

hidden intentionally under the ancient pavement. It has not been possible to draw any conclusions on the date of this object from the context.

After extensive restoration, the thymiaterion was on display in the Izmir Archaeological Museum until refurbishments of the upper galleries started in 1993. The incense-burner is 55 cm high and has a diameter of 50 cm. The three massively cast feet, representing winged sirens on eagle's claws, are of particularly fine quality. On these feet rests a cylinder topped by a dish in which the incense was burned. The perforated lid allowed the scent to spread.

Publication

Aim of the Dutch research is to establish the habitation levels on Karantina on the basis of ancient sources and archaeological excavations. Fieldwork on Karantina has ended and the activities are focused now on the publication of its finds and the conclusions that can be drawn from them. The results will be published by the Klazomenai Foundation, in close co-operation with the archaeologists from Aegean University in Izmir, responsible for the fieldwork on Klazomenai's mainland. Key aspects of the Karantina-publication will be the history of the island, the Roman peristyle house, the terracotta figurines, the pottery kilns and of course the bronze thymiaterion. The publication will also deal with the finds from an emergency excavation on the mainland, where several graves from the 4th century AD were found. These came to light near the spot where the ancient causeway would have reached the mainland. Since special attention will be paid to historical

aspects, an inventory of all the ancient sources relating to Karantina has been made. Modern sources will also be included. Travellers from the 17th century onwards, but especially from the 18th and 19th century, have visited Klazomenai during their tours or explorations in Asia Minor. Their descriptions of the island provide additional information for a reconstruction of the history of the area, also after antiquity.

Terracotta figurines were found in several spots on Karantina. A small corpus of these will be part of the publication. The bronze thymiaterion will be extensively published with a contribution by the restorer on the methods used for restoration and conservation. Until now no exact parallels for this object are known although the decorative elements can be compared to those of metal objects from the Hellenistic and Early Imperial Periods.³

Notes

1 Preliminary reports: R. van Beek/J. Beelen, Excavations in Klazomenai, *BABesch* 63 (1988) 138-141; Excavations on Karantina Island in Klazomenai: A preliminary report, *Anatolica* 17 (1991) 31-58.

2 N.C. Flemming/N.M.G. Czartoryska/P.M. Hunter, Eustatic and tectonic components of relative sea level change, in: D.J. Blackman (ed.), *Marine Archaeology*, London 1973, 23-24; van Beek/Beelen (see note 1, *Anatolica*), 24; G. Bakir/C. Vural, Urla (Klazomenai) Karantina Adasi sualti yüzey arastirmasi, *Arastirma sonuclari toplantisi* 13 (1996) 43-49.

3 Documentation on the restored thymiaterion has been presented in a poster presentation at the 12th International Congress on Ancient Bronzes in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, in June 1992 (not published in the Acts).

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WITH BLACK ATHENA INTO THE THIRD MILLENNIUM CE?

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Although the editors of *Black Athena revisited*¹ hoped otherwise, *Black Athena* debate is still alive. Martin Bernal has projected more volumes of *Black Athena*,² and a defiant *Black Athena writes back*. My 1997 collection, *Black Athena Ten Years After*,³ reopened the debate. Enough material, debate and reflection has now been generated for us to try and sort out whatever lasting contribution Bernal may have made.⁴

Assuming that we can take for granted the issues of the *Black Athena* debate,⁵ the following points help to bring the debate in perspective.

(1) The search for origins (which are often imperceptible anyway) belongs to the realm of parochial, ethnocentric identity construction more than to that of detached scholarship. Bernal argues - con-

vincingly despite too many errors in detail - how one particular view of ancient Greek history has served Eurocentric interests. But his alternative serves other ideological interests, cf. his rapprochement to Afrocentrism. Ironically, the very title *Black Athena* reveals that Bernal employs the language of race in order to drive home his anti-racist, anti-Eurocentric message; some further liberation is to be done here.

(2) Identification of provenance does not preclude the crucial importance of transformative localisation after the borrowed cultural product has reached - by a process of diffusion - its destination area. There is overwhelming evidence that many Greek lexical items, names of gods, myths in which they feature, and elements of philosophy and sci-

ence - as well as many tangible traces of these cultural domains such as enter the field of classical archaeology - do derive from Ancient Near Eastern (including Egyptian) prototypes. But that does not preclude that these cultural achievements, once arrived in the Aegean, have gone through a complex and unpredictable local history which made them into eminently Greek achievements.

