

BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPECIAL SECTION, PART I

enormous army to surprise Hannibal in what they felt to be a state of unreadiness.

The armies met in the Battle of Trasimeno where the greatest defeat that Rome ever suffered took place. Rome lost over 25,000 men; Hannibal but 1500.

The road to Rome was now open, Fabius, the general who succeeded Famenius, kept delaying to enjoin Hannibal in battle. These delays satisfied Hannibal, for he sought reinforcements from Carthage which came in wholly inadequate numbers.

Finally, the two armies met at Cannae. Here, with forces less than half of Rome's Hannibal put into action the now famous pincer strategy that was so successfully copied by Hitler in Belgium. With his center the weakest and his strength on either flank, he drew the Romans into the center and closed in for the massacre. With the loss of 70,000 men, all of Rome except the capital city now belonged to Hannibal. However, with little artillery to siege a city and no secure route or source of supplies, he decided against attacking the city. He knew how to win battles, but he did not have the substance from Carthage to win the country of Rome.

For fifteen years in all, he roamed the countryside, but his homeland was in such political turmoil that he was finally called home to repel attacks by Scipio, a Roman general who had defeated Carthage in battle on her own soil.

He met the army of Scipio and Massinissa, a Numidian and former ally of Carthage in battle at Zama where he was defeated. Rome then demanded that a massive debt be paid by Carthage. Hannibal used his superior organizational and statesman skills to form a government, and he was able to announce that Carthage would pay the indemnity in one sum. Frightened by the prospect of a once again powerful Carthage under the leadership of Hannibal, Rome demanded instead that he surrender himself. He refused, fled in exile; and, taking the poison that he had secreted for such an event, died at the age of 61. His audacious ability to correctly assess the tactical situation and devise strategies that assured success in battle with a concomitant regard for the safety of his men has caused Hannibal's name to be synonymous with military genius.

Massinissa (238-149 B.C.)

Born in a southern Numidian area called Massyllia, Massinissa received his education in Carthage where he was an outstanding student in languages and military strategy. While there, he met and fell in love with Sophronisba, Hannibal's niece. This act would have a profound effect upon Hannibal's fate. It seems inevitable that youth must perform daring feats to attract the eye of the beloved. Massinissa was no exception.

Not yet eighteen, he elected to join Hasdrubal, Sophronisba's father and the general in charge of Carthage's forces in Spain. There he distinguished himself in two battles against a Roman army when Hannibal was winning in Italy.

Meanwhile, Syphax, the king of Numidia, joined with Rome to attack Carthage. In order to prevent this, Sophronisba was forced to marry Syphax. When Massinissa heard of this, he left the Carthaginian army and became a Roman ally. Syphax and his army then went south to Massyllia, Massinissa's homeland, and soundly defeated it. Wounded, Massinissa pretended to have been slain and remained in hiding until Scipio, Hannibal's foe, landed in Africa.

With Roman aid, he attacked Syphax's forces and captured the leader and marched him in chains to the capital. There he abandoned all caution and took the willing Sophronisba as his wife; willing to die with a Numidian rather than with his Romans. When Syphax heard what had been done, he begged to Romans to forgive him and blamed the charms of his wife, not Massinissa's, for blinding his reason.

Scipio, the Roman Supreme Commander who so admired Massinissa and saw a great military future for the young man, called Massinissa in and advised him to recognize that passion could destroy all that he had done and could do since Numidia and all of its people now belonged to Rome.

After agonizing over his choice, he agreed with Scipio's logic. Rather than have his beloved fall into Roman hands, he sent a poison potion to Sophronisba as she requested, and turned his attention to defeating Carthage with a vengeance. Pro-

claimed King of Numidia and a "Roman citizen with senatorial rank. . . the first stranger so honored" he went into battle against Hannibal who had been called back to Carthage, and defeated him.

He ruled his family and country with stern benevolence, increasing the wealth and prestige of the latter for 61 years. His poignant love story was depicted in the Italian film "Cabiria" in 1914.

The advent of Christianity upon the continent of Africa continued the Europeans' quest for colonization; however, a new rationale was given in the form of enlightening the pagan native population.

Initially, the Europeans came in quietly, settling in as traders and missionaries, and generally welcomed by the hospitable blacks on the western shore. The European settlements most often were along the sea coast so that, like the American Indian, the native population was pushed further inland, away from the Atlantic coastline; and southward toward central Africa (by the Romans and Greeks) away from that area most vital for control of the seacoast. All of this was gradual, almost imperceptible.

King Kalydosos (7th Century A.D.)

In northeast Africa, the area closest to the birthplace of Christianity and Mohammedanism (Islam), blacks had gradually migrated from the seacoast, so that by the 7th Century, they had firmly established themselves in Ethiopia. There, they repeatedly suffered the incursions into this area (that was by this time largely Christian) by the burgeoning Muslim (Arab) armies that swarmed the eastern section of Africa and easily occupied Egypt.

Having done so in 634 A.D. with an army of only 4,000 men, the Muslims, under Abdullah the Viceroy of Egypt, now turned southward with the confidence born from the easy defeat of Egypt.

