



Concept of “logos” in ancient Greek and Latin traditions: Semantic evolution and philosophical and philological interpretations

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Abstract. The study aimed to analyse the semantic evolution of the concept of “λόγος” in the Ancient Greek and Latin traditions. The methodological framework comprised lexicographical, semantic-comparative, textual-contextual and hermeneutic-comparative analyses. The lexicographical analysis made it possible to identify the main meanings of “λόγος”; the semantic-comparative analysis was used to compare them with “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio”; whilst the textual-contextual and hermeneutic-comparative analyses revealed how the concept functioned in pre-Christian, early Christian and Latin texts. As a result, the study established that “λόγος” in Classical Greek is not limited to the meaning of “word”, but encompasses speech, utterance, proof, explanation, ground, measure, reason, law and principle. The Latin tradition did not develop a single complete equivalent for “λόγος”: its semantics is distributed amongst “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio”, which convey, respectively, the verbal-theological, rational-explanatory, speech-discursive and rhetorical-compositional dimensions. In pre-Christian Greek texts, “λόγος” functions as a linguistic-philosophical category: in Heraclitus it is associated with the measure and order of the world; in Plato, with the dialogical examination of concepts; in Aristotle, with the argumentative organisation of speech; and in the Stoics, with the rational principle of nature. Greek-Christian and Latin receptions demonstrated a functional reworking of the concept: in Philo of Alexandria, “λόγος” took on a mediating and exegetical function; in the prologue to the Gospel of John, it became the semantic centre of the Christian text; in Justin Martyr, it was apologetic and argumentative; in Clement of Alexandria it was

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linked to a pedagogical and hermeneutical reinterpretation of the Hellenic tradition, and in the Vulgate it was established in Latin as “verbum”. Study demonstrated that the semantic evolution of “λόγος” is linked to the transition from the Greek polycentric concept to the Latin system of partial equivalents and the early Christian interpretation of the Word. Practical significance of the findings lies in the application of the proposed analytical framework in classical philology, the history of philosophical terminology, religious studies and translation studies. The research findings can be applied when analysing concepts that have been transmitted between the Greek, Latin and Christian traditions

Keywords: classical philology; speech; mediating function; receptive shift; meaning; equivalents; interpretation

Introduction

An examination of concepts within the ancient linguistic and philosophical tradition traced how an individual lexeme evolves from its dictionary meaning into a category of thought, law, theology and textual interpretation. For the Greek “λόγος”, this issue is of philological significance, as the concept combines word, speech, reason, foundation, proof, order and principle, whilst in the Latin context it has no single, complete equivalent. The transition from the Greek “λόγος” to the Latin “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio” reflects not only a translator’s choice but also a shift in the mode of conceptual organisation. An analysis of “λόγος” requires simultaneous consideration of lexicographical, philosophical, religious studies and philological levels, as the semantic history of the concept is linked to the formation of the European language of the Word, Reason, foundation and order.

Examination of ancient concepts in philological and philosophical studies has given rise to several lines of research relating to the problem of “λόγος”. The semantic nature of ancient Greek philosophical concepts is explored through an analysis of “ἀλήθεια” as a semantic cluster in the study by I. Pavlenko (2022). In this interpretation, truth appears not as an isolated term, but as a field of meanings associated with openness, memorability, manifestness and cognitive activity. This principle is substantial

for interpretation of “λόγος”, as both concepts function not only at the level of lexical definition but also within the realm of philosophical categorisation of experience. The mental lexicon of ancient Greek philosophy is presented in the study by I. Pavlenko (2023) as a system of interrelated concepts, in which lexemes acquire meaning through their relation to thought, cognition, being and speech. This perspective shifts the problem of “λόγος” from the realm of a single translational equivalent to that of semantic transitions between linguistic form and philosophical function. The connection between “λόγος” and law, truth and the normative order is outlined in a study by I. Fedoriv (2025), which compares the Greek philosophical interpretation of truth with the legal system of Ancient Rome. This framing of the issue opens a distinct line of inquiry for Latin material, since “λόγος” in the Greek tradition is associated with foundation, regularity and rational justification, whereas the Roman tradition more often distributes these functions amongst legal, rhetorical and rational concepts. Study by A.P. Zaitets & Z.O. Pohoryelova (2021) on the formation of the idea of natural law in Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome also shows that ancient thought regarded law and order not merely as legal phenomena, but as conceptual forms of connection between nature, reason and the norm. In this context, the Latin reception of Greek concepts

emerges as a distribution of semantic functions amongst verbal, rational, legal and normative forms of expression.

A separate group comprises philological studies of ancient conceptualisation, which trace the mechanisms of the verbalisation of concepts in the Greek and Latin languages. Y.S. Chekareva (2023) examines the concept of the heart through the lens of ancient Greek and Latin traditions, demonstrating the value of a comparative analysis of these two classical languages in identifying semantic shifts between cultural systems. In the study by Y.S. Chekareva (2025), the concept of war in ancient Greek aphorisms is explored through fixed expressions, evaluative models and linguistic formulas that capture the philosophical and ethical interpretation of experience. In this approach, ancient concepts appear not as isolated lexical units, but as elements of textual contexts in which meaning acquires function. For "λόγος", this principle is of direct significance, as the semantic lines of "word", "reason", "proof" and "principle" are activated depending on genre, context and tradition. The religious and linguistic reception of concepts in biblical and post-antique texts opens yet another research horizon. O. Levko (2022) addressed the development of the "lexicon of humility" in 16th-century Church Slavonic and Old Ukrainian biblical manuscripts and demonstrated that theological concepts undergo semantic shifts during transitions between languages and textual traditions. A similar mechanism is present in the case of "λόγος", as the Greek concept underwent not a mechanical translation but a terminological reformulation in the early Christian context and in the Latin Vulgate. The study of O. Kyrychok (2020) regarding concepts of "philosopher" and "philosophy" in the written sources of Kyivan Rus' from the 11th to the 14th centuries demonstrates that ancient and Christian concepts acquire new interpretative frameworks when received within a different linguistic context.

In this context, "λόγος" emerges as a structure that bridges the Greek, Latin and Christian traditions and requires analysis not only of its meaning but also of the manner in which it is reinterpreted. The philosophical aspects of early Greek conceptualisation form the basis for interpretation of the pre-Christian "λόγος". In V. Turenko's (2025) work, the idea of hostility among the early Greek pluralists and sophists is presented as a transition from the cosmic to the human dimension. This perspective demonstrates the capacity of ancient concepts to change function depending on the level of interpretation. For "λόγος", a similar progression is the shift from a cosmological principle to speech, argumentation, rhetoric and the Christian Word. In S. Kostyuchkov's (2024) study, the relationship between chaos and logos in a biophilosophical interpretation of the origin of life reveals the enduring opposition between disorder and order as one way of conceptualising "λόγος". This opposition supports a philosophical line of thought in which "λόγος" functions as a principle of organisation, measure and meaningful order.

Existing studies outline semantic clusters of Greek philosophy, the mental lexicon of ancient thought, the verbalisation of concepts in the Greek and Latin languages, and the legal and religious reception of these concepts. At the same time, the comprehensive transition of "λόγος" from the Classical Greek semantic field to the Latin system of partial equivalents and the early Christian reception of the Word requires a separate philological analysis. The relationship between the Greek polycentric nature of "λόγος", the Latin distinction between "verbum", "ratio", "sermo" and "oratio", and the Greek-Christian reformulation of the concept within the Hellenistic-Jewish, New Testament and patristic contexts remains insufficiently explored. This gap highlights the need to analyse "λόγος" as a concept that unites word, speech, foundation, proof, reason, order and the theological Word.

The study aimed to investigate how the ancient Greek polycentric semantic field of “λόγος” was reinterpreted within the Latin system of partial equivalents and in the Greek-Christian reception of the Word. The objectives of the study were to define the semantic field of “λόγος” within the Greek lexicographical tradition and compare it with the Latin equivalents “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio”; elucidate the functioning of “λόγος” in pre-Christian Greek philosophical texts through its connection with speech, measure, proof, order and the rational principle; and to trace the Hellenistic-Jewish, New Testament, early Christian and Latin reception of “λόγος” as the foundation for the formation of the European philosophical and philological tradition.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted as a theoretical comparative-interpretative analysis of Greek and Latin lexical roots. Translated editions were consulted only insofar as they contained the Greek or Latin forms of the relevant fragments. The study was organised in three stages: the first stage examined the semantic field of the Greek concept “λόγος” and its Latin equivalents; the second stage examined the functioning of “λόγος” in the pre-Christian Greek philosophical tradition; and the third stage examined the Hellenistic-Jewish, early Christian and Latin reception of the concept. This sequence ensured a progression from the lexeme and semantic field to textual functioning, translational equivalents and conceptual evolution.

In the first stage, a lexicographical and semantic-comparative analysis was conducted. The source materials for this stage included the academic dictionaries and lexicons by C.T. Lewis & C. Short (1879), the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1900), and G.W. Lampe (1961). This stage also drew on the works by P.G. Glare (1968), H.G. Liddell & R. Scott (1996), and F.W. Danker (2000). In addition, the lexicographical material included the dictionary by

F. Montanari (2015). The lexicographical corpus covered Classical Greek, New Testament and Patristic Greek lexis, as well as the Classical, Late Antique and Christian Latin traditions. The analysis focused on identifying the core meanings of “λόγος” and comparing them with the Latin lexemes “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio”. The semantic field of the concept was described in terms of its linguistic, logical-argumentative, rational, ontological and theological dimensions. Within this phase, “λόγος” was examined in its meanings of word, speech, utterance, narrative, proof, explanation, ground, reckoning, measure, reason, law and principle. The Latin material was analysed not as a single, unambiguous translation of the Greek “λόγος”, but as a system of partial equivalents, in which “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio” represent different areas of its semantic field.

