The Signification of the Copula in Fernando de Enzinas's Syncategoremata

Paloma Pérez-Ilzarbe (University of Navarra)
pilzarbe@unav.es

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Abstract: This article deals with a brief difficultas in the Tractatus de compositione propositionis mentalis by Fernando de Enzinas: qualiter copule significant tempus et an copule de presenti et preterito sint synonime. A progressive determination of the signification of the copula is analysed: first, Enzinas defines his position about the principal syncategorematic signification of the copula; then, he analyses the sense of the consignification of time traditionally attributed to the copula. The originality of Enzinas's position is highlighted, given the fact that he gives preference to the question as to how the copulae signify time rather than the question as to which time the copulae signify.

Keywords: Fernando de Enzinas, mental syncategorems, mental copula, consignification of time.

1. Fernando de Enzinas and His Tractatus de Compositione Propositionis mentalis

Fernando de Enzinas († 1523) was one of the brilliant Spanish logicians who studied and taught at the University of Paris when the Nominalist development of terminism was flourishing at the beginning of the 16th century.\(^1\) He lectured as a master of Arts at the colleges of Sainte-Barbe and Beauvais, but shortly before his death he moved to Alcalá to teach summulae. He became very popular in Spanish universities, and his works were enthusiastically studied in Alcalá and Salamanca.\(^2\)

This research is based on the Tractatus de compositione propositionis mentalis, of which Angel d'Ors had prepared a transcription.\(^3\) Angel was able to identify four editions of this text, two of 1526 and two of 1528. An edition of 1521 is also cited by scholars, which some library catalogues list with the title Tractatus de actibus...
sincathegoreumaticis siue de compositione propositionis mentalis. I reproduce below Angel's notes about the editions he had located:

a) Petrus Gromors and Iohannes Parvus, Paris, 1526. One copy located at the Monastery of Santa María de la Vid (Burgos):


Explicit: xxx(vb): Explicit liber de compositione propositionis mentalis, sive de actibus sincathegoreuma-/-ticis Ferdinandi de enzinas, vallis oletanei, Parri-/siis anno domini M.D.XXVI.

b) Tractatus de compositione mentalis ... et ad noticiae introductorias a Roberto V.... Ferdinandi de Enzinas, Venundantur Parrisisi, apud Petrum Gaudoul, 1526. One copy located at the Cathedral of Oviedo.

c) Tractatus de compositione propositionis mentalis actuum sincathegoreumaticorum naturam manifestans et ad noticiae introductorias a magistro Roberto Uvancop noviter recognitus atque in suam integritatem restitutus, Paris, Pedro Gaudoul, 1528 (30 fols. in 4°) (¿Tractatus de verbo mentis et Sincathegorematicis?)

d) Antonius du Ry, Lyon, 1528. Copies located in Granada and León:


Colophon: Explicit liber de compositione propositionis men-/-talils: sive de actibus sincathegoreumaticis Fer-/dinandi de enzinas: vallis oletanei: Lugduni / impressus per Antonium du Ry / anno domini M.D.XXVIII. / Penultima die men-/sis Maii.

The Tractatus de compositione propositionis mentalis is intended to be a discussion about sincategorematic mental acts, although this is preceded by the study of the related question as to whether or not a mental proposition is composed of parts (hence the title of the treatise).4 After Ockham, the issue about the existence and nature of mental syncategorems was a big one,5 and this is echoed in Enzinas's pages. In his investigation into the nature and signification of mental syncategorems, he touches on a number of important logical themes. Among many other points, Enzinas produces a brief but interesting discussion on the signification of the copula, or rather, of the copulae: 'est' and 'fuit' (ff. 11va-12rb of the Lyon edition).6

Concerning sincategorems in general, Enzinas holds the common opinion, according to which syncategorematic terms signify no thing or things (aliiquid vel aliqua), although they signify in some way (aliqualiter).7 The analysis of the signification of the

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4 This question was widely discussed in the post-medieval period. See E. J. Ashworth, Language and Logic in the Post-Medieval Period, 51-52, and ‘Mental Language and the Unity of Propositions’; Gabriel Nuchelmanns, Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition (Amsterdam, Oxford, New York, 1980), 94-102.


6 A digital copy of the book is available at the Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes.

7 See Gabriel Nuchelmanns, Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition, 28-31; E. J. Ashworth, ‘The Structure of Mental Language: Some Problems Discussed by Early Sixteenth Century Logicians’, Vivarium 20 (1982), 59-83. For an overview of the distinction categorema / syncategorema and
copula, although intended to substantiate this thesis, does much more than merely present another example of a syncategorem and its signifying \textit{aliqualiter}. The most interesting aspect of these few paragraphs is that they raise important questions about the complex relations between propositions and time, which are crucial to understand the nature and logical properties of propositions. This is an interesting development of terminist logic: although the effect of tense in the supposition of terms is widely studied, the signification of time by the copula is usually taken for granted, so Enzinas’s study of this topic represents an enrichment of the theory of the properties of terms. This development is closely linked to the interest in mental language and mental syncategorems.

