Introduction: Special Issue on the Twelfth-Century Logical Schools

John Marenbon | ORCID: 0000-0002-3315-3922
Trinity College, Cambridge, UK
jm258@cam.ac.uk

Heine Hansen | ORCID: 0000-0003-0943-8431
Corresponding author
The Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark
hhansen@hum.ku.dk

Abstract

This special issue grew out of a small conference The Known & the Unknown: Exploring Twelfth-Century Philosophy, which was funded by the Carlsberg Foundation, hosted by the Saxo Institute, and held at the University of Copenhagen in April 2018. Its central topic was the many, mostly unexplored, commentaries on Aristotle, Boethius, and Porphyry that constitute the key textual evidence for a fascinating phenomenon that, although it played a pivotal role in the philosophical revival of Western Europe, remains frustratingly underexplored to this day: the logical schools of the twelfth century. The present introduction has two parts. In the first part, John Marenbon lays out the background to this special issue of Vivarium as a whole, explaining both what the philosophical project pursued by twelfth-century logicians was and how, and how far, the historical project of understanding it has progressed over the last two hundred years. In the second part, Heine Hansen briefly presents the issue and its contents.

Keywords

twelfth century – logic – logical schools – commentaries – Aristotle – Boethius – Porphyry
The Twelfth-Century Logical Schools: Two Research Projects (John Marenbon)

For scholars today, the words ‘research project’ conjure up images of vast online forms to complete, budgets to be calculated, timetables to be dreamt up – and the distant prospect of funding. The two research projects discussed here belong to a less bureaucratic world, but they share what alone makes any research project worthwhile: the search for knowledge and understanding. One of them is historical. Its origins go back more than two centuries, although only in recent decades has it become focused and coherent. This collection of articles shows that it is flourishing today. The project is to investigate the twelfth-century logical schools, identifying, making available and organizing their work, and to understand the positions and arguments of its masters, their interrelations, aims, and place within the intellectual world of the time.

The second research project is a philosophical one. It is much older: it began in the late eleventh century and it was over by early in the thirteenth. This research project was that carried out by the twelfth-century logical schools themselves, as investigated by the first, historical research project. The description of their work as a ‘research project’ is not made lightly. There is good reason for it negatively and positively. Negatively: the subject-matter of the history of philosophy is usually divided up into works and their authors, or schools of authors, or into areas (such as ethics and epistemology), or themes or arguments. But none of these customary divisions fits the work of the twelfth-century logical schools: their products were rarely works, in the normal sense of the word, and they are mostly anonymous; although they are linked to the logical curriculum, they are not in fact confined to any one area of philosophy, and cover a variety of themes and arguments, not closely related in any obvious way. Positively, the twelfth-century logicians were engaged in a collective project, with a shared core understanding of what they were trying to do and how they should go about it. Although the material they produced can be considered piecemeal, text by text, or by picking out this or that theme or dispute, only when seen as a research project can its coherence, range, and full philosophical interest be recognized.

The following pages introduce these two linked research projects. In the first section, the philosophical project – its character, extent, and goals – is described. The second section presents the historical project and explains how, from an initial concern with Abelard and the problem of universals, it has come to focus on the twelfth-century research project as a whole. The third section looks at some of the special challenges the material sets for the historical project.
1.1 *The Philosophical Project*

Suppose we asked a master of one of the logical schools around the middle of the twelfth century to describe the research project on which he, his colleagues, rivals and teachers worked. He might reply:

Our main job is commenting on the texts of the logical curriculum. We want to make sense of every word, every paragraph; and also of the whole, because we think the texts, though by more than one author, are coherent. We don't regard our lectures as fixed works, the literary property of a named author. They circulate anonymously, and we each feel free to use what we want of previous commentaries, whether from ancient times, or by our contemporaries, or ourselves. We are, then, first and foremost teachers, but that doesn't mean that we are just engaged in routine pedagogy. Don't be misled by the word ‘logic’ into thinking our interests are restricted to ways of devising arguments and judging them – though we write a good deal about this. We also investigate issues in metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind and semantics, and we are keen to explore all of these areas, often using the curriculum texts just as a point of departure for debates that the ancients never anticipated – not just the dispute over universals, where Boethius led the way, but every sort of question. We are nothing if not disputatious. Soon after our project began, there was a big debate about the whole way in which the texts were to be read, and that was just the first of many intellectual battles, so that now we divide ourselves into rival schools, each with our distinctive logico-philosophical credo: all of us pursuing a common project, but battling it out in our different ways. Finally, fourth, we don't just comment. We also write textbooks of our own, emphasizing our special priorities, though commentary remains our central task.

By glossing this description, the main features of the philosophical project can be sketched:

“The Logical Curriculum.” – Writing probably around 1115, Abelard identified seven books as comprising the whole of “Latin eloquence” in logic: Porphyry's *Isagoge*, Aristotle's *Categories* and *On Interpretation*, all three read in Boethius's translations, and Boethius's own *On Categorical Syllogisms*, *On Hypothetical Syllogisms*, *On Division* and *On Topical Differentiae*.\(^1\) Throughout the twelfth cen-

\(^1\) Peter Abelard, *Dialectica*, 146(10–17).
tury, it was on these texts that logicians commented, with the addition, from the 1130s onwards, of Aristotle’s *Sophistical Refutations*. Among them, the *Isagoge*, *Categories* and *On Interpretation* were especially important, then Boethius on the *Topics*. The rest of Aristotle’s logical *Organon* was available before the end of the century, but received almost no commentary; it was not, apparently, part of the research project. Arguably, however, a non-logical text, the *Institutiones* by the grammarian Priscian did belong to it from about 1100 to 1120, so close are the ties between some logical commentaries and parts of its commentary tradition. Boethius’s commentaries – two each for the *Isagoge* and *On Interpretation*, one for the *Categories* – were also central, as guides, models and as providing material, occasionally for comment, but more usually to be borrowed unceremoniously and without acknowledgement.

