

# THEBES (NOWE)

## *CITY OF A HUNDRED GATES*



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Thebes is the Greek name for a city in Ancient Egypt, natively known as NOWE, located about 800 km south of the Mediterranean, on the east bank of the river Nile within the modern city of Luxor.

As the seat of the Theban Triad of Amun, Mut, and Khonsu, Thebes was known in the Egyptian language from the end of the New Kingdom as niwt-imn, "The City of Amun."



Thebes was inhabited from around 3200 BC. ...According to George Modelski, Thebes had about 40,000 inhabitants in 2000 BC (compared to 60,000 in Mamfe (Greek "Memphis"), the largest city of the world at the time). By 1800 BC, the population of Mamfe was down to about 30,000, making Thebes the largest city in Egypt at the time. By the Amarna period (14th century BC), Thebes may have grown to be the largest city in the world, with a population of about 80,000, a position which it held until about 1000 BC, when it was again surpassed by Mamfe (among others).

With the 19th Dynasty the seat of government moved to the Delta. The archaeological remains of Thebes offer a striking testimony to Egyptian civilization at its height. The Greek poet Homer extolled the wealth of Thebes in the Iliad, Book 9 (c. 8th Century BC): "... in Egyptian Thebes the heaps of precious ingots gleam, the hundred-gated Thebes."

[b] "References have been made to Thebes, and they may have seemed to be almost passing references. Yet Thebes was the most important single city in the entire history of the black people. This whole series of lectures could be properly based on Thebes. The history of Black Africa might well begin at Thebes. For this was truly the "Eternal City of the Blacks" that presented the most compelling evidence that they were the builders of the earliest civilization in Kem, later called Egypt, as well as the great civilization in the South [Nubia]. The foundation of Thebes, like the black state of which it was the center, goes back so far in prehistory that not even a general stone age period can be suggested.

...let us never forget the central fact about Thebes, not even for a moment. For if the Blacks had never left a single written record of their past greatness, that record would still stand, defying time, in the deathless stones of Thebes, of her fallen columns from temples, monuments, and her pyramids; a city more eternal than Rome because its foundation was laid before the dawn of history, and its plan was that copied by other cities of the world . If the Blacks of today want to measure the distance to the heights from which they have fallen, they need go no farther than Nowe (Thebes).

- *Dr Chancellor Williams, 'The Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race from 4500BC to 2000AD'*



**The Great Sphinx, Egypt (Est. 4000 BC)**

### **Vivant Denon**

"...Though its proportions are colossal, the outline is pure and graceful; the expression of the head is mild, gracious, and tranquil; the character is African, but the mouth, and lips of which are thick, has a softness and delicacy of execution truly admirable; it seems real life and flesh. Art must have been at a high pitch when this monument was executed..."

- *Vivant Denon, French Scholar, Historian, Universal Magazine, 1803*

### **Constantine de Volney**

In 1787, Count Constantine de Volney -- a French nobleman, philosopher, historian, orientalist, and politician -- embarked on a journey to the East in late 1782 and reached Ottoman Egypt where he spent nearly seven months.

Constantine de Volney was troubled much by the institution of slavery. His expressed opinion that the ancient Egyptians were black Africans much departed from the typical European view of the late eighteenth century, but it gave many people cause for reflection. During his visit to Egypt he expressed amazement that the Egyptians – whose civilization was greatly admired in Europe – were not White!

"All the Egyptians," wrote de Volney, "have a bloated face, puffed-up eyes, flat nose, thick lips – in a word, the true face of the mulatto. I was tempted to attribute it to the climate, but when I visited the Sphinx, its appearance gave me the key to the riddle. On seeing that head, typically Negro in all its features, I remembered the remarkable passage where Herodotus [450 BC] says:

' As for me, I judge the Colchians to be a colony of the Egyptians because, like them, they are black with woolly hair...

"When I visited the Sphinx, I could not help thinking that the figure of that monster furnished the true solution to the enigma (of how the modern Egyptians came to have their 'mulatto' appearance)

"In other words, the ancient Egyptians were true Negroes of the same type as all native-born Africans. That being so, we can see how their blood, mixed for several centuries with that of the Greeks and Romans, must have lost the intensity of its original color, while retaining nonetheless the imprint of its original mold.

"Just think," de Volney declared incredulously, "that this race of Black men, today our slave and the object of our scorn, is the very race to which we owe our arts, sciences, and even the use of speech! Just imagine, finally, that it is in the midst of people who call themselves the greatest friends of liberty and humanity that one has approved the most barbarous slavery, and questioned whether Black men have the same kind of intelligence as whites!

"In other words the ancient Egyptians were true Negroes of the same stock as all the autochthonous peoples of Africa and from the 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 color but retained the impress of its original mould."

- *M. Constantine de Volney, Travels through Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785 (London: 1787), p. 80-83.*

".....The many achievements of the ancient Egyptians include the quarrying, surveying and construction techniques that supported the building of monumental pyramids, temples, and obelisks; a system of mathematics, a practical and effective system of medicine, irrigation systems and agricultural production techniques, the first known planked boats, Egyptian faience and glass technology, new forms of literature, and the earliest known peace treaty, made with the Hittites. Egypt left a lasting legacy. Its art and architecture were widely copied, and its antiquities carried off to far corners of the world. Its monumental ruins have inspired the imaginations of travellers and writers for centuries. A new-found respect for antiquities and excavations in the early modern period by Europeans and Egyptians led to the scientific investigation of Egyptian civilization and a greater appreciation of its cultural legacy."

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient\\_Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egypt)



### **Nubians**