Enzinas’s results can be summarised in the following three theses: a) the copula has its own syncategorematic signification, independent of the signification of subject and predicate; b) the copula has a twofold signification: first it signifies in a ‘unitive way’, but \textit{in addition} it imports time; c) what distinguishes one copula from the other (‘est’, ‘fuit’) is also syncategorematic in character (it is also an \textit{aliqualiter}).

As we shall see, these theses are linked to Enzinas’s views about mental language: a) the mental copula is an act of combining subject and predicate; b) the mental copula is, by its nature, intrinsically tensed; c) the different copulae are different kinds of mental acts which are characterised by different modes of signifying.

2. Mental Propositions and Their Parts: The Syncategorematic Signification of the Copula

In the pages I am focusing on, Enzinas makes several steps in order to determine more and more accurately the signification of the copula. In the first stage, the signification of the copula is merely separated from the signification of the categorematic terms to which it is attached. This first approach to the copula is just intended to combat the opinion that the significations of subject and predicate are somehow absorbed by the syncategorematic signification of the copula that joins them.\footnote{This is, for example, Hieronymus Pardo’s opinion. See Gabriel Nuchelmans, \textit{Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition}, 37-38.}

This discussion about signification is placed at the level of mental language: Enzinas explores the intellective acts which are involved in the signification of mental propositions.\footnote{See Enzinas’s intellectual context on this issue in: E. J. Ashworth, ‘Mental Language and the Unity of Propositions’; ‘The Structure of Mental Language’; Claude Panaccio, \textit{Le discours intérieur: De Platon à Guillaume d’Ockham} (Paris, 1991), 291-301.} He examines an argument for the thesis that the copula ‘est’, as well as signifying \textit{aliqualiter}, also signifies the things signified by the categorematic terms which accompany it.\footnote{‘Aliquod sincathegoreuma significat aliquid; et non est maior ratio de uno quam de alio; ergo quodlibet. Antecedens probatur: hec copula ‘est’ quando est de tertio adiacente significat quicquid importatur per extrema; ergo etc.’ (11va)} He reproduces an argument which takes as an example a proposition with ‘est’ used predicatively (\textit{de tertio adiacente}), and apparently manages to prove that in ‘homo est asinus’ the copula ‘est’ signifies men and donkeys.

The argument is derived (explicitly) from a relational conception of the signification of propositions, and (implicitly) from the notion of \textit{signicare} as
representing to a cognitive power (in this case, to the intellect). On the one hand, the signification of the propositional copula in ‘homo est asinus’ is explicated in a relational way: the copula ‘est’ unitively signifies men with respect to donkeys. On the other hand, a leap is made from the linguistic to the intellectual level: from ‘significare compositivo’ to ‘intelligere’. The mentioned relational signification implies a relational understanding, and therefore the requirements for the intellect to have this kind of ‘with respect to...’ understanding are examined: for the intellect to understand some things as unitively related to some others it is necessary that the intellect not only understands the ‘respect to’, but also the related things. This is why in the case proposed it would be required that men and donkeys are signified by the propositional copula. This is, of course, connected to a certain position about the structure of the proposition: a mental proposition is considered to be a non-composite mental act.

In response to this argument, Enzinas deploys his conception of mental propositions as composed of several intellective acts. He agrees with the objector in attributing that kind of relational signification to propositions, and hence he admits that when the copula connects subject and predicate in the proposition ‘homo est asinus’ the intellect understands men and donkeys in a new, relational, way. But he disagrees with respect to the elements which are involved in this relational understanding.

Enzinas, who takes the mental proposition to be composed of parts, assigns to each of the intellective acts a distinctive element of the propositional signification. So, instead of assigning to the copula both the signification of the things related (for example, men and donkey) and of the way of being related (for example, unitive), Enzinas separately assigns to the categorematic intellective acts the signification of the things related, and

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12 ‘Probatur antecedens: capta hac propositione: ‘homo est asinus’, illa copula ‘est’ significat compositivo vel unitive homines respectu asinorum.” (11va)

13 Biard places in Peter of Alilly the point of departure of a tendency to assimilate language and knowledge via the notion of representation: Joël Biard, 'Pierre d'Ailly: Language, Concept, Représentation', 169-183.