“We want to make sense of every word, every paragraph …” – The making sense took place, most basically, sentence by sentence. This very close reading was a twelfth-century innovation in logical commentaries, not found in Boethius, and based in part on the practice of interlinear glossing, as found in earlier medieval manuscripts. Such exegesis is often simply a paraphrase, sometimes in the third person, sometimes in the first, with the commentator impersonating Porphyry, Aristotle or Boethius. Each step in the argument will be analysed, sometimes using the topics (as found in *On Topical Differentiae*) as an analytical tool (as in P6 and C6). A few of the commentaries (“literal commentaries”) consist in large part of this type of unambitious exegesis.

Most commentaries that survive, however, are “composite”: they contain sections of literal exegesis, usually placed after a broader, discursive treatment, on the model of Boethius, of the paragraph in question. The discursive sections try

---

2 For catalogues and editions of these commentaries, see below, 121–126. The information in the following notes about numbers and types of commentaries is taken from these catalogues. The different commentaries are distinguished by alpha-numeric tags: see below, 124.

3 31 twelfth-century commentaries on the *Isagoge*, 30 on the *Categories*, 22 on *On Interpretation*, 17 on *De topicis differentiis*, 12 on *On Division*, 12 on *On the Hypothetical Syllogism*, and 7 on *On the Categorical Syllogism* survive or are known from testimonials.

4 There are 11 twelfth-century manuscript copies of the *Topics*, 9 of the *Prior Analytics*, and 6 of the *Posterior Analytics*. See Marenbon and Tarlazzi, “Logic,” esp. the Appendix. There survives just one commentary to the *Prior Analytics*, probably written ca. 1160–1180 (“Anonymous Aurelianensis 11”), and a fragment of a commentary on the *Topics* from ca. 1200 (see Marenbon and Tarlazzi, “Logic,” 296, n. 16).

5 As the work of Irène Rosier-Catach has shown: see below, 117.

6 There are just three literal commentaries each for the *Isagoge*, *Categories* and *On Interpretation*. For an example of the style, see the *Disputata Porphyrii* (P7), edited in Iwakuma, “‘Vocales,’” 74–100.
to explain the positions taken by the text, why they are chosen in preference to others, and how objections to them can be answered. They also try to justify the order of the author’s exposition (for instance, why Aristotle treats relatives before quality) and its completeness, and at times (see below) they can be the place for wide-ranging discussions and debates.

“We don’t regard these lectures as fixed works, the literary property of ... [a] named ... author.” – A glance at the catalogues shows up few instances where there is a title attributing a commentary to an author. This impression of anonymity is not misleading. Of 40 commentaries on the *Isagoge*, *Categories* and *On Interpretation* which survive with their beginnings intact only 10 carry attributions, but there is reason to suspect all but four of these; the others were probably added (in most cases misleadingly) by scribes. The logic masters as a rule did not claim their commentaries as their own, although the commentaries often attribute doctrines and arguments to individual masters, usually named by initials. Maybe this anonymity was, in part, because the masters were teachers: they wanted pupils to come to their schools to hear them, be taught by them, argue with them (and pay them), and so manuscripts were mostly, in the first instance, for their own or intra-mural use.

In any case, a number of the commentaries are not the work of any one author at all. The masters seem often to have looked for an existing commentary from which they could teach, adapting it and adding to it as they wanted. In the case of Priscian’s *Institutiones*, it has been shown how William of Champeaux, the leading logician and grammarian at the turn of the twelfth century, did precisely this: he was not the author of the earliest version of the *Glosule*, but he adapted and made the commentary his own. For each of the *Isagoge* (P3 and P14 – four manuscripts), *Categories* (C7, C8 and C14 – seven manuscripts), *On Interpretation* (H9, H11 – four manuscripts) and *On Topical Differentiae* (B8, B10 – four manuscripts), there is a “standard” commentary, found in various versions in a number of manuscripts. Like the Priscian *Glosule*, these are layered works, and for the first three the bottom layer is provided by material from Boethius’s commentaries. Sometimes a commentary is explicitly a report of the views of a particular master, who did not actually write it (for example, P19, giving the view of a certain Guarinus Cantaber), or often reports the views of more than one master (for example, C15 and C17). Even the work of the most
famous and distinctive logician in the whole project, Peter Abelard, could be borrowed verbatim but adapted, as in H15, to fit another logician’s very different views about some central issues.¹⁰

“Don’t be misled by the word ‘logic’ ...” – Twelfth-century masters often characterized logic as being concerned with judging and finding arguments – wider than the account logicians today would give of their discipline, but certainly not alien to it. But the range of subjects they discussed in their commentaries was far, far wider. This breadth in their research project derived from its basis, the logical curriculum. Aristotle’s *Categories* is really a work of metaphysics, rather than logic. The *Isagoge*, despite Porphyry’s intention to restrict its scope, broaches these issues too, above all the status of universals, which the text deliberately passes over but Boethius brought into prominence in his commentaries. Boethius’s role was also central in opening up the range of questions discussed in connection with *On Interpretation*. In Boethius’s second commentary, Aristotle’s very brief comments about the relation between things, words and mental contents launch a long discussion of semantics and of the workings of the mind, and the problem of future truth is developed into a wider treatment of chance and determinism. Although the twelfth-century masters also had very strong interests, often manifested in independent notes and treatises, in narrowly logical questions, such as entailment and validity, and in developing logical techniques, in their work as commentators they responded especially to the philosophical width of the curriculum, as extended by Boethius’s commentaries, and made it even wider themselves.

