

## Logos, I. Antiquity

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The word *logos* generally refers to the (spoken) word, though it should be borne in mind that this does not mean a single word but the combination of several words. An ancient encyclopaedia entry – the 100<sup>th</sup> of the pseudo-Platonic *Definitions* – defines *logos* as “a voice in signs that can name every single thing that exists” (Horoi). The verb belonging to *logos* is *legein*, it designates speaking as well as picking up or collecting. Thus, *logos* can be understood as selecting and meaningfully compiling. This in turn shows that *logos* as an assembly or “interweaving” (Plato) of words can refer to a narrative, a sentence, a speech or an argument as well as to a proportion or a measure. In Early Greek thought, Heraclitus uses *logos* to refer to an entity that holds together the conflicting forces of the cosmos. In Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy, as with the Sophists, one can observe the discussion of various kinds of *logoi* to which truth and falsity are attributed. In the Stoa, the *logos* becomes the (materially conceived) divine, which determines everything in the world completely rationally. In ancient Christian literature, which was strongly influenced by Neoplatonism, *logos* finally appears in the “event of Jesus Christ” (Bultmann) as “the WORD”, as the divine demand that reveals itself to mankind. The outstanding significance of the various conceptions of *logos* in European intellectual history is apparent not least in the critique of logocentrism, as formulated above all in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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### 1. Linguistic

The Greek word *logos* is a derivative of the verb *legein*, which initially meant “harvest”, “to unite” and “to collect” as well as “to tell”, “to talk” and “to speak”, later “to count” (Frisk 2006: 94–96; Beekes 2010: 841 f.). Accordingly, the noun *logos*, plural *logoi*, designates various types of “collections”, be it links of words as “narratives”, “sentences”, “statements”, “arguments” and (vocally communicated) “speeches” or also connections of numbers in “calculations”, “counts” or “measures”.

We first encounter the word *logos* in literature in the Homeric epics (e.g. Iliad XV, 393). Researchers dispute whether in these early texts the basic meaning of *legein* is the (numerical) “counting” or the “summarising” and “grouping”, from which the later common meaning “telling” resulted. (On the primacy of “telling” over “counting” see Gianvittorio 2010: 140–146, on *legein* in the context of forming quantities see Castoriadis 1990: 372–454). While *logoi* in early Greek poetry mainly

denoted (exciting, entertaining, deceptive or comforting) narratives, from the fifth century B.C. onwards a broadening of the range of meanings in the texts of early Greek thinkers can be detected (Johnstone 2014: 12–17). The term *logos* then also denotes the argument independent of the concrete speaker, an explanation, the object of investigation, a justification, as well as that in which the reasoning and linguistic faculty is located, the mind and reason; *logos* can finally be used to refer to a relation in the sense of a mathematical ratio, as indicated by the expression “ana-logous”; in Christian literature *logos* stands for the “WORD of God” (Liddell/Scott 1996: 1057–1059; Bauer 1958: 942–947). Related to Greek *legein* and *logos* are Latin *legere* and German *lesen* as well as numerous derivatives from Latin in modern languages, such as English “collect”.

The term *logos* does not indicate a single word – the terms *onoma*, “name”, “noun”, and *rhema* “utterance”, “verb” serve to designate such a word – but at least a sentence, i.e. the combination of an *onoma* (“noun”)

and a *rhema* (“verb”), as Plato’s *Sophist* informs us: from the combination of *rhemata* and *onomata* arises the “first interweaving”, the “first and smallest of the *logoi*” (*Sophist* 262c). An ancient encyclopaedia entry – the 100<sup>th</sup> of the pseudo-Platonic *Definitions* – explains *logos* as a “voice in signs that can name every single being” (Horoi 414d). A restriction mentioned in the *Theaetetus* suggests that in Plato’s time, too, *logos* was understood as speech communicated vocally. Socrates describes “(discursive) thinking” (*dianoesthai*) as a *logos*, which the “soul” “goes through” with itself; likewise, “thinking” (*doxa*) is a *logos*, which someone does not address to another with his voice, but silently to himself (*Theaetetus* 189e–190a).