The same reasoning applies to Bernal's regrettable show-piece, the Greek goddess Athena herself. To the many etymologies of her name which scholarship has produced over the centuries⁶ Bernal has added one deriving from the ancient Egyptian Ht Nt, 'temple of Neith'. Neith was a major Egyptian goddess in the Archaic period (3100 BCE) and went through a revival under the seventh century BCE Twenty-sixth Dynasty from Sais, when Greek mercenaries were prominent. Even though Bernal's etymology was effectively refuted on grounds of historical linguistics,⁷ the iconographic and semantic details which Bernal adduces make it quite conceivable that the link between Athena and Neith was more than superficial. Was the goddess Athena the product of the adoption, into some Northern Mediterranean backwater, of splendid and time-honoured Egyptian cultural models - as a result of colonisation and military campaigns, of Hyksos penetration, of trade? Does such adoption offer - as Bernal claims - a model for general Egyptian civilising action in the Aegean during the Bronze Age? Then, why do we find so tantalisingly little of this in the archaeological record from the Bronze Age Aegean, including Minoan Crete?⁸ What theory do we need in order to accommodate both the lexical and mythological continuities between ancient Egypt and the Aegean, and the paucity of archaeological traces of such continuity? Temporary stays of Aegean craftsmen on Egyptian soil - craftsmen too poor or dependent to take any artifacts home but clever enough to pick up Egyptian words, myths, and ritual practices? As general principles, we should acknowledge both Ancient Near Eastern (including Egyptian) essential contributions to Greek classical civilisation (the argument of diffusion), and Greek creative working on these borrowings producing Greek civilisation (the argument of the localising transformation). But specifically on Neith and Athena, I propose that neither derives from the other, but both derive from a common prototype (see below, (4)).

(3) Methodology. We have no direct knowledge of the pattern of the past. Our historical pronouncements are scientific because they are based on the processing of all available evidence in the light of explicit and repeatable methods and procedures, before the international forum of academic peers. So much for the outsider to a discipline "going it alone", like Bernal; he even poses as an outsider

though having been a professor of Near Eastern Studies at Cornell since 1984. His pride at reviving scholarly views of the early twentieth century; his sticking to the Ht Nt-Athena etymology even in the face of refutation; his over-reaction to critics, whom he readily accuses of ulterior, Eurocentric or racist ideological motives - all this shows a strange mixture of empiricism and machiavellism, a shocking lack of method and epistemology, and (where his own scholarship is concerned) a denial of the same collective component which he insists on in the motives of others.

After several years of participation in the *Black Athena* debate, having familiarised myself with the ancient Egyptian language and mythology, it is Bernal's claims in these domains which, to my mind, stand out most convincingly. But here again it is Bernal's lack of an explicit and approved method which has produced unsystematic and unconvincing results. His proposed etymologies have to be browsed together from all over his published work,⁹ and they usually remain at the level of isolated lexical atoms. His greatest handicap after all is his lack of sociological and cultural imagination. He cannot construct a coherent image of a living culture, but only a loose bundle of provenances that have virtually died in transit. He handles myth as if its historical contents are self-evident and non-problematic, and is unaware of the advances in myth analysis since the nineteenth century. And yet I now find that I have to come back upon my earlier rejection of Bernal's findings.¹⁰ I have now completed detailed and theoretically informed analyses of the transformations of Egyptian (and Libyan) myths on their way into the Aegean and into Africa.¹¹ This has convinced me of the soundness of Bernal's general intuition on these points, but also of his methodological defects.

(4) Bernal mechanically juxtaposes the Indo-European and the Afroasiatic language families as if this exhausts cultural interactions in the ancient eastern Mediterranean. This springs from Bernal's obsession with language as the supposed key to cultural history, cf. the misnomer 'Afroasiatic [a language family!] roots of classical Greek civilization'. He creates a sense of 'either/or' which eminently befits the political rhetoric underlying the *Black Athena* debate (Black versus White; radical versus ethnocentric; Eurocentrism versus liberation of the rest of the world) but which obscures such continuity as may underlie (in Sumerian, Nostratic etc.) the actual cultural dynamics in this region - even linguistically. That continuity may extend to what now remains an uninvited guest: an ancient Mediterranean linguistic and cultural substratum, wedging in between Indo-European and Afroasiatic, with appreciable archaeological traces.¹² Specialists have often invoked such a substratum

for etymological and religious reconstructions of the ancient Mediterranean. It provides a far more convincing model of cultural exchanges - within a region already displaying fundamental continuities and similarities from Neolithic times - than Bernal's simple diffusion, as late as the Bronze Age, from one privileged source notably ancient Egypt. Athena and Neith then appear as closely related branches from a stem which, throughout the ancient eastern Mediterranean, has produced Great Goddesses with connotations of underworld, death, violence, and rebirth - connotations which were often emblematised in snake, bird and bee symbolism.

