

SOME CONSIDERATIONS IN MEDIEVAL TENSE LOGIC

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I In medieval logic we find a distinction between categorematic and syncategorematic terms.¹ Categorematic terms are those that can be used as the subject and/or the predicate of a sentence; syncategorematic terms are those that cannot serve the role of subject and/or predicate of a sentence. Some syncategorematic terms are of particular interest to logicians and were discussed by medieval logicians; among such terms discussed we find 'all', 'some', 'is', 'if', 'only', 'and', 'or', 'not', etc.

Peter of Spain explains at the beginning of his *Treatise on Syncategorematic Words*:

Because a thing is or is not, a proposition is said to be true or false. But truth or falsity is caused in a proposition by syncategorematic words, such as 'only', 'alone', 'but', 'with the exception of', and so on. Therefore syncategorematic words signify something or other. But they do not signify things capable of functioning as subjects or predicates. Therefore they signify characteristics of things which are characteristics of things capable of functioning as subjects or predicates. However, there is nothing in a true or false statement except a subject and a predicate and their characteristics. Nevertheless they do not signify characteristics of that which is a subject or of that which is a predicate, as 'white', 'black', 'well', 'badly', and the like, do; rather they signify a characteristic of a subject as subject or of a predicate as predicate. [3], p. 17.

Syncategorematic words signify characteristics of terms rather than characteristics of things. They serve the syntactic role of indicating how terms are qualified and how they are to be interrelated.

In discussions of syncategorematic terms by medieval logicians, we find some include consideration of the terms 'incipit' ('begins') and 'desinit' ('ceases'). Though these terms are of little interest to contemporary logicians, medieval logicians thought 'begins' and 'ceases' were syncategorematic terms of particular interest to logicians.² I will briefly consider why this is so.

A logic which analyzes the language of mathematics can be a logic of eternal or atemporal truths and falsehoods, but in the physical world things change. While the statement ' $2 + 3 = 5$ ' is true for all time, in all places,