14 “Sed impossibile est intellectum intelligere homines respectu asinorum quin etiam intelligat homines et asinos; ergo illa copula ‘est’ signifcat homines et asinos.” (11va)

15 Enzinas has in mind the theory of mental propositions of Hieronymus Pardo, with whom Enzinas shows his disagreement throughout the Tractatus, especially in the first pages, where he refutes his main theses. On Pardo's theory, see Paloma Pérez-Lizarbe, 'Jerónimo Pardo on the Unity of Mental Propositions', in Le Langage Mental du Moyen Âge à l'Âge Classique, ed. J. Biard (Louvain-Paris, 2009), 185-204, as well as the cited E. J. Ashworth, 'Mental Language and the Unity of Propositions'; 'The Structure of Mental Language'; Gabriel Nuchelms, Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition. Friedman traces back this 'one act' theory to Durand of St. Pourçain: Russell L. Friedman, 'Mental Propositions before Mental Language', in Le Langage Mental du Moyen Âge à l'Âge Classique, ed. J. Biard (Louvain-Paris, 2009), 95-115.

16 On the history of this 'compositional' theory of mental propositions, see Alfonso Maiuri, 'Mental Language and Italian Scholasticism in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', in John Buridan and Beyond. Topics in the Language Sciences, ed. R. L. Friedman and S. Ebbesen (Copenhagen, 2004), 33-67; Stephan Meier-Oeser, 'Mental Language and Mental Representation in Late Scholastic Logic', in John Buridan and Beyond. Topics in the Language Sciences, ed. R. L. Friedman and S. Ebbesen (Copenhagen, 2004), 237-265; Russell L. Friedman, 'Mental Propositions before Mental Language', 95-115.

17 “Ad hac replicam respondeo quod intellectus, adveniente hac copula 'est', intelligit unitive homines in ordine ad asinos qualiter antea non intelligebat..." (11va)
to the syncategorematic intellective act the signification of the way of being related.\textsuperscript{18} He concludes thus that the copula signifies no thing, but it just signifies in a way. As usual, Aristotle’s authority is called to confirm this (\textit{Peri Hermeneia}, 16b 24-25).\textsuperscript{19} But in addition, Enzinas highlights the syncategorematic signification of the copula by telling us that it is incorrect to interpret Aristotle as saying that the copula signifies a composition:\textsuperscript{20} it rather signifies in a ‘suitable for uniting’ way (\textit{unitive seu compositive}).\textsuperscript{21}

So far, Enzinas has settled a first position on the signification of the copula, by stressing its syncategorematic character and understanding this character in accordance with the standard opinion of the terminist tradition. But a mere distinction from the categorematic signification of the extremes does not suffice to fully characterise the signification of the copula. Terminist logic has inherited (via the \textit{logica antiquorum}) the Aristotelian conception of the basic elements that constitute a proposition: noun and verb. The copula, which inside the terminist tradition is classed as a syncategorem, in Aristotelian terms can be also classed as a verb, which forces us to further qualify the signification of the copula.

\textbf{3. The Copula as a Verb: Does the Copula Signify Time?}

Enzinas examines the first implications of the verbal character of the copula by considering a second objection against the common opinion about syncategoresms: if, according to Aristotle, a verb is that which consignifies time, it seems to follow that the copula ‘\textit{est}’ in ‘\textit{homo est asinus}’ in fact signifies something, namely, the present time.\textsuperscript{22}

From this point on, Enzinas inquires more thoroughly into the signification of the copula, with the aim of clarifying whether and in what sense it can be said that the different forms of the copula signify time (\textit{qualiter copulae significent tempus}). His analyses are progressively deeper: he starts by considering the copula as a verb, and he combines the Aristotelian idea of ‘\textit{consignificare tempus}’ with the terminist idea of a ‘respect to time’ in the signification of the copula; second, he analyses the structure of mental propositions, trying to identify the element in a mental proposition that could effect the signification of time; finally, he engages in an onto-semantic investigation of the relation proposition-time, which will result in the finding of a specific signification for each of the copulae.

Concerning the copula as a verb, Enzinas explains the traditional answer given by the defenders of the common opinion about syncategoresms: they translate the Aristotelian idea of ‘\textit{consignificare tempus}’ into the terminist language about the syncategorematic signification of the copula. To say that the copula consignifies a time is

\textsuperscript{18} “... sed hoc non est per copulam, sed intelligit solum homines et asinos per notitias quas habet hominum et asinorum, et intelligit unitive per copulam.” (11va)

\textsuperscript{19} “Et hoc est quod Aristoteles voluit quando dixit: ly ’est’, si purum dixeris, nihil significat, sed significat quandam compositionem quam sine extremis non est intelligere; id est, ly ’est’ solitari positum nihil significat, sed significat quandam compositionem, id est, compositiv[o]<> in ordine ad aliqua que sine extremis non potest intelligi.” (11va)

\textsuperscript{20} This issue can be traced back to a dispute between Chatton and Wodeham, in the first half of the 14th century: see Gino Roncaglia, \textit{Palestra Rationis: Discussioni su Natura della Copula e Modalità nella Filosofia ‘Scolastica’ Tedesca del XVII secolo}, (Firenze, 1996), 106.

