"The basis of the Egyptian population was negro in the Pre-Dynastic epoch."

The general acceptance, as a sequel to the work of Professor [Louis B.] Leakey, of the hypothesis of mankind's monogenetic and African origin, makes it possible to pose the question of the peopling of Egypt and even of the world in completely new terms. More than 150,000 years ago, beings morphologically identical with the man of today were living in the region of the great lakes at the sources of the Nile and nowhere else. This notion, and others which it would take too long to recapitulate here, form the substance of the last report presented by the late Dr. Leakey at the Seventh
Pan-African Congress of Pre-History in Addis Ababa in 1971. It means that the whole human race had its origin, just as the ancients had guessed, at the foot of the mountains of the Moon. Against all expectations and in defiance of recent hypotheses it was from this place that men moved out to people the rest of the world. From this two facts of capital importance result:

(a) of necessity the earliest men were ethnically homogeneous and negroid. Gloger's law, which would also appear to be applicable to human beings, lays it down that warm-blooded animals evolving in a warm humid climate will secrete a black pigment (eumelanin). Hence if mankind originated in the tropics around the latitude of the great lakes, he was bound to have brown pigmentation from the start and and it was by differentiation in other climates that the original stock later split into different races;

(b) there were only two routes available by which these early men could move out to people the other continents, namely, the Sahara and the Nile valley. It is the latter region which will be discussed here.
From the Upper Palaeolithic to the dynastic epoch, the whole of the river's basin was taken over progressively by these negroid peoples.

Evidence of Physical Anthropology on the Race of the Ancient Egyptians

It might have been thought that, working on physiological evidence, the findings of the anthropologists would dissipate all doubts by providing reliable and definitive truths. This is by no means so: the arbitrary nature of the criteria used, to go no farther, as well as abolishing any notion of a conclusion acceptable without qualification, introduces so much scientific hair-splitting that there are times when one wonders whether the solution of the problem would not have been nearer if we had not had the ill luck to approach it from this angle.

Nevertheless, although the conclusions of these anthropological studies stop short of the full truth, they still speak unanimously of the existence of a negro race from the most distant ages of prehistory down to the dynastic period. It is not possible in this paper to cite all these conclusions: they will be found summarized in Chapter X of Dr. Emile Massoulard's Histoire et protohistoire d' Egypt (Institut d'Ethnologix, Paris, 1949). We shall quote
Miss Fawcett considers that the Negadah skulls form a sufficiently homogeneous collection to warrant the assumption of a Negadah race. In the total height of the skull, the auricular height, the length and breadth of the face, nasal length, cephalic index and facial index this race would seem to approximate to the negro; in nasal breadth, height of orbit, length of palate and nasal index it would seem closed to the Germanic peoples; accordingly the Pre-Dynastic Negadians are likely to have resembled the negroes in certain of their characteristics and the white race in others.

It is worth noting that the nasal indices of Ethiopians and Dravidians would seem to approximate them to the Germanic peoples, though both are black races.

These measurements, which would leave an open choice between the two extremes represented by the negro and the Germanic races, give an idea of the elasticity of the criteria employed. A sample follows:
An attempt was made by Thompson and Randall MacIver to determine more precisely the importance of the negroid element in the series of skulls from El'Amrah, Abydos and Hou. They divided them into three groups: (1) negroid skulls (those with a facial index below 54 and a nasal index above 50, i.e. Short broad face and broad nose); (2) non-negroid skulls (facial index above 54 and nasal index below 50, long narrow face and narrow nose), (3) intermediate skulls (assignable to one of the two previous groups on the basis of either the facial index or on the evidence of the nasal index, plus individuals marginal to either group). The proportion of negroids would seem to have 24% of men and 19% of women in the early Pre-Dynastic and 25% and 28% respectively in the late Pre-Dynastic.

Kieth has disputed the value of the criterion selected by Thompson and Randall MacIver to distinguish the negroid from the non-negroid skulls. His opinion is that if the same
criteria were applied to the study of any series of contemporary English skulls, the sample would be found to contain approximately 30% of negroid types. (pp. 420-1)

The converse of Keith's proposition could also be asserted, namely, that if the criterion were applied to the 140 million negroes now alive in black Africa a minimum of 100 million negroes would emerge whitewashed.

It may also be remarked that the distinction between negroid, non-negroid and intermediary is unclear; the fact is that 'non-negroid' does not mean of white race and 'intermediary' still less so.

'Falkenburger reopened the anthropological study of the Egyptian population in a recent work in which he discusses 1,787 male skulls varying in date from the old, Pre-Dynastic to our own day. He distinguishes four main groups' (p. 421). The sorting of the predynastic skulls into these four groups gives the following results for the whole predynastic period: "36% negroid, 33% Mediterranean, 11% Cro-Magnoid and 20% of individuals not falling in any of these groups but approximating either to the Cro-Magnoid or to the negroid'. The proportion of negroids is definitely higher than
that suggested by Thomson and Randall MacIver, though Kieth considers the latter too high.

'Do Falkenburger's figures reflect the reality? It is not our task to decide this. If they are accurate, the Pre-Dynastic population far from representing a pure bred race, as Elliott-Smith has said, comprised at least three distinct racial elements - over a third of negroids, a third of Mediterraneans, a tenth of Cro-Magnoids and a fifth of individuals crossbred - to varying degrees' (p. 422).

The point about all these conclusions is that despite their discrepancies the degree to which they converge proves that the basis of the Egyptian population was negro in the Pre-Dynastic epoch. Thus they are all incompatible with the theories that the negro element only infiltrated into Egypt at a late stage. Far otherwise, the facts prove that it was preponderant from the beginning to the end of Egyptian history, particularly when we note once more that 'Mediterranean' is not a synonym for 'white', Elliott-Smith's 'brown' or Mediterranean race being nearer to the mark'.

'Elliott Smith classes these Proto-Egyptians as a branch of what he calls the brown race".' The term 'brown' in this context refers to skin colour and
is simply a euphemism for negro. It is thus clear that it was the whole of the Egyptian population which was negro, barring an infiltration of white nomads in the proto-dynastic epoch.

