

The African Origin of Grecian Civilization

Speech of George Wells Parker, Delivered Before the Omaha Philosophical Society, April 1, 1917.
(Continued.)

Permit me now, ladies and gentlemen, to show definitely the debt which Greece owes to the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations. Crete, as I have said before, appears to be the center from which the Mediterranean culture radiated. It is the "Mid-Sea Land," a kind of half-way house between three continents and its geographical position makes it the logical cradle of European civilization. It is near the mainland of Greece, opposite the mouths of the Nile and in easy communication with Asia Minor, with which it was actually connected in late geological times. As I mentioned before, the civilization expanded in every direction and at the time of the conquest it had firm hold upon Greece, appearing at Mycenae, Tiryns, Thebes, Orochomenos, and other places. That some vanguard of Aryan immigrants came into contact with this culture at its climax is plain from the evidence furnished by Homer. That they mingled with the inhabitants is certain. The later onrush about 1200 B. C. destroyed in part the civilization found there, but fortunately there was not utter destruction. These rude people realized the difference between their savagery and their enemies' culture. They, too, merged with the inhabitants and formed the Grecian people of historic times. This amalgamation is clearly apparent in the Greeks today and because of it Count de Gobineau has called their ancestors half-breeds and mulattoes. Note, also, if you will, that Greek genius burned brightest in those parts of Greece where the Minoan elements were most thoroughly planted.

If you should inquire the source of the Minoan civilization I would first call your attention to the fact that Herodotus attributed much of the Grecian civilization to Egypt, and secondly to the opinion expressed by Sir Arthur Evans in his presidential address before the British Association last fall. "My own recent investigations," said he, "have more and more brought home to me the all pervading community between Minoan Crete and the land of Pharaohs. When we realize the great indebtedness of the succeeding classical culture of Greece to its Minoan predecessor the full significance of this conclusion will be understood. Ancient Egypt itself can no longer be regarded as something apart from general human history. Its influences are seen to lie about the very cradle of our civilization. The first quickening impulse came to Crete from the Egyptian and not from the Oriental side." Herodotus has been called the father of lies, but at this late date we again see him vindicated in a conclusion reached by the greatest living authority upon classical archeology.

Before closing I wish again to enforce the fact that the ferment creating the wonderful Grecian civilization was pre-eminently the ferment of African blood. Take all the archeological facts of the last fifty years and read them up or down, across or diagonally, inside and out, and this fact rises into your mind like a Banquo that will not down. Historians may distort truth and rob the African race of its historical position, but

facts are everywhere throwing open the secret closets of nations and exposing ethnic skeletons that laugh and jest at our racial vanities. The Aryan savages of Europe came down upon Greece, found there a great civilization, merged with the inhabitants and builded a greater. The all but savage European of the Dark Ages knew nothing of culture save what had been taught him by the Roman legions, the heirs of the Mediterranean civilization. This little was almost forgotten until religious fanaticism started the Crusades and brought them into contact with the civilized refinement of the Arabians, Moors and Saracens, likewise peoples in whose veins flowed the fiery ferment of African blood. If, as Sir Arthur Evans declares, that classical students must consider origins and admit the ancient Grecians of African descent, so must they go a bit further and admit the Renaissance to have sprung because of contact between feudal Europe and African Mohammedism. Again we must admit, no matter how bitter the taste, that the mixed race has always been the great race—the pure race always the stagnant race. One potent reason for the possible downfall of European civilization today is the fact that the Aryan element has proven incapable of the mighty trust. It has forgotten the everlasting lesson of history that mergence of distinct types means the perpetuation of nationalism. The sole tenet of Europe has been the domination of the world by the Caucasian and suddenly it discovers that the term Caucasian is too narrow to include both Saxon and Teuton. Hence a war for the extermination of both.

The end of the world is not near and the dream of a millenium is equidistant. The sum of all that is past is but a prelude of that which is to come. It has taken the brute a myriad of years for his gaze to reach beyond them. Civilization is a mixture of dictions and contradictions and none of us today is sure that we know just what it means. Through all there yet remain:

"Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,—
Are yet the master-light of all our seeing,—
Upholds us, cherish and have powers to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of Eternal Silence.

I close with the hope of a time when earthly values will be measured with a justice now deemed divine. It is then that Africa and her sun-browned children will be saluted. In that day men will gladly listen with open open minds when she tells how in the deep and dark pre-historic night she made a stairway of the stars so that she might climb and light her torch from the altar fires of heaven, and how she has held its blaze aloft in the hall of ages to brighten the wavering footsteps of earthly nations.

CAPTAIN DAVIS RELIEVED

Wilberforce, O.—Captain Benjamin O. Davis, U. S. A., has been withdrawn as military instructor at Wilberforce university and will be sent to the Philippines.

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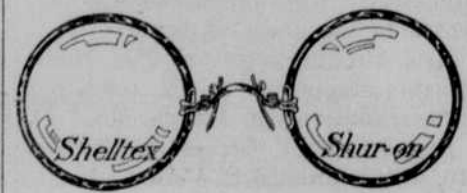
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