

## Journals of semiotics in the world revisited – and proposing a new list *anno* 2023

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**Abstract.** We provide a list of semiotic journals in the world *anno* 2023. Our article is an expanded follow-up on Kalevi Kull and Timo Maran’s list of semiotic journals from 2013. The article finds that in 2023 there are 66 active semiotic journals in the world; hence, 11 new journals have been launched since 2013. Furthermore, there are 19 semiotic journals currently registered in the SCImago Journal Ranking database (2021 data). The article traces the development of the registration during 1999–2021 and finds that there has been a positive development in the period concerning the total number of citable documents and documents cited at least once, when we look at the semiotic journals as a whole. This is seen as an indication not only of the growth in the scientific output of the semiotic journals but also of an increase in their quality. Finally, in the period from 1964 to 2023 only nine semiotic journals (or 12 percent out of 75 journals) ceased publication. The article optimistically concludes that the development of the journals of semiotics in the world that has taken place during the last ten years points toward how the journals continue to be a stable platform for the future development of the semiotic field.

The list is the origin of culture. It’s part of the history of art and literature. What does culture want? To make infinity comprehensible. It also wants to create order – not always, but often. And how, as a human being, does one face infinity? How does one attempt to grasp the incomprehensible? Through lists, through catalogs, through collections in museums and through encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Umberto Eco, 2009 (interview in *Spiegel International*)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Umberto Eco by Susanne Beyer and Lothar Gorris (11 November 2009), accessed on 3 February 2023 at: <https://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/spiegel-interview-with-umberto-eco-we-like-lists-because-we-don-t-want-to-die-a-659577.html>.

In 2013 the readers of *Sign Systems Studies* could find an article written by Kalevi Kull and Timo Maran with the intriguing title “Journals of semiotics in the world”. It was the aim of the authors to provide a list of all the semiotic journals in the world *anno* 2013. And with their study, the authors could indeed, as they wrote, provide a list,

[...] which includes 53 titles. From among these, 42 are printed on paper (among them six international journals on general semiotics, 16 journals specializing in some branch of semiotics, and 20 regional semiotics journals), while 11 appear only as electronic publications. All in all, these journals publish articles in 16 languages. (Kull, Maran 2013: 140)

Yet in the conclusion they decided to leave two journals off their list, namely: *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure – Revue de linguistique générale*, *Publiée par le Cercle Ferdinand de Saussure* (1946; Librairie Droz S. A) and *Transactions of the Charles Peirce Society – A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy* (1965; Charles S. Peirce Society) because, as they said, these journals “[...] do not identify themselves directly as semiotic journals” (Kull, Maran 2013: 144). Hence, their list of the semiotic journals of the world in fact only included 51 titles and it is this number which we will address in the following.

Semiotic journals have been published since the beginning of the 1960s, and during the last 50–60 years several new journals have seen the light of day. Many of these journals are still with us, such as *Sign Systems Studies* (University of Tartu Press), which is regarded as the oldest semiotic journal in the world (published since 1964), as well as *Semiotica* (Walter de Gruyter), the official journal for the International Association for Semiotic Studies (published since 1969). Yet some semiotic journals have also disappeared over the years, with some of these only having lasted for a shorter period. However, looking at the semiotic journals of the world in 2013, the overall conclusion made by Kull and Maran was positive and therefore the authors accentuated that “for semiotics [...] the situation looks quite stable and provides a platform that can ensure the continuation and development of our field” (Kull, Maran 2013: 144). Hence, judging from their compiled list of semiotic journals in the world, the two authors confidently looked into the future concerning the “[...] continuation and development of [the semiotic] field”. Ten years later, we believe that it is relevant to ask the question, however, “what is the 2023 status of the journals of semiotics in the world”? And we furthermore believe that one way to approach the question is to examine: (1) how many of the journals on the list compiled by Kull and Maran are active today; and (2) whether new active journals can be added to the list.

This approach can give us, as far as we can tell, an indication whether there is a continuation and/or positive development numerically in relation to the journals of semiotics in the world. Hence, in the following we want to investigate that. However, we are also interested in “continuation and/or development” in another sense – namely, regarding the scientific quality of the semiotic journals. Kull and Maran did not go into that, but we would like to address the scientific quality of the semiotic journals from the perspective of citation analysis and journal ranking. Hence, by using available statistical material from the SCImago Journal Rank indicator, the scientific influence of the semiotic journals can be indicated. Therefore, we furthermore want to examine the registered semiotic journals by the SCImago Journal Ranking in the period 1999–2021,<sup>5</sup> concerning:

- (3) the development of the total number of semiotic journals registered;
- (4) the development of the total number of citable documents in the semiotic journals;
- (5) the development of the total number of documents in the semiotic journals which were cited at least once.