In Petrie’s study of the Egyptian race we are introduced to a possible classification element in great abundance which cannot fail to surprise the reader.

Petrie . . . published a study of the races of Egypt in the Pre-Dynastic and Proto-Dynastic periods working only on portrayals of them. Apart from the steatopygian race, he distinguishes six separate types: an aquiline type representative of a white-skinned Libyan race; a 'plaited beard' type belonging to an invading race coming perhaps from the shores of the Red Sea, a 'sharp-nosed' type almost certainly from the Arabian Desert; a 'tilted-nose' type from Middle Egypt; a 'jutting beard' type from Lower Egypt; and a 'narrow-nose' type from Upper Egypt. Going on the images, there would thus have been seven different racial types in Egypt during the epochs we are considering. In the pages which follow we shall see that study of the skeletons seems to provide little authority
The above mode of classification gives an idea of the arbitrary nature of
the criteria used to define the Egyptian races. Be that as it may, it is
clear that anthropology is far from having established the existence of a
white Egyptian race and would indeed tend rather to suggest the opposite.

Nevertheless, in current textbooks the question is suppressed: in most cases
it is simply and flatly asserted that the Egyptians were white and the
honest layman is left with the impression that any such assertion must
necessarily have a prior basis of solid research. But there is no such
basis, as this chapter has shown. And so generation after generation has
been misled. Many authorities skate around the difficulty today by speaking
of red-skinned and black-skinned whites without their sense of common logic
being in the least upset. 'The Greeks call Africa "Libya", a misnomer au
initio since Africa contains many other peoples besides the so-called
Libyans, who belong among the whites of the northern or Mediterranean
periphery and hence are many steps removed from the brown (or red) skinned
whites (Egyptians).'4

In a textbook intended for the middle secondary school we find the following
sentence: 'A Black is distinguished less by the colour of his skin (for there are black-skinned "whites") than by his features: thick lips, flattened nose . . .'5 It is only through these twistings of the basic definitions that it has been possible to bleach the Egyptian race.

It is worthwhile calling to mind the exaggerations of the theorists of anthropo-sociology in the last century and the beginnings of the present one whose minute physiognomical analyses discovered racial stratifications even in Europe, and particularly in France, when in fact there was really a single and by now practically homogeneous people.6 Today Occidentals who value their national cohesion are careful to avoid examining their own societies on so divisive a hypothesis, but continue unthinkingly to apply the old methods to the non-European societies.

Human Images of the Protohistoric Period: Their Anthropological Value

The study of human images made by Flinders Petrie on another plane shows that the ethnic type was black: according to Petrie these people were the Anu whose name, known to us since the protohistoric epoch, is always 'written' with three pillars on the few inscriptions extant from the end of
the fourth millennium before our era. The natives of the country are always represented with unmistakable chiefly emblems for which one looks in vain among the infrequent portrayals of other races, who are all shown as servile foreign elements having reached the valley by infiltration (cf. Tera Neter7 and the Scorpion king whom Petrie groups together; 'The Scorpion King . . . belonged to the preceding race of Anu, moreover he worshipped Min and Set.').8

As we shall see later Min, like the chief gods of Egypt, was called by the tradition of Egypt itself 'the great negro'.

After a glance at the various foreign types of humanity who disputed the valley with the indigenous blacks, Petrie describes the latter, the Anu, in the following terms: Besides these types, belonging to the North and East, there is the aboriginal race of the Anu, or Annu, people (written with three pillars) who became a part of the historic inhabitants. The subject ramifies too doubtfully if we include all single pillar names, but looking for the Annu written, with the three pillars, we find that they occupied southern Egypt and Nubia, and the name is also applied in Sinai and Libya. As to the southern Egyptians, we have the most essential document, one portrait of a
chief, Tera Neter, roughly modelled in relief in green glazed faience, found in the early temple at Abydos. Preceding his name his address is given on this earliest of visiting cards, 'Palace of the Anu in Hemen city, Tera Neter'. Hemen was the name of the god of Tuphium, Erment, opposite to it, was the palace of Annu of the south, Annu Menti. The next place in the south is Aunti (Gefeleyn), and beyond that Aunyt-Seni (Esneh)."

Amelineau lists in geographical order the fortified towns built along the length of the Nile valley by the Annu blacks.

[Hieroglyphics] =Ant=(Esneh)

[Hieroglyphics] =An =the southern 'On'
(now Hermonthis)

[Hieroglyphics] =Denderah, the traditional birthplace of Isis

[Hieroglyphics] = A town also called 'On' in the name of Tinis

[Hieroglyphics] =The town called the northern 'On', the renowned city of Heliopolis
The common ancestor of the Annu settled along the Nile was Ani or An, a name determined by the word [hieroglyphics] (khet) and which, dating from the earliest versions of the "Book of the Dead" onwards, is given to the god Orisis.

The wife of [hieroglyphics] the god Ani is the goddess Anet [hieroglyphics] who is also his sister, just as Isis is the sister of Osiris.

The identity of the god An with Osiris has been demonstrated by Pleyte;10 we should, indeed recall that is also surnamed by (?) the Anou; 'Osiris Ani'.

The god Anu is represented alternately by the symbol [hieroglyphics] and the symbol [hieroglyphics]. Are the Aunak tribes now inhabiting the upper Nile related to the ancient Annu? Future research will provide the answer to this question.

Petrie thinks it possible to make a distinction between the predynastic people represented by Tera Neter and the Scorpion King (who is himself a Pharaoh even at that date as his head-dress shows) and a dynastic people worshipping the falcion and probably represented by the Pharaoh's Narmer,14 Khasekhem, Sanekhei and Zoser.12 By reference to the faces reproduced in the figure it is easily perceived that there is no ethnic difference between the
two lots, and both belong to the black race.