There are numerous expressions derived from *logos* and *legein*. The adjective *logikos*, for example, is the origin of the word “logic”, derived from *logike technē*: “the art concerning *logoi* and thinking”. *Logos* is found in compound words such as “logotherapy” or “dialogue”. Abstract terms derived in accordance with the original schema *theo-logos* (“one who talks about the gods/god”) designate many sciences, for instance (in the context of the observation of nature) key terms such as “biology” or “cosmology”.

## 2. Early Greek philosophy: *logos* as cosmic principle and Sophistic practices of *logoi*

In the surviving fragments of the Early Greek thinkers dealing with *physis*, “nature” (see Dunshirn 2019), the word *logos* is most conspicuously encountered in Heraclitus. “With regard to *logos*, being – always – men prove to be uncomprehending”, is the beginning of the piece traditionally counted as fragment 1 (Fragment B 1 D-K, cited in Diels/Kranz 1968: 150). Aristotle already points out the difficulty of understanding the word order in this sentence. It is unclear what the word “always” (*aei*) refers to (*Rhetoric* III, 5, 1407b14–18). It could specify the aforementioned *logos* as being “always” – in which case the way is paved for the interpretation of the *logos* as a cosmic principle; or “always” defines in more detail the lack of understanding of people who never understand the *logos*.

It is disputed whether Heraclitus at this point aims with *logos* at a world law at all or does not instead refer to his own “account” (Guthrie 1985: 419–425; Röd 1988: 97–100; Johnstone 2014). Further Heraclitus

fragments (B 2 and 50 D-K, cited in Diels/Kranz 1968: 151 and 161) suggest that *logos* means something that structures the *physis*. This may be conceived as a meta-physical “sense” that emerges in “speech” (Vassallo 2020), or as “measure” that determines the balance and good arrangement of the world, which is characterised by opposites but divinely directed (Long 2009). Possibly Heraclitus’ use of *logos* indicates that the world reveals itself as an ordered and intelligible whole (Johnstone 2014: 21). (For an overview of how translators have rendered the word *logos* in Heraclitus’ fragments over the last two centuries, see Gianvittorio 2010: 158 f.)

While Heraclitus uses *logos* mainly in the singular, the Sophists emphasise the plurality of *logoi*, “pro-positions”, “speeches” or “arguments”, which can contradict each other. In this respect, the title of the anonymous tract *Dissoi logoi*, “Twofold *logoi*”, is striking, as it is intended to make various methods of argumentation comprehensible by means of pairs of opposites (Becker/Scholz 2004). This text, which was probably written at the turn of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., is often associated with the relativism of Protagoras. Protagoras’ *logos* that man is the measure of all things is familiar to us from Plato’s *Theaetetus*, where it is discussed at length (151e ff.; Schiappa 2003: 117–133). The claim “to make the weaker *logos* the stronger” is probably the best-known statement on *logos* associated with the Sophists, the “wisdom teachers”, and the rhetoric teachers of the fifth century B.C.; Aristotle describes it in the *Rhetoric* as the “promise” of Protagoras (*Rhetoric* II, 24, 1402a23 f.) (For an appreciation of the Sophists, see Schirren/Zinsmaier 2003: 10–30.)

## 3. Plato: the true *logos* of the world soul

In Plato’s dialogues which criticize rhetoric, several reflections on the sophistic technique of *logoi* can be found. The true art of oratory must not be a persuasive technique independent of knowledge, it has to try to bring about the good with a constant view to what is just (*Gorgias* 504d–e); if not, an orator acts merely on the basis of his experience and creates pleasure in the audience, but is of no use to them (*Gorgias* 462c–463d). A feature that distinguishes real from apparent knowledge is the ability to give a *logos* of it, the famous *logon didonai*, “to give an account” (Wieland 1999: 247–250; Weiner 2012). In Plato’s *Phaedo*, Socrates reports