Meeting and overcoming limited resistance, further southward they pressed the fleeing Ethiopians until the latter, joining at an assigned area with their king, Kalydosos, leading the way, they massed into a group of 100,000 expertly trained courageous troops that almost totally destroyed the Muslims. The bow-and-arrow corps was so skillful that the devastation it wreaked astonished the world.

Defeated, the remnants of the Arabian army retired northward and remained there for eight years; rebuilding and retraining to again attack King Kalydosos and his country (then called Makuria).

In 651 A.D., the decision was made by the Arab viceroy of Egypt to avenge the earlier slaughter by Kalydosos, so once more the Muslims invaded Makuria. This time they penetrated deeply enough to capture and raze the capital city of Dongola. All major buildings, including the great cathedral, were destroyed by massive catapults. Often, the loss of the capital in ancient times signalled capitulation; however, King Kalydosos regrouped. So outraged were the blacks that it soon became apparent to the Arabs that the king and his army would fight to the death. An armistice was then declared that lasted 600 years.

Some historians believe that Christianizing Ethiopia had an enormous political and religious impact upon the world for it created a buffer zone between the Afro-Asian Islamic forces and the white Christian Europeans. A theory has been promulgated that had it not been for King Kalydosos, Ethiopia, as an Islamic country, may have prevented Europe from colonizing Africa. Conversely, Ethiopia, as a Christian country, may have prevented the Islamic forces from conquering all of Africa.

Mulai Ismael (1647-1727)

As Sultan of Morocco, Mulai Ismael commanded an army that soundly defeated the Turks and Berbers of Atlas. He also was head of an army that broke Spain's grip on Africa and sent them reeling back to Europe. So, too, was England forced to leave Tangiers and Fort Charles.

When Morocco was free of foreign intervention, Ismael sent his ships along the western coast of Europe as far north as England. Raiding the countries along the way, he acquired thousands of European slaves; learned men and women as well as common folk. The many he acquired were held for ransom with the command that it be paid for by the Christian churches. In this way he felt he was revenging the Muslims (Moors) who were enslaved in Europe.



Mulai Ismael

A stern but just ruler, the tenets of his faith were strictly adhered to. Crime in his land was almost unheard of for the criminal paid dearly. He was deeply loved by his poor subjects.

Reigning for 55 years, he began to rebuild Morocco into its former glory with 25,000 Christian slaves. Trade was reestablished throughout north Africa and southern Europe. Although he accumulated much wealth in this way, he lived simply for eighty years.

(Africa and Asia)

The Middle East (Asia Minor) is most noted for its black militarists who spread the world of Islam throughout Africa and Europe.

Some, however, looked further east. For centuries, Ethiopia and the other eastern countries of Africa traded with the countries in Asia and established enclaves there. So too did refugees from the holy wars emigrate to Asia. Some became mercenaries in the armies of India. In the middle of the 15th Century, Barbek Shah was the first Indian ruler to employ blacks in an Asian army. There were at least 8,000 soldiers, and his most faithful were rewarded by promotions to high levels in the army and navy.

As early as the 14th century, Ethiopians, who formed the largest ethnic groups in India and became known as Sidis, seized the island of Janjira, now known as Bombay. They also settled in Gujrat, the Deccan and Bengal.

Malik Ambar (1548-1628)

In 1600, Malik Ambar, a former Ethiopian slave of the Queen, became head of Bombay's army. During a coup in which the queen was killed by rebels, he remained a loyalist and overcame the rebellion. Seven years later, through various military encounters, he ruled an area east of Bombay.

Sharing this section of the Deccan with another, Emperor Jahangir, there were constant military conflicts between the two. Ambar's strategies, along with the loyalty from his Muslim forces, most often found the fortunes of war in his favor. This would continue for almost twenty years.

When the British attempted to gain control of the gateway to India, Malik Ambar, as Master of Janjira, saw through their duplicity and seized a caravan as hostage. At the demand for its return, Ambar countered with the demand that they leave. They left.

During his reign, Malik Ambar was a supreme militarist, consistent statesman, enterprising economist, and just ruler. Tyrannical slavery was abolished and the fractious ethnic groups under his rule remained peaceful.

Close to winning in his wars with Jahangir and his allies, he was not to enjoy the victory, for he died at age eighty in 1628.

Queen Ann Nzinga (c. 1580-1663)

For centuries the Europeans, content to overcome through trading and religion rather than by might, had been gradually penetrating the African continent on the west coast. By the 15th century, Portugal had made incursions deep into the area of the Kongo, all under the guise of "Christian Enlightenment". Numbers of the kings had been converted, relinquished their African names for Portuguese titles under baptism, and allowed European "aides" in their courts.

All went as planned until during the late 16th and early 17th century the Portuguese became unmasked through their ruthless aggressiveness in slave trading.

It should be noted that slavery had been in existence from time immemorial. A slave, before the commercial aspects of slavery entered in such a large measure during European expansion and col-



Queen Ann Nzinga

New Booklet Outlines Struggles Of James City

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