We believe that by addressing points 1–5 we will have the opportunity to put forth a new 2023 status concerning the journals of semiotics in the world and thereby also see whether we can look into the future of the semiotic field with the same degree of optimism as Kull and Maran did.

### **Revisiting the list of journals compiled by Kull and Maran (2013)**

As mentioned in the introduction, we will begin our study of the semiotic journals of the world by revisiting the list of journals compiled by Kull and Maran (2013) – in order to create a revised and updated list *anno* 2023. Initially, we will follow the classification of semiotic journals which Kull and Maran (2013: 141) have proposed, namely: “(A) international journals of semiotics in general; (B) international journals of some special field of semiotics; (C) regional journals of semiotics”; however, we will refrain from using category (D) “electronic journals of semiotics”, because today, to the best of our knowledge, all semiotic journals appear at least, or also, in a digital format. As with Kull and Maran, the journals on our revised and updated list are mentioned in a chronological order. Following Kull and Maran’s classification also means that we – *grosso modo* – agree with what journals they have placed under each category.

<sup>5</sup> At the time of writing the article the data for the years 2022 and 2023 were not available yet.

Looking at the list of Kull and Maran, our first aim was to see whether we could identify semiotic journals from the period 1964–2013 which do not figure on their list.

Secondly, our purpose was to see which of the journals listed by Kull and Maran were still active, as well as the status of the possibly added journals from the period 1964–2013.

And, thirdly, we have searched for journals published after 2013, which naturally do not figure on Kull and Maran's list, also checking which of these journals are still active. In order to identify which journals before and after 2013 could be added to Kull and Maran's list, we also followed their "strict approach", where the criterion of inclusion covers journals which "[...] explicitly self-identify themselves as concerned with semiotics" (Kull, Maran 2012: 141).

However, the two authors do admit that sometimes it can be difficult clearly to identify whether a journal belongs to the list of semiotic journals; they write: "It is not always clear which journals can be identified as journals of semiotics, as the number of periodicals that publish texts in the field of semiotic studies is very large" (Kull, Maran 2012: 141). We have faced the same difficulty and it could perhaps further be argued that we have sometimes placed a journal in a wrong category. We have, firstly, examined whether a journal has a general semiotic scope and tries to promote international semiotic research and scholarship; secondly, we have looked into whether a journal is dedicated to a certain field of research (which in itself can be very diverse, e.g. when it comes to theory, methodology, etc.) – thereby finding journals belonging to the categories (A) and (B). Concerning category (C), we associate this category with journals having publication activities which are related to a national organization such as an association or a society or a local university/college department; furthermore, these journals typically publish articles primarily in a language other than English (even though submissions in English can be accepted). This method is, of course, far from waterproof. However, we must also accentuate that it has been of less importance for us (even though it has been important, no doubt) to place a journal in the correct category than to identify journals as semiotic journals in order to compile an updated list of the semiotic journals of the world – which can indicate an overall status *anno* 2023 concerning journal publication continuity, development and quality of publication, etc.

Finally, it is important for us to mention that when we speak of "active journals" we thereby mean journals which have been published at least once within the last four years; hence, the criterion here is not that of yearly regularity, but some sign of productivity and the likelihood that the journal will be published again. Calls for papers and general notifications from the editor(s) (on e.g.

editorial policy, frequency, regularity, etc.), as well as other indications of activity such as a (recent) redesign of a journal website, were also taken into consideration, of course, concerning the journals' status of being active or non-active. Perhaps, the "four-year criterion" may seem somewhat arbitrary or suggest that we simply needed to draw the line "somewhere". Yet our study of the "semiotic journals of the world" made us conclude that journals which have not had any publishing record for a period of four years will most likely not become active again. If such journals are still accessible, they naturally can, and probably often will, be a resource for semiotic research.

After these preliminary remarks let us now look at our revised and updated list of the "journals of semiotics of the world". The journals on the list are numbered. Furthermore, journals marked with an asterisk (\*) were established between the years 1964–2013, but did not figure on Kull and Maran's list. Journals on the list with their titles underlined were established after 2013. Finally, the journals that are no longer active, as well as their last year of publication, are marked as (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER ...).

