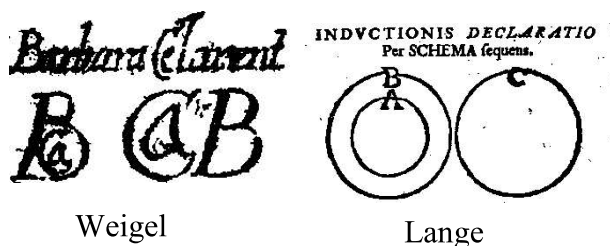


## Means or end? Eulerian-diagrams in the history of modern philosophy

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From the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were not less than ten philosophers which focused extensively on so-called Euler- or Venn-diagrams, as modern historians of logic note [1–6]. In early modern philosophy, Euler-diagrams had been anticipated, inter alia, by J.L. Vives (16<sup>th</sup> century), G.W. Leibniz (17<sup>th</sup> c.) and both G. Ploucquet and J.H. Lambert (18<sup>th</sup> c.). Each of these scholars developed an original form of diagrammatic reasoning in logic: For example, E. Weigel (17<sup>th</sup> c.) has used capital letters for representing syllogisms and J.C. Lange (18<sup>th</sup> c.) has used circles and “Chirothecas” to illustrate logical relations and methodical problems (e.g. induction, enthymems etc.), as seen in the following:



But what was the reason for early modern philosophers to use Eulerian diagrams at all? Among modern historians of logic we found two theses which are closely connected to each other: M. Gardner [2] states that since the middle ages Euler-diagrams were used just in order to teach dull-witted students. Therefore, Euler diagrams were just means to an end. A second thesis was raised by P. Bernard [6]: According to Bernard, the appreciation of Euler-diagrams in logic starts not before the 1960s. Thus it arose very late that Euler diagrams become the end to research.

In my talk, I will focus on the question whether Eulerian diagrams were just means in the history of early modern logic or not. Against Gardner, I will argue that Eulerian diagrams were not only as a tool for dull-witted students, but rather as a tool of didactic reformers in early modern logic. Against Bernard, I will argue that there was a time long before the 1960s in which Eulerian diagrams become the end to logical research.

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<http://blog.fernuni-hagen.de/euler-venn-diagrams/>

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