

## THE TREATMENT OF SEMANTIC PARADOXES FROM 1400 TO 1700

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During the middle ages, semantic paradoxes, particularly in the form of "Socrates speaks falsely", where this is taken to be his sole utterance, were discussed extensively under the heading of *insolubilia*. Some attention has been paid to the solutions offered by Ockham, Buridan, and Paul of Venice, but otherwise little work seems to have been done in this area.<sup>1</sup> My own particular interest is with the generally neglected period of logic between the death of Paul of Venice in 1429 and the end of the seventeenth century; and the purpose of this paper is to cast some light both upon the new writings on paradoxes and upon the marked change in emphasis which took place during the sixteenth century. Although the traditional writings on *insolubilia* were available throughout the period, the detailed discussions of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were soon entirely replaced by briefer comments whose inspiration seems wholly classical. Even the mediaeval word *insolubile* was replaced by the Ciceronian *inexplicabile*. In this area at least there is strong evidence for the usual claim that the insights of scholastic logic were swamped by the new interests and studies of renaissance humanism.

Before I go on to discuss in some detail the various types of theory which were put forward, I shall give a brief survey of my sources. I looked at 232 printed books in the British Museum, the Cambridge University Library and the Bodleian, all on logical or related topics, and I found some 47 which were relevant to my study. They fell into three groups: (1) Works devoted to, or with significant chapters on, *insolubilia*;<sup>2</sup> (2) works devoted to, or with sections on, *De Sophisticis Elenchis*;<sup>3</sup> (3) works containing discussion or references under miscellaneous and sometimes unexpected headings.<sup>4</sup> The first group is, of course, the most important. Among the mediaeval sources available in printed form were Ockham's *Summa Totius Logicae*, Buridan's *Sophismata*, the *Regulae Solvendi Sophismata* of William of Heytesbury [Gulielmus Hentisberus], the *Insolubilia* of Peter of Ailly [Alliacus], a French cardinal who died in 1420, and the *Logica*, both *magna* and *parva*, of Paul of Venice, together with a commentary by Mengus Blanchellus Faventinus. Also available was the *Logica* of Paul of Pergola,

*Received September 27, 1969*