The second stage involved a comparative and contextual analysis of the pre-Christian use of “λόγος” in the Greek philosophical tradition. The materials for this stage comprised editions and corpora relating to Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle and the Stoic tradition. This stage drew on Aristotle (1926), H. Arnim (1964), and A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley (1987). It also included C.H. Kahn (1979) and Plato (2013a; 2013b). The selected corpus represents the main pre-Christian contexts in which “λόγος” is associated with speech, argumentation, rational justification, measure, law and the order of being. The analysis covered the Heraclitean use of “λόγος” in connection with order and measure, the Platonic use in connection with dialogue and rational justification, the Aristotelian use in connection with speech, proof and definition, and the Stoic use in connection with the rational principle and the law of nature. A comparison of these contexts was used to distinguish between the linguistic, argumentative, philosophical and cosmological levels of the concept’s pre-Christian usage.

The third stage involved a hermeneutic and comparative analysis of the Hellenistic-Jewish,

early Christian and Latin receptions of “λόγος”. The corpus of primary sources comprised “Clement of Alexandria” as translated by G.W. Butterworth (1919), St. Justin Martyr (1997), Philo of Alexandria (Runia, 2001). The Vulgate edition by R. Weber & R. Gryson (2007) was also used as part of the corpus. The interpretative material included monographs and studies by J.M. Dillon (1996), D. Runia (2023) and C.J. Friesen *et al.* (2025). The corpus of sources encompassed Philo’s interpretation of “λόγος”, the Greek New Testament text (Holmes, 2010), the Latin translational tradition of the Vulgate, the early Christian apologetic and Alexandrian traditions, as well as the philosophical context of the concept’s reception. The analysis focused on comparing the Greek “λόγος” in Philo’s, New Testament and early Christian material with the Latin “verbum” in the Vulgate, as well as on identifying semantic shifts associated with the transition of the concept between the Greek philosophical, Jewish-Hellenistic, early Christian and Latin traditions. Early Christian material was drawn upon for a philological analysis of the functioning of Greek philosophical vocabulary within the New Testament, apologetic and Alexandrian Christian textual contexts.

The selection of materials was made as a targeted sample of academic lexicographical, textual and monographic sources that were directly related to the semantics or reception of “λόγος”, contained Greek or Latin linguistic material, and were significant for the Classical, Hellenistic, Early Christian or Latin traditions. The material was structured using a semantic matrix of meanings for “λόγος”, a table of Latin equivalents, a comparative diagram of the pre-Christian and early Christian usage of the concept, and an analytical model of its semantic evolution. The semantic matrix grouped meanings along the lines of “word – speech – argument – reason – law – principle”. Meanings were assigned to a particular group according to the dominant function of the lexeme in context: nominative, speech-related, argumentative,

rational, normative or ontological. The type of utterance, the connection with the act of speech, the presence of an explanation or proof, and appeals to reason, measure, law or principle were considered. A table of Latin equivalents compared “λόγος” with “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio”. The comparison was based on semantic scope, context of use, function within a sentence, affiliation with the speech, rational, rhetorical or theological spheres, as well as the ability of the Latin lexeme to convey a specific aspect of the Greek concept. A comparative framework distinguished between the pre-Christian, Hellenistic-Jewish, New Testament, patristic and Latin-Christian levels of the concept’s functioning; an analytical model was used to describe the semantic evolution of “λόγος” within the European philosophical, linguistic and terminological traditions.

Results

Multi-component semantics of “λόγος” and its Latin equivalent

A lexicographical comparison of the Greek “λόγος” with the Latin “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio” reveals not a translational equivalence, but rather the distribution of a single Greek semantic field across several Latin lexemes. In Classical Greek, “λόγος” combines the meanings of word, speech, utterance, narrative, message, proof, explanation, justification, calculation, measure, reason, law and principle. This semantic structure cannot be reduced to the opposition “word – reason”, as both spheres are linked through the function of organising content. A lexeme denotes not only what is uttered, but also what is explained, justified, calculated, correlated or presented as a meaningful order. Therefore, “λόγος” functions as a multi-component philological unit in which linguistic expression is not separated from the rational structure of the expressed content. Greek lexicography confirms this grouping, as it presents “λόγος” simultaneously in its linguistic, accounting-rational, explanatory and

conceptual meanings (Liddell & Scott, 1996; Montanari, 2015). The internal organisation of the semantic field of “λόγος” is formed through a combination of three actions: naming, explaining and organising. In the sense of a word or utterance, “λόγος” conveys linguistic form; in the sense of an argument, proof or justification, it conveys the logic of reasoning; in the sense of calculation, measure and proportion, it conveys the structural order between elements. Therefore, the concept is not limited to a communicative function. When “λόγος” denotes a “narrative” or a “message”, the speech aspect is activated; when it conveys “evidence” or an “explanation”, argumentative aspect becomes dominant; when it is associated with “count”, “measure” or “ratio”, the rational-structural level is revealed. These meanings do not constitute a random set of equivalents. They belong to a single field in which speech and rationality are presented as different modes of semantic organisation. The speech zone of “λόγος” encompasses the word, utterance, speech, message and narrative. In this zone, the concept denotes verbally formulated content, rather than merely an individual linguistic unit. For example, when “λόγος” is used to mean a narrative or a report of an event, it conveys not an individual word but a coherent meaning presented in linguistic form. When, on the other hand, “λόγος” means an utterance or a speech, it combines linguistic material with the compositional structure of thought. A direct identification of “λόγος” with the Latin “verbum” narrows the Greek concept down to its verbal component. The Latin “verbum” denotes a word, an utterance, a linguistic sign or a formula of expression; it therefore corresponds to those contexts in which “λόγος” functions as a verbal expression (Lewis & Short, 1879; Glare, 1968). However, “verbum” does not encompass the meanings of calculation, rational ground, measure, proportion and the principle of order. The correspondence between “λόγος” and “verbum” is of a local nature: it operates within the verbal-linguistic sphere,

but does not reproduce the full structure of the Greek concept. Logical-argumentative sphere of “λόγος” is revealed through the concepts of proof, explanation, justification, reasoning and grounds. In this context, “λόγος” denotes not merely what is said, but what is said with justification; that is, a statement that possesses an internal logic of explanation. For example, in the context of a judgement regarding the cause of a particular action or the demonstration of the correctness of a statement, “λόγος” is no longer merely a linguistic formulation. It denotes a rational basis, thanks to which the utterance becomes persuasive or conclusive. For such semantics, “verbum” is insufficient, as it conveys the verbal form without a necessary connection to the rational organisation of the content. The Latin term “ratio” encompasses reason, a basis, a mode of reasoning, calculation, a method of explanation and proportion. Therefore, “ratio” specialises that part of the semantics of “λόγος” where speech takes the form of rational proof. In the context of explaining a cause or justifying a statement, “ratio” conveys the meaning more precisely than “verbum”, as it captures not the verbal form itself, but the basis and logic of what is expressed.

The rational sphere of “λόγος” is formed at the intersection of the concepts of “reason”, “calculation”, “measure”, “foundation” and “correlation”. In this context, the Greek word denotes the order through which a thought or utterance takes on a well-founded form. The meanings of “calculation” and “measure” show that “λόγος” can describe not only a speech act, but also the principle of relating elements to one another. For example, when the concept is used in the sense of “calculation” or “correlation”, it no longer denotes an utterance as a linguistic event, but rather captures a proportion, a calculation or an internal order. The Latin term “ratio” comes closest to this concept, as it combines intellectual, computational and explanatory functions. At the same time, “ratio” shifts the semantic focus towards reason,

foundation and method, whereas "λόγος" retains a connection with speech and the expressed content. The Greek concept combines word and foundation, whilst the Latin system divides them between "verbum" and "ratio": the former denotes the verbal aspect, the latter the explanatory-rational aspect.

Discursive zone "λόγος" is associated with speech as a process of exposition, conversation, discussion or the coherent formulation of thought. It differs from the verbal zone in that it emphasises not an individual word, but a sequence of utterances. In the Latin tradition, this aspect of the Greek concept is conveyed by "sermo", which denotes conversation, speech, a manner of expression, discourse or linguistic interaction (Lewis & Short, 1879; Glare, 1968). Whilst "verbum" corresponds to a unit of verbal expression, "sermo" conveys the flow of speech. In the context of an exchange of views, an educational discussion or a coherent exposition, "sermo" captures the communicative aspect of "λόγος" more precisely than "verbum". For example, when the focus is not on an individual word but on the manner of conducting a conversation, the nature of speech or the coherent presentation of a thought, "sermo" encompasses precisely the procedural aspect of the speech act. However, "sermo" does not convey the rational-normative dimension of "λόγος", as it does not convey meanings of measure, law, basis or principle. The rhetorical and compositional sphere of "λόγος" is associated with a formalised speech, a structured exposition and a reasoned linguistic construction. The Latin tradition conveys this sphere through "oratio", which denotes a speech, a manner of expression, a linguistic construction and a rhetorically organised text. In contrast to "sermo", which tends towards conversation or the process of speaking, "oratio" emphasises the formal nature of the utterance. Therefore, "oratio" is closer to "λόγος" in cases where the Greek concept denotes a speech, a reasoned exposition or a compositionally organised utterance. For example,

in a rhetorical context, where the structure of a statement, the sequence of arguments and the manner of presenting an idea are substantial, "oratio" conveys not the act of speaking itself, but its organised form. At the same time, "oratio" does not convey the accounting-rational and ontological semantics of "λόγος". Its function is to represent the rhetorical and compositional dimensions of the Greek concept, rather than its entire semantic structure.