The mural in tomb SD 63 (Sequence Date 63) of Hierakonopolis shows the native-born blacks subjugating the foreign intruders into the valley if we accept Petrie's interpretation: 'Below is the black ship at Hierakonpolis belonging to the black men who are shown as conquering the red men.'

The Gebel-el-Arak knife haft shows similar scenes: 'There are also combats of black men overcoming red men.' However, the archaeological value of this object, which was not found in situ but in the possession of a merchant, is less than that of the preceding items.

What the above shows is that the images of men of the protohistoric and even of the dynastic period in no way square with the idea of the Egyptian race popular with Western anthropologists. Wherever the autochthonous racial type is represented with any degree of clearness, it is evidently negroid.

Nowhere are the Indo-European and Semitic elements shown even as ordinary freeman serving a local chief, but invariably as conquered foreigners. The rare portrayals found are always shown with the distinctive marks of captivity, hands tied behind the back or strained over the shoulders. A protodynastic figurine represents an Indo-European prisoner with a long
plait on his knees, with his hands bound tight to his body. The characteristics of the object itself show that it was intended as the foot of a piece of furniture and represented a conquered race.15 Often the portrayal is deliberately grotesque as with other proto-dynastic figures showing individuals with their hair plaited in what Petrie calls pigtails.16

In the tomb of King Ka (first dynasty) at Abydos, Petrie found a plaque showing an Indo-European captive in chains with his hands behind his back.17 Elliott-Smith considers that the individual represented is a Semite. The dynastic epoch has also yielded the documents illustrated in Pls 1.9. and 1.14 showing Indo-European and Semitic prisoners. In contrast, the typically negroid features of the pharaohs (Narmer, first dynasty, the actual founder of the Pharaonic line; Zoser, third dynasty, by whose time all the technological elements of the Egyptian civilization were already in evidence; Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid, a Cameroon type,18 Menthuhotep, founder of the eleventh dynasty, very black,19 Sesostris 1; Queen Ahmosis Nefertari; and Amenophis I) show that all classes of Egyptian society belong to the same black race.

Pls 1.15 and 1.16, showing the Indo-European and Semitic types, have been
included deliberately to contrast them with the quite
dissimilar
physiognomies of the black pharaohs and to demonstrate clearly
that there is
no trace of either of the first two types in the whole line of
Pharaohs if
we exclude the foreign Libyan and Ptolemaic dynasties.

It is usual to contrast the negresses on the tomb of Horemheb
with the
Egyptian type also shown. This contrast is surely a false one; it is social
and not ethnic and there is as much difference between an aristocratic
Senegalese lady from Dakar and those antique African peasant
women with
their horny hands and splay feet as between the latter and an Egyptian lady
of the cities of antiquity.

There are two variants of the black race: (a) straight-haired, represented
in Asia by the Dravidians and in Africa by the Nubians and the Tubbou or
Tedda, all three with jet-black skins; (b) the kinky-haired blacks of the
Equatorial regions. Both types entered into the composition of the Egyptian
population.

Melanin Dosage Test

In practice it is possible to determine directly the skin colour and hence
the ethnic affiliations of the ancient Egyptians by microscopic analysis in

the laboratory; I doubt if the sagacity of the researchers who have studied

the question has overlooked the possibility.

Melanin (eumelanin), the chemical body responsible for skin pigmentation,

is, broadly speaking, insoluble and is preserved for millions of years in

the skins of fossil animals.20 There is thus all the more reason for it to

be readily recoverable in the skins of Egyptian mummies, despite a tenacious

legend that the skin of mummies, tainted by the embalming material, is no

longer susceptible of any analysis.21 Although the epidermis is the main

site of the melanin, the melanocytes penetrating the derm at the boundary

between it and the epidermis, even where the latter has mostly been

destroyed by the embalming materials, show a melanin level which is

non-existent in the white-skinned races. The samples I myself analyzed were

taken in the physical anthropology laboratory of the Mus'ee de l'Homme in

Paris off the mummies from the Marietta excavations in Egypt.22

The same method is perfectly suitable for use on the royal mummies of Thutmose III,

Seti I and Ramses II in the Cairo Museum, which are in an excel state of

preservation. For two years past I have been vainly begging the curator of

the Cairo Museum for similar samples to analyze. No more than a few square
millimetres of skin would be required to mount a specimen, the preparations being a few um in thickness and lightened with ethyl benzoate. They can be studied by natural light or with ultra-violet lighting which renders the melanin grains fluorescent.

Either way let us simply say that the evaluation of melanin level by microscopic examination is a laboratory method which enables us to classify the ancient Egyptians unquestionably among the black races.

Osteological Measurements

Among the criteria accepted in physical anthropology for classifying races, the osteological measurements are perhaps the least misleading (in contrast to craniometry) for distinguishing a black man from a white man. By this criterion, also, the Egyptians belong among the black races. This study was made by the distinguished German savant Lepsius at the end of the nineteenth century and his conclusions remain valid; subsequent methodological progress in the domain of physical anthropology in no way undermines what is called the 'Lepsius canon' which, in round figures, gives the bodily proportions of the ideal Egyptian, short-armed and of negroid or negrito physical type.23
Blood Groups

It is a notable fact that even today Egyptians, particularly in Upper Egypt, belong to the same Group B as the populations of western Africa on the Atlantic seaboard and not the A2 group characteristic of the white race prior to any crossbreeding. It would be interesting to study the extent of Group A2 distribution in Egyptian mummies, which present-day techniques make possible.

The Egyptian Race According to the Classical Authors of Antiquity

To the Greek and Latin writers contemporary with the ancient Egyptians the latter's physical classification posed no problems: the Egyptians were negroes, thick-lipped, kinky-haired and thin-legged; the unanimity of the author's evidence on a physical fact as salient as a people's race will be difficult to minimize or pass over. Some of the following evidence drives home the point.