## **The journals of semiotics in the world anno 2023**

### A. International journals on general semiotics

1. *Sign Systems Studies* (1964) [University of Tartu Press; English, some papers in Russian]
2. *Semiotica – Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies/Revue de l'Association Internationale de Sémiotique* (1969) [De Gruyter Mouton; English and French]
3. *Kodikas/Code – Ars Semeiotica – an International Journal of Semiotics* (1977) [Gunter Narr Verlag; English, French, and German]
4. *The Public Journal of Semiotics* (2007) [Toronto; English]
5. *Signata – Annales des sémiotiques/Annals of semiotics* (2010) [Presses Universitaires de Liège; French and English]
6. *International Journal of Signs and Semiotic Systems* (2011) [IGI Publishing; an official publication of the Information Resources Management Association; English]. Active, 2023 – as *International Journal of Semiotics and Visual Rhetoric* (IJSVR)
7. *Signs and Society* (2013) [University of Chicago Press; English]
8. *Filosofi(e)Semiotiche* (2014) [Lago (CS); Italian, French]
9. *Punctum. International Journal of Semiotics* (2015) [Hellenic Semiotic Society. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece; English]

## B. International journals in some special fields of semiotics

10. *Degrés – revue de synthèse à orientation sémiologique* (1973) [Bruxelles, ASBL Degrés; French and English]
11. *Sémiotique et Bible* (1975) [Université Catholique de Lyon; French]
12. *Carte Semiotiche* (1984) [*Journal of Semiotics and Theory of Image*; Centro di Semiotica e Teoria dell'Immagine Omar Calabrese; Italian, English, and French]
13. \**Discurso – Revista Internacional de Semiótica y Teoría Literaria* (1987) [Asociación Andaluza de Semiótica; Spanish (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 2007)]
14. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law/Revue Internationale de Sémiotique Juridique* (1987) [Springer; English and French]
15. *Social Semiotics* (1991) [Routledge/Taylor & Francis; English]
16. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing – A Journal of Second Order Cybernetics, Autopoiesis and Cybersemiotics* (1992) [Imprint Academic; English]
17. *Applied Semiotics/Sémiotique Appliquée* (1996) [Lulu Press; University of Toronto at Mississauga; English and French]
18. *IJGLSA - Interdisciplinary Journal for Germanic Linguistics and Semiotic Analysis* (1996) [University of California Berkeley; English]
19. *Variaciones Borges – Journal of Philosophy, Semiotics and Literature* (1996) [The University of Pittsburgh; Spanish, English, and French] (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 2006)<sup>6</sup>
20. *Visio – International Journal for Visual Semiotics* (1996) [Laval University, Diffusion Publishing; English and French] (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 2004)
21. *Cognitive Semiotics* (2007) or *The Journal of Cognitive Semiotics. Multi-disciplinary Journal on Meaning and Mind*. [Vol. 4(1) of the latter was launched in August 2012. It is the follower of *Cognitive Semiotics*; however, it has been published only as an e-journal up till now; English]
22. *Biosemiotics* (2008) [Springer; English]
23. \**RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics* (2010) [Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University); Russian and English]
24. *International Journal of Marketing Semiotics and Discourse Studies* (2012) [Department of English and American Studies, University of Kassel; English]

<sup>6</sup> While the publication of the journal with this title is continued, it no longer has a subtitle involving the word 'semiotics'. Furthermore, correspondence with the current editor Daniel Balderson also confirms that the journal is not a semiotic journal.

25. "PRAXEMA". *Journal of Visual Semiotics* (2014) [Tomsk State Pedagogical University; English]
26. *Language and Semiotic Studies* (2015) [Soochow University. De Gruyter; English]
27. *Eikón. Journal of Semiotics and Culture* (2017) [Universidade de Beira Interior; English, French, Portuguese, Spanish]
28. *Digital Age in Semiotics and Communication* (2018) [South-East European Center for Semiotic Studies; English]
29. *Language, Context and Text: The Social Semiotic Forum* (2019) [John Benjamins Publishing Company; English]
- C. Regional journals on any field of semiotics
  30. \**Studia Semiotyczne* (1970) [Polskie Towarzystwo Semiotyczne; Polish, English]
  31. *Versus: Quaderni di studi semiotici* (1971) [Bompiani; Italian, French, and English]
  32. *Significação – Revista Brasileira de Semiótica* (1973) [Annablume; Portuguese]
  33. *Actes Sémiotiques* (1979) [Université de Limoges; French]<sup>7</sup>
  34. *Zeitschrift für Semiotik* (1979) [the journal of the German Semiotic Society, in cooperation with Austrian and Swiss semiotic societies; German]
  35. *Recherches sémiotiques/Semiotic Inquiry* (1980) [the official publication of the Canadian Semiotics Association; English and French]
  36. *The American Journal of Semiotics* (1981) [the journal of the Semiotic Society of America; English]
  37. *Semiotopos* (1981) [initially *Studia Semiotica*; Japanese Association of Semiotic Studies; since 2003 *Series Semiotopos*; Keio University Press; Japanese]
  38. *Revista Cruzeiro Semiotico* (1984) [Associação Portuguesa de Semiótica Publicou. Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil; Portuguese] (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 1993)
  39. *AdVersuS – Revista de Semiótica* (1990; online from 2004) [Instituto Italo-argentino di Ricerca Sociale (IIRS); Spanish, Italian, French and Portuguese]
  40. *Almen Semiotik* (1990) [Aarhus Universitetsforlag; Danish and English] (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 2002)

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<sup>7</sup> At first the journal was called *Actes Sémiotiques*, then, for some years, *Nouveaux Actes Sémiotiques*, and now it is again called *Actes Sémiotiques*.

