

## ***Insolubilia: The First Medieval Discussions of Logical Antinomies***

### **Scientific Goal**

The research project explores one of the most intriguing puzzles in the history of logic: the so-called *insolubilia*, or logical paradoxes, as they were known in the Latin Middle Ages. The most famous example is the Liar Paradox – If I say ‘I am lying,’ am I telling the truth or lying? – a contradiction follows regardless of the chosen answer.

While this paradox has fascinated thinkers from ancient times to the present day, surprisingly little is known about how it was first discussed in the twelfth century and how the medieval discussion began. Most studies focus on later medieval texts, leaving the early stages of the debate – between the early 1100s and mid-1200s – largely unexplored. This project aims to fill that gap.

The main scientific goal is to uncover and understand how early medieval scholars first approached these paradoxes. The project will investigate unknown or little-studied texts from the 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, analyse the arguments used to solve the paradoxes, and explore how these ideas connect to both ancient sources and later medieval developments. It also aims to interpret these early theories in light of modern logic.

### **Planned Research**

The research will focus on several key areas:

- **discovering early sources** – the team will search for overlooked or unpublished medieval texts that mention or discuss paradoxes like the Liar;
- **analyzing arguments** – these texts will be carefully studied to understand the different strategies medieval thinkers used to deal with paradoxes. Some of these strategies are surprisingly original and have not yet been fully examined;
- **connecting the dots** – the project will explore how ancient authors, like Cicero and Jerome, may have influenced medieval thinking, and how early medieval ideas relate to later developments in logic;
- **studying the contexts** – paradoxes weren't just discussed in logic works – they also appeared in theological and philosophical writings. The project will look at how and why these paradoxes were used in different settings;
- **modern relevance** – the team will compare medieval solutions to modern theories in logic, showing how historical ideas might still inspire today's thinkers.

### **Research Motivation and Relevance**

Although logical paradoxes are a well-known topic in philosophy and logic, the early-scholastic contributions have been largely overlooked. Yet, scattered references in 12th-century texts suggest that these paradoxes were already being discussed in schools and theological debates. Because these discussions often appear in unexpected places – like theological questions – they have been missed by previous research. By systematically studying these early sources, the project hopes to reconstruct the beginnings of the medieval debate. This will not only fill a major gap in the history of logic but also shed light on how medieval scholars thought about truth, language, and meaning – issues that remain central to philosophy today.

### **Expected Results**

The project is expected to produce several important outcomes:

- a better understanding of the early argumentative strategies;
- a map of argumentative strategies used by early thinkers to solve paradoxes, showing how these ideas evolved over time and across disciplines;
- new insights into the interplay between logic, philosophy, and theology in the early Middle Ages;
- new insights into the intellectual dynamics of early scholasticism and the role of paradox in shaping philosophical inquiry;
- a comparative study linking early medieval theories to both later medieval logic and modern approaches;
- an open-access database of early medieval texts discussing paradoxes, including text editions and translations.

Ultimately, the research will not only deepen our knowledge of medieval logic but also offer a precious source of inspiration for the contemporary thought.