“We are nothing if not disputatious.” – The first recorded master to teach roughly the logical curriculum followed until the end of the twelfth century was Gerbert of Aurillac, at the Cathedral school of Rheims in the 970s and 980s, who seems to have taught the texts commented by Boethius by expounding Boethius’s commentaries.¹¹ In the 1070s, the study of logic took a disputatious twist that signals the start of the philosophical research project. It happened when some masters challenged the traditional way of interpreting the *Isagoge* and *Categories* as being about things. These masters – the most famous of them, probably pupils or followers of the originators, were Roscelin and Garlandus – insisted that the texts by Porphyry and Aristotle are discussing not things, but

---

¹⁰ For the use of Abelard in H15, see *Glossae “Doctrinae sermonum,”* xxxvi–xlvi.


VIVARIUM 60 (2022) 113–136
words. This position was immediately challenged, and it seems to have been abandoned in its extreme form by the 1110s. But there remained the question of whether certain passages of the two texts should be interpreted as about words and things, or about words alone – most notoriously, the passages on universals, especially Porphyry’s unanswered questions on them at the beginning of the *Isagoge*. Boethius had already made clear that it was problematic, though he thought possible, to justify logicians’ use of universals within the frame of realism. This problem now became a matter of debate, with different masters championing different realist solutions, whilst Abelard and his followers insisted that, when talking of universals, but not in many other places, Aristotle and Porphyry were discussing words, not things.

Although universals provoked probably the most complex, widespread, and long-lasting of all the debates, very many other issues became matters of contention between different masters. For example, from the beginning of the twelfth century or even slightly before, the nature of a *vox* – substance, quantity, quality? – was fiercely contested. There were battles over whether all things can be divided into bodies and non-bodies. And when Abelard first discusses the referents of sentences, a subject hardly addressed in the ancient textbooks, it is clear that it was already a matter on which there were various opinions.

In the 1130s and 1140s, students in Paris could find two contending views on many of the central problems raised by the logical texts: those of Abelard, and those of his arch-opponent, Alberic of Paris. In the second half of the century, the differences between (mainly) the great masters of the previous fifty years gave rise to distinct schools: the most important were the *nominales* (nominalists), followers of Peter Abelard; the *Parvipontani* (or *Adamatæ*), followers of Adam of the Petit-Pont (Adam of Balsham); the *Porretani* (or *Gilebertini*), followers of Gilbert of Poitiers; the *Albricani*, followers of Alberic of Paris; and the *Melidunenses* (or *Robertini*), followers of Robert of Melun. These schools each had sets of distinctive and sometimes paradoxical positions, to which, it seems, pupils had to sign up: for example, the nominalists’ thesis that nothing grows, or that of the *Melidunenses* that no name is equivocal.

---

13 See Rosier-Catach, “*Uox* and *Oratio.*”
14 See Cameron, “The Logic of Dead Humans.”
15 See Peter Abelard, *Dialectica*, 154–156.
17 See Iwakuma and Ebbesen, “Logico-Theological Schools,” 173–174. There were also the *Montani*, whom some scholars have identified with the *Albricani*, but Iwakuma and Ebbesen disagree.
18 See Ebbesen, “What Must One Have.”
“We also write textbooks ... though commentary remains our central task.” – As well as a variety of shorter Introductiones to logic, there are two important logical textbooks from the early twelfth century, both called simply Dialectica – that by Garlandus, probably written shortly after 1100, and that by Abelard, probably complete by around 1115. Both these works assemble commentary material (in the case of Abelard, the discussions are usually fuller, but – because earlier – often less developed than in his commentaries proper). They are, then, very direct extensions of the commentary project. But in 1132, Adam of the Petit-Pont produced his Ars disserendi, which introduces students to Adam’s very particular view of logic, ordered quite differently from how they are in Porphyry, Aristotle and Boethius, and discussed using a deliberately idiosyncratic terminology. The other longer and more important logical treatises also do not follow the order of discussion in the curriculum texts, though they are closer to them than Adam’s. They include the Summa dialetice artis, by a follower of Abelard’s; the Introductiones Montane maiores, which follow especially Alberic’s teachings and were written partly in the 1140s, partly in the decade afterwards; a Porretan logical compendium, certainly from the second half of the century, probably between 1155 and 1170; and the Ars Meliduna, from Paris in the 1170s. The Summa and the Introductiones are introductory works, though they contain some very sophisticated discussion. The Porretan treatise and the Ars Meliduna, however, while comprehensive, apparently aim to give the state of the art for their respective schools: maybe in the second half of the century the philosophical project shifted its emphasis away from commentaries to textbooks.

1.2 The Historical Research Project

Today’s research projects, in search of funding, have to set out with a clearly defined scope and goal, otherwise they will have no hope of winning support. Traditionally, however, research projects often discovered their distinctive characters and aims only as they developed. The historical research project discussed here illustrates the process. Originally, no historian identified this

19 The attribution of the Summa by its editor, L. Pozzi, to William Guinitinga, the Bishop of Lucca from 1175 to 1194, has been convincingly rejected by Gastaldelli, “Note sul codice,” 697–698, but Gastaldelli’s attribution of it to an older William of Lucca (d. 1178) who wrote a commentary on pseudo-Dionysius (see “Linguaggio e stile”) lacks strong evidence. Internal evidence, especially the fact that Abelard is always mentioned in the present tense, suggests a date before 1142.