41. *Semiotic Review* (1990) [formerly *The Semiotic Review of Books*, starting from 2013 only online with a new name. Department of Sociology, Lakehead University; English]
42. *Szemiotikai szövegtan – Semiotic Textology* (1990) [Department of Hungarian Language and Linguistics at the Juhász Gyula Teacher Training College in Szeged; Hungarian and English] (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 2007)
43. *Signa – Revista de la Asociación Española de Semiótica* (1992) [Institute of Literary Semiotics, Theatre and New Technologies at the National University of Distance Education, Madrid; Spanish]
44. *Lexia* (1994) [Semiotic journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Communication of the University of Torino; English, Italian, French, and Spanish]
45. *Texto!* (1996) [Institut Ferdinand de Saussure; French, English, and Spanish]
46. *deSignis* (1999) [Federación Latinoamericana de Semiótica; Spanish]
47. *Respectus Philologicus* (1999) [Vilnius University / Jan Kochanowski University; English, Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian]
48. *\*Tópicos del Seminario – Revista de Semiótica* (1999) [Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla; Spanish]
49. *Критика и семиотика [Kritika i semiotika]* (2000) [Department of Semiotics and Discourse Analysis, University of Novosibirsk; Russian]
50. *Ocula – Occhio semiotico sui media/Semiotic Eye on Media* (2000) [Pubblicato da Associazione Ocula; Italian]
51. *Semikolon – Tidsskrift for Idéhistorie, Semiotik og Filosofi* (2000) [University of Aarhus; Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and English] (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 2017)
52. *Acta Semiotica Estica* (2001) [Estonian Semiotics Association / University of Tartu Press; Estonian]
53. *Galáxia. Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação e Semiótica* (2001) [formerly *Face: Revista de Semiótica e Comunicação* (1998); Portuguese]
54. *\*ASJP* (2002) [Université Aboubeker Belkaid de Tlemcen; Arabic]
55. *\*Casa: Cadernos de Semiótica Aplicada* (2003) [Programa de Pós-graduação em Linguística e Língua Portuguesa. Faculdade de Ciências e Letras da UNESP; Portuguese, Spanish, French and English]
56. *Entretextos – Revista Electrónica Semestral de Estudios Semióticos* (2003) [University of Granada; Spanish] (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 2010)
57. *Carte Semiotiche – Rivista di Semiotica e Teoria dell' Immagine* (2003) [Ananke edizioni; Italian]



58. \**De signos y sentidos* (2004) [Secretaria Académica y de Innovación Educativa; Spanish].
59. *SemiotiX – A Global Information Bulletin* (2004) [The Semioticon; English]
60. \**Estudos Semioticos* (2005) [Universidade de Sao Paulo (USP); Portuguese, French and English]
61. *Hortus Semioticus* (2006) [University of Tartu, Estonia; Estonian and English]
62. *E/C – Rivista dell' Associazione Italiana di studi semiotici* (2007) initially printed, then only online; Italian]
63. *Signs – International Journal of Semiotics* (2007) [Royal School of Library and Information Science, Denmark; English and Danish] (NON-ACTIVE, AFTER 2019)
64. \**L.I.S. Letra. Imagen. Sonido. Ciudad Mediatizada* (2008) [Ciencias de la Comunicación. Facultad de Ciencias Sociales – UBA; Spanish]
65. *Chinese Semiotic Studies* (2009) [Nanjing Normal University Press; English]
66. *Signs and Media* (2009) [Sichuan University Press; Chinese]
67. \**Semeiosis – Semiótica e transdisciplinaridade em revista* (2010) [University of Sao Paulo (USP); Portuguese and English]
68. \**Blityri* (2012) [c/o Edizioni ETS; English and Italian]
69. \**Semiotika* (2012) [Vilniaus Universiteto Leidykla; Lithuanian, English and French]
70. *Cygne Noir – Revue d'exploration sémiotique* (2013) [Montréal; French]
71. \**Southern Semiotic Review* (2013) [Australia; English]
72. *El Signo inVisible – Revista de Semiòtica* (2017) [FELS – Federación Latinoamericana de Semiòtica; Spanish]
73. *Neatá* (2019) Revista digital del Grupo Estudios Semio-discursivos (GESEM, SGCyT-UNNE) [Portal de Publicaciones Periodicas Cientificas, Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, Argentina; Spanish]
74. *Revista Chilena de Semiòtica* (2019) [Publicación científica de la Asociación Chilena de Semiòtica; Spanish]
75. *Tamga: Journal of Turkish Semiotic Studies* (2022) [Turkish Semiotic Circle, Turkey; Turkish, English and French]