(a) Herodotus, 'the father of history', -480(?) to -425. With regard to the origins of the Colchians he writes:

    it is in fact manifest that the Colchidians are
Egyptian by race ... several Egyptians told me that in their opinion the Colchidians were descended from soldiers of Sesostris. I had conjectured as much myself from two pointers, firstly because they have black skins and kinky hair (to tell the truth this proves nothing for other peoples have them too) and secondly, and more reliably for the reason that alone among mankind the Egyptians and the Ethiopians have practiced circumcision since time immemorial. The Phoenicians and Syrians of Palestine themselves admit that they learnt the practice from the Egyptians while the Syrians in the river Thermodon and Pathenios region and their neighbors the Macrons say they learnt it recently from the Colchidians. These are the only races which practice circumcision and it is observable that they do it in the same way as the Egyptians. As between the Egyptians themselves and the Ethiopians I could not say which taught the other the practice for among them it is quite clearly a custom of great antiquity. As to the custom having been learnt through their Egyptian connections, a further strong proof to my mind is that all those Phoenicians trading to Greece cease to treat the pudenda after the Egyptian manner and do not subject
their offspring to circumcision.26

Herodotus reverts several times to the negroid character of the Egyptians and each time uses it as a fact of observation to argue more or less complex theses. Thus to prove that the Greek oracle at Dondona in Epirus was of Egyptian origin, one of his arguments is the following: '... and when they add that the dove was black they give us to understand that the woman was Egyptian.'27 The doves in question - actually there were two according to the text - symbolize two Egyptian women who are said to have BEEN carried off from the Egyptian Thebes to found the oracles in Greece at Dodona and in Libya (Oasis of Jupiter Amon) respectively. Herodotus did not share the opinion of Anaxagoras that the melting of the snows on the mountains of Ethiopia was the source of the Nile floods.28 He relied on the fact that it neither rains or snows in Ethiopia 'and the heat there turns men black'.29

(b) Aristotle, -389 to -332, scientist, philosopher and tutor of Alexander the Great.

In one of his minor works, Aristotle attempts, with unexpected naivete', to establish a correlation between the physical and moral natures of living beings and leaves us evidence on the Egyptian-Ethiopian race which confirms
what Herodotus says. According to him, 'Those who are too black are cowards,
like for instance, the Egyptians and Ethiopians. But those who are
excessively white are also cowards as we can see from the example of women,
the complexion of courage is between the two.'30

(c) Lucian, Greek writer, +125(?) to +190.

The evidence of Lucian is as explicit as that of the two previous writers.
He introduces two Greeks, Lycinus and Timolaus, who start a conversation.

Lycinus (describing a young Egyptian):
'This boy is not merely black; he has thick lips and his legs are too thin. . .
his hair worn in a plait behind shows that he is not a freeman.'

Timolaus: 'But that is a sign of really distinguished birth in Egypt, Lycinus.
All freeborn children plait their hair until they reach manhood. It is the
exact opposite of the custom of our ancestors who thought it seemly for old men to
secure their hair with a gold brooch to keep it in place.'31
(d) Apollodorus, first century before our era, Greek philosopher.

'Aegyptos conquered the country of the black-footed ones and called it Egypt after himself.'32

(e) Aeschylus, -525(?) to -456, tragic poet and creator of Greek tragedy.

In The Suppliants, Danaos, fleeing with his daughters, the Danaids, and pursued by his brother Aegyptos with his sons, the Aegytiads, who seek to wed their cousins by force, climbs a hillock, looks out to sea and describes the Aegytiads at the oars afar off in these terms: 'I can see the crew with their black limbs and white tunics.'33

A similar description of the Egyptian type of man recurs a few lines later in verse 745.

(f) Achilles Tatius of Alexandria.

He compares the herdsmen of the Delta to the Ethiopians and explains that they are blackish, like half-castes.

(g) Strabo, -58 to about +25.

Strabo visited Egypt and almost all the countries of the Roman empire. He
concurs in the theory that the Egyptians and the Colchoi are of the same race but holds that the migrations to Ethiopia and Colchoi had been from Egypt only.

'Egyptians settled in Ethiopia and in Colchoi.' There is no doubt whatever as to Strabo's notion of the Egyptian's race for he seeks elsewhere to explain why the Egyptians are darker than the Hindus, a circumstance which would permit the refutation, if needed, of any attempt at confusing 'the Hindu and Egyptian races'.

(h) Diodorus of Sicily, about -63 to +14, Greek historian and contemporary of Caesar Augustus.

According to Diodorus it was probably Ethiopia which colonized Egypt (in the Athenian sense of the term, signifying that, with overpopulation, a proportion of the people emigrate to new territory).

The Ethiopians say that the Egyptians 'are one of their colonies, which was led into Egypt by Osiris. They claim that at the beginning of the world Egypt was simply a sea but that the Nile, carrying down vast quantities of loam from Ethiopia in its flood waters, finally filled it in
and made it part of the continent. ... They add that the Egyptians have received from them, as from authors and their ancestors, the greater part of their laws.36

(i) Diogenes Laertius.

He wrote the following about Zeno, founder of the stoic School (-333 to -261): 'Zeno son of Mnaseas or Demeas was a native of Citium in Cyprus, a Greek city which has taken in some Phoenician colonists.' In his Lives, Timotheus of Athens describes Zeno as having a twisted neck. Apollonius of Tyre says of him that he was gaunt, very tall and black, hence the fact that, according to Chrysippus in the First Book of his Proverbs, certain people called him an Egyptian vine-shoot.37

(j) Ammianus Marcellinus, about +33 to +100, Latin historian and friend of the Emperor Julian.

With him we reach the sunset of the Roman empire and the end of classical antiquity. There are about nine centuries between the birth of Aeschylus and Herodotus and the death of Ammianus Marcellinus, nine centuries during which the Egyptians, amid a sea of white races, steadily crossbred. It can be said
without exaggeration that in Egypt one household in ten included a white Asiatic or Indo-European slave.39

It is remarkable that, despite its intensity, all this crossbreeding should not have succeeded in upsetting the racial constants. Indeed Ammianus Marcellinus writes: "...the men of Egypt are mostly brown and black with a skinny and desiccated look."39 He also confirms the evidence already cited about the Colchoi: 'Beyond these lands are the heartlands of the Camaritae40 and the Phasis with its swifter stream borders the country of the Colchoi, an ancient race of Egyptian origin.'41

This cursory review of the evidence of the ancient Graeco-Latin writers on the Egyptians' race shows that the extent of agreement between them is impressive and is an objective fact difficult to minimize or conceal, the two alternatives between which present-day Egyptology constantly oscillates.