\textsuperscript{21} “Ex quo patet hanc propositionem: ly ’est’ significat compositionem seu unionem, esse de rigore falsam, nisi capiatur loco huius: ly ’est’ significat unitive seu compositive.” (11va)

\textsuperscript{22} “Sed contra hoc arguitur: Ly ’est’ in propositione assumpta significat tempus; ergo significat aliquid. Antecedens probatur per Aristotelem dicentem verbum est quod consignificat tempus etc.” (11vb)
just to say that the copula makes its syncategorematic union with respect to the present, the past, or the future.

For the orthodox defenders of the common opinion, time is not an aliquid which is signified by the copula, but it is something with respect to which the signification of the copula is exerted (significare... ad aliquam differentiam temporis). If, for example, in an affirmative proposition, the copula is denoting that the predicate applies to the subject, the consignification of time just adds that this is denoted with respect to the present, the past, or the future.\textsuperscript{23}

At this level of analysis (a merely linguistic explication of the phrase ‘consignificare tempus’), time would seem to be something external to the signification of the copula. But again signification requires an analysis of the mental language, where a deeper sense of ‘consignificare tempus’ appears. Enzinas does not stop at the formula ‘significat unitive in ordine ad aliquam differentiam temporis’, but he tries to discover what exactly this respect to time amounts to. He engages in a semantic-epistemic inquiry, asking what happens on the side of the intellect when the copula exerts its syncategorematic function with respect to time.

He inspects an opinion which states that if we admit that the copula ‘est’ makes the syncategorematic union with respect to one or other difference of time, then we have to admit that the intellect somehow understands (intelligit) the present, the past or the future. For example, in the case of the proposition ‘homo est asinus’, for the present-tensed copula ‘est’ to signify with respect to the present, the intellect must understand the present time.\textsuperscript{24}

The proof of this statement is similar to the argument examined previously intended to prove that the copula signifies the things signified by the categorematic terms: it goes from significare to intelligere. Enzinas had replied to that argument by showing that the mental proposition contains other parts, different from the copula, which are apt to signify these things. To this argument Enzinas replies by investigating whether or not there are other parts in the mental proposition which could be apt for signifying the present time.

\textbf{4. The Elements of a Mental Proposition: Which of the Parts Can Signify Time?}

According to the standard opinion about the composition of a mental proposition, there are three parts (though only two cognitions) implied in the mental proposition ‘homo est asinus’: a cognition (\textit{notitia}) of men which corresponds to the subject ‘homo’, a cognition of donkeys which corresponds to the predicate ‘asinus’, and a syncategorematic act (an intellecitive \textit{actus} which is not a cognition) which makes the predicative union.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} “Ad hanc replicam respondent omnes communes: Ly ‘est’ non significat tempus; et dicunt quod consignificare tempus nihil aliud est quam significare unitive ad aliquam differentiam temporis, id est, denotare predicatum competere subiecto pro aliqua differentia temporis (nec hinc sequitur verbum significare tempus).” (11vb)
\item \textsuperscript{24} “Contra hoc arguitur: Ly ‘est’ significat tempus; ergo etc. Probatur: bene sequitur: Ly ‘est’ significat unitive in ordine ad aliquam differentiam temporis in hac propositione: ‘homo est asinus’, ergo intellectus intelligit aliquam differentiam temporis...” (11vb)
\item \textsuperscript{25} Gabriel Nuchelmans, \textit{Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition}, 36-37. On the 14th century discussion whether mental syncategorems are ‘concepts’ or ‘acts’, see, for example: Gino Roncaglia, ‘Mesino de Codronchi’s Discussion on Syncategoremata and Mental Language’; Paul J. J. M.
But the focus on time forces the logician to revise this straightforward structure. There are two ways of complicating the picture: a) one can make the signification of the copula more complex, b) or one can make the structure of the mental proposition more complex.

a) A complex signification for the copula. According to the more traditional approach, it seems obvious that none of the mentioned cognitions can make the intellect understand the present time. This seems to imply that the remaining intellective act, the one corresponding to the copula ‘est’, is that by which the intellect understands the present, and as a consequence, that the ‘est’ in some sense signifies the present. In sum, the mental copula ‘est’ on the one hand makes the predicative union, but on the other hand this syncategorematic act somehow signifies the present. This traditional way thus proposes a double signification for the copula, in virtue of which the copula would not be a pure syncategorem. This is the opinion on which the mentioned argument is based.

b) A more complex structure for mental propositions. Some defenders of the common opinion about syncategoremats, unwilling to admit this double signification for the copula, have maintained a curious thesis about the mental proposition to which the vocal proposition is subordinated. They propose four basic parts for the mental proposition. The elements of the corresponding mental proposition are not only the cognition corresponding to the subject, the cognition corresponding to the predicate, and the syncategorematic act corresponding to the copula, but a fourth element is added which makes the link to the adequate difference of time: for example, ‘in tempore presenti homo est asinus’. The twofold signification which the first opinion associated with the copula is in this second opinion split into two elements: the mental copula takes only the significare unitive, and the connotation of time is made by a different mental act. The mental proposition would contain then, as well as the categorematic cognitions corresponding to subject and predicate, an atemporal syncategorematic cognition which makes the predicative union (the mental copula ‘est’), and a temporal modifier which indicates the difference of time with respect to which the predicative union is effected (the ‘in tempore presenti’ modifier).