The findings in relation to the revised and updated list, which constitutes the list of journals of semiotics in the world *anno* 2023, are the following:

- With our journal search we managed to locate all 51 semiotic journals on Kull and Maran's list.
- We also managed to find 13 semiotic journals that were established up to and

including the year 2013 which did not appear on the list of Kull and Maran (marked with \*). Hence, we can conclude that in 2013 there were (at least) 64 semiotic journals of the world, that is, approximately 26 percent more journals than Kull and Maran located. Furthermore, of these 64 journals, 57 journals – or 89 percent – were active in 2013.

- The search for semiotic journals established after the year 2013 resulted in 11 additional titles (underlined). Hence, adding this number to the 64 semiotic journals from the year 2013 has given us a total of 75 journals in 2023.
- Concerning the new 2023 total of semiotic journals, 66 journals – or 88 percent – are active.

Yet how should we evaluate the publication period of the semiotic journals after 2013, which shows that 11 new titles have appeared? Looking at each of the six decades of publishing semiotic journals can indicate an answer concerning the possible numerical continuation and/or development of the journals. Hence, Table 1 below shows how many semiotic journals were established each decade.

Table 1. The number of semiotic journals established during the decades 1960s–2020s.

Decade	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s
New journals	2	8	7	16	21	20	1

Comparing the decades concerning the establishment of new semiotic journals confirms the conclusion made by Kull and Maran – even though they solely speak of hard copies – namely that: “[the] distribution seems to reflect a new momentum in publishing becoming apparent in the 1990s” (Kull, Maran 2013: 144). We can add that the momentum of the 1990s has developed into a thirty-year period of very stable numerical output of new semiotic journals. Furthermore, the development of the total number of semiotic journals from the beginning of the 1960s until today, of course, also has to do with the fact that the number of journals which no longer are active as semiotic outlets is relatively small, namely nine journals or 12 percent. It is also interesting to note how long these nine semiotic journals lasted, as Kull and Maran (2013: 140) accentuated when looking at the development of semiotic journals of the world: “[...] as common to any branch of research, many of the journals have not lasted for long”. We cannot know exactly, of course, what Kull and Maran meant when they stressed that many semiotic journals “have not lasted for long”; however, we can add that the nine semiotic journals which are not active anymore were published actively, on average, for approximately 12 years and that the median was 12 years

as well – spanning from *Discurso – Revista Internacional de Semiótica y Teoría Literaria* (1987, active for 20 years) to *Entretextos – Revista Electrónica Semestral de Estudios Semióticos* (2003, active for seven years). Why these nine semiotic journals have stopped their publishing activities we can only guess (perhaps not having enough resources to continue, waning interest from their readers, etc.), but they all managed to exist for at least seven years.

Of course, the numbers which we have “worked with” here concern rather small quantities statistically speaking. However, we still believe that do the numbers not only emphasize the positive conclusion made by Kull and Maran in 2013 but they also show how yet another ten years’ period can be added to the stable development of the number of semiotic journals in the world.

Still, it is one thing to try to make an updated count of the semiotic journals of the world and discover the field in a quantitative way, while it is quite another thing to investigate the quality of these journals. There are many ways to investigate the quality of scientific journals and articles. One of the ways, and this is the way that we have chosen in the following, is to look at the semiotic journals of the world from 1999 to 2021 by using the SCImago Journal & Country Rank database.

### **The scientific quality of the semiotic journals of the world 1999–2021 and the SCImago Journal & Country Rank database**

There are numerous methods to analyse and measure the quality of a scientific journal. Obviously, the journal quality concerns the quality of the articles which are published in the journal – and factors such as editorial and review policy, impact, frequency, regularity and timeliness can attract quality authors/researchers and readership (see also Saxena *et al.* 2013). Furthermore, different index databases list scientific journals according to certain indicators determining the quality of these journals. The SCImago Journal & Country Rank database (from now on abbreviated as SJR) is a publicly available and highly esteemed portal which measures the scientific influence of journals. SJR uses citation data from Scopus© (Elsevier B.V.), which is the world’s largest citation database of peer-reviewed literature, containing more than 15,000 journals from more than 4,000 publishers as well as more than 1,000 journals made available as open access. The data used by SJR is the data contained in the Scopus© database from the year

