

RESEÑA/REPORT

History of Semiotic Thinking. The Greco-Roman Antiquity Wenceslao Castañares Burcio Trotta, Madrid, 2014

Graciela Padilla Castillo: Complutense University of Madrid. Spain

This is the first part of a complete work, conceived in three volumes, ranging from Greco-Latin antiquity to present day. The first installment, reviewed here, corresponds to the first part, published in 2014 with support for editing by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. It begins with the Homeric texts and ends with Augustine, the first author who explicitly speaks of general semiotics.

Along this route, Wenceslao Castañares collects the origins of semiotic thinking in authors who did not yet deal with or use the word "semiotics" but, of course, they were deeply talking about it. Therefore, we are facing an extremely original and interesting work for experts in Semiotics and, at the same time, for beginners and learners who want to delve into Semiotics and Communication.

As explained in the opening pages, semiotics is a disciplinary field which acquired its body in the late nineteenth century, with the names of Charles Sanders Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure. However, interest in the signs is as old as the humans and, although no name had been given to this knowledge, it fully existed since man existed. This book orders that story and this unprecedented historical discourse about semiotics or semiology, always very close to Communication, the academic field of Castañares.

Thus, the reader will find in these pages Preplatonic Greece and the tribes of the semas, with signs and signals in Plato, Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Aesop, Hecataeus of Miletus, Anaxagoras and of course, Aristotle's Rhetoric. An entire chapter is devoted to Plato and his language, revealing his semiotic terminology and the semantic theories of Cratilo. The only protagonist of the next chapter is Aristotle, with his semiotics and his theory of argumentation. According to the author, his semiotic reflection focuses on the treaties of Organ on and Rhetoric, already introduced in the first chapter.

From Aristotle, the book progresses to the Epicureans and the sign inference. According to Castañares, the Epicureans and the Stoics learned to live in a world in which the next was no longer a reference and life in the city and could no longer be a political or ethical ideal. Laercio is quoted to enter sensitive knowledge, inferential

knowledge from Epicurus, or Epicurean semiotics in *De Signis* of Filodemo. The following pages address the stoic stage, the end of the Roman Republic and the High Empire, and Augustine, with his general theory of signs.

We can only finish our reading by already thinking about the second volume, the publication of which is very close, as it is a truly original, unusual and commendable book. The author conveys his curiosity to the reader, it is evident the need to know the historical perspective to go into any theory and it encourages to think that it would be necessary to have similar exercises of analysis and reflection, in other fields of knowledge of Social Sciences, which we take for granted too quickly.

Wenceslao Castaños Burcio

Is Doctor of Philosophy from the Complutense University of Madrid. His research has focused mainly in the field of semiotics and mass communication. He was Head of the Department of Journalism III, Faculty of Information Sciences, from 2008 to 2012. Currently, he is a professor of *semiotics of mass communication* at the School of Information Sciences at UCM. He is also a professor of the subject *semiotic analysis of texts and cultural processes* in the Master's degree in Sociocultural Analysis of Knowledge and Communication, of which he has been coordinator.