

THE THEORY OF CONSEQUENCE IN THE LATE FIFTEENTH
AND EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

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Part One. In this paper I intend to examine the treatment accorded to consequences by a group of writers from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, although I shall make some reference to earlier periods. The subject of consequences (or valid inference) is of central importance to the historian of logic because those who discussed it covered such a wide range of logical issues, including criteria for validity, problems of self-reference, the status of the so-called paradoxes of strict implication, and the systematization of valid inference forms. Indeed, a large part of semantics and the whole of formal logic could be subsumed under this general heading. Whether the authors themselves fully appreciated that this was so is unfortunately not such an easy question to answer, for those I am concerned with frequently leave the reader in doubt as to their view of the relation of consequences to the rest of logic. So far as they discussed the matter, syllogistic was seen to be consequential in nature,¹ but they certainly did not make the subordinate position of the syllogism as clear as Burleigh had in the fourteenth century, or indeed as Andreas Kesler was to do in the seventeenth century.² A good guide to the way they viewed the problem is to see where consequences were discussed. A very few authors, including J. Major, A. Coronel and J. Almain, devoted a whole treatise to them, but generally speaking they came in on the coat-tails of other topics so far as separate treatises were concerned. They appear at the beginning of Dolz's treatise on the syllogism, at the end of Celaya's treatise on supposition and under 'hypothetical propositions' in the treatises on opposition written by R. Caubraith and F. Enzinas. The best places to look for a discussion of consequence turn out to be commentaries on Peter of Spain, where they appear either as an appendage to the *Parva Logicalia* or under the heading of 'hypothetical propositions', and, of course, general textbooks of logic. In these, a separate tract was sometimes devoted to consequences, as it was by C. Javellus, but more usually they were associated with the syllogism, whether as an introduction to it or, sometimes, as an appendix to it. Savonarola, for instance, said all