1996.<sup>8</sup> SJR measures the value of citations of the scientific journals by assigning “[...] weights to bibliographic citations based on the importance of the journals that issued them, so that citations issued by more important journals will be more valuable than those issued by less important ones” (Gonzalez-Pereira *et al.* 2009: 2). Or, to use a different formulation, not all citations are equal from the scientific quality perspective of the SJR database: “SJR is a measure of scientific influence of journals that accounts for both the number of citations received by a journal and the importance or prestige of the journals where such citations come from.”<sup>9</sup> Hence, with a focus on citations, the SJR database can help us to evaluate the quality of the semiotic journals and, most importantly, the numerical development of their citations.

We have looked at the individual profiles of the semiotic journals in the SJR database to see the significative metrics of the journal’s performance by focusing on two specific indicators, namely ‘citable documents’ and ‘cited documents’. The indicator ‘citable documents’ concerns the fact that “[...] not every article in a journal is considered primary research and therefore ‘citable’” and therefore there is a ratio of a “[...] journal’s articles [which] include[s] substantial research (research articles, conference papers and reviews) in three-year windows”.<sup>10</sup> The second indicator, ‘cited documents’, concerns: “[...] a journal’s items, grouped in three-year windows, that have been cited at least once”.<sup>11</sup>

It is important to notice that the category ‘cited documents’ is not the same as citations per document (all citations received) and that the category furthermore includes citations from the same journal. Yet looking at a semiotic journal’s citable and cited documents in the SJR database over a certain period, we can address the development of its scientific productivity or output as well as the quality of this output. What we are interested in here, however, is not the single semiotic journal as such, but the development, taken as a whole, for the semiotic journals which have been registered in the SJR database. Therefore, we have made a total count concerning citable documents and documents cited at least once for all the semiotic journals, in order to get an idea of the possible numerical growth, stagnation or decline of these two indicators. Before we can go into that, however, we first need to see which semiotic journals have been registered in the SJR

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.scimagojr.com/aboutus.php>; accessed the 5th of January 2023.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=5700170931&tip=sid&clean=0>; accessed on 5 January 2023.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=5700153989&tip=sid&clean=0>; accessed on 5 January 2023.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=5700153989&tip=sid&clean=0>; accessed on 5 January 2023.

database in the period 1996–2021 (at the time of writing the article the data for the years 2022 and 2023 were not available yet). When we use the word ‘registered’ we mean the first year that the journal had a value in relation to the metrics in question. Finally, we need to say that all data from the database was collected during two days, namely, 25 and 26 May 2023.

To locate the semiotic journals in SJR database we have used a simple search strategy: firstly, we conducted a search after journal titles from our updated list concerning all the journals which have been active after the year 1996 (74 journal titles); secondly, we made a search in the database using several keywords: semiotics, sign theory, signs, semiosis, sémiologie, semiótica and semiotika. Our search in the database yielded the following result:

1990s

1. *The American Journal of Semiotics* (1999; discontinued in 2019)
2. *International Journal for the Semiotics of Law* (1999)
3. *Semiotica* (1999)
4. *Social Semiotics* (1999)

2000s

5. *Zeitschrift für Semiotik* (2002)
6. *Biosemiotics* (2009)
7. *Lexia* (2009)

2010s

8. *Kodikas/Code* (2011)
9. *International Journal of Marketing Semiotics* (2013)
10. *Sign Systems Studies* (2013)
11. *Cognitive Semiotics* (2014)
12. *Signs and Society* (2015)
13. *Respectus Philologicus* (2019)
14. *Chinese Semiotic Studies* (2019)

2020s

15. *Kritika i Semiotika* (2020)
16. *Punctum: International Journal of Semiotics* (2020)
17. *RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics* (2020)
18. *Signata* (2020)
19. *Versus* (2020)
20. *Studia Semiotyczne* (2021)

We can see, then, that during the period 1999–2021 a total of 20 semiotic journals were registered in the SJR database. Furthermore, we can see that most of the journals were registered in the database during the 2010s and 2020s – namely 13 journals or approximately 65 percent – and it is indeed noticeable that six of these 13 journals were registered during 2020–2021 alone. Table 2 shows the development of the number of journals in the database during the period 1999–2023.

Table 2. Number of semiotic journals per decade in the SJR database.