20 For the date, see Anonymous, Introductiones Montane maiores, xiii.

21 For the date, see Anonymous, Compendium logicae Porretanum, vii.

research project, embodied in the commentary tradition, as an object of study. It was discovered, rather, through interest in just one of the thinkers who animated it, and one of its many themes. The thinker is Peter Abelard; the theme universals.

It was his interest both in Abelard, and in universals, that led Victor Cousin to edit twelfth-century logical manuscripts. His interest in Abelard seems to have been origin patriotic: just as France could claim the founder of modern philosophy, Descartes, so, argued Cousin, it could also count as its own Abelard, the founder of scholasticism. Always an enthusiastic searcher in manuscripts, Cousin sought to extend the range of Abelard’s texts in print and published in 1836 Ouvrages inédits d’Abélard. There he not only, among other material, gave the first ever edition of any of Abelard’s logic, in the form of a partial text of the Dialectica, but also provided a sampling of other twelfth-century logic. He was often, but not always, under the mistaken belief that these works were Abelard’s. His choice of texts to publish was guided in part by his conviction, which went back to Degérando and further, that the problem of universals was the central topic in medieval philosophy, and he devoted most of his 200-page Introduction to this topic. He regards commentaries as hardly worth notice: “nothing that is a gloss [commentary] contains anything of importance,” he remarks early on (xvii). Although that attitude may make him seem a strange founder for a historical research project that now, like the logicians it studies, focuses especially on commentaries as the occasion for original thinking, Cousin deserves the title. The texts he published were for nearly a century the most important evidence available for twelfth-century logic, and the Ouvrages inédits contains (x–xvii, 613–618) a very detailed description of one of the most important manuscript collections of commentaries and discussions from the period, Paris, Bibliothèque de Saint-Germain, ms 1310 (now Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms lat. 13,368).


He prints from Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms lat. 13,368 the treatise De generibus et speciebus, nowadays connected with Joscelin of Soissons, attributing it to Abelard, and from the same manuscript parts of commentaries on the Isagoge (P3), Categories (C3), and On Interpretation (H12), which he attributes to Joscelin. He also prints parts of two more commentaries in this manuscript, one on the Isagoge (P3) and one on On Interpretation (H11), attributing them, on the basis of their titles, to the ninth-century monk Hrabanus Maurus.

Although in the second edition of his *Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande*, published in 1885, Carl Prantl devoted over 150 pages to twelfth-century logic, he did not belong to the historical research project, except peripherally, because he lacked one of the defining characteristics of its members, an eagerness to make new discoveries, rather than merely presenting and interpreting the material already known, either by searching in manuscripts or by revising accepted historical constructions.26 By contrast, Barthélémy Hauréau, author of a general history of medieval philosophy, was a dedicated researcher of the manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Like Cousin, his interest in the logical texts is limited to their treatment of the problem of universals, but he wants to go beyond looking at just Abelard. "Are all the other monuments of this great controversy lost?," he asks, and answers in the negative by describing in detail and printing excerpts from Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 17.813, another important twelfth-century logical collection.27 Another contributor to the nascent historical project, François Picavet, illuminates the beginnings of the twelfth-century logical controversies by looking at Roscelin – drawn to this subject, no doubt, because of his reputation in the dispute over universals. Though he does not bring new manuscript material, Picavet examines the evidence with such care, stripping away the encrustation of legend, that his work still remains the best study of Roscelin.28

In the early and mid-twentieth century, the scholar who did most to reveal unpublished twelfth-century logical commentaries was Martin Grabmann (d. 1949), who brought to light nine new commentaries.29 But Grabmann’s main focus was on the thirteenth century and later. These discoveries were the result of his energy and thoroughness as a reader of manuscripts, along with an open-mindedness that led him down previously unexplored paths, even if the one piece of twelfth-century material he edited in full was a short treatise on – universals (P21).30 During the first half or so of the twentieth century, there were also two other developments essential to the further expansion of the historical project. Between 1919 and 1933, Bernhard Geyer provided an edition of most

28 Picavet, *Roscelin*.
29 These are P13, P16, P18, P20, P21, P25, C17, H5, H17. Grabmann was also one of the early writers to discuss P7, P28, C24, and H23. His discoveries are found in various articles assembled in his *Gesammelte Akademieabhandlungen*.
30 Grabmann, "Ein Tractatus."
of Abelard’s logical commentaries, to which he appended a set of Untersuchungen, which unfortunately did not look far beyond what he took to be Abelard’s own work. In the 1960s, Lorenzo Minio-Paluello provided researchers into twelfth-century logical commentaries with the textual basis they needed: critical editions of the Boethian versions of the Isagoge, Categories and On Interpretation. In the two volumes of his Twelfth Century Logic, Minio-Paluello contributed more directly to the historical project, by editing the Ars disserendi of Adam of Balsham, improving the edition of Abelard’s commentary on On Interpretation, and providing a detailed analysis of the very important logical collection in Orléans, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms 266.