The ontological domain of "λόγος" reveals the limits of its Latin equivalents. When "λόγος" is associated with law, principle, order or the meaningful organisation of being, it ceases to be merely a linguistic unit and acquires the status of a philosophical category. In this context, no single Latin equivalent covers the entire field. "ratio" conveys a rational order, principle or foundation; "verbum" conveys meaning expressed in words; "sermo" and "oratio" retain a connection with speech and utterance. However, none of these words combines word, proof, reason, measure and principle in the way that "λόγος" does within the Greek semantic field. For example, in a context where "λόγος" denotes a principle of order, a translation using "ratio" conveys rationality but not the verbal form; a translation using "verbum" conveys verbal expression but does not fully encompass the meanings of measure and law. This attests to a different way of organising conceptual material: the Greek field retains its internal unity, whilst the Latin system conveys it through functionally distinct equivalents. The theological domain of "λόγος" adds a new level of textual functioning to its linguistic and philosophical meanings. In New Testament and patristic Greek lexis, "λόγος" retains the meanings of "word", "message", "utterance" and "content of a proclamation", but is used in contexts associated with the divine Word, revelation and Christological interpretation. Specialised early Christian lexicography records "λόγος" as a word, an utterance, a message, the content of a sermon, and the personified

Word, illustrating a transition from general linguistic and philosophical semantics to theological usage (Lampe, 1961; Danker, 2000). In Latin, the term most closely corresponding to this concept is “verbum”, though it primarily conveys the verbal-theological aspect of the concept. The Greek “λόγος”, meanwhile, retains traces of rational, argumentative and ontological semantics; therefore, translation via “verbum” does not eliminate the multi-faceted nature of the original Greek field. In this case, “verbum” does not replace the entire structure of “λόγος”, but captures one of its aspects – the verbal-theological one.

The Latin lexicographical tradition confirms the distributive nature of equivalence. “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio” do not form a sequential series of synonyms, but denote different modes of linguistic representation of the Greek field. “verbum” is associated with the word and utterance; “ratio” with reason, basis, calculation and order; “sermo” with speech, conversation and the discursive process; “oratio” with a speech and a compositionally organised exposition. The *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1900) provides material for tracing these lexemes within the broader Latin tradition, where their meanings function not as interchangeable but as specialised domains of linguistic and conceptual description. Consequently, the Latin rendering of “λόγος” depends on which component of the Greek concept is emphasised in a particular context. A Greek-Latin comparison reveals four main types of partial equivalence. The first type is verbal: “λόγος”, in the sense of a word, utterance or message, corresponds to “verbum”. The second type is rational-explanatory: “λόγος”, in the sense of a basis, reasoning, calculation or principle, corresponds to “ratio”. The third type is discursive: “λόγος” as a speech act or conversation corresponds to “sermo”. The fourth type is rhetorical-compositional: “λόγος”, as a speech or a structured exposition, corresponds to “oratio”. The Latin

equivalents do not simply duplicate the Greek concept, but rather specialise its individual functional aspects. “λόγος” emerges as a semantic centre from which the Latin tradition derives several lexical lines. The difficulty in translating “λόγος” arises from the combination, within a single Greek concept, of linguistic, argumentative, rational and ontological functions. If the context is dominated by speech, “verbum”, “sermo” or “oratio” becomes appropriate, depending on whether the reference is to a word, a conversation or a speech. If the context revolves around a basis, proof, measure or order, “ratio” is the more accurate choice. If “λόγος” combines speech, reason and principle, no single Latin equivalent can fully capture the concept’s structure. Translating “λόγος” as “verbum” emphasises the verbal aspect but weakens the rational-structural one; translating it as “ratio” conveys reason and foundation but pushes the verbal form into the background; “sermo” and “oratio” specify the verbal mode but do not convey the ontological function. Consequently, the Latin equivalence is of a zonal rather than a synonymous nature. The semantic field of “λόγος” emerges as a system in which speech, argument, reason, measure, law and principle do not exist as isolated meanings. They form a sequence of transitions: from word to utterance, from utterance to explanation, from explanation to justification, from justification to rational order, and from rational order to principle. The Latin tradition does not capture this sequence with a single term, but distributes it amongst “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio”. Philological comparison reveals not a loss of the Greek meaning in Latin, but a change in the way it is linguistically organised. The Greek “λόγος” remains a polycentric concept, whilst its Latin counterparts form a system of specialised equivalents (Danker, 2000). Table 1 presents a semantic matrix for “λόγος”, which specifies the main areas of meaning, the Latin equivalents and the limits of their correspondence.

Table 1. Semantic matrix of “λόγος” and the limits of its Latin equivalent

Semantic domain of “λόγος”	Key figures	Latin equivalent	Boundaries of compliance
Verbal and communicative	Word, a phrase, a message, a story	“verbum”	Conveys verbal form, but does not encompass the meanings of basis, measure, count and principle
Rational-explanatory	Basis, explanation, reasoning, calculation, “ratio”	“ratio”	Reproduces rational and explanatory components, but weakens the link with the linguistic form
Discursive	Conversation, speech flow, discussion, coherent exposition	“sermo”	Conveys the process of speech, but does not encompass the normative and ontological dimensions of “λόγος”
Rhetorical and compositional	Speech, a structured presentation, a well-reasoned argument	“oratio”	Reproduces structured speech, but does not convey the meanings of measure, law and the principle of order
Ontological-theological	Law, principle, order, the divine Word, the meaningful organisation of existence	“ratio”/“verbum”	“ratio” conveys a rational order, whilst “verbum” conveys a verbal-theological dimension; no single equivalent captures the full scope of the Greek structure.

Source: compiled by the author based on C.T. Lewis & C. Short (1879), *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1900), G.W. Lampe (1961), H.G. Liddell & R. Scott (1996), P.G. Glare (1968), F.W. Danker (2000), F. Montanari (2015)

The data in Table 1 show that the Latin equivalents do not duplicate “λόγος”, but rather distribute its semantics across distinct functional domains. “verbum” denotes the verbal form, “ratio” – the rational basis and order, “sermo” – the flow of speech, “oratio” – rhetorical form, and “verbum” in Christian Latin – the

verbal-theological dimension. Limitations to correspondence arise where the Greek concept simultaneously combines speech, explanation, reason, measure, law and principle. Table 2 summarises the distribution of this field amongst the main Latin approaches to rendering the term.

Table 2. Distributional model of the Latin rendering of “λόγος”

“verbum” channel I	↔	“ratio” channel II
↑↓	“λόγος” integral field	↑↓
“sermo” channel III	↔	“oratio” channel IV

Source: compiled by the author based on C.T. Lewis & C. Short (1879), *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1900), G.W. Lampe (1961), H.G. Liddell & R. Scott (1996), P.G. Glare (1968), F.W. Danker (2000), F. Montanari (2015)

Table 2 illustrates the varying directions of the Latin equivalents in relation to the Greek “λόγος”. At the centre of the model, a single Greek field is retained, whilst the Latin lexemes are arranged as separate directions of its transmission. This structure emphasises that the correspondence between “λόγος” and its Latin forms is not symmetrical: the Latin terms do not fully replace the Greek concept, but rather cover distinct aspects of it. Consequently, the same Greek lexeme may require a different Latin equivalent in different contexts. The model

also distinguishes between the verbal, rational, discursive and rhetorical dimensions of the Latin rendering of “λόγος”.

Thus, the semantic field of “λόγος” in the Greek tradition emerges as a multi-component structure in which speech, explanation, proof, reason, measure, law and principle interact within a single conceptual field. The Latin terms “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio” do not fully replicate this structure, but rather distribute it across distinct lexical domains: verbal, rational-explanatory, discursive and

rhetical-compositional. Consequently, the Latin equivalence of “λόγος” is partial and functionally dependent: the choice of a corresponding term is determined by which semantic zone is activated in a particular text. This division confirms that “λόγος” cannot be reduced to a single translational equivalent, since its meaning simultaneously encompasses linguistic form, the logic of justification, rational order and a theological dimension.

The pre-Christian “λόγος”

as a linguistic and philosophical category

In pre-Christian Greek texts, “λόγος” evolves from a linguistic designation of expressed content into a category that organises reasoning, argumentation and conceptions of order. Its function is not confined to a single level of meaning: in various philosophical contexts, the linguistic, argumentative, rational, philosophical and cosmological dimensions come to the fore. The Greek tradition does not separate these dimensions mechanically, since “λόγος” can simultaneously denote an utterance, the basis of an utterance, a method of proof and a principle of order. Consequently, the concept retains a connection with speech, but in pre-Christian philosophical texts it functions more broadly – as a form of rational access to meaning, law, measure and the structure of being.