Decade	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s
Number of journals	4	7	13	19
Change from the previous decade		+3	+7, -1	+6

If we make a comparison between the total number of active journals in the database (19 journals) and the total number of active semiotic journals of the world *anno* 2023 (67 journals) we can see that 28 percent, or more than a quarter of these journals, are registered in the database. We are not saying, of course, that there can be no important semiotic resources among the rest of the journals that make up the remaining 72 percent. Many of these journals have, for example, eminent editors and impressive international editorial boards and publish numerous original articles written by prominent semiotic scholars (none mentioned, none forgotten). Yet, what we are saying is that the 28 percent of the total number of semiotic journals *anno* 2021 figure in the SJR database because of their quality (prestige) measured in relation to the number of citations received by the respective journals as well as where these citations originate from. Therefore, the question is how the positive numerical development of the semiotic journals in the JSR database reflects the development concerning the yearly totals of the following two indicators: citable documents and documents that were cited at least once. We should expect, of course, that the more semiotic journals are registered in the SJR database, the more citable semiotic documents there will be as well, as the more documents there will be that are cited at least once.

As mentioned above, we first investigated the metrics of each semiotic journal in the SJR database; we registered their yearly number of citable and cited documents, respectively; then we added the registered numbers for each journal giving us yearly totals of citable and cited documents – covering a period of 23 years in all. This period of 23 years is derived from, as indicated in the previous list, the fact that the first year with semiotic journals registered in the SJR database

was 1999 (four journals) and, furthermore, that the year 2021, naturally, was the last year registered in the database so far. Yet, despite only having, for our statistics, the year 1999 from the 1990s and the years 2020 and 2021 from the 2020s, we have chosen to pull together the numbers from each year in the 2000s and 2010s representing the two decades and involve the year 1999 and the years 2020 and 2021 under the headlines of the 1990s and the 2020s, recognizing, of course, the incompleteness of these last-mentioned data. Table 3 below shows, then, the numerical development in the SJR database of the semiotic journals concerning the total of citable documents and documents cited at least once, from the year 1999 to 2021.

Table 3. The development of semiotic journals in the SJR database concerning the total of citable documents and documents cited at least once from 1999 to 2021.

Years	1990s (1999)	2000s	2010s	2020s (2020–2021)
Citable documents	395	4654	9347	2314
Documents cited at least once	42	696	2060	769

Hence, as expected, following the development of the number of registered semiotic journals in the SJR database, there has been a positive numerical development concerning both the total number of citable documents and the documents cited at least once. What seems most interesting and positive to us concerning this development is the following: firstly, there has been an increase in the total number of citable documents from the 2000s to the 2010s by 4693 documents, which equals an increase of 100.8 percent. Furthermore, looking at the same period and the increase in the total number of documents cited at least once, there has been an increase by 1364 documents, which equals an increase of no less than 195 percent.

Secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, looking at the years 2020 and 2021, these two years together have alone produced almost a half – or 49 percent – of the total number of citable documents that were produced in the 2000s, as well as 10 percent more documents cited at least once than the total number in the 2000s. Furthermore, compared to the total number of the citable documents and documents cited at least once in the 2010s, the years 2020 and 2021 together have already produced 33 percent of the 2010s’ total of citable documents and 37 percent of the total number of documents cited at least once, respectively.

Finally, when we look at the ratio between the total of citable documents and the total of documents cited at least once in the 2000s and the 2010s, we can see that 15 percent of the citable documents were cited in the 2000s, whereas the number was 24 percent in the 2010s. Furthermore, concerning the years 2020 and 2021 taken together, 33 percent of the citable documents were cited at least once. Hence, we are witnessing an interesting development concerning the 2000s, 2010s and, as far as we can investigate, the 2020s – namely, a clear increase in the total number of documents in the semiotic journals which are cited at least once.

With the previously mentioned numbers in mind, what should we conclude, then, about the journals of semiotics in the world from the perspective of the SJR database? No doubt, there has been, during the last 23 years, a very positive numerical development in relation to the semiotic journals, including:

- A steady increase in new semiotic journals in the database in the 2000s and the 2010s.
- A very promising start to the 2020s, with already six new journals registered in the database.
- Only one semiotic journal has been discontinued since 1999 and 16 new journals have been registered in the database – making the total of active journals in the database anno 2023 19 journals.

The productivity of the semiotic journals does not simply equal quality, of course, yet there has to be a certain amount of productivity or output to make quality possible in the first place, and the steady increase in the number of journals in the SJR database has also, and not surprisingly, resulted in an increase in the total number of citable documents. When we look at the quality of the semiotic journals, this quality has been reflected in a quite dramatic growth in the total number of both citable documents and documents cited at least once – where the latter concerns an increase in the total of cited documents of almost 200 percent when comparing the 2000s to the 2010s; and, judging by the years 2020 and 2021, we can see no reason why the development in the 2020s should not be positive either. Or, formulated differently: over the last 23 years the numerical development of the semiotic journals in the SJR database has caused a clear increase in the quality of the semiotic journals taken as a whole – that is, judged from the perspective of the two related indicators, ‘citable documents’ and ‘documents cited at least once’, in prestigious or influential journals contained in the Scopus© database.



