

Benedictus Pererius: Renaissance Culture at the Origins of Jesuit Science

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Abstract. Benedictus Pererius (1535–1610) published in 1576 his most successful book *De principiis*, after he had taught philosophy at the Roman College of the Jesuits. It will be shown that parts of this book are actually based on his lectures. But the printed version was intended as a contribution to the debate within his Order on how science should be conceived. Pererius redefined the meaning of scientific speculation to the effect that metaphysics was split into ontology and natural theology, and that further speculative sciences, such as physics, gained their own competence. Throughout this book, as well as in his warning against magic and in his commentaries on the Bible, the Jesuit addresses Renaissance strains of neo-Platonism, Aristotelianism, and syncretism.

Sometimes one can tell a book from its cover: *On the principles and properties common to all natural things (De Communibus omnium rerum naturalium Principiis et Affectionibus)*. The title of the best known book by the Jesuit Benedictus Pererius (1535–1610)¹ tells the reader of the late 16th century that the author was determined to compete with Renaissance natural philosophers, because the title echoes recent books in natural philosophy such as Bernardino Telesio's anti-Aristotelian *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia* (started to be published in 1565) or that of Pietro Pomponazzi: *De naturalium effectuum causis sive de incantationibus* (written in 1520, printed a.o. in 1567) or that of his follower Simon Portius (Porzio, Porta): *De rerum naturalium principiis* (1553). Those books claimed to account for universal principles of everything within nature, maintaining that such principles were causal to their properties. Pererius thus promises a naturalist theory and report about observable reality.

His book is commonly perceived as an important step towards modern – or, rather, enlightenment – metaphysics, as he redesigns the role of physics in the whole of philosophy and expressly states, for the first time, that there is a metaphysics that precedes all particular regions of philosophy. This overarching, 'general' metaphysics, later termed 'ontology', would lay the foundations for the ontological discussions of any particular being, starting with the intelligences (later including natural theology) down to physics.² However, Pererius' book can also be read in the context of the Jesuits' strife for a

unified philosophy teaching and as a response to the philosophy of the Renaissance, including non-Aristotelian philosophy of nature.

The *De principiis* came first out in 1576.³ And it seems that the author's teaching had provoked controversies in connection with Averroism, as transpires from the document of approval for printing.⁴ The censors made special reference to the unity of learning: "idem dicamus, idem sapiamus", according to the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus. However, it was also stated that in some treatments of philosophy there is no danger of presenting varying opinions, given that "one cannot force the human mind with strict laws in matters that allow for dispute, being only probable matters, anyway". So, expecting the addition of a "pious preface", printing was permitted.

Pererius gave philosophy lectures at the Collegium Romanum, where he taught Physics in 1558/1559, Metaphysics in 1559/1560 and 1560/1561, and two times the entire circle of three years, namely, Logic in 1561/1562, Physics in 1562/1563, Metaphysics in 1563/1564; again Logic in 1564/1565, Physics in 1565/1566, Metaphysics in 1566/1567.⁵ His *De principiis* draws in large part on these lectures as one can see by comparing it with extant manuscripts of these lectures.⁶ Many chapters of book 7 through 15 are to be found *verbatim* in cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1298. But most surprisingly, Pererius' treatment of the division of sciences and the relationship between metaphysics, physics, and mathematics were originally formulated in his lectures on metaphysics.⁷ Even his discussions on alchemy (*De principiis* VIII, 19–21) and on generation from putrid matter (VIII, 16–18) were originally part of his commentary on *Metaphysics* VII,⁸ and for the same systematic reason, since they dealt with special cases of causation. But in 1576, Pererius has come to the conclusion that causation is not a matter of metaphysics but rather of physics.⁹ Nevertheless, it can be excluded that the book represents Pererius' lectures on a whole, since it deliberately departs from the style of commenting on Aristotle's *Physics* that was customary far into the 17th century.¹⁰ This book is evidently written as a general program of teaching philosophy and scientific matters addressed to his peers.