At the same time, Lambertus de Rijk produced the first complete edition of the most remarkable of all twelfth-century logical texts, Abelard’s Dialectica, and edited for the first time the important Dialectica of Garlandus. De Rijk looked at the whole area of twelfth-century logic, no longer, like most of his predecessors, in thrall to the problem of universals. In the 1960s, in “Some new Evidence on twelfth century Logic” and the two parts of Logica modernorum, he laid the basis for understanding the logical disputes of the mid-century, when the views of Alberic of Paris were opposed to Abelard’s, delved deeply into commentaries discovered by Grabmann or himself, and edited or gave lengthy extracts from three of the most important treatises of the mid or later-twelfth century: the Introductiones Montane minores and maiores, and the Ars Meliduna. Despite these remarkable achievements, De Rijk was himself not primarily engaged in the historical research project, but rather contributed to it incidentally, in the course of his own, different scheme of research, which aimed to show the origins and development of the branches of logic created for the first time in the Middle Ages.

Three books in the 1980s and early 1990s helped especially to give the historical research project its current form. The earliest was Niels Jørgen Green-
Pedersen’s *The Tradition of the Topics in the Middle Ages*. Green-Pedersen took the important step of including a catalogue of medieval commentaries on *De topicis differentiis* (and also on Aristotle’s *Topics*). Seventeen of them – all previously unknown except for Abelard’s – are from the twelfth century or the very last years of the eleventh. His example was followed. In a collection on commentaries on Aristotelian logic, Sten Ebbesen included a complete catalogue, based on his own researches, of Latin commentaries on the *Sophistical Refutations* up to 1300.35 The volume also included the first version of a “Working Catalogue” of commentaries and glosses on the *Isagoge*, *Categories* and *On Interpretation* up to ca. 1150, extended in later versions to ca. 1200.36 Both catalogues, which borrowed Green-Pedersen’s device of alpha-numeric labels (e.g., B3, C8, H17: B for the *De differentiis topicis*; S for the *Sophistical Refutations*; P for the *Isagoge*; C for the *Categories*; H for *On Interpretation*), were prefaced by introductions discussing the manuscripts, analyzing the techniques of commentary, and dividing the commentaries into different types. Through these catalogues, most of the central source material for the historical research project was identified and some preliminary sorting was done, to make it more amenable for study.37

Sten Ebbesen was also a contributor to the third of the volumes, a 1992 special issue of *Vivarium* edited by William Courtenay. With the work of De Rijk as the background, the various writers used the unpublished commentaries and treatises to give, for the first time, an account of the later twelfth-century schools. Ebbesen’s articles were especially important in delineating their configuration, character and rivalries, and the second of them, co-authored with Yukio Iwakuma, provides a list of all the sources (many of them unpublished) that mention these schools.38 Ebbesen had already been one of the editors of a Porretan logical compendium, and he went on to provide editions of two of

35 Ebbesen, “Medieval Latin Glosses.”
36 Marenbon, “Medieval Latin Commentaries.” This was reprinted with an extensive supplement as Item 1 in Marenbon, *Aristotelian Logic*. The section on the *Categories* has been thoroughly revised and issued with a new, special introduction, as Marenbon, “The Tradition.” A similar revision and new introduction to the section on the *Isagoge* is found in Marenbon, “The *Isagoge*.” For further analysis of the material, see Marenbon, “Glosses and Commentaries on the *Categories* and *De interpretatione*” and Marenbon, “Logic at the Turn.”
37 For the texts not included in these catalogues – Boethius’s *De divisione*, and his textbooks on categorical and hypothetical syllogisms – information and alpha-numeric designations will be found on Iwakuma’s website (see below, n. 42).
38 Ebbesen, “What Must One Have,” and Iwakuma and Ebbesen, “Logico-Theological Schools.”
the most fascinating of all the commentaries, both on the *Categories*, one nominalist in its views, the other Porretan.\(^{39}\)

It is, however, Ebbesen’s former student and collaborator in the 1992 volume article, Yukio Iwakuma, who has done more than anyone – more, indeed, than all the scholars, from Cousin to today, put together – to make the rich material generated by the philosophical research project available. Early in the 1990s, Iwakuma brought to light, and in many cases edited, commentaries from the turn of the twelfth century that followed the language-based approach to logic associated with Roscelin and Garlandus.\(^{40}\) Later, he published an edition of P3, the twelfth-century commentary on the *Isagoge* that was most widely copied.\(^{41}\) But most of Iwakuma’s work as an editor has not been printed, although it has been published. Over thirty and more years, he has transcribed most of the unpublished twelfth-century logical commentaries, along with other logical material from the time, including the vast *Ars Meliduna*. Iwakuma has always made these texts available, and they are now in the process of being made freely accessible on the web.\(^{42}\) Over the same period, other scholars too have made important contributions, editing and elucidating texts by Abelard and others: most notably Onno Kneepkens (who has concentrated on *On Interpretation* commentaries), Klaus Jacobi, Peter King, and Christopher J. Martin.\(^{43}\)

Neither Iwakuma nor his predecessors investigated twelfth-century logic’s sibling, the study of grammar. As Irène Rosier-Catach has shown, during the period from about 1100 to 1120 themes and problems were shared between commentaries on Aristotle’s *Categories* and *On Interpretation* and those on Priscian’s *Institutiones grammaticae*: William of Champeaux lectured on

\(^{39}\) Anonymous D’Orvillensis, *Commentarium*, and Anonymous Porretanus, *Commentarium*. For the *Compendium logicae Porretanum*, see above, 120.

\(^{40}\) Iwakuma, “*Vocales.*” Iwakuma returned to the theme in “*Vocales Revisited.*”

\(^{41}\) Pseudo-Rabanus, *Super Porphyrium*.