The Heraclitean line reveals “λόγος” through the connection between speech, measure and the universal order. In this context, the concept does not coincide with the private utterance of an individual speaker. It denotes a meaningful order which can be expressed and heard, but is not created by the very act of speaking. In the fragments of Heraclitus presented and annotated by C.H. Kahn (1979), “λόγος” is associated with a universal, law-governed order, which people may fail to comprehend even after encountering it. Fragment B1 is particularly illustrative, where “λόγος” is presented as ever-present, whilst people do not perceive it either before hearing it or after

their first encounter with it. In this case, “λόγος” does not belong to any particular speaker, but denotes a constant order that precedes human perception and requires recognition. Fragment B50 serves a similar function, in which listening to “λόγος” is linked to the recognition of the unity of all that exists. The problem lies not in the absence of an utterance, but in the fact that what is uttered does not always translate into comprehension. Thus, Heraclitus’s “λόγος” functions not as a message in, but as a form of meaning through which the order of the world becomes accessible to comprehension. In Heraclitus’s writings, the linguistic function of “λόγος” is combined with its cosmological function. A concept can be “heard” as speech, but its meaning points to something that transcends a single utterance. When human incomprehension is contrasted with the universal “λόγος”, the focus is not on a lack of information, but on the gap between the linguistic presence of meaning and the ability to recognise it. For this reason, “λόγος” functions as a principle that unites word and order: it designates not only what is said, but also the pattern that what is said is meant to reveal. In this sense, the concept serves as a measure. It does not merely describe individual phenomena but defines the manner in which they are related to one another. Where the world appears as movement, opposition and change, “λόγος” captures not a static state, but the order of relationships between different states. The function of a measure in Heraclitus’s “λόγος” takes the concept beyond the bounds of ordinary linguistic meaning. Whilst a word merely names an object, “λόγος” in this context establishes how an object or phenomenon is incorporated into the overall structure. Its semantic function lies not in naming, but in ordering. The oppositions “the one – the many”, “the constant – the changing”, “human incomprehension – the universal order” can be understood through “λόγος” as a principle of correlation. The Heraclitean tradition establishes a level of philosophical expansion of

the concept, where "λόγος" remains linked to utterance, but its content is directed towards law and measure – that is, towards that which organises the possibility of a meaningful utterance. In Plato's corpus, "λόγος" moves into the realm of dialogical reasoning and conceptual verification. In the *Republic*, speech is not presented as a ready-made message, but unfolds through questions, clarifications, objections, definitions and sequential justification. In such a textual context, "λόγος" signifies not merely participation in conversation, but a procedure through which thought takes on a defined form. A discussion of justice, the common good, the soul or the state is not confined to setting out the views of the participants. It is structured as a test of whether a particular statement can be justified and free from contradiction. Therefore, Plato's "λόγος" functions as an instrument of philosophical discourse, in which the word becomes reasoning, and reasoning becomes a search for definition (Plato, 2013a; 2013b).

In a dialogue, "λόγος" is not equivalent to just any utterance. An utterance may be an opinion, a supposition or a reply, but it only acquires the status of a philosophically significant statement when it is incorporated into a chain of reasoning. For example, the definition of justice cannot remain at the level of a single statement, as it is tested against other concepts – utility, the good, the order of the soul, and the structure of the community. Such a correlation shows that "λόγος", in the Platonic form of dialogue, performs a regulatory function: it distinguishes unfounded statements from reasoning capable of withstanding conceptual scrutiny. This constitutes its level of argumentation. Speech is relevant not in itself, but as the form in which a thought is tested for consistency. The connection between "λόγος" and definition in the Platonic tradition is revealed through the need to establish the boundaries of a concept, its content and its distinction from related concepts. In the dialogue, this occurs through the systematic identification of

weaknesses in previous answers. Consequently, "λόγος" takes on the function of a discipline of meaning. It not only conveys a thought but compels it to move from an uncertain answer towards a more well-founded formulation. In this context, linguistic form is not separated from the philosophical procedure: the word becomes a means of organising the concept. This function distinguishes the Platonic "λόγος" from the Heraclitean: in Heraclitus, it reveals a universal order; in Plato, it organises the path to conceptual clarity through dialogue. For example, in "*Republic*", the discussion of justice unfolds not as a mere recording of opinions, but as a testing of the proposed definitions. Definitions of justice as "giving what is due" or as "the benefit of the stronger" are not accepted outright, but are subjected to questioning, objections and clarification. In this context, "λόγος" serves to test the concept through dialogue, as it transforms the initial assertion into a coherent line of reasoning (Plato, 2013a; 2013b). In Aristotle's works, "λόγος" is specified in terms of the argumentative structure of discourse. In the "*Rhetoric*", this is evident from the distinction between three modes of persuasion: through the character of the speaker, the emotional state of the listener, and "λόγος". The latter is associated with proof or apparent proof, which arises from the subject matter of the speech. Therefore, "λόγος" in this text does not denote any form of speech, but rather the argumentative part of a speech, where a claim is substantiated and logically linked to a conclusion. In "*Rhetoric*", the concept is linked to persuasion through argument, that is, to that part of the speech which relies on the internal logic of the statement, rather than merely on the emotional impact or image of the speaker. The "λόγος" denotes speech organised as proof. A rhetorical speech may be grammatically correct or emotionally charged, but without a structure of proof it does not fulfil the function of "λόγος" in the strict argumentative sense. Aristotle's clarification lies in the fact that speech

gains force when it contains a basis, a sequence and a rational connection between the premise and the conclusion (Aristotle, 1926).

On a rhetorical level, “λόγος” distinguishes between the form of speech and the argument. A speech, as a linguistic construct, may appear complete on the surface, but “λόγος” requires internal validity. A claim regarding the benefits of a particular action becomes persuasive not merely through the existence of the speech, but through an explanation of the cause, effect, conditions and connection between the action and the expected result. In this case, “λόγος” transforms a statement into an argument. It organises the material in such a way that the listener or reader sees not only the thesis but also the basis for accepting it. Therefore, in the Aristotelian context, “λόγος” embodies the logical-argumentative sphere, already established at the lexicographical level through the meanings “proof”, “explanation”, “basis” and “reasoning”. The connection between “λόγος” and definition in this material is revealed through the need to establish what exactly makes an object what it is. A definition cannot be merely the name of an object, for it establishes its semantic boundary. In this procedure, “λόγος” performs the function of conceptual demarcation. It determines not only the verbal form but also the structure of the content. Whilst in Plato’s dialogues a definition is tested through questioning and contradiction, in Aristotle’s work it is incorporated into a systematic order of proof. Therefore, “λόγος” can be described as speech subject to the requirement of evidential and conceptual precision. In it, the philological semantics of the word gives way to the logic of argument construction.

In the Stoic tradition, the concept of “λόγος” is evident in the doctrine of “λόγος σπερματικός” – the “seed-mind”, that is, the inner rational principle by which nature brings things into being and organises them. In the fragments collected by H. Arnim (1964), as well as in the thematic selection by A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley (1987),

the concept is associated with the rational structure of nature, the regularity of the cosmos and the principle that organises the world. A telling example is the Stoic definition of nature as a fiery and rational force containing “λόγοι σπερματικοί” – the rational principles of individual things. In this usage, “λόγος” does not denote speech or a specific argument, but acts as the principle of the formation, development and regular connection of natural phenomena. Linguistic meaning does not disappear, but it loses its dominant status. Rationality becomes the central focus, inherent not only in human thought but also in the very organisation of nature. In the Stoic context, “λόγος” signifies not only the ability to express or prove, but also the principle according to which nature is conceived as lawful and ordered.

The scope of “λόγος” in the Stoic tradition differs from that in rhetoric. In Aristotelian rhetoric, it organises speech as an argument, whereas in Stoic philosophy it organises conception of the world as a rationally ordered whole. If natural processes are understood as governed by regularities, “λόγος” is no longer merely a human means of explaining these regularities. It becomes the principle that conceives the regularity as rational. Consequently, the Stoic conception links “λόγος” with the law of nature, necessity, order and normativity. This function extends the concept from the argumentative structure of speech to the ontological structure of the cosmos. The cosmological meaning in Stoic thought does not abolish the previous levels, but incorporates them into a broader system. Speech remains a means of expressing “λόγος”, argumentation a means of its rational explanation, and definition a means of conceptual organisation. However, the focus shifts from human utterance to the world order. Consequently, “λόγος” takes on the function of a link between human thought and natural regularity. Philologically, this signifies an expansion of the semantic field from the expressed content to the principle that

explains the semantic organisation of reality. In the pre-Christian tradition, this is one variant of the rational-ontological functioning of the concept. A comparison of Heraclitean, Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic material reveals not a sequential replacement of meanings, but a shift in the functional centre. The Heraclitean approach emphasises order and measure; the Platonic approach, dialectical reasoning and the examination of concepts; the rhetorical-logical approach, proof, definition and persuasion; and the Stoic approach, rational principle and cosmic law. Each context shifts the emphasis to a different aspect of the same semantic field. Consequently, "λόγος" retains its recognisability but does not remain static. It can be an utterance, a basis, an argument, a method of definition or a principle of order, depending on the genre, text type and philosophical task. The linguistic level of "λόγος" is present in all the contexts under consideration, but its function changes each time. In the Heraclitean tradition, speech opens access to order; in the Platonic tradition, it guides thought through dialogue; in the Aristotelian tradition, it takes on a demonstrative structure; and in the Stoic tradition, it expresses the rationality of nature. Consequently, "λόγος" cannot be described merely as a "word", "speech" or "reason". In each case, it acts as a mediator between the linguistic form and the order that this form is intended to reveal. Its pre-Christian function is linguistic-philosophical: language is not an external shell of thought, but serves as a means of organising it. The argumentative level creates a transition from speech to proof. In the works of Plato and Aristotle, "λόγος" most clearly demonstrates the ability to transform utterances into reasoned argument. In dialogue, this occurs through the comparison of statements, the clarification of definitions and the identification of contradictions; in rhetoric, through the construction of a line of reasoning. Both cases demonstrate that "λόγος" is not merely communication. It

refers to an organisation of speech in which a thought can be tested. Consequently, the argumentative function combines the linguistic and rational planes: a word gains power when it is well-founded. The rational level ensures the consistency of a concept across different contexts. Even when "λόγος" refers to speech, dialogue or a law of nature, it retains a connection with rational order. This connection can be traced in the transition from Heraclitean measure to Platonic justification, from Aristotelian proof to the Stoic cosmic principle. In each case, "λόγος" performs a unifying function: an individual utterance is linked to its basis, an individual thought to its proof, and an individual phenomenon to order. Therefore, the rational sphere does not exist as one of the peripheral variants of meaning; it runs through the fundamental modes of the pre-Christian functioning of the concept (Plato, 2013a).