An exception is the evidence of an honest savant. Volney, who travelled in Egypt between +1783 and +1785, i.e. at the peak period of negro slavery, and made the following observations on the true Egyptian race, the same which produced the Pharaohs, namely the Copts:
All of them are puffy-faced, heavy eyed and thick-lipped, in a word, real mulatto faces. I was tempted to attribute this to the climate until, on visiting the Sphinx, the look of it gave me the clue to the enigma. Beholding that head characteristically Negro in all its features, I recalled the well-known passage of Herodotus which reads: 'For my part I consider the Colchoi are a colony of the Egyptians because, like them, they are black skinned and kinky-haired.' In other words the ancient Egyptians were true negroes of the same stock as all the autochthonous peoples of Africa and from that datum one sees how their race, after some centuries of mixing with the blood of Romans and Greeks, must have lost the full blackness of its original colour but retained the impress of its original mould. It is even possible to apply this observation very widely and posit in principle that physiognomy is a kind of record usable in many cases for disputing or elucidating the evidence of history on the origins of the peoples . . .

After illustrating this proposition citing the case of the Normans, who 900 years after the conquest of Normandy still look like Danes, Volney adds:
but reverting to Egypt, its contributions
to history afford many subjects for philosophic reflection. What a
subject for meditation is
the present-day barbarity and ignorance of the Copts who were considered, born of the alliance of the deep genius of the Egyptians and the brilliance of the Greeks, that this race of blacks who nowadays are slaves and the objects of our scorn is the very one to which we owe our arts, our sciences, and even the use of spoken word; and finally recollect that it is in the midst of the peoples claiming to be the greatest friends of liberty and humanity that the most barbarous of enslavements has been sanctioned and the question raised whether black men have brains of the same quality as those of white men!42

To this testimony of Volney, Champollion-Figeac, brother of Champollion the Younger, was to reply in the following terms: 'The two physical traits of black skin and kinky hair are not enough to stamp a race as negro and Volney's conclusion as to the negro origin of the ancient population of Egypt is glaringly forced and inadmissible.'43
Being black from head to foot and having kinky hair is not enough to make a man a negro! This shows us the kind of specious argumentation to which Egyptology has had to resort since its birth as a science. Some scholars maintain that Volney was seeking to shift the discussion to a philisophic plane. But we have only to re-read Volney: he is simply drawing the inferences from crude material facts forcing themselves on his eyes and his conscience as proofs.

"The Egyptians had only one term to designate themselves:

  kmt=the negroes (literally)."

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ORIGIN OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS (Cont,)

by Cheikh Anta Diop

The Egyptians as They Saw Themselves

It is no waste of time to get the views of those principally concerned. How did the ancient Egyptians see themselves? Into which ethnic category did
they put themselves? What did they call themselves? The language and

literature left to us by the Egyptians of the Pharaonic epoch

supply

explicit answers to these questions which the scholars cannot refrain from

minimizing, twisting or 'interpreting.'

The Egyptians had only one term to designate themselves:

[hieroglyphics]=kmt=the negroes (literally).44 This is the strongest term

existing in the Pharaonic tongue to indicate blackness; it is accordingly

written with a hieroglyph representing a length of wood charred at the end

and not crocodile scales.45 This word is the etymological origin of the

well-known root Kamit which has proliferated in modern anthropological

literature. The biblical root kam is probably derived from it and it has

therefore been necessary to distort the facts to enable this root today to

mean 'white' in Egyptological terms whereas, in the Pharaonic mother tongue

which gave it birth, it meant 'coal black.'

In the Egyptian language, a word of assembly is formed from an adjective or

a noun by putting it in the feminine singular. 'kmt' from the adjective

[hieroglyphics] =km=black; it therefore means strictly negroes or at the

very least black men. The term is a collective noun which thus described the

whole people of Pharaonic Egypt as a black people.
In other words, on the purely grammatical plane, if one wishes to indicate negroes in the Pharaonic tongue, one cannot use any other word than the very one which the Egyptians used of themselves. Furthermore, the language offers us another term, [hieroglyphics] kmtjw=the negroes, the black men (literally)=the Egyptians, as opposed to 'foreigners' which comes from the same root km and which the Egyptians also used to describe themselves as a people as distinguished from all foreign peoples.46 These are the only adjectives of nationality used by the Egyptians to designate themselves and both mean 'negro' or 'black' in the Pharonic language. Scholars hardly ever mention them or when they do it is to translate them by euphemisms such as the 'Egyptians' while remaining completely silent about their etymological sense.47 They prefer the expression [hieroglyphics] Rmt kmt=the men of the country of the black men or the men of the black country.

In Egyptian, words are normally followed by a determinative which indicates their exact sense, and for this particular expression Egyptologists suggest that [hieroglyphics] km=black and that the colour qualifies the determinative which follows it and which signifies 'country'. Accordingly, they claim, the translation should be 'the black earth' from the colour of
the loam, or the 'black country', and not 'the country of the black men' as

we should be inclined to render it today with black Africa and white Africa

in mind. Perhaps so, but if we apply this rule rigorously to
[hieroglyphics] =kmit, we are forced to 'concede that here the adjective "black" qualifies

the determinative which signifies the whole people of Egypt shown by the two

symbols for "man" and "woman" and the three strokes below them which

indicate the plural'. Thus, if it is possible to voice a doubt as regards

the expression [hieroglyphics] =Kme, it is not possible to do so in the case

of the two adjectives of nationality [hieroglyphics] kmt and kmtjw unless

one is picking one's arguments completely at random.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the ancient Egyptians should never have

had the idea of applying these qualificatives to the Nubians and other

populations of Africa to distinguish them from themselves; any more than a

Roman at the apogee of the empire could use a 'colour' adjective to

distinguish himself from the Germani on the other bank of the Danube, of the

same stock but still in the prehistoric age of development.

