Rethinking Africa’s contribution to global cultural history: lessons from a comparative historical analysis of mankala board-games and geomantic divination

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Abstract: On June 28, 1996, a conference was held at the African Studies Centre, Leiden, on controversies originating from Martin Bernal’s study ‘Black Athena: the Afro-Asiatic roots of classical civilization’ (1987, 1991). Papers were presented by Wim van Binsbergen, Martin Bernal, Jan Best, Arno Egberts, and Josine H. Blok. The present publication contains edited versions of these papers, as well as responses by Martin Bernal.

It stresses mankala’s close parallels with geomantic divination, which are treated in detail. In this connection I discuss board-games and divination as formal models, their relation to narrative literature, their temporal structure, symbolism and mathematics. My review of the geographical distribution and history of mankala and geomancy will yield new suggestions as to their related origin: not as authentic and untainted all-African inventions, but as transformations of the most ancient funerary ritual, taking on hunting symbolism and later further redefined in the course of fundamental changes in production in the Neolithic, with finally, more recently, a major. Mankala games are played throughout Africa, however there are considerable differences in rules and styles of playing. Presumably these rules and styles disseminated themselves by a process of diffusion and mutation similar to that in which languages spread. www.driedger.ca. rules, styles, process, diffusion, mutation. MANKALA. MANKALA (2 players) Mankala is an African stone game of strategy requiring pure skill and foresight. It was played in Egypt at least 3000 years ago. www.smithswood.com. Rethinking africa’s contribution to global cultural history. lessons from a comparative historical analysis of mankala board-games and geomantic divination. Talanta, 28(4), 221-254. DOI: 10.1016/0039-9140(81)80044-6. van Binsbergen, W. M. J./ Rethinking Africa's Contribution to Global Cultural History: Lessons from a Comparative Historical Analysis of Mankala Board-games and Geomantic Divination. In: Talanta. 1997 ; Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 221-254. @article{d0dfaaf3d9534921a6862b4f60020fb, title = "Rethinking Africa’s Contribution to Global Cultu...