The philosophical dimension of "λόγος" lies in the ability to organise work involving definitions, foundations and semantic boundaries. In Plato, this function is realised through the dialogical clarification of concepts; in Aristotle, through the argumentative structure of discourse and the procedure of definition; and in the Stoics, through the normative connection between thought and the natural order. All these contexts demonstrate that "λόγος" is not merely a subject of lexical analysis. It functions as an instrument of philosophical thought, enabling a transition from word to concept, from concept to foundation, and from foundation to order. The pre-Christian tradition establishes a functional space for it, within which speech and philosophy are not separated. The cosmological level completes the pre-Christian expansion of the concept. It is evident in the Heraclitean and Stoic traditions, although it takes different forms. In Heraclitus, "λόγος" is associated with the universal order, which is not always recognised by humans; in the Stoics, it acquires the systematic significance of the rational principle of nature. Both cases demonstrate that "λόγος"

can denote not only the mode of human speech, but also the structure according to which being is conceived. The cosmological meaning does not negate the linguistic and argumentative levels, but rather broadens the scope of the concept's application. Consequently, "λόγος" encompasses both the expressed thought and the order that renders that thought semantically justified. Pre-Christian "λόγος" emerges as a category that combines linguistic form, argumentative foundation, rational order and cosmological structure. In the Heraclitean context, it tends towards moderation and law; in the

Platonic context, towards dialogue and the examination of concepts; in the Aristotelian context, towards proof and persuasion; and in the Stoic context, towards the rational principle of nature. Such variability does not blur the concept, but demonstrates its ability to function within different types of philosophical text. "λόγος" remains recognisable because, in every context, it retains its function of bringing order: to speech, thought, argument or the world (Plato, 2013b). Table 3 compares which semantic functions of "λόγος" are activated in various pre-Christian philosophical contexts.

Table 3. Matrix of functional levels of "λόγος" in pre-Christian texts

Textual context	Dominant mode	Language level	Argumentative level	Rational level	Philosophical level	Cosmological level
Heraclitean fragmentary tradition	Order/measure	Expressiveness of the general	Explanation of the pattern	Measure and proportion	Logical structure of changes	General order of the world
Platonic dialogue	Concept check	Speech in dialogue	Comparison of statements	Well-founded sequence	Definition and scope of the concept	Indirect procedure
Aristotelian rhetoric	Evidence/conviction	Structured speech	Logic of proof	Basis for assertion	Conceptual distinction	Non-dominant
Stoic tradition	Sensible principle	Expression of a pattern	Explanation of nature	Rational Law	Normative cognition	Cosmic order

Source: compiled by the author based on Aristotle (1926), H. Arnim (1964), C.H. Kahn (1979), A.A. Long & D.N. Sedley (1987), Plato (2013a; 2013b)

Table 3 compares the semantic functions of "λόγος" as they are employed in various pre-Christian philosophical contexts. The matrix shows that the Heraclitean, Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic traditions distribute the linguistic, argumentative, rational, philosophical and cosmological levels of the concept in different ways. This format can be used to trace not merely a change in meanings in chronological sequence, but different configurations of the functions of "λόγος" depending on the type of text and the philosophical task. The individual levels are not isolated from one another: speech can transition into proof, proof into rational justification, and rational justification into an explanation of the order of being.

Thus, in the pre-Christian Greek tradition, "λόγος" functions as a linguistic and

philosophical category that encompasses utterance, reasoning, proof, definition, measure, law and order. In the Heraclitean context, it is associated with the general order and measure of the world; in the Platonic context, with the dialogical unfolding of thought and the testing of concepts; in the Aristotelian context, with the argumentative organisation of speech and rational persuasion; and in the Stoic context, with the rational principle of nature and the cosmic order. A comparison of these contexts shows that "λόγος" does not change by substituting one meaning for another, but each time activates a different aspect of a shared semantic field. As a result, the concept retains its connection with speech, yet transcends the linguistic function and assumes the role of a category through which Greek thought described the validity

of a statement, the rationality of thought and the orderliness of existence.

Concept of “Logos” in the Greek-Christian and Latin traditions

Transition of the term “λόγος” from the pre-Christian Greek philosophical milieu to the Greek-Christian and Latin traditions took place through a reorganisation of its semantic field. The pre-Christian tradition endowed the concept with a multi-component structure, in which word, speech, reasoning, proof, foundation, measure, order and principle constituted interrelated lines of meaning. In its subsequent reception, this structure was not replaced by a single new meaning, but shifted its functional centre. Philo’s corpus emphasised the mediating and cosmological dimensions of “λόγος”; the New Testament text centred the concept’s semantics on the Word, the beginning and creation; the apologetic tradition of Justin Martyr employed Logos as an instrument for the rational defence of Christian truth; the Alexandrian tradition of Clement assigned a pedagogical and interpretative function to the concept; the Latin Vulgate established the verbal-theological line through “verbum”. The reception of “λόγος” reveals a shift in the concept between the philosophical, exegetical, apologetic, educational-interpretative and translational-terminological levels.

Philo of Alexandria represents a transitional form of reception, in which Greek philosophical terminology is integrated into the structure of a Jewish-Hellenistic interpretation. In the treatise “On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses” (Runia, 2001), “λόγος” is associated with the explanation of creation, cosmic order and the relationship between divine design and created reality. In Philo’s corpus, the concept does not function as an ordinary statement or a separate argument. The semantic focus shifts towards mediation: “λόγος” denotes the manner in which the invisible order relates to the visible world. This

mediating function is based on pre-Christian notions of measure, the rational principle and cosmic order, but transposes these meanings into the biblical-exegetical sphere. “λόγος” becomes a means of interpreting creation as a semantically organised act, rather than merely a philosophical term denoting order. Philo’s interpretation differs from the Stoic cosmological usage in that the order of the world does not appear as a self-sufficient natural law. In the Stoic tradition, “λόγος” denoted the rational structure of the cosmos; in Philo, this structure is related to the divine source and the biblical text. The mediating function of the concept unfolds on three levels. The cosmological level explains the orderliness of the created world. The hermeneutical level provides a framework for a philosophical interpretation of the biblical account of creation. The ontological level describes the relationship between the transcendent God and visible reality. This multi-layered structure is consistent with the characterisation of Philo as an author whose thought is shaped at the intersection of Jewish exegesis, the Platonic tradition and the Hellenistic philosophical lexicon (Dillon, 1996; Runia, 2023).

The receptive shift in Philo’s usage lies in the transfer of “λόγος” from the realm of general order to that of interpretative mediation. In the Heraclitean and Stoic traditions, the concept already denoted order, measure and the rational structure of the world. In Philo’s treatise “On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses” (Runia, 2001), these meanings take on a different textual role: “λόγος” does not merely denote order, but explains how the order of the created world corresponds to the divine design. The description of the cosmos as an ordered whole requires not only the category of nature, but also the categories of design, image, archetype and meaningful organisation. In this configuration, “λόγος” becomes a linguistic-philosophical means of transition from the biblical text to a conceptual explanation. The Philo-style level demonstrates the functioning of the Greek term

in a context where philosophical semantics is subordinated to the exegetical task. Philo's receptive role is not limited to a local synthesis of Jewish and Greek material. Philo's "λόγος" becomes one of the points of transition between Alexandrian exegesis, Platonic philosophy and the later Christian interpretation of the Word. In the reception of Philo, interest is evident not only in specific tenets of interpretation, but also in the very model of processing Greek philosophical vocabulary as a tool for explaining biblical content. This model facilitated the subsequent transition of "λόγος" into the early Christian milieu, where the concept no longer merely described the cosmic order but became a means of shaping the language of Christian doctrine. The receptive dimension of Philo's legacy demonstrates that texts function as an intermediary link between Hellenistic philosophical culture and the Christian tradition of interpreting "λόγος" (Friesen *et al.*, 2025).

