

Ancient African Civilizations

LD 6: Black Kingdoms Video Review

Introduction: In our text, the Wonders of the African World, Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. explores the ancient kingdom of Kush via his chapter on “Nubia: Black Gods and Kings.” In today’s video, Professor Gates examines this civilization via his video rendition of “Black Kingdoms of the Nile.” Whereas on the one hand Gates’ explores the tandem developments that led to the rise of both the Egyptian and Nubian civilizations, on the other hand he lays claim to the Nubian legacy in light of the African American experience.

Questions: Respond to the following questions by way of the online journal. Using your response, consider these same questions for class discussion.

1. Given both his text and video commentaries about the region, why do you believe that Nubia -- and the question of the sub-Saharan and Black African character of Nubia and Kushite civilization – is so critically important to Professor Gates and the African American experience?
2. What specific aspects of Nubian and Kushite civilization does Professor Gates characterize as most significant to the discussion and consideration of this ancient African civilization? Why do you believe that these elements are highlighted?
3. Both our text and the video render specific credit to the Kushites for their having revitalized and maintained the long-lost traditions of Egyptian civilization. Given Egypt’s multi-millennium historical tradition, how can this be the case; particularly as Kushite civilization grew in tandem and longevity with that of ancient Egypt?
4. According to our text, Kerma of the Kushites was perhaps the oldest city of Africa. How can this claim stand when classical scholars have always argued that this credit actually goes to the Egyptians?
5. What challenges faced Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and his team of intrepid explorers and videographers during his adventures in Nubia? If given the opportunity, would you be willing to venture such risks to capture the essence of Nubian civilization?