that he fled into the *logoi* in order to “spot” the truth in them; through this flight, he wanted to avoid “becoming blind” in his soul when trying to comprehend the world with his senses (Phaedo 99d–e; Beierwaltes 2011: 79 f.). The philosophers, unlike the (court) orators whose speaking time is limited, have leisure to pursue the diverse *logoi* they get involved in (Theaetetus 172c–e). In Plato’s dialogues, Socrates proves to be a prominent figure in assessing whether individual *logoi* are tenable or not. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates reveals his “midwifery” (*maieutike*), a conversational technique that refers to the “birthing souls” and their productions, the *logoi* (150b; Sedley 2004: 28–37; Futter 2018). Through Socrates’ intervention, his interlocutors get into aporias, situations where they cannot get through to what they are looking for. In the process, however, they determine which *logoi* do not lead to a solution of the problem in question (Erler 1987). In the *Theaetetus*, for example, several attempts are made to determine *episteme*, the “understanding of something” or “knowledge”. The interlocutors do not arrive at a satisfactory definition. They also reject the last attempt to define knowledge as “true opinion (*doxa*) with *logos*” (Theaetetus 201c–d). This definition seems insufficient to the dialogue’s partners, among other reasons, because *logos*, understood as an enumeration of the constituent parts or as an indication of the essential characteristics of a thing, is already contained in the opinion of it or the “belief”, the *doxa* (206c–210b; Gill 2003: 167–169).

In general, *logos* is said to belong to both *doxa* and *episteme*, or “knowledge” (on Plato’s conception of opinion and knowledge see Burnyeat 1980; Fine 1990; Graeser 1991). According to the Platonic view, however, opinion and knowledge refer to their contents in varying degrees of objectivity (Szaif 2017). In a view of the world based solely on opinion, we easily get confused; things that we think are large in one context turn out to be small the next time we look at them (Republic 523c–524d). Only with knowledge, which determines the factual connections in orientation to the ideas, do we arrive at permanently true statements. With reference to the different objects of thinking and knowing, one can therefore speak of an (epistemic) two-world theory in Plato (Strobel 2017: 360–362). However, the above-mentioned attempted definition from the *Theaetetus* – *episteme* as “true opinion with *logos*” – established itself as the classical definition of knowledge in the form

of “justified true belief” (where “justified” renders the words “with *logos*”), and was intensively discussed in connexion with the Gettier problem (that a justified and true opinion can also happen to be true) (Gettier 1963; Schukraft 2017).

The Eleatic Stranger explicitly addresses the truth and falsity of *logoi* in Plato’s *Sophist*, where the sentences “Theaetetus sits” and “Theaetetus flies” function as examples of the “smallest *logos*” (263a; Lorenz/Mittelstrass 1966). In connection with the question of non-being and being, the discussants define *logos* – as mentioned above under “linguistic” – as the “linking” of *onoma* and *rhema*, of “noun” and “verb” or “subject” and “predicate” (262c, a passage with which overviews of grammatical theory often begin, cf. Jungen/Lohnstein 2007: 36 f.; on the danger of the non-being of *logos* see König 2020: 449 f.). The *rhema* is an “indication” (*deloma*) of actions, the *onoma* a “sign” (*semeion*) attached to those who perform the actions (262a; Heidegger 1992: 590–592; on the relation of *onoma* and *logos* in the *Seventh Letter* see Liatsi 2008; on the question of the “rightness” of the *onomata*, the “names”, see Sedley 2003; Enache 2007). The interlocutors in Plato’s dialogues, however, do not only comment on whether various *logoi* are true or false, they often let the argument or speech itself become the subject in their conversations. Thus, the (present) *logos*, the momentary conversation, may be said to “force” them to do something, it “flees” from them, it “conceals itself” and much more (Dunshirn 2010: 129–142).

Of particular relevance for natural philosophy are the different *logoi* that arise when the divine “craftsman”, the Demiurge, arranges the world, as Plato’s *Timaeus* tells us. In forming the *psyche* of the world, that which “animates” the cosmos, the divine world-builder “mixes together” a “third form” of being from the “nature” of the “same” and the “different” (*Timaeus* 34b–35c). Out of all three, he forms two opposing orbits, namely a rotation of identity and a circle of difference (which can be understood as the – from the point of view of the earth – opposing movements of the starry sky and the planets). In its connection with the world body, the world soul produces *logoi* that correspond to these rotations, of course without “sound and noise” (37b). These *logoi* give rise, firstly, to “opinions” (*doxai*) – deriving from the circulation of the “other” and

referring to the perceptible – and, secondly, to “conviction” (*pistis*), or – in the case of the circulation of the “same” and with reference to the faculty of thought – to “reason” (*nous*) and “knowledge” (*episteme*) (37b–c; Karfik 2004: 174–201; Karfik 2020).