The New Testament interpretation is linked to the prominence of "λόγος" in the prologue to the Gospel of John. In the Greek text, as published by M.W. Holmes (2010), the concept is positioned at the beginning and is associated with the beginning, existence in relation to God, creation and life. This positioning alters the functional status of the lexeme. "λόγος" no longer functions merely as one of the designations for speech or reasoning; the concept becomes the semantic centre around which the connection between the Word, being and creation is organised. The philological shift does not consist in the disappearance of the previous semantics, but in its condensation: the meanings of "word", "order", "rational foundation" and "principle of the beginning" are united into a single textual position. In the New Testament prologue, "λόγος" functions as a category possessing linguistic, ontological and theological dimensions simultaneously. A comparison of the Philoan and New Testament levels reveals a different organisation of the receptive function. In Philo, "λόγος" helps to explain

the relationship between God, the divine plan and the created world; in the prologue to the Gospel of John, the concept itself becomes the initial point of meaning in the text. Philo's model is predominantly hermeneutical in nature: "λόγος" explains how to interpret the cosmos and creation. John's model is of a centring nature: "λόγος" not only explains but also forms the initial framework for the entire theological discourse. In this context, the lexeme retains its connection with the Greek philosophical tradition, yet is incorporated into a new syntactic and semantic structure. The concept can no longer be translated simply as "word" or interpreted solely as "mind", as both dimensions are embedded within a broader textual framework (Runia, 2023).

The semantic function of "λόγος" in the prologue stems from the fact that the beginning is presented not as an abstract point in time, but as a semantic space in which the word, being and creation are interrelated. This structure has philological significance, as the Greek term serves not only to name, but also to organise the text. The repetition of the concept, its position at the outset and its connection with the motif of creation confer upon "λόγος" the status of an organisational centre. In pre-Christian texts, "λόγος" could signify law, measure, proof or a rational principle; in the New Testament prologue, these semantic strands converge in the Christian formula of the Word. The New Testament usage is not a mere continuation of ancient philosophical terminology. It reshapes the previous field by introducing "λόγος" into the textual logic of revelation (Holmes, 2010). The apologetic reception of Justin Martyr unfolds the argumentative aspect of the functioning of "λόγος". In "The first and second apologies" by St. Justin Martyr (1997), "Logos" is used as a concept capable of reconciling the Christian proclamation with the language of Greco-Roman rationality. The apologetic genre requires not only an exposition of doctrine, but also an explanation of its semantic

acceptability to an external audience. In this genre context, Logos fulfils an argumentative function: Christian truth is presented as something that can be reconciled with reason, logic and philosophical inquiry. In Justin's writings, Greek philosophical vocabulary is not merely a decorative borrowing; it becomes a means of defence, polemic and the translation of Christian content into a language capable of engaging in dialogue with the ancient intellectual tradition. Justin's apologetic model emphasises the connection between "λόγος" and proof and rational justification. Whilst in the Gospel of John "λόγος" structures the Christian text through the motif of the beginning and creation, in Justin's work Logos operates within the realm of targeted argumentation. The Christian position is explained not only through the authority of revelation, but through its capacity to be understood as a truth that does not contradict reason. This approach preserves the pre-Christian connection between "λόγος" and foundation, reasoning and proof, but transposes this connection into Christian apologetics. The concept becomes an instrument through which a reconciliation takes place between the Greek culture of philosophical proof and the Christian assertion concerning the Word.

In the writings of Justin the Martyr, the Logos also serves as a means of cultural mediation. The apologetic discourse involves explaining Christian truth to a context in which philosophical discourse held the status of rational authority. Thanks to the Logos, the Greek tradition is not entirely rejected, but is reorganised around a Christian centre of meaning. From a philological perspective, this reception demonstrates that the Greek concept has not lost its capacity to denote rationality, foundation and semantic order. What has changed is the intended audience and the genre in which it functions: the concept shifts from philosophical dialogue and rhetorical argument to apologetic defence. In Justin, "λόγος" not only designates Christological

reality but also structures the manner of its rational presentation (St. Justin Martyr, 1997). The Alexandrian reception of Clement forms a pedagogical-hermeneutical variant of the Christian interpretation of "λόγος". In the texts presented in G.W. Butterworth's (1919) edition, Greek philosophical language functions as a tool for engaging with the Hellenic educational tradition. "λόγος" is associated with teaching, instruction, the organisation of knowledge, and the transition from philosophical culture to Christian interpretation. In contrast to Justin's apologetic model, where the primary function is that of defence and proof, the Alexandrian model emphasises the function of formation. The concept operates not only in polemics with an external audience, but also in the organisation of the internal space of Christian teaching, where the Greek educational heritage is reinterpreted through a Christian centre of meaning. For Clement, the "λόγος" functions as a means of transforming Hellenic *paideia*. The Christian appeal to the Greeks is not based solely on a rejection of philosophical culture. The Greek language of reason, learning and the organisation of thought is incorporated into a different system of meanings. In this process, the "λόγος" retains its connection with speech, instruction and rational explanation, but takes on the function of a guide from prior knowledge to Christian truth. Whilst the apologetic Logos in Justin serves a defensive and demonstrative function, the Alexandrian "λόγος" in Clement functions as a principle of intellectual and spiritual guidance. The Greek concept becomes a means not only of polemic, but also of organising the Christian language of education.

A comparison of Justin and Clement reveals two strands of early Christian reception of Greek philosophical terminology. The apologetic strand uses "Logos" to provide a rational explanation of Christian doctrine to an external audience; the Alexandrian strand incorporates "λόγος" into a model of learning, interpretation and the formation of knowledge. In both cases,

the concept is not reduced to the biblical word in the narrow sense. It serves as a conduit between the Greek culture of reasoning and the Christian textual milieu. The mediating role of “λόγος” ensures a philological link between early Christian reception and the pre-Christian semantic field: word, reason, explanation, order and instruction take on a new configuration, yet do not lose their interconnection (Butterworth, 1919; St. Justin Martyr, 1997). The Latin level of reception consolidates a shift in translation and terminology. In the “Biblia Sacra Vulgata” as edited by R. Weber & R. Gryson (2007), the Greek “λόγος” in the prologue to the Gospel of John is rendered as “verbum”. The translation as “verbum” captures the verbal-theological aspect of the Greek concept and lends this particular aspect terminological stability within the Latin Christian tradition. At the same time, the Latin “verbum” does not fully convey the meanings of reason, foundation, proportion and cosmic principle associated with “λόγος” in the Greek context. These meanings remain closer to “ratio” or other Latin equivalents. The Latin reception does not eliminate the polysemy of the Greek term, but highlights one dominant aspect – the Word as a theologically significant expression. The translational choice of “verbum” shifted the focus of the European reception of “λόγος”. In the Greek concept, a tension persisted between word, reason, foundation, measure and order. In the Latin Vulgate, the verbal-theological dimension came to the fore. This does not imply the disappearance of the rational or ontological dimensions, but terminological stabilisation took place precisely around “verbum”. The Latin tradition took on a form suitable for Christian theological vocabulary; however, the semantic scope of the Greek “λόγος” remained broader than that of its single Latin counterpart. This shift in translation explains the subsequent coexistence within the European tradition of two strands: “verbum” as the Word, and “ratio” as reason, foundation and rational order.

The relationship between “verbum” and “ratio” defines the linguistic and philosophical mechanism of the Latin reception of “logos”. The “verbum” establishes the textual and theological line associated with the Word, proclamation and the Christian interpretation of the prologue to the Gospel of John. “ratio” preserves the philosophical and rational-explanatory line associated with foundation, reasoning, reason and order. This dichotomy is not merely a difference in translation. It creates, within the Latin and subsequent European traditions, two interrelated trajectories of interpreting the Greek “λόγος”: through the Word and through Reason. The Greek polyfunctionality does not disappear, but continues to exist as a tension between the theological and rational-philosophical vocabularies. The European reception of “λόγος” emerges as a multi-faceted process. The Philo-level established a link between Greek philosophical vocabulary and the Jewish-Hellenistic interpretation of creation. The New Testament level concentrated the concept in the prologue to the Gospel of John as the semantic centre of the Christian text. The apologetic level, as seen in Justin Martyr, utilised Logos for the rational defence of Christian truth. The Alexandrian level, as seen in Clement, transformed Greek philosophical vocabulary into a tool for Christian teaching and interpretation. The Latin level, through the “verbum”, established the verbal-theological direction within the Western terminological tradition. In this chain, each level does not merely repeat the previous one, but shifts “λόγος” into a new functional position. The receptive chain explains the formation of several interrelated European terminological strands. In the Greek tradition, the concept retained a multi-component structure encompassing the word, reasoning, foundation, order and principle. In the Greek-Christian corpus, this structure was reorganised around the Word, creation, revelation and truth. In the Latin tradition, “verbum” established the verbal-theological

strand of reception, whilst “ratio” retained its connection with the rational-explanatory dimension. The European linguistic and philosophical tradition inherited not just a single equivalent for “λόγος”, but a system of inter-related terminological lines between word, reason, foundation and order. The role of “λόγος” in shaping the European philosophical, linguistic and terminological tradition is determined by the concept’s ability to transfer semantic structure between different types of text. In a philosophical context, “λόγος” organised reasoning and conceptions of order; in Philo’s corpus, it served as a bridge between

biblical exegesis and the language of Greek philosophy; in the New Testament prologue, it became the centre of Christian semantics of the Word; in apologetics and the Alexandrian tradition, it functioned as a means of explanation, defence and instruction; in the Latin Vulgate, it was terminologically fixed as “verbum”. This multi-layered reception facilitated the transition of “λόγος” from a distinct Greek lexeme to a cross-linguistic and cross-traditional category, uniting speech, reason, meaning and order within the European intellectual lexicon. Figure 1 summarises the main directions of the “λόγος” transition.