Such a view - although inspired by Bernal - effectively explodes the *Black Athena* thesis, since it dissolves the very contradiction between Indo-European and Afroasiatic as the source of Aegean civilisation, and draws on a substratum which, contrary to the Afroasiatic one, can not readily be relegated to an African provenance.¹³

All this leads on to a re-assessment of the *Black Athena* project.

Volume I was an eminently successful explosion of the Eurocentric myth of the autonomous origin of Greek civilisation - a liberating act of deconstruction of previous scholars' myths. Volume II, lacking such methodology and venturing into a domain where the production, re-circulation and reproduction of scholarly myth was only too tempting, has not yet produced the science it set out to produce. What is needed now is that Bernal's endeavour is shared with others, with sounder epistemology and methods, but within the spirit of his vision of interculturality and multi-centredness as the central challenge of our age, and respecting his standards of interdisciplinary breadth and scholarly imagination. If there are a hundred things more or less wrong with *Black Athena*, then these are merely so many items for a research agenda that ought to keep as many of us as possible occupied well into the Third Millennium CE. A fundamental dilemma has attended the *Black Athena* project from the beginning: its scope is far too comprehensive for one person, its political, ideological and moral implications are far too complex, than that one person could possibly thresh them all out. Whatever has crept in in the way of error and arrogance, is largely compensated by Bernal's scope of vision, which made him realise that, inside as well as outside scholarship, creating a viable and acceptable alternative to Eurocentrism is the most important

intellectual challenge of our time.

One obvious strategy for reducing the state of alarm which *Black Athena* has brought about among specialists on Ancient Greece and the Ancient Near East, has been to try and refute the details of its scholarship, and to subsequently, smugly, withdraw from the debate. The other way out, and one which I passionately advocate, is to continue in the spirit of Martin Bernal's project, with vastly increased personal, disciplinary, financial and temporal resources, and see where this will lead us: very far beyond the *Black Athena* thesis, absolutely, but with new questions towards a new understanding of the ancient world, with a new mission for archaeology, and more effectively equipped for the global future of mankind.

Notes

1 M.R. Lefkowitz/G. MacLean Rogers (eds.), *Black Athena revisited*, Chapel Hill/London, 1996.

2 M. Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization*, I. *The fabrication of Ancient Greece 1787-1987* II. *The archaeological and documentary evidence*, London/New Brunswick, N.J. 1987-1991.

3 W.M.J. van Binsbergen (ed.) 1997, *Black Athena: Ten Years After* = TALANTA 28-29 (1996-1997) [henceforth: BATYA].

4 I shall reserve for another occasion the *Black Athena* thesis' relevance for Africa. See: *Global Bee Flight: Sub-Saharan Africa, Ancient Egypt, and the World - Beyond the Black Athena thesis*, in press.

5 See my overview in BATYA, 11-64.

6 cf. W. Fauth, s.v. 'Athena', *Der kleine Pauly* 1 (1977); F. Graf, s.v. 'Athena', *Der Neue Pauly* 2 (1997) 160-166.

7 A. Egberts, Consonants in collision: Neith and Athena reconsidered, in: BATYA, 149-163.

8 J. Best, The ancient toponyms of Mallia: A post-Eurocentric reading of Egyptianising Bronze Age documents, in: BATYA, 99-129; W.M.J. van Binsbergen, Alternative models of intercontinental interaction towards the earliest Cretan script, in: BATYA, 131-148. That there is at least some evidence has been recognised ever since: A. Evans, *Scripta Minoa I*, Oxford 1909; cf. R.B. Brown, *A provisional catalogue of and commentary on Egyptian and Egyptianizing artifacts found on Greek sites* (Ph.D. University of Minnesota 1975); E. Cline, An unpublished Egyptian faience plaque from Mycenae, *JAOs* 110 (1990) 200-212; M. Bernal, *Black Athena II o.c.*, although this is often far-fetched.

9 For an overview, see M. Bernal, Responses to *Black Athena*: General and linguistic issues, in: BATYA, 65-98; BATYA's index lists many Bernalian etymologies.

10 Van Binsbergen, *Alternative models o.c.*: the final, excessively long, footnote on the Erichthonios myth arguing against Egyptian provenance.

11 Van Binsbergen, *Global Bee Flight o.c.*

12 M.A. Gimbutas, *The gods and goddesses of Old Europe*, London 1974; id., *The civilization of the Goddess: The world of Old Europe*, San Francisco 1991.

13 Van Binsbergen, *Global Bee Flight o.c.*

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