A comparable listing of cognitive powers is found in the analogy of the divided line in the *Republic*, which offers evidence for *logos* in the sense of “relation”. Socrates’ audience is asked to imagine a line divided into sections of different lengths and then to “cut” the imagined line “in the same *logos*”, in identical proportion (*Republic* 509d). Entities of different degrees of being as well as the “affections of the soul” corresponding to them are assigned to the four segments of the line: “imagination” (*eikasia*), “conviction” (*pistis*), “thinking” (*dianoia*) and “reasoning” (*noesis*); these participate in truth to an increasing degree (511d–e; Erler 2007: 399–401). In this respect, it is appropriate to speak of “levels of truth” (Janke 2007: 122), especially since the Greek word *alethes* (“true”, “truthful”) is capable of an increase. Thus Plato may speak of someone having said something “truer” or “in a truer way” (*Gorgias* 493d) or of the interlocutors having (supposedly) found the “truest” *logos*, the most accurate definition, of something (*Theaetetus* 208b, cf. *Cratylus* 438c). At the peak of knowledge, the *logos* may be suspended. In Plato’s *Symposium*, it is said that at the climax of the ascension of knowledge, a “nature of wondrous beauty” is glimpsed. This no longer appears as a body, nor in the manner of the previous forms of knowledge or *logos*. What emerges is an “absolute, separate, simple and everlasting” beauty (cf. *Symposium* 210e–211b; Sier 1997: 285 f.).

Explaining the arrangement of the world, Plato’s character Timaeus speaks of an *eikos mythos* (*Timaeus* 29d) as well as of an *eikos logos* (30b; Brisson 2012), i.e. of a “likely” or “probable” “story” or “speech” (on the interpretative tradition of *eikos* see Martijn 2010: 219–235). In the *Republic*, Socrates repeatedly points out to his interlocutors that they produce the “good city” they are talking about “through the *logos*” (472de) or that they “tell it as myth” (*mythologoumen logo*, 501e). In the latter instance, the word *logos* appears to enter into opposition with *ergon*, the “work” or “deed”: until the philosophers obtain power, there is no end to evils, and the constitution put forward in conversation does not “actually” (*ergo*) reach its goal (501e). Nevertheless,

we come across passages in Plato on the “effectiveness of speech” (Hetzel 2011), of the *logos* as a “mighty ruler”, as Gorgias calls it in his *Encomium of Helena* (Fragment B 11, 8 D-K, cited in Diels/Kranz 1964: 290; on the drama allusions in Gorgias see Novokhatko 2020: 86–91). Thus, in Plato’s *Charmides*, the *logoi* with Socrates turn out to be the true remedy for Charmides’ malaise, since it is they that bring about prudence (*Charmides* 157a–b; Derrida [1972] 1981: 124 f.).

In view of the above-mentioned passages in the *Timaeus* and the *Republic*, where *mythos* and *logos* occur in close connection, a strict separation of these terms in the sense of the opposition of the irrational and the rational, as suggested by influential overviews (Nestle 1940), seems problematic. Rather, a separation within the spoken – whether it be called *mythos* or *logos* – in terms of the degrees of being seems appropriate: a *logos* or *mythos* can be about insights of reason, concerned with the “perfect” being, or assumptions of opinion, concerned with the “in-between”, the simultaneously existing and non-existing (*Republic* 477a–478e; cf. *Timaeus* 27d–28a; Strobel 2017: 360 f.).

#### 4. Aristotle: man and *logos*

Aristotle’s differentiation of *episteme* (“knowledge”), *doxa* (“opinion”), *pistis* (“conviction”) and *phantasia* (“imagination”) can be compared with the gradation of the soul’s abilities in the Platonic analogy of the divided line. This differentiation is based not least on having or not having *logos*. It is central to Aristotle’s natural philosophy, anthropology and ethics (Rese 2003). According to Aristotle’s *Politics*, the only living being who has *logos* is man (*Politics* I, 2, 1253a9 f.). How does this *logos*-having distinguish him from other living things? For Aristotle, *logoi* are also the expression of opinion (*doxa*) and the convictions (*pisteis*) that go with it, as well as of *nous*, “reason”. As is evident from *De anima* (“On the Soul”), these processes of the soul are peculiar to man (*De anima* III, 3). Together with man, other living beings have perception, some of them also have *phantasia* (“imagination”, *De anima* 428a10). As Aristotle explains in the *Posterior Analytics*, the opinion of human beings is concerned with “the true and the false”, with that which may be otherwise (*Posterior Analytics* I, 33, 89a2 f.). The faculties which always speak truth, i.e. reason and knowledge (*De anima* III, 3, 428a17 f.), deal

with contents that cannot be otherwise (Posterior Analytics I, 33, 88b31 f.; on the connection between reason, knowledge and *logos* see Bronstein 2016: 58).