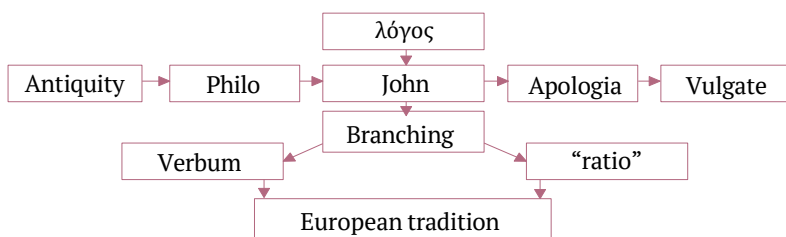


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the European reception of “λόγος”

Source: compiled by the author based on G.W. Butterworth (1919), J.M. Dillon (1996), St. Justin Martyr (1997), D. Runia (2001; 2023), R. Weber & R. Gryson (2007), M.W. Holmes (2010), C.J. Friesen et al. (2025)

In Figure 1, the reception of “λόγος” is presented as a sequence of semantic transitions between different traditions. The change in the textual context was not merely a matter of replacing one meaning with another, but was accompanied by a redistribution of the concept’s functions. The visual representation captures the interaction between the philosophical, exegetical, early Christian and Latin levels of reception. The Latin transmission via “verbum” is noteworthy, which established a verbal-theological strand of the European terminological tradition. This can trace how a Greek concept acquires cross-linguistic and cross-traditional meaning.

Thus, the European reception of “λόγος” took shape as a multi-layered process of re-organising the Greek semantic field within

the Hellenistic-Jewish, New Testament, early Christian and Latin textual contexts. In Philo’s writings, the concept took on a mediating and exegetical function; in the prologue to the Gospel of John, it became the semantic centre of the Christian definition of the Word; in the works of Justin Martyr, it fulfilled an apologetic and argumentative role; in Clement of Alexandria it was linked to a pedagogical and hermeneutical reinterpretation of the Hellenistic educational tradition, and in the Vulgate it was established in Latin terminology through “verbum”. This transition did not eliminate the previous polysemy of “λόγος”, but rather distributed it across several functional dimensions: verbal, rational-explanatory, exegetical, apologetic, and translational-terminological. As a result, “λόγος” became not merely a Greek

philosophical lexeme, but an interlingual and inter-traditional category through which the European philosophical and linguistic tradition brought together the themes of the word, reason, foundation, order, creation and the theological Word.

Discussion

The analysis demonstrated that “λόγος” cannot be interpreted as a lexeme with a single fixed meaning or as a concept with a complete Latin equivalent. The semantic field of “λόγος” encompasses speech, argumentation, rationale, reason, order and the theological Word; it therefore requires consideration at the levels of lexicon, textual function and reception. C. Rico’s (2024) philological approach elucidated “λόγος” within the Ancient Greek linguistic system through its connection with the act of utterance, speech and forms of verbal expression. In the present article, this line of inquiry has been expanded through a shift from an intra-Greek description to the Latin equivalents “verbum”, “ratio”, “sermo” and “oratio”, which has made it possible to identify the partial nature of Latin equivalence. The issue of the Latin translation of “λόγος” received separate attention in a study by E.Z. Ellis (2024), which focused on Erasmus’s translation choice, the academic debate and the reaction to the translation of logos as “sermo”. This study demonstrated that the choice between “verbum” and “sermo” influenced the interpretation of the prologue to the Gospel of John and was not merely a matter of grammar. The findings explained the source of the translational tension: the Greek “λόγος” simultaneously encompasses verbal, discursive, rational and theological components. “verbum” establishes one line of reception, whilst “sermo” remains a viable equivalent in contexts where the speech-discursive aspect becomes relevant. The trajectory from Heraclitus to Philo of Alexandria and early Christianity was explored by I.E. Gozum (2024). In this work, “logos” was presented

as a concept that evolves from a philosophical principle to a Christian definition of the Word. The author’s interpretation elaborated on this trajectory through functional levels: in the Heraclitean tradition, “λόγος” is associated with measure and order; in Philo’s writings, with mediation between the divine plan and the created world; and in early Christian material, with reorganisation centred on the Word. This perspective deviates from the straightforward “philosophy – theology” framework and reveals a shift in the functional focus of the concept.

The New Testament interpretation of “λόγος” was further refined in an article by C.S. Atkins (2021), which reinterpreted John 1:1 through an analysis of the relationship between the Word and God and by drawing on the philosophical context. In this work, the prologue to the Gospel of John was examined as a complex textual structure, in which grammatical and semantic details determined the interpretation of “λόγος”. The analysis presented followed a similar line of inquiry but shifted the emphasis from the exegesis of a single verse to the philosophical function of the concept. The prologue was examined as a focal point for preceding semantic threads: the word, the beginning, being, creation and the order of meaning. The broader New Testament context of the functioning of “λόγος” was presented in the work by J.G. Allen (2025), which investigated God’s “λόγος” in the Epistle of James and within the early Jewish milieu. This study demonstrated that the New Testament function of the concept is not limited to the prologue of the Gospel of John. Within the scope of the analysis, John’s prologue was identified as a centre of reception due to its semantic concentration; however, the broader New Testament context was not disregarded. The results demonstrated that “λόγος” in the early Christian textual context can fulfil the functions of proclamation, revelation, normative communication, a foundation of meaning, and the divine Word. The question of the relationship between Luke and John in the study of

the Logos was raised in the work of D.H. Nggadass (2026). The author examined the literary connections between Luke's and John's material and addressed the broader New Testament logic of the Word. For the present analysis, it is necessary to extend the scope of "λόγος" beyond the confines of a single text. The results have shown that the prologue to the Gospel of John serves a unifying function, but early Christian reception of the concept is not limited to the Johannine corpus. John's material emerges as a nexus in which the Greek philosophical memory of the concept transitions into the Christian semantics of the Word. In the pre-Christian tradition, "λόγος" is associated with speech, reason, proof and order; in the early Christian context, the concept acquires a new focus through the Word, creation and revelation. This transition to the Christian context explains the possibility of a further anthropological interpretation of Logos as a category linked not only to thought but also to incarnation.

The interaction between Greek literature and Christian doctrine was examined in a study by R. Franchi (2023). In this work, the early Christian tradition was presented not as a simple inheritance of classical Greek culture, but as a reworking of Greek material in accordance with new doctrinal objectives. The results of the analysis confirmed this logic using the term "λόγος" as a case study. In the writings of Justin Martyr, Greek philosophical vocabulary serves an apologetic function, whilst in those of Clement of Alexandria it serves a pedagogical and hermeneutical function. The early Christian reception of "λόγος" was a process of functional redefinition, rather than a passive borrowing of the ancient term. The Alexandrian context of the reception of Greek philosophical language was explored in the study by C. Kyriacou (2023), where the origins of the Alexandrian School are presented through the interaction of philosophy and Christian theology. In the present analysis, the Alexandrian approach was elaborated through the functioning of "λόγος" in Clement

of Alexandria. The concept is linked not only to Christological content, but also to teaching, instruction and the reinterpretation of the Hellenic educational tradition. The findings show that the Alexandrian reception of "λόγος" created not only a theological but also an educational and interpretative model for engaging with the Greek heritage. The need for caution in interpreting semantic shifts in Ancient Greek was emphasised in the study by A. Alonso Déniz & J.V. Méndez Dosuna (2023). The study demonstrated that a difference in the usage of a lexeme does not always indicate an actual change in meaning. The findings confirm the need for such a caveat. In different texts, "λόγος" does not merely change its meaning, but activates different areas of a shared semantic field. The Heraclitean order, the Platonic justification, the Aristotelian proof, the Stoic rational principle and the New Testament Word were examined as functional configurations of a polycentric concept, rather than as isolated meanings.

A corpus-based approach to semantic change in Ancient Greek and Latin was proposed by V. Perrone *et al.* (2021). Semantic dynamics are described through computational models and an analysis of lexical changes over time. The analysis had a different methodological basis, as it relied on a philological rather than a quantitative approach. At the same time, the results are consistent with the idea of considering meaning in a dynamic context. The semantic evolution of "λόγος" was described as a transition between textual contexts and linguistic systems, rather than as a fixed set of lexical equivalents. An evaluation of distributional models for Ancient Greek was conducted by S. Stopponi *et al.* (2024b). The proposed benchmark for testing semantic models demonstrated an interest in the formal analysis of Ancient Greek lexis. Formalised modelling was not applied within the scope of this article; however, the results point to areas that are difficult to reduce to an automatic lexical equivalent. "λόγος" has several functional dimensions,

so the analysis requires not only modelling the proximity of meanings but also interpreting the textual and receptive context. The challenges of creating language models for Ancient Greek were examined in the work by S. Stopponi *et al.* (2024a). The paper describes the advantages and limitations of automated processing of Ancient Greek texts, in particular the complexity of corpora, historical variability and the heterogeneity of the linguistic material. Results of the analysis confirmed the significance of these constraints for “λόγος”. The polycentric semantics of the concept necessitates covering genre, tradition, philosophical context and the history of translation. A philological reading remains essential even with the availability of digital tools for semantic analysis.

