



DR. J.C. DeGRAFT-JOHNSON AND THE
GLORY OF ANCIENT AFRICAN
CIVILIZATIONS

By [RUNOKO RASHIDI](#)

African historian John Coleman

*DeGraft-Johnson was born in Accra,
Ghana on March 21, 1919. He was*

*educated initially at Mfantshipim School, in what was then called
the "Gold Coast" (the country later to be known as Ghana.) After
spending his first two years at the University of Edinburgh studying
medicine, he discontinued his medical training to study Commerce
and Economics. He graduated Bachelor of Commerce in June
1942, Master of Arts with Honors in Economic Science in June
1944 and Doctor of Philosophy in December 1946.*

*DeGraft-Johnson's published works include "The African's
Contribution to Civilization" and "The Empire of Monomotapa," but
he comes to us here as the author of the classic work, African
Glory: The Story of Vanished Negro Civilizations. Originally*

published in 1954 on the eve of the modern African independence movement, *African Glory* was reprinted in 1986 by Black Classic Press with an Afterword and Supplemental Bibliography by Dr. John Henrik Clarke. Dr. Clarke wrote that "DeGraft-Johnson's book was published when a restless generation of African people, both in Africa and abroad, was looking for a non-colonial history of Africa, from an African point of view." Dr. Clarke concluded that "It can be said, without exaggeration, that there now exists a renaissance of writing of African history by writers of African descent. Dr. J.C. DeGraft-Johnson set this renaissance in motion."

African Glory contains chapters devoted to Carthage, the early North African Church, the Arab conquest of Africa, the Mali and Songhai Empire, and the Moors. On the Moors, DeGraft-Johnson noted that "The Conquest of Spain was an African conquest. They were Mohammedan Africans, not Arabs, who laid low the Gothic kingdom of Spain." Today, more than four and a half decades since its initial publication, *African Glory* still provides a vivid and dynamic connection to the African past.