Now published (August 2011):

BLACK ATHENA COMES OF AGE


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’.

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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