nubia.

During her reign the 18th dynasty prospered as great as any other dynasty. Hatshepsut as a female ruler boosted Kemet's reputation as an Economic power in the ancient world. Upon dying

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in 1458 BC Hatshepsut's memory was being erased by Tuthmose III, which was believed to be spurred by his grudge he held for her. Despite the destruction to the memory of the great female Pharaoh, her memory lives today because of her great reign as a Pharaoh which caused Kemet to prosper for twenty peaceful years. Hatshepsut was the blueprint for female power and dignity; she gave the female ruler prestige and respect. Pharaoh Hatshepsut we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Hatshepsut video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uO4L-HpWLPg>



Ahmose I

A member of the Theban royal line and the son of Pharaoh Tao II, Ahmose I became the founder of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt which is often referred to as the greatest of the Egyptian dynasties. At the age of 7, Ahmose's father was killed and at the age of ten his brother, having only ruled for three years, died of unknown causes. Afterwards, Ahmose assumed the throne and gained the title of Neb-Pehty-Re, meaning "the lord of strength is Re". During his reign, Ahmose I was able to expel the Hyksos which was something that his father and grandfather were not able to accomplish. This success allowed for the 18th Dynasty to become an all-African ruled dynasty.

Ahmose I restored the Theban rule, Egyptian culture and politics, and reasserted Egyptian power in its former territories of Nubia and Canaan. He also reopened quarries, mines and trade routes. Massive construction projects began to take place which allowed for the building of the last pyramid built by native Egyptians. Ahmose I was a visionary, a brave nationalist and a lover of his people and his culture, his bravery opened the doors for an African centered Egypt until the fall of the 18th dynasty. Ahmose I stood for justice and freedom which he displayed by removing the foreign invaders known as the Hyksos. Ahmose I showed pride and courage to free his people from oppression and inspired his people to live free and be proud to be African. Ahmose I we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.



Hypatia of Alexandria

Born in 370 AD as the daughter of Theon, a mathematician and Philosopher, Hypatia of Alexandria is the first woman in history to make a substantial contribution to mathematics. Throughout her childhood, Hypatia was taught mathematics by her father who worked at a distinguished museum used for higher education which also housed the Library of Alexandria. Upon finishing her formal education she left for Athens and Italy to further her studies. After completion, she returned to Alexandria and began teaching mathematics and philosophy. In 400 AD Hypatia became the leader of the Neo-Platonists school, which was the last of its kind dedicated to the Greek Philosophy of Plato. Because of Hypatia's grand reputation of being regarded as an authority figure on Platonic Philosophy, she attracted a great number of students desiring to learn from her.

Hypatia was the first woman known to write on the subject of math, including the conic section (The intersection of a plane and a cone). She also wrote several papers on philosophy and astronomy. However, only fragments of those writings still exist today. Hypatia was said to have refined the algebraic equations of the early Egyptian mathematician Diophantus. She is given credit for the creation of the astrolabe, which is an instrument used to measure star positions relative to earth as well as to purify water.

In 415 AD Hypatia was tortured to death by an angry mob of religious zealots following the new Christian patriarch Cyril of Alexander. The assassination was thought to be linked to her association with a non-Christian prefect. Hypatia became a martyr after her death, and it was said that her death caused other scholars to leave the School in Alexandria. Her loss was also regarded as the fall of the influences of the Greek philosophers. Hypatia gave the world wisdom in

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the form of science, mathematics and philosophy, and she paved paved the way for female educators by setting a standard of greatness to follow. Hypatia, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Hypatia of Alexandria video!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5H4Y8pkoZc>



Imhotep (2667 BC – 2648 BC)

Imhotep: one who comes in peace.

A commoner by birth to parents Kanofer, and architect and Khredounkh, Imhotep became one of the most phenomenal and most talked about individuals of antiquity. He served under Pharaoh Djoser of the Third Dynasty as High Priest, Chancellor, Chief Architect, Scribe, Engineer, Physician, along with others. He is considered the first architect, physician and genius in history.

Imhotep was the master mind behind the building of the first pyramid, the step pyramid at Saqqara.

As one of the few commoners to ever be given divine status after his death, he was worshiped as a god for 3,000 years in Greece and Rome due to his talents and contributions. He is credited as the author of the Edwin Smith Papyrus which describes over 90 anatomical terms and 48 injuries. Imhotep founded a school of medicine known as "Asklepion", which remained famous for 2,000 years, and he did so 2,200 years before the so called Greek "father of medicine", Hippocrates, ever existed. Commonly known as the first figure of a physician to stand out clearly from the mists of antiquity, Imhotep diagnosed and treated over 200 diseases, including 15 of the abdomen, 11 of the bladder, 10 of the rectum, 29 of the eyes, and 18 of the skin.