For the realm of action, according to Aristotle, the orientation towards *orthos logos*, the “right reason” that simultaneously prescribes and explains something, is central (Nicomachean Ethics II, 2, 1103b31-34; Moss 2014; Frede 2020: 409 f.). The virtue or “excellence” (*arete*) of man is the disposition or “having” associated with the right *logos* (*hexis*, Nicomachean Ethics VI, 13, 1144b26 f.).

Those writings of Aristotle which were later summarised under the name “Organon” deal with parts of sentences, negations and the connectedness of *logoi* in conclusions. They had a decisive influence on the Western conception of speech and thought for centuries. Aristotle discusses various types of *logoi* that “indicate” (*semainein*) something. An indicating *logos* is not always “declarative” (*apophantikos*) in the sense of “true” or “false”; this is evident in the case of *logos* as prayer or request (On Interpretation 4, 16b26–17a5). Of course, the focus of Aristotle’s analyses is on the *logos apophantikos*, “declarative speech”. Here, “affirmation” (*kataphasis*) is to be distinguished from “negation” (*apophasis*, On Interpretation 5, 17a8 f.; Wey 2014). Universal affirmative or negative (with some qualifications, also particular affirmative or negative) propositions can be regarded as elements of syllogisms, of “conclusions”. These indicate – linked via a finite number of middle terms – the cause of certain facts (Detel 2005: 21–30).

An essential function, which is also highly relevant in natural philosophy, is assigned to *logos* in Aristotle’s considerations of *physis* and *ousia*, of “beingness” or “substance”, as documented in his *Physics* and *Metaphysics* (Wiplinger 1971). In the list of the four ways in which cause is spoken of, *logos* is found in the explanation of the second type of cause, *eidos* (the “form”): this is “the *logos* of what-it-was-to-be and its genera” – *logos* functions here as the “explanatory speech” of *ti en einai*, of “what-it-was-to-be” or the “creative concept of being” (Prantl 1997: 211; Höffe 2006: 173). In this *logos* of definition, reason grasps the universal (*to katholou*) about a thing (Tugendhat 2003: 15–17), for example, the characterisation of the human being as a “two-footed animal” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IV, 4, 1006a31–b4; Horn 2005: 330 f.; on the problem of defining *ousia*, “beingness” or “substance”, as *logos* see Weiner 2016).

## 5. The Stoic universal *logos*

Probably the most influential concept of *logos* – at least in terms of natural philosophy – is that of the Stoa. In particular, the representatives of the Ancient Stoa are regarded as proponents of the world *logos*, which determines all phenomena and developments in the cosmos (Kahn 1969). For the Stoics, two principles can be regarded as components of the universe, namely that which is acted upon and that which acts (SVF II 300; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 268 f./Fragment 44B). The former can be termed matter, the latter as the *logos* working in it, that is, the divine reason. The Stoics also refer to this as God, as the “fate” (*heimarmene*) or as *logos*, according to which everything is carried out (SVF II 915 = Arnim 2004, vol. 2: 264). According to Diogenes Laërtius, the world-reason is conceived by Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school, and by his successor Chrysippus as “seminal principle”, as *logos spermatikos*, which encompasses the germ of everything; this principle as primordial fire brings forth everything and makes the matter in which it is inherent “serviceable” for further becoming and creates the four elements (Diogenes Laërtius VII, 135 f. = SVF I 102; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 275/Fragment 46B; further passages in Arnim 2004, vol. 4: 91–93). Here, just like matter, *logos* is understood as something corporeal, since according to the Stoics something incorporeal cannot effect anything (SVF II 363; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 272/Fragment 45B). The active principle, just like the suffering principle, is uncreated and imperishable, in contrast to all the elements of the cosmos, which perish in the cyclically occurring conflagration (SVF II 299; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 268 f./Fragment 44B). Everything is completely rationally determined by the universal *logos*. A quote by Chrysippus preserved by Plutarch emphasises that in the world not even the smallest part can come into being in any other way than according to the “common nature” and according to its *logos* (Plutarch, On Stoic Self-Contradictions 1050B–D = SVF II 937; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 331/Fragment 54T). The *logos* can be conceived as a “structural plan” according to which nature is active (Löbl 1986: 64). According to Cicero’s discussion of Chrysippus’ view, all things in the cosmos came into being because of another thing and are imperfect; the world alone comprises everything and is therefore perfect – there is “nothing more perfect” than the