Pererius and Averroes

Before discussing Pererius' view of philosophy, and specifically of physics, a few observations on the controversy about his alleged lack of orthodoxy might be in order. Petrus Canisius, then Provincial of the German Province, reported in 1567 that some students coming back from their studies in Rome praised Averroes as 'divine' and spread the Averroistic heresy.¹¹ Now, it is important to observe what Canisius perceives as the "unfruitful dandel of the Averroistic philosophy"¹²: His concern is that it makes the students not only heretics but outright atheists, in as much as it fosters the "spirit of

contradiction”, and makes them lose the “simplicity of spirit and judgment”, because they are being accustomed to trust only the leadership of reason and deny reverence for any authority. It is of high importance that Canisius’ complaint does not deal with any particular doctrine but rather with a spirit of philosophizing, which we today might call rationalistic and enlightened. There is no doubt that Jesuit schooling was based on authority, and the whole debate on the system of studies revolved around regaining and establishing authoritative teaching in contents and in sources. This presupposed unity of doctrine and ‘simplicity’ of mentality,¹³ but it did not exclude some liberty in discussing controversial matters of science, as we have seen in the statement of the censors.

Liberty of philosophizing and eclecticism seem to have been, indeed, what separated Canisius and Pererius. In a short treatise on the method of studies,¹⁴ written in 1564 while he was teaching logic at the Roman College, Pererius is much concerned with the natural inhibitions to studies as they tend to occur in young students. He therefore gives advice as to the ‘dietetics’ of student life. Then he recommends reading the ancient authorities, because they render the young mind both multi-versed and mature.¹⁵ Pererius concludes his treatise by presenting a list of *loci communes*, which should enable every scholar to write about any topic “prompte ac copiose”. The list starts with ‘meaning of words’, ‘action or passion’ of the subject etc., and it culminates in the *locus communis* of Man as the Lesser World. The Jesuit not only describes man as “mikrokosmos” (sic) but also places him in the center of the Universe, stating that he is: “Greater than anything under the Moon, lesser than the angels.”¹⁶ He closes with reference to excellent men who due to their virtue were revered with divine honors. No doubt, the Jesuit has Renaissance Platonists and troublemakers in mind, like Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico. This becomes even more evident when Pererius introduces his recommendations for studies by quoting Aristotle: “Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas.” His interpretation of this adage is: For the sake of truth one has to disagree with these authorities, and even to rethink one’s own previous assumptions.¹⁷

In 1561 the prefect of studies at the Collegium Romanum, Jacobus Ledesma, had started an inquiry among his colleagues about what the philosophy course should be made of and the order in which it should be taught.¹⁸ To which among many others Pererius answered by listing the individual books of the *Corpus Aristotelicum* that he thought to be necessary to read and teach. It is noteworthy in this note of 1561 or 1562 that – on the one hand – he recommended to give more room to Metaphysics and even to extend the course from three to three and a half years, for that purpose.¹⁹ On the other hand he oriented the topics to be touched upon on the authorities Chrysostomus Javelli, Johannes de Janduno, and Marsilius de Inghen.²⁰ Ledesma, in his summary about this survey (1564–1565),

addressed to Franciscus Borgia, then Vicar General of the Jesuits, mentioned that professor Achilles Gagliardi had warned against the teachings of Pererius in matters of logic. However, Averroism is not mentioned explicitly, and even Pererius' name is erased in the final version of that report.²¹ One might wonder how Averroism was associated with logic, or vice versa. As a matter of fact, Pererius had added an excursus *Explanatio Prologi Averrois* at the beginning of his lecture on the *Posterior Analytics*, which began with the evidently aggressive statement: "I disagree with those who for petty reasons deny these commentaries by Averroes to be great, who is named 'the great' not just for the prolificacy of words but for the enormous amount doctrines and erudition."²² Pererius seems to be aware that it was not well seen to teach Averroes, even though it remains unclear what might have been dogmatically dangerous in the Arab's logic. And logic was a strength of Pererius' at that time, because, in 1561, Johannes Polanco had recommended to Canisius to send the best students to Rome, because he had to offer an "excellent professor" of logic, namely Pererius.²³ However, in 1564, Ledesma had made a list of some of ambiguous teachings, mainly concerned with the doctrine of the soul.²⁴ This list followed another, positive list of theses to be defended. In the general mindset of the fathers of the Jesuit *Ratio studiorum* it appeared to be reasonable to compile such lists, because they believed in the objective truth and communicability of true propositions, even though eventually they only managed to promulgate negative lists of deviant or just controversial teachings that had to be kept away from class rooms.²⁵ Ledesma's negative list was allegedly taken from some student of Pererius'. I must confess that in this point I depend on the edition of this document prepared by László Lukács who gives no evidence for his attribution of these teachings to Pererius.²⁶ According to this black list the accused teacher basically defended the skeptical position, otherwise known as double truth theory, according to which the immortality of the soul cannot be known philosophically.

