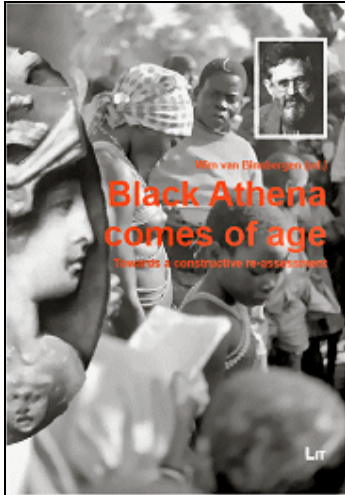


Now published (August 2011):

BLACK ATHENA COMES OF AGE



Wim M.J. van Binsbergen, 2011, ed., *Black Athena comes of age: Towards a constructive reassessment*, Berlin - Münster - Wien - Zürich - London: LIT: Reihe: Afrikanische Studien/African Studies, Bd. 44, ISBN 978-3-8258-4808-8, br., numerous figures and tables, extensive general index, 368 pp, €39.90

To be ordered from:

<http://www.lit-verlag.de/isbn/3-8258-4808-8>

This book reflects the intellectual encounter, over the years, between, on the one hand, a group of Dutch scholars studying the Ancient Mediterranean, Ancient Egypt and Africa, and, on the other hand, Martin Gardiner Bernal (photo: inset front cover) as one of the most challenging and innovative, but also controversial and criticised, scholars of recent decades. From the 1980s on, Bernal has claimed that the roots of Western civilisation were to be sought not in Ancient Greece but outside Europe, in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, and ultimately in sub-Saharan Africa. Bernal has wrought havoc in Western identity, addressing hot issues such as racism, exclusion, cultural domination, White and North Atlantic hegemony. He has combined a preference for non-mainstream theories (including Afrocentrism) with a passion for *ad-hominem* arguments derived from his personal sociology of knowledge. In this way he has blazed a trail of polemics and conflicts throughout a considerable number of international scholarly fields, learned journals, and conferences.

Deriving from one such conference, with three original contributions by Bernal himself, and greatly expanded and updated, the present collection as a whole does *not* (contrary to the 2008 Warwick conference on Bernal) call for canonisation of the *Black Athena* thesis as a main-stream achievement of empirical research. It does however call for recognition of Martin Bernal as the courageous and visionary initiator of an inspiring and timely research programme. His *Black Athena* series has greatly contributed to raising the question of the global politics of knowledge, from heresy, to becoming the very boundary condition of scholarly and institutional integrity. In this sense of maturation, self-transcendence and limitation, we may say that *Black Athena comes of age*.

Molly Myerowitz Levine, prominent contributor to the *Black Athena* debate, called the present collection when published in the scholarly journal *TALANTA* ‘the most interesting, constructive, and substantive treatment of *Black Athena* to date’.

CONTENTS: Preface; Wim van Binsbergen, *Black Athena ten years after: Towards a constructive re-assessment*; Martin Bernal, *Responses to Black Athena: General and linguistic issues*; Jan Best, *The ancient toponyms of Mallia: A post-Eurocentric reading of Egyptianising Bronze Age documents*; Wim van Binsbergen, *Alternative models of intercontinental interaction towards the earliest Cretan script*; Arno Egberts, *Consonants in collision: Neith and Athena reconsidered*; Martin Bernal, *Response to Arno Egberts*; Josine H. Blok, *Proof and persuasion in Black Athena I: The case of K. O. Müller*; Martin Bernal, *Response to Josine Blok*; Wim van Binsbergen, *Rethinking Africa's contribution to global cultural history: Lessons from a comparative historical analysis of mankala board-games and geomantic divination*; Wim van Binsbergen, *Is there a future for Afrocentrism despite Stephen Howe's dismissive 1998 study?* Fred Woudhuizen, *The bee-sign (Evans no. 86): An instance of Egyptian influence on Cretan Hieroglyphic*; Wim van Binsbergen, *The limits of the Black Athena thesis and of Afrocentricity as empirical explanatory models: The *Borean hypothesis, the Back-into-Africa hypothesis and the Pelasgian hypothesis as suggestive of a common, West Asian origin for the continuities between Ancient Egypt and the Aegean, with a protective new identity for the goddess Athena*; General Index.

THE EDITOR: Wim van Binsbergen (1947), a prominent member of the African Studies Centre, Leiden since 1977, taught sociology, anthropology and African Studies at the universities of Zambia, Leiden, Manchester, Berlin (FU), Durban-Westville, and Amsterdam (VU). Since 1998 he has been Professor of the Foundations of Intercultural Philosophy, Erasmus University, Rotterdam. The author of numerous books and scholarly articles, his latest books are *New Perspectives on Myth (Papers in Intercultural Philosophy and Transcontinental Studies, 2010; with Eric Venbrux)*, and *Ethnicity in Mediterranean Protohistory (British Archaeology Reports, 2011; with Fred Woudhuizen)*.

sections of the book are available online from:

<http://www.shikanda.net/topicalities/topicali.htm>, under 'August 2011