\(^{42}\) https://pric.univie.it/projects/logicalia-medievalia/home. Iwakuma’s website also contains descriptions of dozens of logical manuscripts and useful bibliographical references.

\(^{43}\) Jacobi, together with Christian Strub, produced a new edition of Abelard’s commentary on *On Interpretation* (Peter Abelard, *Glossae super Peri hermeneias*), and King edited the related *Glossae “Doctrine Sermorum”* (H15). Besides an important interpretative article on these two commentaries written by all three (“From *intellectus verus/falsus*”), both Jacobi and King have written extensively on Abelard’s logic. Chris Martin has used a range of published and unpublished sources in reconstructing Abelard’s logic, its critique by Alberic, and the consequences (a succinct presentation of his views, with references to others of his articles, is “Logical Consequence”). Martin and King are now working together on a new edition of P12 (*Logica Nostrorum petitioni sociorum*, usually attributed to Abelard) and P11 (*Glossae secundum vocales*): cf. below, 127.
Priscian as well as on the logical texts, and in his logical commentaries Abelard was deeply influenced by the grammarians.44

1.3 Challenges and Opportunities: An Agenda for the Historical Research Project

What, then, are the challenges that scholars now face as they continue this project, and what are the opportunities?

1.3.1 Transcribing, Editing, Publishing

Printed, critical editions exist now for all the important longer treatises, except for the vast Ars Meliduna, but, Abelard’s aside, for only a small proportion of the commentaries, which are at the very heart of the philosophical research project. But, thanks to the work of Yukio Iwakuma, described in the previous section, many of the commentaries not in print are now published more openly and effectively than if they were in a book or in most journals. They are indeed transcriptions, rather than critical editions, but Iwakuma’s familiarity with the manuscripts, language and issues is apparent everywhere in his work, and he takes great trouble to indicate where and how alternative versions of a commentary differ, and when there are substantial borrowings from Boethius.

Any remaining commentaries could usefully be transcribed and made available à la Iwakuma. More official editing should be limited to the commentaries of direct philosophical interest, and should aim to make the texts widely accessible, through detailed commentary and translation. Most valuable of all would be a collection of carefully selected extracts, translated and thematically arranged, which would bring the outstanding achievements of the philosophical research project into the mainstream of the history of philosophy.

1.3.2 The Manuscript Collections

As mentioned above, one of the distinguishing features of the historical research project is that its investigators, from Cousin onwards, have combined interest in manuscripts and in philosophy. Even if all the commentaries and treatises eventually become available in transcription, the project should still regard its basis of evidence not as the published, easily readable versions, but as the manuscripts. The way that the commentaries are grouped in the manuscripts, the texts that accompany them, the hands, the physical charac-

44 See Rosier-Catach, “Abélard”; Grondeux and Rosier-Catach, “Les Glosulae”; Grondeux and Rosier-Catach, Priscien. Rosier-Catach has written very extensively on this area: for a list of some of her important publications, see http://opac.regesta-imperii.de/lang_en/autoren.php?name=Rosier-Catach%C3%A9%2C+Ir%C3%A8ne (up to 2019; accessed 25.07.2022).
teristics of the codex: all these provide evidence to help solve the many puzzles that still remain about this material. How do the texts in the manuscripts relate to the teaching? Are they copies for masters, or pupils’ lecture notes, or written-up pieces for circulation? (The answers will, of course, vary from text to text.) And how do they relate to one another, especially in the cases where they include similar arguments or even almost identical passages?\(^{45}\)

1.3.3 Anonymity and Pseudonymity

Many investigators in the historical research project have been discontented with the widespread anonymity of twelfth-century logical texts and sought to alleviate it by supplying presumed authors’ names. Cousin himself started the trend by attributing to Abelard *De generibus et speciebus*, for no good reason except that he thought it contained the conceptualist theory of universals he favoured. Hauréau quickly identified the Master R., whose view on universals he printed, with Roscelin. Constant Mews claimed a commentary on Porphyry “secundum uocales” as Abelard’s work. More recently, Yukio Iwakuma has been eager to attribute a variety of commentaries and other texts to William of Champeaux.\(^{46}\)

All of these attributions, however, have been either convincingly rejected or else are now seriously questioned.\(^{47}\) Moreover, one of the striking developments in the historical research project in the last decade has been the removal of what were previously regarded as solid attributions. The literal commentaries said to be by Abelard in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS 13.3368, published in part by Cousin and fully by Dal Pra, have been powerfully argued not to be his, and the *Logica Nostrorum petitioni sociorum* is thought by its current editors not to be directly Abelard’s work.\(^{48}\) The need for such

---

\(^{45}\) On the logical collections, see Marenbon, “Medieval Latin Commentaries,” 93–95; Marenbon and Tarlazzi, “Logic,” 222–225.

\(^{46}\) See Mews, “A Neglected Gloss,” and Iwakuma, “Pierre Abélard,” where a variety of commentaries in their different versions (P3, P14, C8, C14, H9, Hu, B8, and B10) are attributed to William. Iwakuma has himself qualified this view since then: see “Vocales Revisited,” esp. 90–91, for a more recent statement of his position.

\(^{47}\) On the authorship of *De generibus*, see now Tarlazzi, *Individui universali*, 96–97; on that of the *Sententia secundum magistrum R*, see Dijks, “Two Anonymous 12th-Century Tracts,” 89–91; on William of Champeaux’s authorship of surviving commentaries, see Marenbon, “Logic at the Turn,” 193–194, 196–199, with further references there.