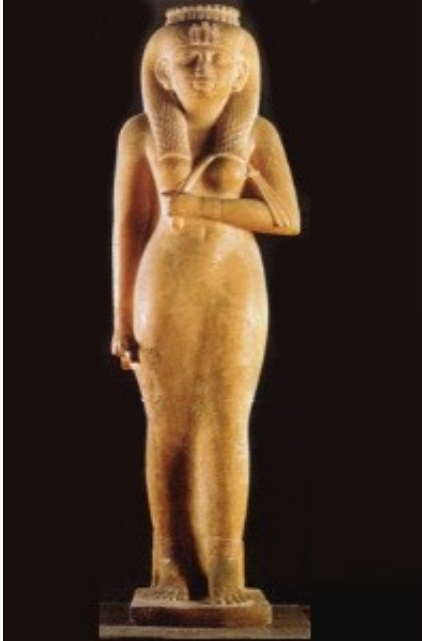
He performed surgery and practiced dentistry and was knowledgeable of the positions and functions of the organs as well as the circulation of the blood system. As a historic and medical figure, temples were erected and dedicated to him in Greece, which were turned into centers of medical teachings; he was also identified as the Greek God of medicine, Aesculapius. Imhotep was so profound that he is even incorporated into today's modern doctors Hippocratic Oath which states, "I swear by Apollo the physician, by Aesculapius, Hygeia, and Panacea, and take into witness all the gods and goddesses, to keep according to my ability and my judgment, the following oath".....

Imhotep gave the world a multitude of gifts which we still use today. Medical practitioners throughout history owe Imhotep a debt of gratitude. Architects throughout history owe Imhotep a debt of gratitude. This one man set the foundation for a future even he possibly could not dream of. Arguably one of the most influential people in the history, this Egyptian born multi genius gave the world the template for building Pyramids and other massive structures which are still erected and reflected today. Imhotep we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.

Click below to view the Imhotep video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbEmje2i5U8>



The Candace's of Kush

When we study history and the great people who contributed to our world, our women warriors and rulers are often overlooked. From the third century BCE to the second century CE, the Empire of Kush (Ethiopia) was ruled by a line of independent female rulers called the Candace's or in the traditional language of Kush, Kentake. Amanerinas, Amanishakhete, Nawidemak and Maleqereabar were the four Queens, well known as the Candace's. Different from their Egyptian counterparts, the Candace's had absolute rule, instead of the power coming from their husbands.

During the period known as the Meroitic period, Kush thrived, and it was often thought of as a nation never ruled by a male. The word Kentake means "queen mother", so the title was not taken lightly. If a woman was a Candace, she was able to influence the line of succession and consolidate her power. The Candace often played a role in the coronation of a new King. The Candace's are well known for refusing Alexander's entry into Kush, and deterring him on one of his military campaigns causing him to overtake a weaker Egypt. The strength of the Candace rulers also appeared in history as they were able to thwart the roman conquest of Kush. Using brilliant battle tactics, Amanerinas attacked Petronius during Rome's punitive invasions of Napata. They waited until most of his troops were gone off to battle, then Amanerinas attacked the army. When Petronius returned he found his "mighty" army in a standoff with a Nation they considered weaker. The standoff lasted until Augustus Caesar and Amanerinas were able to settle on signing a peace treaty.

Over a period of 1250 years, the kingdom of Kush was amazing and certainly one of the greatest, if not the greatest, civilization of its time and all time. The title of Candace lasted for 500 years,

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allowing Kush to become the great civilization it was under female rule. The Candace's set a standard for excellence and stability. A female dominated society with a female warrior class is not talked about much in the pages of history, especially a purely African civilization. The Candace's were brave, brilliant and influential; they were an example of how a strong spirit will not be held back by sexism and male domination. Women, no matter their race or creed, can learn a lot from the Candace's-- women who successfully ruled a kingdom and inspired Egyptian culture and prestige. To all of the Candace's, and all the female rulers of Kush, thank you for your brilliance and courage which helped create greatness in the form of a Kingdom. These women are an example of the greatness of the female spirit. To all the Candace's, we stand on your shoulders.

J.A. Ward.