This way of analysing mental propositions saves the purely syncategorematic character of the copula, but it has consequences concerning its signification. On the one hand, an atemporal mental copula would after all fail to meet the Aristotelian definition of a verb as something which consignifies time. On the other hand, a serious problem is that an atemporal copula would lack a specific signification, and would fail to be distinguished from other syncategorematic unitive acts (for example, a conjunction).

Enzinias is not willing to pay such a price, so he prefers to keep the three-part analysis of mental propositions, and thus he has to admit that the copula ‘est’ in a sense signifies the present time. But he warns the reader that this does not convert the
copula into a categorematic term. Although the copula signifies something (it signifies time), it also signifies _aliqualiter_ (it signifies in a unitive way). The copula has therefore a mixed signification, partly syncategorematic and partly categorematic (_unitive significare + importare tempus_). The order of the elements in this twofold signification is important: first the copula has a syncategorematic signification, and second it also brings in time.31 This is the reason why Enzinas can say that the copula, unlike connotative terms, does not have a principal significate (_principale significatum_) to which the consignification of time is added: the principal signification is syncategorematic and hence there is no significate on this side.32 This simply means that ‘consignicare’ is here taken in an improper sense.

So far only the present-tensed copula ‘est’ has been mentioned, and its signification has been explained in a general way, making only reference to some (unspecified) ‘difference of time’. To obtain a deeper understanding of the signification of the copula Enzinas has to go into the signification of the different copulae: ‘est’ and ‘fuit’,33

5. ‘Est’ versus ‘Fuit’: Which Time Is Signified by Each of the Copulae?

In principle, it seems natural to answer that the present-tensed copula signifies the present, and the past-tensed copula signifies the past. But this simple answer becomes puzzling when one realises, first, that time passes (the present becomes past, and the future becomes present, and then also past), and second, that propositions are themselves temporal entities (in the sense that they are formed at a time and they can have a duration), so not only their own existence but also their having a signification occur at a time, and thus they are affected by the passage of time. In this context it makes sense to ask ‘which present’ is signified by the present-tensed copula of a given proposition.

An extra complication might arise from the twofold way of considering time, either as an extended duration (_tempus_) or as a point-like instant (_instans_). Enzinas remains neutral in principle about whether the time signified by the copula is a span of time or an instant, but in general he chooses to speak about instants for the sake of simplicity. In any case, his approach to the signification of time is extensional, in the sense that he is considering a set of instants/spans that might be signified, and he asks which particular instants/spans in this set are in fact signified by each of the copulae.

5.1. The Copula ‘Est’ Signifies this Present Instant

In his analysis of this question, Enzinas first presents a dilemma between two possibilities: either the copula signifies only the present instant or it signifies any

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31 “Nec propter inter se sequitur ly ‘est’ esse purum cathegoreuma, quia etiam aliqualiter significat (videlicet unitive). Unde significatio totalis de ly ‘est’ non est nisi significare unitive in ordine ad subiectum et predicatum, et ultra suum aliqualiter sive unitive significare importare tempus.” (11vb)
32 “Et si arguas contra hoc: sequitur quod est connotativus, postquam ultra suam principalem significationem importat seu dat intelligere aliquid, ad hoc nego consequentiam, quia ad aliquid esse terminum connotativum requiritur, ultra principale significatum (id est, materiale), aliquid alius vel aliqualiter det intelligere; modo ly ‘est’ non habet principale significatum. Sed questio est de nomine utrum ly ‘est’ sit connotativum necne, sed postquam non est terminus cathegoreumaticus dicendum est quod nec est connotativus nec absolutus.” (11vb-12ra)
33 Enzinas does not mention in this context the future-tensed copula ‘fuit’. I am inclined to think that his analysis cannot be transposed to the third difference of time: given the extensionalist character of Enzinas’s semantics, the metaphysical asymmetry between past and future might be an obstacle to such a transposition.
instant. He starts by considering the seemingly natural view that the present-tensed copula 'est' signifies only the present instant. The adoption of a tensed perspective in the analysis of propositions has significant effects at the level of truth values. Enzinas explores the implications that this option could have in this respect.