In either case both sides were of the same world in terms of physical

anthropology, and accordingly the distinguishing terms used related to level
of civilization or moral sense. For the civilized Romans, the Germans, of
the same stock, were barbarians. The Egyptians used the expression

[hieroglyphics] =na-has to designate the Nubians; and nahas is the name of
a people, with no colour connotation in Egyptian. It is a deliberate
mistranslation to render it as negro as is done in almost all present-day
publications.

The Divine Epithets

Finally, black or negro is the divine epithet invariably used for the chief beneficent gods of Egypt, whereas all the malevolent spirits are qualified as desret=red; we also know that to Africans this form applies to the white nations; it is practically certain that this held good for Egypt too but I want in this chapter to keep to the least debatable facts.

The surnames of the gods are these:

[hieroglyphics] =kmwr=the 'Great Negro' for Osiris

[hieroglyphics] =km=the black + the name of the god

[hieroglyphics] =kmt=the black + the name of the goddess
The km (black) [hieroglyphics] qualificative is applied to Hathor, Apis, Min, Thoth, etc.52 [hieroglyphics] set kmt=the black woman=Isis53 On the other hand 'seth', the sterile desert, is qualified by the term desret=red.

54 The wild animals which Horus fought to create civilization are qualified as desret=red, especially the hippopotamus.55 Similarly the maleficent beings wiped out by Thoth are Des= [hieroglyphics] =desrtjw=thr red ones;

this term is the grammatical converse of Kmtjw and its construction follows the same rule for the formation of 'nisbes'.

Witness of the Bible

The Bible tells us. ' ...the sons of Ham [were] Cush, and Mizraim [i.e. Egypt], and Phut, and Canaan. And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah.56

Generally speaking all Semitic tradition (Jewish and Arab) classes ancient Egypt with the countries of the blacks.

The importance of these depositions cannot be ignored, for these are peoples (the Jews) which lived side by side with the ancient Egyptians and sometimes in symbiosis with them and have nothing to gain by presenting a false ethnic
picture of them. Nor is the notion of an erroneous interpretation of the facts any more tenable.57

Cultural Data

Among the innumerable identical cultural traits recorded in Egypt and in present-day black Africa, it is proposed to refer only to circumcision and totemism.

According to the extract from Herodotus quoted earlier, circumcision is of African origin. Archaeology has confirmed the judgment of the Father of History for Elliott-Smith was able to determine from the examination of well-preserved mummies that circumcision was the rule among the Egyptians as long ago as the protohistoric era,58 i.e. earlier than -4000.

Egyptian totemism retained its vitality down to the Roman period59 and Plutarch also mentions it. The researches of Amelineau6,60 Loret, Moret and Adolphe Reinach have clearly demonstrated the existence of an Egyptian totemic system, in refutation of the champions of the zoolatric thesis.

If we reduce the notion of the totem to that of a fetish, usually representing an animal of a species with which the tribe believes
it has special ties formally renewed at
fixed intervals, and which is carried into
battle like a standard; if we accept this
minimal but adequate definition of a totem,
it can be said that there was no country
where totemism had a more brilliant reign
than in Egypt and certainly nowhere where
it could be better studied.61

Linguistic Affinity

Walaf,62 a Senegalese language spoken in the extreme west of
Africa on the
Atlantic Ocean, is perhaps as close to ancient Egyptian as
Coptic. An
exhaustive study of this question has recently been carried
out.63 In this
chapter enough is presented to show that the kinship between
ancient
Egyptian and the languages of Africa is not hypothetical but a
demonstrable
fact which it is impossible for modern scholarship to thrust
aside.

As we shall see, the kinship is genealogical in nature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egyptian</th>
<th>Coptic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walaf</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
=kef=to grasp, (Saidique dialect)
kef=seize a prey
to take a strip
(oh something)

kef i
kef na
kef ek
kef nga
kef et
kef na
kef ef

kef es
kef ef na

kef es

kef n
kef nanu

kef ton
kef ngen

kef sen
kef nanu

keh=to tame 65

keh
keh ek
keh er
keh en
keh es
keh etetu
keh ey
We have the following correspondences between the verb forms,
with identity of similarity of meaning: all the Egyptian verb forms, except for two, are also recorded in Walaf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WALAF</th>
<th>EGYPTIAN</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feh-ef</td>
<td>feh-ef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feh-es</td>
<td>feh-es</td>
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<tr>
<td>feh-n-ef</td>
<td>feh-n-ef</td>
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<tr>
<td>feh-n-es</td>
<td>feh-n-es</td>
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<tr>
<td>feh-w</td>
<td>feh-w</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feh-wef</td>
<td>feh-wef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feh-w-es</td>
<td>feh-w-es</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feh-w-a-ef</td>
<td>feh-w-a-ef</td>
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<tr>
<td>feh-w-n-es</td>
<td>feh-w-n-es</td>
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<tr>
<td>feh-in-ef</td>
<td>feh-in-ef</td>
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<td>feh-in-es</td>
<td>feh-in-es</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feh-ef</td>
<td>feh-ef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fen-es</td>
<td>fen-es</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
t-ef feh-t-ef feh-
es feh-t-es feh-
atify feh-tyfy feh-
at-ef feh-tysy feh-
tw-ef feh-tw-ef mar-
tw-es feh-tw-es mar-
fahi-kw feh-kw(i)
an-tw-ef feh-n-tw-ef feh-
an-tw-es feh-a-tw-es feh-
y-ef feh-y-ef feh-
y-es feh-y-es fey-