world (Cicero, *De natura deorum* II, 14, 37–39; cf. SVF II 641 = Arnim 2004, vol. 2: 193 f.). Cicero encountered similar views in Panaetius, who emphasised the harmonious structure of the world and in particular the unity of the human organism. Everything in man is designed in the best way for him to recognise the divine and the beauty in the world (Cicero, *De natura deorum* II, 54–56, 133–141; Pohlenz 1959: 196 f.; Capelle 1954: 51 f.).

Several times in the expositions of Stoic doctrines, *logos* is also encountered in the plural. The doxographer Aëtius reports that the god of the Stoics encompasses the *logoi spermatikoi*, the seminal principles, according to which everything happens fatefully. At the same time, Aëtius points out the unifying nature of the *logos*. As a deity endowed with reason, the *logos* acts like an “intelligent, designing fire” that runs through the entire cosmos and takes on different names depending on the substance in which it works (Aëtius I, 7, 33 = SVF II 1027; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 274 f./Fragment 46A). This active force is often called “breath” (*pneuma*) or “breathy substance”: it gives the bodies their cohesion (SVF II 439; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 282/Fragment 47F), which is conceived as “tension” (*tonos*). In the twofold form of the “tensile movement” that goes along with it, the dynamics of world events become apparent: directed outwards, the tensile movement endows sizes and properties, directed inwards, unity and substance (SVF II 451; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 283/Fragment 47J).

On the basis of such testimonies, the Stoic conception of the world has been characterised as monistic (see e.g. Steinmetz 1994: 606 f.) and pantheistic (see Zeller’s influential account of the “Stoic system” in intellectual history, Zeller 2006: 118; for general discussion of pantheism see Bollacher 2020). “Everything is intertwined” and forms a “sacred connection” that leads to an order in “the same cosmos”, says Marcus Aurelius – who in this context speaks of the “one cosmos” that consists of everything, the “one God” that works through everything, and the “one *logos*” that is common to all rational living beings (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* VII, 9). In connection with the necessity of natural processes, which is understood as “fate” (*heimarmene*), the Stoics also speak of “providence” (*pronoia*) (*Meditations* XII, 14; on Chrysippus’ view of providence, see e.g. Plutarch, *On Stoic Self-Contradictions* 1044E–F = SVF II 1160/Arnim 2004, vol. 2: 334). On the question of why, if the world and human affairs are governed by

providence, there are evils, a complex explanation by Chrysippus has come down to us: the good is opposed to the evil; good and evil must exist together and mutually support each other, since no concept of the opposite exists without that to which it is opposed. Moreover, in nature, unfavourable things have arisen as a “concomitance” (*parakolouthesis*): the physical arrangement of the human head, for example, is highly conducive to the increase of its reason, but it also entails the thin bone of the skull which is susceptible to injury (SVF II 1169 f.; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 329 f./Fragment 54Q; on the development of the “theodicy” in the Stoa, see Zeller 2006: 176–182, cf. Steinmetz 1994: 610–612).

The problem of determinism, which arose from the divine determination of the world’s fate and seemed to rule out free action, is answered in the Stoa with the argument that the “perfect cause” for actions lies with man (SVF II 974/Arnim 2004, vol. 2: 282 f.), namely his *logos*, his reason. The “presentations” (*phantasiai*) that arise through external influences and provide the material for cognition are merely contributory causes to which man must first give his assent (*synkatathesis*) in order for them to trigger an impulse for action (Steinmetz 1994: 611; Schrieffl 2019: 114–118). To live according to the universal *logos* and “in agreement” (*homologoumenos*) with the *physis* does not mean that man is unfree because of predestination, but that he reaches the highest perfection (SVF I 179; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 394/Fragment 63B).