\(^{48}\) On the literal commentaries, see Martin, “A Note,” and Cameron, “Abelard’s Early Glosses.” On the *Logica Nostrorum petitioni sociorum*, see Marenbon, *Abelard*, 33–38: the doubts about the authenticity of the work were first raised by Peter King and Christopher Martin, and they will explain them in detail in their edition.
de-attributions may be no accident. Just like the historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it seems that some twelfth-century scribes saw in an unattributed commentary a vacuum needing to be filled with some famous name, such as that of Abelard, or of Roscelin, or indeed of the ninth-century writer Hrabanus Maurus.\footnote{C27 is attributed to “Ros.” – which almost certainly means Roscelin, but its doctrine shows clearly that it is not by him. See Marenbon, “The Tradition,” 150. P3 is attributed to “Rabanus” in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms 13.3368.}

1.3.4 Understanding the Philosophy

The biggest of all the opportunities and challenges now for the historical research project is to achieve a philosophical understanding of its material. This aim is a challenge as well as an opportunity because, although so many of the texts are now available, there is a lack of information about the chronology of the commentaries and their relations with each other. Historians of philosophy should be able to tell a story, but how can they do so when their material is mostly not merely anonymous but unordered and unsorted?

Yet philosophical scholars should not hold off from the material and wait until the philologists and literary historians have had time to do more work. Many of these problems, especially those concerning the standard commentaries, may not be solved for a long time, if ever. The challenge posed by the material can be met, even now. In some fortunate cases, external evidence, such as the date of the manuscript, fixes a date.\footnote{As in the case of the material from the turn of the twelfth century analysed by Hansen, “In Voce/In Re,” and Ebbesen, “An Argument.”} Otherwise, one strategy employed by the few scholars yet to have attempted a philosophical discussion is to use Abelard as their fixed point of reference.\footnote{See Cameron, “The Logic” (mainly P3, P20, and Abelard); Erismann, “Paternités multiples” (C7, C8, and Abelard on relatives); Martin, “The Invention” (C8 and Abelard on relatives).} Another is to profit from the many attributions of arguments and positions to named masters. By collecting and collating these comments, Yukio Iwakuma has started to build up an idea of Alberic of Paris’s views and Irène Rosier-Catach of those in grammar and logic of William of Champeaux.\footnote{Iwakuma began this process in Iwakuma and Ebbesen, “Logico-Theological Schools,” and he assembles material on Alberic in “Alberic of Paris.” On William of Champeaux, see Grondeux and Rosier-Catach, “Les Glosulae,” 152–153, and Grondeux and Rosier-Catach, \textit{Priscien}, 1: 25–268.} Even where positions and arguments are not attributed to a named master, the relations between them can be made clearer by carefully collecting and classifying their occurrences across a body of
works – as illustrated recently in Caterina Tarlazzi’s remarkable study of Walter of Mortagne and the problem of universals.\textsuperscript{53}

1.4 \textbf{Conclusion}

As the last section shows, there are many incidental reasons why the historical research project is now more worthwhile than ever. It exploits a gamut of historians’ and philosophers’ skills, and it tackles problems of anonymity and the relation between the material deposit of evidence and medieval practice that concern all who work on the Middle Ages. But its central importance lies in the fact that, though twelfth-century thought is certainly multi-facetted, the logical schools were clearly one of its most important features, attracting many of the ablest men, just as the universities of Paris and Oxford would in the next century. The philosophical research project was these schools’ main activity and yet, apart from Abelard and the problem of universals, it is given a few paragraphs, if that, in the standard histories of philosophy, and Abelard is allowed to dwarf the combined thinking of all other twelfth-century thinkers.\textsuperscript{54} Now that so much material is transcribed, and the methodological issues have been clarified, the historical research project is in a position to rewrite the history of twelfth-century philosophy.

2 \textbf{The Twelfth-Century Logical Schools: A Special Issue (Heine Hansen)}

The idea and aim of the small conference that gave rise to this special issue were simple. The idea: to bring together the most expert senior scholars and young researchers working on the many, mostly anonymous and unknown, commentaries that constitute the key evidence for the twelfth-century logical schools. The aim: to advance and keep vital scholarly research into this area so as to work toward a better and more balanced understanding of twelfth-century philosophy as a whole. In order to also get a good lie of the land, speakers were

\textsuperscript{53} Tarlazzi, \textit{Individui universali}. Tarlazzi combines this method with others, so that she is also able (287–344) to discuss to which masters the different positions and arguments should be attributed.

\textsuperscript{54} For instance, in Anthony Kenny’s very widely-read \textit{Medieval Philosophy}, twelfth-century logic – indeed twelfth-century philosophy – is limited to Abelard; in the far more comprehensive \textit{Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy} edited by Robert Pasnau and Christina van Dyke, Abelard apart, the philosophical research project is mentioned on just five pages (28, 34, 141–143). In the second volume of \textit{Handbook of the History of Logic}, Ian Wilks, “Peter Abelard,” gives the non-Abelardian material ten pages and Abelard 63.
given free choice of topic, and the following selection of articles is thus nicely indicative of where their individual interests – whether long-standing or more recent – in the diverse material deposit of the twelfth-century schools had led these scholars at the time. Let me briefly introduce them.

As John Marenbon has pointed out above, the project pursued by early twelfth-century logicians included, in addition to the texts of the logica vetus, the Institutiones by the late-ancient grammarian Priscian. As a consequence, the various logical commentaries from the period have close ties with the commentary tradition on Priscian’s work. Working from both recently edited grammatical source material and unedited commentaries on Aristotle’s Categories, all arguably with some connection to Abelard’s teacher, William of Champeaux, Chris Martin’s contribution explores one aspect of this interdependence between grammar and logic in the early twelfth century and shows how discussions of the meaning of numerical terms within grammar came to influence (onto-)logical thinking about the metaphysics of number.