WALAF EGYPTIAN
[symbol] =mer=love
mar=lick (symbol)

mer-ef
mer-es
mer-n-el
mer-n-es
mer-w
mer-w-ef
mer-w-n-f
mer-w-n-es
mer-in-ef
mer-in-es
mer-t-ef
mer-t-es
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>Shortened Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tw-ef</td>
<td>mer-tw-ef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tw-es</td>
<td>mer-tw-es</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at-ef</td>
<td>mer-tyfy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aty-es</td>
<td>mer-t-tysy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aty-s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aty-sy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mari-kw</td>
<td>mar-kwi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y-ef</td>
<td>mer-y-ef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y-es</td>
<td>mer-y-es</td>
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<tr>
<td>an-tw-ef</td>
<td>mer-n-tw-ef</td>
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<tr>
<td>antw-es</td>
<td>mer-n-tw-es</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tw-on-ef</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tw-on-es</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Egyptian and Walaf Demonstratives

There are the following phonetic correspondents between Egyptian and Walaf demonstratives;

[This section was omitted because of the difficulty of reproducing the symbols on the Internet]

These phonetic correspondences are not ascribable either to elementary affinity or to the general laws of the human mind for they are regular correspondences on outstanding points extending through an entire system,

that of the demonstratives in the two languages and that of the verbal languages. It is through the application of such laws that it was possible to demonstrate the existence of the Indo-European linguistic family.

The comparison could be carried to show that the majority of the phonemes remain unchanged between the two languages. The few changes which are of great interest are the following:

[This section was omitted because of the difficulty of reproducing the symbols on the Internet]
It is still early to talk with precision of the vocalic accompaniment of the Egyptian phonemes. But the way is open for the rediscovery of the vocalics of ancient Egyptian from comparative studies with the languages of Africa.

Conclusion

The structure of African royalty, with the king put to death, either really or symbolically, after a reign which varied in length but was in the region of eight years, recalls the ceremony of the Pharaoh's regeneration through the Sed feast. Also reminiscent of Egypt are the circumcision rites mentioned earlier and the totemism, cosmogonies, architecture, musical instruments, etc., of Africa. Egyptian antiquity is to African culture what Graeco-Roman antiquity is to Western culture. The building up of a corpus of African humanities should be based on this fact.

It will be understood how difficult it is to write such a chapter in a work of this kind, where euphemism and compromise are the rule. In an attempt to avoid sacrificing scientific truth, therefore, we made a point of suggesting three preliminaries to the preparation of this volume, all of which were agreed to at the plenary session held in 1971. The first two led to the holding of the Cairo Symposium from 28 January to 3 February 1974. In
this connection I should like to refer to certain passages in the report of that symposium. Professor Vercoutter, who had been commissioned by Unesco to write the introductory report, acknowledged after a thorough discussion that the conventional idea that the Egyptian population was equally divided between blacks, whites and half-castes could not be upheld. 'Professor Vercoutter agreed that no attempt should be made to estimate percentages, which meant nothing, as it was impossible to establish them without reliable statistical data'. On the subject of Egyptian culture: 'Professor Vercoutter remarked that, in his view, Egypt was African in its way of writing, in its culture and in its way of thinking'.

Professor Lecant, for his part, 'recognized the same African character in the Egyptian temperament and way of thinking'.

In regard to linguistics, it is stated in the report that 'this item, in contrast to those previously discussed, revealed a large measure of agreement among the participants. The outline by Professor Diop and the report by Professor Obenga were regarded as being very constructive'.

Similarly, the symposium rejected the idea that Pharaonic Egyptian was a Semitic language. 'Turning to wider issues, Professor Sauneron drew
attention to the interest of the method suggested by Professor Obenga following Professor Diop. Egyptian remained a stable language for a period of at least 4500 years. Egypt was situated at the point of convergence of outside influences and it was to be expected that borrowing had been made from foreign languages, but the Semitic roots numbered only a few hundred as compared with a total of several thousand words. The Egyptian language could not be isolated from its African context and its origin could not be fully explained in terms of Semitic, it was thus quite normal to expect to find related languages in Africa'.

The genetic, that is, non-accidental relationship between Egyptian and the African languages was recognized: 'Professor Sauneron noted that the method which had been used was of considerable interest, since it could not be purely fortuitous that there was a similarity between the third person singular suffixed pronouns in Ancient Egyptian and in Wolof, he hoped that an attempt would be made to reconstitute a palaeo-African language, using present-day languages as a starting point'.

In the general conclusion to the report it was stated that: 'Although the preparatory working paper sent out by Unesco gave particulars of what was
desired, not all participants had prepared communications comparable with
the painstakingly researched contributions of Professors Cheikh Anta Diop
and Obenga. There was consequently a real lack of balance in the
discussions'.

A new page of African historiography was accordingly written in Cairo. The
symposium recommended that further studies be made on the concept of race.
Such studies have since been carried out, but they have not contributed
anything new to the historical discussion. They tell us that molecular
biology and genetics recognize the existence of populations alone, the
concept of race being no longer meaningful. Yet whenever there is any
question of the transmission of a hereditary taint, the concept of race in
the most classic sense of the term comes into its own again, for genetics
tells us that 'sickle-cell anaemia occurs only in negroes'. The truth is
that all these 'anthropologists' have already in their own minds drawn the
conclusions deriving from the triumph of the monogenetic theory of mankind
without venturing to put them into explicit terms, for if mankind originated
in Africa, it was necessarily negroid becoming white through mutation and
adaptation at the end of the last glaciation in Europe in the Upper
Palaeolithic; and is not more understandable why the Grimaldian negroids
first occupied Europe for 10,000 years before Cro-Magnon Man—the prototype

of the white race—appeared (around -2,000).

The ideological standpoint is also evident in apparently objective studies.

In history and in social relations, it is the phenotype, that is, the

individual or the people as that individual or people is perceived, which is

the dominant factor, as opposed to the genotype. For present-day genetics, a

Zulu with the 'same' genotype as Vorster is not impossible. Does this mean

that the history we are witnessing will put the two phenotypes, that is, the

two individuals, on the same footing in all their national and social

activities? Certainly not -- the opposition will remain not social but

ethnic.