In the Stoic tradition, as with Aristotle, man’s participation in *logos* is regarded as a feature distinguishing him from other living beings (SVF I 515/Arnim 2004, vol. 1: 116). In the Latin testimonies of the Stoic doctrines, *logos* is conceived as *ratio*. In *De natura deorum*, Cicero quotes Chrysippus’ statement that there is *ratio* (“reason”) only in man, beyond which nothing can rise (*De natura deorum* II, 6, 16 = SVF II 1012; cf. Long/Sedley 1987: 324 f./Fragment 54E). Sextus Empiricus makes the argument more specifically: man does not distinguish himself from the alogical creatures by the *prophorikos logos*, the “speech suitable for utterance”, but by the *endiathetos logos*, the “speech set within” (*Adversus mathematicos* VIII, 275 = SVF II 135/Arnim 2004, vol. 2: 43). This distinction between a *logos* directed outwards (like animal sounds) and an internal *logos* (like reason) can be traced back to the time of the dispute between the Stoics of the second century B.C.

and the Platonist Carneades on the question of whether other living beings also had *logos* (Pohlenz 1959: 39; Kamesar 2004: 163 f.). This question will become important for theological speculation in the Roman imperial period, as it is explored in Philon of Alexandria.

## 6. Theology of *logos* in the Imperial period

In Philo's allegorical interpretation of biblical stories, Moses represents the *logos endiathetos* and Aaron the *logos prophorikos*. While the latter's pronouncements communicate the contents of Moses' revelation to the people, God speaks "in" Moses, whose spirit is in contact with the Lord (Quod deterius 126 f.; Kamesar 2004: 164). Similarly to the Stoics, Philo views the *logos* as a divine agency, though his concept of *logos* is a highly complex one (Lévy 2018). Philon also speaks of *spermatikos logos*, the "seminal principle" that guarantees a rational development of everything that becomes (Legum allegoriae III, 150; Verbeke 1980: 485 f.). For the subsequent Christian doctrine of *logos*, the role that Philo ascribes to the *logos* as God's attention to the world is of particular importance (Löhr 2010: 354; Burz-Tropper 2014: 102 f.). Among other things, Philo calls the *logos* the "first-born son" of God (De agricultura 51; Löhr 2010: 348); he regards *logos* as the combination of God's power and goodness (Pohlenz 1959: 373–375; Hadas-Lebel 2012: 186–188; Niehoff 2018: 217–223).

Christian thinkers clearly relied on this concept when they started to understand Christ, the second person in the divine Trinity, as *logos* (Menke 2009). The doctrine of Christ as the "Word" (*logos*) emerging from God can already be found in early Christian authors, such as Justin Martyr in the second century AD (Apologia prima pro Christianis 23; Hünermann 2009). The central New Testament text for Christian *logos* theology is the prologue of John's Gospel: *En arche en ho logos, kai ho logos en pros ton theon, kai theos en ho logos*, "In the beginning was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with God, and God was the *logos*". (The traces of the "Wisdom Literature" in John's prologue – i.e. the theological speculations reflected e.g. in the biblical books of *Job*, *Ecclesiastes* or *Proverbs* – are explained by Lips 1990: 290–317 and Burz-Tropper 2014). These words echo the beginning of *Genesis*, where it says: *Bereshit bara elochim ...*, "In the beginning God created ...". There the

"speech act" also resounds: "And God said, Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3; Hetzel 2011: 370–376). Traditionally, *logos* in the prologue of John's Gospel is translated as "word", which obviously does not mean a single word but the divine verbum as a "empowered word" (Bühner/Verbeke 1980: 499), a speech to which great power is attributed. In theology, in connection with the divine *logos* that turns to the world, there is talk of the "event of Jesus Christ" (Bultmann 1993: 288 f.). This *logos* is the "creating" and "healing" speech (ibid. 268–274): In the Old Testament, the word of God is heard, which brings forth and creates heaven and earth and all that is (Schlier 1974: 417–419). The healing effect of the divine *logos* is expressed, for example, in the words of prayer in the liturgy of the Mass, which take up the New Testament: "But only say the word (*eipe logo*), and my soul shall be healed" (cf. Matthew 8:8; Luke 7:7; on the hearing of the "revelation" in the "Word" of God, which defines our being, see Rahner 1997: 16 f.).