When the duration of propositions is taken into account, we can ask about the instant at which a proposition is true: the whole set of instants at which the proposition exists can be taken as points of reference. The standard answer is that a proposition is only true for the instant which is imported by the copula 'est'. But, according to this first opinion on the signification of the copula, the instant imported by the copula 'est' is just *hoc presens*. This implies that when this instant passes by, the proposition cannot be true any more.

Enzinas does not make explicit the kind of truth conditions that are being used in the objections he reports, but we can suppose that some kind of 'significatur qualiter est' is being put into play. Of course, this simple formula gets complicated when time is taken into account.

The first complication arises when time is taken into account as part of the signification of propositions: an explication of the truth conditions of the proposition must then include the instant which is signified by the copula. For example, the proposition 'Deus est' is taken to signify 'Deus in hoc instanti est'. Therefore, for the proposition 'Deus est' to be true it will be required that God exists at this instant.

But the second complication arises when the proposition is considered as a temporal entity, and the passage of time is taken into account. Let us take for example, that the proposition 'Deus est' is formed at instant A, but then a second instant B arrives (that is, instant A becomes past and instant B is now present) and the proposition keeps existing at B. We can now ask about the truth value of the proposition not only at A but also at B. Therefore, in order to determine the truth value both at A and at B, we will have to take into account the signification of the proposition both at A and at B.

The opinion reported by Enzinas takes for granted that the time signified by the present-tensed copula is the time which is present when the proposition is formed: to signify 'Deus in hoc instanti est' would then be to signify 'Deus in A instanti est'. If the time signified by the copula is the time which is present when the proposition is formed, when a new instant B arrives, the proposition (formed at A) will still signify 'Deus in A instanti est'. But if the signification does not change with the passage of time, then the proposition 'Deus est' would be false at B, since the truth condition that was the case at A is not the case at B any more.

This consequence is not a mere curiosity about the fact that the truth value of a proposition changes with time. It is of a great importance for Enzinas, since this means that no proposition can be necessary (in the sense of true at any time), not even 'Deus

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34 "Sed contra hoc arguitur: Si hec copula 'est' importaret tempus vel instans, vel solum hoc presens significat vel quodlibet." (12ra)
35 In some of Enzinas's examples the 'est' occurs as second adjacent: this does not make any significant difference to his arguments.
If the copula ‘est’ only signifies the present instant, the truth value could never remain the same through the passage of time.\textsuperscript{36}

5.2. The Copula ‘Est’ Signifies Any Instant Which Happens to Be Present

A possible way to defend the prima facie natural position that the present-tensed copula signifies the present, without encountering this undesired outcome, is to avoid the mismatch between the time signified by the proposition (instant A) and the posterior time at which its truth value is considered (instant B). At this point Enzinas reports an intermediate opinion that still maintains that the copula signifies the present but abandons the assumption that the time signified by the present-tensed copula is the time which is present when the proposition is formed: instead, the natural thing for the copula is to effect the syncategorematic union with respect to the instant which is present whenever the copula exists. The duration of the proposition has then an immediate effect on the signification of the copula: according to this opinion, when the proposition exists at instant A, the copula signifies this single instant A, but when the proposition exists at instant B, the signification of the copula is somehow extended, so that it also signifies instant B.\textsuperscript{38} The copula comes thus to progressively signify the whole set of instants which happen to be present during the existence of the proposition.

This intermediate solution may allow us to solve the problem about the change of truth value, but it generates some other strange consequences concerning the signification of the copula: on the one hand, a problem concerns the duration that this solution introduces into the signification of the copula; on the other hand, a difficulty remains which is common to any opinion which restricts the signification of the copula ‘est’ to the present time or instant.

First, this way of determining the signification of the copula forces one to take the copula of a given proposition in an equivocal way.\textsuperscript{39} When the span during which the proposition exists is taken into account, this duration is transferred to the signification of the copula, so that at instant B the ‘est’ makes its syncategorematic union for an extended time (tempus), not for a single instant. This means that the ‘est’ has to be taken first (at A) as making its union for the present instant and then (at B) as making its union for the present time (the duration of the proposition), simply by the fact that the passage of time extends the set of instants which happen to be present during the existence of the proposition.

Second, from the idea that the copula ‘est’ signifies the present it follows that different tokens of the present-tense copula ‘est’ existing at different moments of time (one in the past and the other in the future) would not be synonymous: they would not signify the same, since the former would in fact signify only instants that now are past

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\textsuperscript{36} “Si primum, sequitur quod nulla propositio est necessaria, nam si aliqua esset, maxime esset hec: ‘Deus est’; sed hec non potest esse vera nisi per instans hoc presens quod illa copula ‘est’ importat, cum post hoc instans seu tempus illa erit falsa, quia sensus eius erit: ‘Deus in hoc instanti est’ [anima]; ergo propositum.” (12ra)

\textsuperscript{37} This is, by the way, a different question from the problem, also discussed by Enzinas’s contemporaries, whether a mental proposition can change its truth value over time. See Gabriel Nuchelmas, Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition, 128-138.