This study makes it necessary to rewrite world history from a more

scientific standpoint, taking into account the Negro-African component which

was for a long time preponderant. It means that it is now possible to build

up a corpus of Negro-African humanities resting on a sound historical basis

instead of being suspended in mid-air. Finally, if it is true that only

truth is revolutionary, it may be added that only rapprochement brought

about on a basis of truth can endure. The cause of human progress is not

well served by casting a veil over the fact.
The rediscovery of the true past of the African peoples should not be a divisive factor but should contribute to uniting them, each and all, binding them together from the north to the south of the continent so as to enable them to carry out together a new historical mission for the greater good of mankind; and that is in keeping with the ideal of Unesco.

"Footnotes to:

ORIGIN OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS"

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ORIGIN OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS (Cont,)

by Cheikh Anta Diop

NOTES

1. Proceedings of the Seventh Pan-African Congress of Pre-History and Quaternary Studies, December 1971

3. The study of this race's pigmentation can be carried farther by the method described; actually Elliott-Smith often found patches of skin on the bodies and the mummification methods which cause skin deterioration were not yet in use.


5. Geographie, classe de 5, 1950.

6. In his 'Lutte des races" (1883) L. Gumplovicz asserts that the diverse classes making up a people always represent different races, of which one has established its domination over the others by conquest. G. deLapounge in an article published in 1897 postulated no less than a dozen 'fundamental laws of anthropo-sociology' of which the following are typical; his 'law of distribution of wealth' posits that, in countries of mixed European-Alpine populations, wealth is greater in inverse proportions to the cephalic index; the 'law of urban indices' given prominence by Ammon in connexion with his
research on Badener conscripts asserted that town dwellers exhibit greater
dolichocephaly than the people in the adjacent countryside; the 'law of
stratification' was formulated in the following terms: 'the cephalic index
decreases and the proportion of dolichocephalics rises the higher the social
class, in each locality'. In his Selections sociales' the same writer had no
hesitation in asserting that 'the dominant class in the feudal epoch belongs
almost exclusively to the variety "Homo Europaeus" so that it is not pure
chance which has kept the poor at the foot of the social ladder but their
congenital inferiority'.

We thus see that German racism was inventing nothing new, when Alfred
Rosenberg asserted that the French Revolution must be deemed a revolt of the
brachycephalics of the Alpine stock against the dolichocephalics of the
Nordic race.' (A. Cuvillier, p. 155)

7. W.M.F. Petrie, 1939, Fig. 1.

8. ibid., p. 69.

9. ibid., p. 68.

11. Pl. 1.2.

12. Pl. 1.3.


14. Pl. 1.11.

15. Pl. 1.5.

16. Pl. 1.8.

17. Pl. 1.7 I know that 'Indo-European' is usually said to be a language,
   not a race, but I prefer this term to 'Aryan' wherever its use causes no
   confusion.

18. Pl. 1.2.


20. R.A. Nicolaus, p. 11.


25. In the fifth century before our era, at the time when Herodotus visited Egypt, a black-skinned people, the Colchians, were still living in Colchis on the Armenian shore of the Black Sea, East of the ancient port of Trebizond, surrounded by white-skinned nations.

The scholars of antiquity wondered about this people’s origins and Herodotus in "Euterpe’, the second book of his history on Egypt, tries to prove that the Colchians were Egyptians, whence the arguments we quote. Herodotus, on the strength of commemorative stelae, erected by Sesostris in conquered countries, asserts that this monarch had got as far as Thrace and Seythia, where stelae would seem to have been still standing in his day (Book II, 103).


27. Herodotus, Book II, 57.


33. Aeschylus, The Suppliants, vv. 719-20. See also v. 745.

34. Strabo, Geography, Book I, ch. 3, para. 10.

35. My italics.

36. Diodorus, Universal History, Book III. The antiquity of the Ethiopian
   civilization is attested by the most ancient and most venerable Greek
   writer, Homer, in both the Iliad and the Odyssey: 'Jupiter followed today by
   all the gods receives the sacrifices of the Ethiopians' (Iliad, I, 422).
   'Yesterday to visit holy Ethiopia Jupiter betook himself to the ocean shore'
   (Iliad, I, 423).

37. Diogenes Laertius, Book VII,i.

38. The Egyptian notables liked to have a Syrian or Cretan female slave in
their harems.

39. Ammianus Marcellinus, Book XXII, para 16 (23).

40. Pirate gangs who worked from small ships called Camare.

41. Ammianus Marcellinus, Book XXII, para. 8 (24).


44. This important discovery was made, on the African side, by Sossou Nsougan, who was to compile this part of the present chapter. For the sense of the word see Worterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache, Vol 5, 1971, pp. 122 and 127.

45. ibid., p. 122.

46. ibid., p. 128.


48. Worterbuch der aegyptischen Sprache, p. 128.
49. ibid. p. 124.

50. ibid., p. 125.

51. ibid., p. 123.

52. It should be noted that set-kem=black wife in Walaf.

53. Wortherbuch der agyptischen Sprache, p. 492.

54. ibid., p. 493.

55. Desret= blood in Egyptian; deret=blood in Walaf; ibid., p. 494.


58. E. Massoulard, 1949, p. 386.


60. E. Amelineau, op. cit.

61. A. Recnach, 1913, p. 17.

62 Often spelt Wolof.

64. R. Lambert, 1925, p. 129.

65. A. Mallon, pp. 207-34.

66. A. de Buck, 1952.

67. ibid.

68. A. Mallon, pp. 207-34.

69. By extension=love intensely (hence the verb mar-maral) after the fashion of a female animal licking the cub which she has just borne. This sense does not conflict with the other notion which the determinative may convey of a man raising hand to mouth.

70. See below for the explanation of this important law.


72. See final Report of the First Plenary Session of the International Scientific Committee for the Drafting of a general History of Africa,