## **The journals of semiotics in the world – status 2023 and further comments**

So, what do all the numbers mentioned above tell us about the status of the journals of semiotics in the world seen from the year 2023? Well, there are currently, as far as we have been able to locate them, 66 active semiotic journals in the world. After the year 2013, when Kull and Maran compiled their list, 11 new semiotic journals have been launched. Furthermore, out of the 75 semiotic journals which have been registered in our updated list, only nine journals are no longer active today and all of the nine journals lasted for at least seven years. Finally, 19 of the journals of semiotics in the world are currently registered as active in the SJR database (2021 data), beginning with four journals in 1999 and increasing numerically during the 2000s, 2010s and the beginning of 2020s, with three, seven and six new journals respectively; this development has also resulted in a rather dramatic development in the total number of the semiotic journals' citable documents and documents cited at least once. For example, looking at the development of these numbers from the 2000s to the end of the 2010s, there has been an increase of 100 percent and 195 percent concerning the total number of citable documents and documents cited at least once, respectively. And taken together, the years 2020 and 2021 have already produced 33 percent of the 2010s total of citable documents. We also understand this development as indicating the growing quality of the semiotic journals taken as a whole – because the citations are contained in the Scopus® database and therefore these citations are judged by the SJR to have a value high enough (coming from prestigious or influential journals) to make up their statistical material for ranking journals. Or, formulated differently, we are witnessing a very positive development in the last three decades, of the semiotic journals found in the SJR database – both concerning their total scientific production or numerical output and quality (seen from the two indicators 'citable documents' and 'documents cited at least once').

Let us return, then, to the conclusion made by Kull and Maran in 2013 regarding the status of the field of semiotics in relation to the journals of semiotics in the world, remembering that they optimistically claimed: “[...] for semiotics itself, the situation looks quite stable and provides a platform that can ensure the continuation and development of our field” (Kull, Maran 2013: 144). In 2023, around ten years later and based on the foregoing, we do not see any reason why we should make a less optimistic conclusion about the next ten years or perhaps looking even further into the future concerning the publication of journals of semiotics in the world as a stable platform ensuring the continuation and/or development of the field. Hence, the positive development of the number of

journals of semiotics in the world after 2013 testifies that the publication of semiotic journals has not slowed down. It is also interesting to notice that when a semiotic journal is first established, its life expectancy has, so far, been at least seven years. This may not seem long, but it is not an insignificant period of time when we consider that semiotics, as institutionally established, is quite a young field – only acquiring its associations, societies, schools, academic positions, specialized journals, etc. in the 1960s.

Of course, the journals of semiotics in the world play an enormous role concerning the possible continuation and development of the field. However, we should also remember that there are a considerable number of articles that are continuously published in journals which do not consider themselves, primarily, as semiotic: for example, linguistic, communication and philosophy journals. There are also a number of semiotic monographs, volumes in semiotic book series, and text books published every year.

We do not claim that our revised and updated list of journals of semiotics in the world is exhaustive; hence, we will not rule out that there can be semiotic journals which we did not manage to locate. Yet we still consider our list as being solid enough for us to present a status of the journals of semiotics in the world *anno* 2023 – Kull and Maran (2013) provided us with a fine foundation to build on, and two of the three authors of this article, Torkild Thellefsen and Amalia Nurma Dewi, are librarians and information-search experts who have made relevant search results.

Concerning our work with the data from the SCImago Journal & Country Rank database, we can surely be criticized for not having even touched upon the computational methodology of the SJR indicator including its algorithm, which begins from certain values that are pre-established (Gonzalez-Pereira *et al.* 2009: 3) – for example, why a journal like *Sign Systems Studies*, that was established in 1964, has not been registered in the database with citable documents before the year 2013. And, furthermore, why did we choose ‘citable documents’ and ‘documents cited at least once’, and not, for example, the H-index of the journals as our indicators of quality? Our only response will simply be that, to the best of our knowledge, the SJR database is the only publicly available database which seems to offer the most relevant material for our simple statistical calculations (making a citation count possible) – namely, material concerning the semiotic journals that can indicate scientific productivity or output, combined with whether or not this output also has led to citations – and thereby what we here understand as a sign of quality.

Finally, it is our hope that our revised and updated list of journals of semiotics of the world can be used as an inspiration and overview for semioticians (and other scholars), when they want to publish in semiotic journals.

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