



Carlo Altini / Philippe Hoffmann / Jörg Rüpke (ed.)

Issues of Interpretation

Texts, Images, Rites

THE EDITORS

Carlo Altini is professor for Philosophy at the University of Modena and director of the Graduate School of the Fondazione San Carlo at Modena.

Philippe Hoffmann is teaching at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. He is head of the research team on “Ancient, medieval and modern philosophies and theologies” within the centre of research “History and anthropology of knowledge, techniques and beliefs”.

Jörg Rüpke ist Professor für Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft an der Universität Erfurt. Er beschäftigt sich in seinen Arbeiten vornehmlich mit antiker Religionsgeschichte.

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Interpretation is crucial. Indeed, it is the very concept that may protect the humanities from the loss of their specific character. It may also stop the tendency to take the practices and methods of natural sciences as models, for example by focusing on quantitative aspects (when sociology or philosophy use criteria from the neurosciences) or by employing cognitivism instead of an historical approach. The concept of interpretation allows us to reflect on the historical and social aspects of any research. This can only be understood if we take into account the problem of the sense and meaning of individual and social conduct, by analysing the intentions of historical agents. Human facts do not speak for themselves. They need to be interpreted, understood, and analysed with instruments that are aware of the profound complexity of human events (both individual and social). From the ancient Mediterranean world through medieval Europe to contemporary India case studies focus on original developments, new techniques and new fields of, but also important reflections on, the interpretation of texts, rituals and major cultural “facts”.

CONTRIBUTORS

Carlo Altini & Philippe Hoffmann & Jörg Rüpke, Emanuele Stolfi, Harry O. Maier, Jörg Rüpke, Adrien Lecerf, Ghislain Casas, Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Elisabeth Boncour, Francesco Marchesi, Dominik Fugger, Christian Jambet, Laura Nicolì, Emma Nanetti, Vera Höke, Vincent Delecroix, Silvana Borutti, Martin Fuchs, Carlo Altini, Antje Linkenbach



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