

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87655-1 - A Philosophy of Political Myth
Chiara Bottici
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

A Philosophy of Political Myth

In this book, Chiara Bottici argues for a philosophical understanding of political myth. Bottici demonstrates that myth is a process, one of continuous work on a basic narrative pattern that responds to a need for significance. Human beings need meaning in order to master the world they live in, but they also need significance in order to live in a world that is less indifferent to them. This is particularly true in the realm of politics. Political myths are narratives through which we orient ourselves, and influence the way we act and feel about our political world. Bottici shows that in order to come to terms with contemporary phenomena, such as the purported clash between civilizations, we need a Copernican revolution in political philosophy. If we want to save reason, we need a new understanding of myth.

Chiara Bottici is a Research Fellow in political philosophy at the University of Florence. The author of *Uomini e Stati*, she has contributed to the *Journal of Political Philosophy*, *Iride*, *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*, and the *European Journal of Social Theory*.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87655-1 - A Philosophy of Political Myth
Chiara Bottici
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

A Philosophy of Political Myth

CHIARA BOTTICI

University of Florence and European University Institute



Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87655-1 - A Philosophy of Political Myth
Chiara Bottici
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA
www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521876551

© Chiara Bottici 2007

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2007

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Bottici, Chiara.
A Philosophy of political myth / Chiara Bottici.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-521-87655-1 (hardback)
1. Political science – Philosophy. 2. Myth.
3. Mythology – Political aspects. I. Title.
JA71.B584 2007
320.01-dc22 2006034141

ISBN 978-0-521-87655-1 hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-87655-1 - A Philosophy of Political Myth
Chiara Bottici
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

To B. for the political myths he gave me

Contents

Introduction	<i>page</i> 1
I. A GENEALOGY OF MYTH	17
1 <i>Mythos</i> and <i>Logos</i>	20
2 The <i>Biblos</i> and the Dialectic of the Sacred <i>Logos</i>	44
3 Scientific Rationality and the Dialectic of the Enlightenment	62
II. THE NEED FOR MYTH	81
4 Myth and Meaning	83
5 Approaching Myth	99
6 Naming the Unknown, Grounding Significance	116
III. POLITICAL MYTH	131
7 Myth and the Critique of Political Reason	134
8 Classical Theories of Political Myth	151
9 Political Myth, Ideology and Utopia	177
IV. MYTH AND POLITICAL IDENTITY	201
10 Myth, Historical Narratives and the Social Imaginary	203
11 Myth and Identity	227
12 Political Myths Today: The Extraordinary and the Banal	246
<i>Bibliography</i>	261
<i>Index</i>	281