In his interpretation of the *logos* of Christ (for a collection of passages, see Balthasar 1991: 95–216), the early Christian theologian Origen refers to the distinction between the *logos prophorikos* and the *logos endiathetos*, the "speech suitable for utterance" and the "speech set within", mentioned above in connection with the Stoic *logos* concept. Origen maintains that neither type of *logos*, as expressions of human reason, can grasp the divine *logos* (Contra Celsum VI, 65). Porphyry makes use of this in his polemic against the *logos* of Christ, which he argues is not a *logos* at all (Ramelli 2012: 334–336; on the interpretation of *logos* in Origen see Göglér 1963: 244–281).

A synopsis and critique of the various ancient accounts of *logos* in non-Christian philosophy and in Gnosticism can be found in Plotinus (Brisson 1999). In his treatise *On Providence* (Enneads III, 2–3), Plotinus criticises both a view of the world that attributes everything to the coincidental meeting of atoms or the separation of various primordial substances and the Stoic teaching that the cosmos is determined down to the last detail by a divine *logos*. In this case, there would only be the divine; "we" would be "nothing" (III, 2, 9). Similarly, the view of the followers of Aristotle's doctrine that divine reason only refers to the celestial spheres and not to the sublunary world, i.e. the four spheres below the moon, namely fire, air, water and earth (as the centre of the world in the geocentric worldview), must be

rejected. Instead, according to Plotinus, divine providence extends to everything, nothing is not subject to its care; the universe depends on *nous*, the “spirit” (III, 2, 6). However, Plotinus does not understand the *logos* as a deity, like the Stoa, which as a physical force completely determines worldly events. Rather, *logos* “flows out” of *nous*, “reason” (emanation); through *logos*, reason acts on matter: “For that which flows out of the spirit is *logos*, and it always flows out of it as long as the spirit is present in the things being” (III, 2, 2). This *logos* is the unfolding of the one, single reason into the material world consisting of many parts (Halfwassen 2004: 17). In this multiplicity of *logos*, one reason for the (apparent) evil and unhappiness in the world is to be sought. Unlike *nous*, which is always in complete unity with itself, the *logos* that “comes” from it neither exists everywhere in its full form nor does it “give itself in its entirety to those to whom it gives itself” (III, 2, 16). It sets the parts of the world in opposition to each other and brings them forth as deficient, from which war and struggles result (ibid.). Plotinus also speaks of *logos* in the Heraclitean sense as the unity of opposites. The essence of *logos* is to embrace differences (ibid.; Motta 2019).

At the end of antiquity, Proclus accentuates the relationship between the One (*hen*) and *logos* in his synopsis of the positions of various “Platonists” concerning the hypostases, the levels of being or emanation of concretely existing things (on the hierarchy of the *logoi* in Proclus in connection with his philosophy of nature see Martijn 2010: 235–239). If there were no One, there would be neither knowledge (*gnosis*) nor *logos*: “For *logos* too is one out of many, if it is perfect” (Theologia Platonica II, 1; see Saffrey/Westerink 1974, vol. 2: 8, line 20 f.). This clearly expresses the connection between One, Being, cognition and language, but at the same time the difference between One and *logos*: The One is “not yet” *logos* whereas Being is “already” *logos* (II, 2; see Saffrey/Westerink 1974, vol. 2: 21, line 12 f.).

## 7. Outlook

The various ancient concepts of *logos* have taken on enormous significance in the subsequent history of European thought. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that the first “International Journal for the Philosophy of Culture” in Germany, founded in 1910, was named “Logos” (see Becker et al. 2020). It is also reflected in

the fact that, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a fundamental critique of so-called logocentrism was formulated. Under this heading, Ludwig Klages, for example, criticises a rationality that is hostile to life and which tethers it to mind, and Jacques Derrida – giving “logocentric” a completely different meaning – criticises a conception of the sign that determines the entire tradition of European philosophy and systematically favours spoken language over written language as a medium of cognition (Pöhler 1980).

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