The linguistic context of the New Testament material was clarified in a study by M. Bianconi & E. Magni (2023) devoted to the preservation of the optative in New Testament Greek. The study demonstrated that the language of the New Testament combines elements of continuity and transformation. This conclusion is significant for the analysis of “λόγος”, as the New Testament’s reception of the concept is shaped not in an abstract theological space, but within the specific linguistic environment of post-classical Greek. The results showed that the semantic reorganisation of “λόγος” in the prologue to the Gospel of John combines the continuity of the Greek philosophical tradition with a new Christian textual function. Post-classical Greek, situated between continuity and change, was examined by M. Bianconi & E. Magni (2023). New Testament and later Greek usage is presented as a context in which classical forms continue to function but acquire new conditions of usage. The findings regarding “λόγος” follow this logic. The concept does not lose its connection with the classical meanings of “word”, “reason” and “order”, but in the early Christian context these meanings centre on the Word, creation and revelation. Semantic evolution occurs not through a break

with the preceding tradition, but through a new organisation of the inherited field. A semantic clustering of ancient Greek genres was proposed by L. Gauthier (2026). The approach presented demonstrated the influence of the genre context on the semantic organisation of the lexicon. The results of the analysis confirmed the significance of genre for “λόγος”. In philosophical fragments, the concept tends towards measure and order; in dialogue, towards the justification and verification of concepts; in rhetoric, towards the argumentative organisation of speech; in the New Testament prologue, towards the semantic centre of the Word; and in the Latin translation, towards terminological stabilisation. This genre-specific nature explains why “λόγος” does not have a single universal mode of functioning.

The transition from logos to categories of person was examined by S. Mas (2024) through an analysis of the term “πρόσωπον” – persona in Origen and Tertullian. The issue goes beyond the scope of the main body of this article, but the findings regarding the Greek-Christian reception of “λόγος” reveal the preconditions for the personological transition. When “λόγος” in the New Testament and early Christian contexts ceases to be merely speech or a principle of order, space opens for a Trinitarian interpretation. The Latin tradition consolidates this development through the complex interplay of “verbum”, “ratio” and subsequent theological terms. The question of the interaction between Christian thought and classical Greek literature was raised in the work of S. Morlet (2025) based on Trinitarian issues and the interpretation of Gen. 1:26. Crucial to the present analysis is a model of interaction in which the classical Greek heritage is not merely utilised, but is reinterpreted within a new doctrinal context. The findings regarding “λόγος” demonstrate a similar mechanism. The Greek concept enters the Christian context not as a neutral term, but as a lexeme with established associations with the word, reason, order and principle. Christian

reception shifts the functional focus of the concept, but does not eliminate its previous semantic structure. The medieval interpretation of John 1:1 was examined in a study by A. Nannini & M. Trepczyński (2022) based on the works of Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas. The Prologue to the Gospel of John emerges as a space for metaphysical exegesis, where the "verbum" is subjected to further philosophical reflection. The analysis covered the preliminary stage – the formation of the Greek-Latin foundation of this tradition. The Latin rendering of "λόγος" as "verbum" created a terminological framework within which medieval thought could develop a metaphysical interpretation of the Word. The preservation of the "ratio" lineage maintained a connection with the rational-philosophical dimension of the Greek concept.

A synthesis of the findings in the context of the reviewed works shows that "λόγος" requires a multi-level philological analysis. Studies on Greek semantics have revealed the linguistic and lexical dimensions of the concept. Works on the New Testament prologue have highlighted the prominence of "λόγος" in Christian texts. Studies on early Christianity, the Alexandrian school, Latin reception and medieval interpretations have demonstrated further modes of redefinition. The results of the analysis have brought these strands together through a model of semantic evolution: from the Greek polycentric field to the Latin system of partial equivalents and the early Christian interpretation of the Word. This model makes it possible to avoid reducing "λόγος" to a single translation or a single theological meaning, and presents the concept as an interlingual and inter-traditional category.

Conclusions

The study established that the concept of "λόγος" in the ancient Greek tradition cannot be reduced to a single meaning or a direct translation such as "word". The semantic field

of "λόγος" has a multi-component structure, combining speech, utterance, narrative, proof, explanation, justification, reckoning, measure, reason, law and principle. This structure demonstrates that "λόγος" functions not merely as a lexeme denoting linguistic meaning, but as a philological unit combining verbal form, the logic of justification and the notion of the ordered structure of meaning. An analysis of Latin equivalents has shown that the Latin tradition did not develop a single complete equivalent for the Greek "λόγος". The semantics of the Greek concept were distributed across several lexemes: "verbum" conveys the verbal-theological dimension, "ratio" – the rational-explanatory and normative dimension, "sermo" – the speech-discursive dimension, and "oratio" – the rhetorical-compositional dimension. The findings confirmed the partial and functionally dependent nature of the Latin equivalence of "λόγος", whereby the choice of a corresponding term is determined not by formal lexical identity, but by the active semantic field of a specific text.

In the pre-Christian Greek tradition, "λόγος" is defined as a linguistic and philosophical category that extends from expressed content to the organisation of reasoning, proof, definition, measure, law and order. In Heraclitus, the concept is linked to the general order of the world; in Plato, to the dialogical examination of concepts; in Aristotle, to the argumentative organisation of speech; and in the Stoics, to the rational principle of nature and the regularity of the cosmos. A comparison of these contexts has shown that the pre-Christian "λόγος" did not have a single, fixed meaning. In different texts, distinct aspects of a shared semantic field were emphasised; consequently, the concept retained its connection with speech but extended beyond a purely linguistic function. In the Greek-Christian and Latin traditions, "λόγος" underwent a functional reorientation. In Philo of Alexandria, the concept acquired a mediating and

exegetical role. In the prologue to the Gospel of John, “λόγος” became the centre of the Christian interpretation of the Word, the beginning and creation. In the writings of Justin Martyr, Logos performed an apologetic and argumentative function, whilst in those of Clement of Alexandria it was linked to a pedagogical and hermeneutical reinterpretation of the Hellenic tradition. In the Vulgate, the translation as “verbum” cemented the verbal-theological direction of its reception, without severing the connection with “ratio”.

The obtained results substantiated the significance of “λόγος” for the European philosophical, linguistic and terminological tradition. The semantic evolution of “λόγος” took place not through the preservation of a single meaning, but through the transfer of semantic structure between different types of text and linguistic systems. The Greek tradition shaped a multifunctional field of “λόγος”; the early Christian tradition reorganised it around the

Word, creation, truth and revelation; whilst the Latin tradition divided its semantics between “verbum” and “ratio”. Thus, two interrelated trajectories were established – those of the Word and of Reason. As a result, “λόγος” became a cross-linguistic and cross-traditional category, uniting speech, reason, foundation, order and the theological Word within the European intellectual lexicon. Further refinement of these findings may involve a broader engagement with patristic texts, medieval interpretations of “verbum” and “ratio”, and modern European transformations of “λόγος”.

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Концепт «logos» у давньогрецькій та латинській традиціях: семантична еволюція та філософсько-філологічні інтерпретації

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Анотація. Мета дослідження полягала в аналізі семантичної еволюції концепту «λόγος» у давньогрецькій і латинській традиціях. Методологічну основу становили лексикографічний, семантико-порівняльний, текстово-контекстуальний і герменевтико-порівняльний аналіз. Лексикографічний аналіз дав змогу визначити основні значення «λόγος», семантико-порівняльний – зіставити їх із «verbum», «ratio», «sermo» й «oratio», текстово-контекстуальний і герменевтико-порівняльний – розкрити функціонування поняття в дохристиянських, ранньохристиянських і латинських текстах. У результаті встановлено, що «λόγος» у класичній грецькій мові не зводиться до значення “слово”, а охоплює мовлення, висловлювання, доказ, пояснення, підставу, міру, розум, закон і принцип. Латинська традиція не виробила одного повного еквівалента «λόγος»: його семантика розподіляється між «verbum», «ratio», «sermo» й «oratio», які передають відповідно словесно-богословську, раціонально-пояснювальну, мовленнєво-дискурсивну та риторично-композиційну площини. У дохристиянських грецьких текстах «λόγος» функціонує як мовно-філософська категорія: у Геракліта він пов'язаний із мірою й порядком світу, у Платона – з діалогічною перевіркою понять, в Арістотеля – з доказовою організацією мовлення, у стоїків – із розумним принципом природи. Грецько-християнська та латинська рецепція засвідчила функціональне переформатування поняття: у Філона Александрійського «λόγος» набув посередницької й екзегетичної функції, у прологу Євангелія від Йоана став смисловим центром християнського тексту, у Юстина Мученика виконував апологетично-аргументативну роль, у Климента Александрійського був пов'язаний із педагогічно-герменевтичним переосмисленням еллінської традиції, а у Вульгаті отримав латинське закріплення через «verbum». Доведено, що семантична еволюція «λόγος» пов'язана з переходом від грецького поліцентричного поняття до латинської системи часткових відповідників і ранньохристиянського осмислення Слова. Практична значущість результатів полягає у використанні запропонованої логіки аналізу в класичній філології, історії філософської термінології, релігієзнавстві та перекладознавстві. Матеріали дослідження можуть бути застосовані під час аналізу понять, що переходили між грецькою, латинською та християнською традиціями

Ключові слова: класична філологія; мовлення; посередницька функція; рецептивний зсув; значення; відповідники; інтерпретація