\textsuperscript{38} “Si forte dixeris quod natura illius copule ‘est’ est talis quod unit pro quolibet instante in quo ipsa est, ita quod quando ipsa est in instante <a> significat ‘a’ instans et quando in b signifcet etiam ‘b’…” (12ra)

\textsuperscript{39} “... contra hoc arguo: sequitur quod illa copula capitur equivoce (cum per solam mutationem temporis acquirat <novam> significationem).” (12ra)
(the instants which were present when it existed) and the latter only instants that now are future (the instants which will be present when it will exist).  

It seems, then, that the consideration of an 'extended' present is not a satisfactory amendment of the opinion that the copula signifies the present. Enzinas explores then the other extreme, the opinion that the copula 'est' signifies any time.

5.3. The Copula 'Est' Signifies Any Instant  

But now problems seem to arise concerning both signification and truth values. First, the undesired consequence concerning signification would be that (given that we apply the same analysis to the past-tensed copula 'fuit') the present-tensed copula 'est' and the past-tensed copula 'fuit' would be synonymous, since they would both signify any time: quodlibet temporis, that is, any element in the set of instants/spans of time, extensionally considered. Second, the undesired consequence concerning truth values is that the truth-condition that makes the past-tensed proposition 'Adam fuit' true (the fact that Adam existed at a past time) would also serve to make the present-tensed proposition 'Adam est' true (since that Adam existed at a past time is also signified by it): if we take the whole set of instants to be signified by the copula (this instant, and this instant, and so on, from past to present), we find some instants in the past at which Adam's existence is a fact, which will be enough to make the proposition true.

Up to this point, three possibilites have been explored: the copula signifies the single instant which is present when the proposition is formed, the copula signifies the set of instants which are present during the existence of the proposition, the copula signifies the set of all instants. As we have seen, each of these possibilities raises its own difficulties, and now Enzinas has to choose the best option.

The problem with necessary propositions seems to be the most serious: the first option is discarded without any further comment. Concerning the second option, the problem of equivocation is also serious: Enzinas finds it unacceptable that the mental copula can make its union both for an instant and for a duration. Equivocation must not be allowed at the level of mental language: the idea that the copula makes its union for any instant at which it exists (that is, having its consignification of time progressively extended from the first instant to the whole time which is present during the existence of the proposition) must therefore be mistaken.

Enzinas introduces then a qualification in the idea that the copula makes the predicative union for any instant at which it exists: this is only true if we are talking about an actual union (unione actuali). But we can also have in mind a potential union (unione potentiali), and in this case we can say that the copula makes its union for any instant whatever. At the level of actual signification, we can say that the present-tensed

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40 "Preterea sequitur quod copula que ante hoc fuit et copula que erit, quamvis utraque sit de presenti, non erunt synonyme, quia una solum instantia preterita importat (postquam in illis fuit) et alter instantia solum futura (quia non fuit in preteritis)." (12ra)
41 "Si dicas nunc secundum (videlicet quod copula de presenti quodlibet temporis importat), contra hoc arguitur: Sequitur etiam quod copula de preterito omne tempus importat, et s[i]<c> copula de preterito et presenti erunt synonyme." (12ra)
42 "Preterea sequitur quod hec concederetur: 'Adam est', cum ly 'est' tempus preteritum importat (et non propter alium conceditur hec: 'Adam[us] fuit')." (12ra)
43 "Ad hanc replicam respondeo quod hec copula 'est' in mente, si uniat pro instanti non potest unire pro tempore; et tunc, quando queris utrum ne importet hoc instans presens vel quodlibet, respondeo quod quodlibet." (12ra)
copula signifies only present instants (that is, the instants which happen to be present when the proposition exists) and the past-tensed copula signifies only past instants (the instants which happen to be past when the proposition exists). But at the level of potential signification, we must say that both copulae signify the whole set of instants which constitute the complete extension of time.\footnote{44}{"Et pro improbationis declaracione notandum est quod copula de presenti unit solum pro instanti in quo ipsa est unionis actualis, sed pro quolibet unit unione potentiali (sicut ly 'homo' supponit tantum pro homine actu existente in hac: 'homo est animal', sed suppositione potentiali pro quolibet homine qui possibiliter supponit); et ly 'fuit' omne instans preteritum actualiter importat et pro quolibet tali unit, sed unione potentiali pro quolibet unit." (12ra-a)}

Enzinas mentions an analogous division of supposition into two species, actual and potential.\footnote{45}{Although the terminology 'actual supposition' / 'potential supposition' is used at the time of Enzinas (see E. J. Ashworth, Language and Logic in the Post-Medieval Period, 78), the sense intended here is more close, in my opinion, to the classical division between suppositio naturalis and accidentalis.} This makes it clear that it is the actual union that matters when truth and falsity are involved (in the same way as it is the actual supposition which determines the truth value of the proposition). The reader must infer that this solves the problem concerning ‘Adam est’ and ‘Adam fuit’: it is the actual union which counts in order to determine the truth value of propositions. Thus, the truth condition of ‘Adam est’ is not fulfilled even if we admit that the ‘est’ signifies every point of time.