Looking similarly at both edited and unedited material, but focusing purely on logical sources (although here too Priscian has a role to play), Irene Binini investigates early twelfth-century discussions of modal claims. In particular, she investigates the immediate context in which Abelard developed one of his greatest achievements in logic, the distinction between two possible readings of such claims, one de re, the other de dicto. As Binini shows, the systematic investigation of this famous distinction seems to occur only in Abelard’s Dialectica, but it was clearly developed by engaging closely with the views of Abelard’s predecessors and contemporaries.

For reasons that Marenbon has explained above, Abelard is without a doubt the representative of the twelfth-century logical schools about whose thought we know the most. Still, even if we focus on his works more exclusively, there are still important things to be learned. To this end, Federico Viri offers a close analysis of a much-disputed passage from Abelard’s Logica “Ingredientibus” commentary on Aristotle’s Perihermeneias, in which Abelard introduces his famous notion of the dictum. In particular, Viri focuses on the question, raised by Abelard in this context, whether a true declarative sentence (propositio) can generate a false understanding. This question, Viri argues, is important as it constitutes a turning point in Abelard’s argument and prompts him to develop an account of understanding (intellectus) in which the notion of attention (attentio) plays a prominent role. On Viri’s analysis, the understanding generated by a declarative sentence is a multi-layered complex of actions involving mental images, where attention plays a decisive role with respect to the truth or falsity of the understanding. This analysis, Viri argues, not only yields a more coherent interpretation of the overall passage, but also serves to bring together
the mental and extramental aspects of signification (\textit{de intellectibus} and \textit{de rebus}) that Abelard explicitly recognises for declarative sentences.

Also focusing on Abelard, Enrico Donato looks specifically at his view on eternal truths. Donato begins with the \textit{Dialectica}, where Abelard develops the idea that true conditionals express eternal truths. The basis for these truths, Abelard argues, is to be found in the natures of things, but they hold even when things do not actually exist. Having shown how this is meant to work, Donato goes on to consider Abelard's mature theological works, the \textit{Sententiae Parisienses} and \textit{Theologia “Scholarium,”} where eternal truth is ascribed even to what is expressed by contingently true categorical statements such as “Peter is now sitting.” The basis for such truths, Abelard maintains, is to be found in what he now calls “the event of things.” These events are, he claims, perpetual and are foreseen by God from eternity (\textit{ab aeterno}). Although he explicitly denies that events are things (\textit{res}), Abelard's endorsement of them does, according to Donato, nonetheless complicate the picture for those interpreters who wish to defend a deflationary reading of the ontological implications of Abelard's propositional semantics.

As we learn from John of Salisbury in the \textit{Metalogicon} (11.10), and as Marenbon also noted above, a prominent opponent of Abelard was Alberic of Paris. No writings attributed, or attributable, to this Alberic seem to survive, but there are a number of texts that stem from his school and report his views. In the final contribution to this special issue, Heine Hansen examines two of these texts, a commentary on Aristotle's \textit{Categories} and a logical handbook known as \textit{Introductiones Montane maiores}, both of which have been recently edited. Hansen shows how the \textit{Albricani} (as the followers of Alberic were called) handle a problem arising from the widespread use of father and son as examples in the context of Aristotle's theory of relations. It is a problem that has sometimes led scholars to accuse medieval and post-medieval philosophers working in the Aristotelian tradition of being slightly confused about a fundamental feature of relations, but, as Hansen shows, the \textit{Albricani} were keenly aware of it. As Hansen also shows, the solution to the problem was a point on which the \textit{Albricani} were largely in agreement with Abelard (and perhaps even inspired by him), despite their fierce rivalry with him in other matters.

As the attentive reader will no doubt have gathered by this point, there is no article in this special issue that does not mention Peter Abelard. Indeed, that most well-known of all twelfth-century philosophers remains a point of reference throughout. As Marenbon pointed out above, having this fixed reference point is, in fact, a sensible and helpful approach when trying to understand the philosophy that we find in this vast, but largely anonymous and unsorted mass of material. However, as several of the articles attests, this is not just a matter of
using the well-known to understand the unknown: we also, in the process, get to know the well-known better. That is fortunate, of course. For as the special issue as a whole also makes clear, there is still much to be learned about all of these philosophers, known and unknown alike, and it is my modest hope that it will help inspire more research into this fascinating chapter in the history of philosophy.

References

Authors before ca. 1500
Authors after ca. 1500


Cousin, V. Ouvrages inédits d’Abélard pour servir à l’histoire de la scolastique en France (Paris, 1836).


Green-Pedersen, N. J. The Tradition of the Topics in the Middle Ages: The Commentaries on Aristotle’s and Boethius’ “Topics” (Munich, 1984).

Introduction


Hansen, H. “In Voce/In Re in a Late 11th Century Commentary on Boethius’s Topics.” In Arts du langage et théologie aux confins des XIe–XIIe siècles. Textes, maîtres, débats, ed. I. Rosier-Catach (Turnhout, 2011), 663–676.


König-Pralong, C. Médiévisme philosophique et raison moderne de Pierre Bayle à Ernest Renan (Paris, 2016).


Picavet, F. Roscelin, philosophe et théologien d’après la légende et d’après l’histoire. Sa place dans l’histoire générale et comparée des philosophies médiévales (Paris, 1911).