Only the (serious) difficulty about the synonymy of the different copulae remains to be solved. Enzinas has to find a specific signification for each copula, compatible with the opinion that both (‘est’, ‘fuit’) signify any time.

6. Any Copula Signifies Any Instant: Are ‘Est’ and ‘Fuit’ Synonymous?

Enzinas firmly states that although both the present-tensed copula and the past-tensed copula import any instant, their signification is not the same. A specific modus of signifying any instant belongs to each of them: the present-tensed copula ‘est’ signifies any instant per modum presentialitatis, whereas the past-tensed copula ‘fuit’ signifies any instant per modum preteritionis.\footnote{46}{"Et sic tam copula presentis quam preteritis importat omne instans, sed in hoc differt [quod] una ab alia <quia> hec per modum preteritionis significat, hoc est, connotat quodlibet instans per modum preteritionis, et illa connotat quodlibet instans per modum presentialitatis (capio ly 'connotare' improprie)." (12ra-b)} That is, there is not a particular set of points of time signified by each copula (present instants / past instants), but the signification of ‘est’ and ‘fuit’ is specified by their particular way of signifying any time (by way of presentness / by way of pastness).

Recall that Enzinas is talking about the potential signification of the copula. The present-tensed copula ‘est’ can make its union for any instant of time (and the past-tensed copula ‘fuit’ can make its union for the same set of instants), and thus both signify the whole set of instants, but the present-tensed copula signifies these instants in a way that the past-tensed copula does not. The signification of the copulae is therefore not completely determined unless one makes reference to this way of signifying. ‘Consignificare tempus’ involves more elements than it appeared to at first sight.

As far as the specific signification of each copula is concerned, the correct question is not, therefore, \textit{which} time is signified by each copula, but \textit{how} time is signified by each copula. What distinguishes ‘est’ from ‘fuit’ is not the particular set of instants which are (potentially) signified, but the way the whole set is signified. This means that there are two \textit{aliqualiter} involved in the signification of the copula: as an element of the principal
signification, there is the way in which the copula relates subject and predicate; and as an element of the added signification, there is the way in which each copula consignifies time.

Here is the originality of Enzinas’s solution, in comparison, for example, with John Dorp’s, who also discusses this problem: Dorp simply turns to the distinction signification / acception, whose analogy in Enzinas (actual / potential signification) is intended to solve a very different problem. Enzinas clearly separates the question about truth values from the question about signification. He has found that the signification of the copula is doubly syncategorematic, so a complete determination of the signification of ‘est’ must include these two aliqualiter.

The fragment I am considering ends with a paragraph which uses the modistic terminology of ‘modi significandi accidentales’, in order to stress the essential character of this second aliqualiter Enzinas has found in the signification of the copula. If the signifying by way of presentness or by way of pastness were accidental to the copulae (just like cases, for example, are accidental to a noun), the vocal or written ‘est’ would be subordinated to the same mental copula as the vocal or written ‘fuit’. But this is impossible, because there are two different ways of dare intelligere involved.

6. Conclusion: The Signification of the Copula in Enzinas’s Syncategorems

In this brief but insightful fragment, who have seen Enzinas reaching a detailed determination of the signification of the copula, from a statement of its principal syncategorematic signification to a clarification of its consignification of time. This second aspect involved several steps: first, the admission of a categorematic component in the signification of the copula (the copula signifies time); second, the stance taken with respect to the question as to which time is signified (the copula signifies any time); and third, the original proposal of a further syncategorematic signification included in the consignification of time (the whole set of times is differently signified by one copula and the other).

In my opinion, Enzinas’s interest in the question as to how the different copulae signify time is an indication that an extensionalist approach to signification falls short of the needs of a comprehensive semantic theory. When tensed propositions come to complicate the picture, something intensional fights to make a space for itself. Enzinas feels that consignifying the present time is something more than pointing to this or that instant which at some point or other happens to be present. Unfortunately, in these pages he does not develop his proposal, so we are left wondering what exactly this connotare per modum presentialitatis might have been.

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47 See Gabriel Nuchelmans, Late-Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition, 131.
48 ‘Et ex hoc patet copulas illas non esse synonymas de significione essentiali (ut quidam dicit), quia non significant eodem modo (postquam aliqualiter una dat intelligere ultra suum principale aliqualiter significare qualiter alia non dat intelligere); si enim solum different penes modum significandi accidentalem, viderentur eidem subordinari (quod est impossibile). Et pro hec patet ad formam argument[um]<i>.</i>.'