Nevertheless it is safe to say that in two documents Pererius shows himself as somehow interested in Averroism. In an advice on teaching the philosophy course (ca. 1564) he recommends Themistius and the recent Franciscus Vicomercatus instead of the Greek commentators, and adds that: "To read Averroes is very useful, both for his teaching and because of the fame he has in Italy; and in order to understand him one should read his followers, such as Jandunus, Barleus, Paulus Venetus, Zimara, and Niphus."²⁷ The title of the document (*Breve istrutione del modo di leggere il corso*) and the extended list of Averroists make it evident that he does by no means require that his students read all this, but he rather suggests that the teacher, in order to prepare himself, should be acquainted with Averroism. Thus, to label Pererius an Averroist on the basis of this document is at least premature, also because Franciscus Toletus, not suspect of the same heresy,

had given basically the same list of authorities in Aristotelianism as Pererius.²⁸ In another document he asserts that: “Averroes was a special honor, glory, and head of the Lyceum, to whom alone (except Alexander of Aphrodisias and Simplicius) peripatetic philosophy owes more than to all other commentators taken together.”²⁹ This statement that served László Lukács as evidence for Pererius’ Averroistic sympathies is taken from a text with guidelines for students of philosophy.³⁰ The text contains eight guidelines or exhortations (*documenta*), of which the first four elaborate the relationship of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian faith. Exhortation no. 7 gives rules of reading and interpreting Aristotle, linguistically, doctrinally, and contextually. No. 8 gives an account of the major commentators of Aristotle; here he makes the statement on Averroes, as quoted. He also mentions the “obscuritas and perplexitas” of Averroes’ doctrines and ascribes it to the poor translations from Arab into Latin.³¹ However, the report on Aristotle commentaries concludes with a list of errors, including Averroes’ doctrine of the oneness of the intellective soul for all men.³² It is no surprise, then, that in his lectures on *De anima* Pererius extensively and unequivocally criticizes the Averroist theory of the soul.³³ At one point he even exclaims: “Averroes suggests in a book *De beatitudine animae* (a passage I never can read without laughing) that the *intellectus agens* is that which the Christians call the Holy Spirit.”³⁴

Given this evidence I am inclined to believe that the whole story about Pererius’ Averroism was the expression of an enmity between Father Pererius and Father Gagliardi. What is strange in this context is the fact that one of the students who – according to the protest by Petrus Canisius, as mentioned above – returned from Rome corrupted by Averroism had not studied with Pererius but rather with Gagliardi.³⁵ The latter continued his fight after the *De communibus rerum principiis* had been published; even unsuccessfully involving Pope Gregory XIII who personally had given his *Imprimatur* to the book.³⁶

Putting thus the in-house debate aside, we can read Pererius’ two recommendations for what they expressly intended to state: the standards of philosophy training of the mid 16th century. This fits perfectly with the remark that follows in the document of ca. 1564: after having accounted for the main authorities among the Greek, Arab, and Latin Aristotelians (which include, of course, Albert the Great and Aquinas) he warns against becoming “sectario”, and mostly in favor of the Latins, as these deviate from the Greeks.³⁷ That is to say: teaching philosophy means eclecticism with regard to the vast history of Aristotelianism, and the Latin medieval version of it is not always the best. This is still quite germane to the development of the *Ratio studiorum* that kept the Society of Jesus engaged in worldwide debates for almost forty years until eventually, in 1599, the final version was promulgated. All the discussions within the order and involving all provinces of

that time focused on the two main goals: unity of doctrine and modernity in the sense of acceptability by the large scientific community.³⁸

Pererius and Renaissance Philosophy

Given this context of Pererius' activities as a teacher at the Collegium Romanum, I will examine his *De communibus rerum principiis* and also his *De magia*, which resumes parts of his commentaries on "Genesis", as a response to certain strains of Renaissance philosophy. I hope to show that he strives to satisfy the expectations of learned laymen of the 16th century by offering a philosophy textbook that incorporates current philosophical approaches, as far as the scholastic setting and aims of the Jesuit colleges allow.

Pererius' preface to his *De principiis* makes some clear statements about this mission. He first makes a cursory remark that he refrains from commenting on Aristotle's text in the traditional sentence-by-sentence style. Then he repeats that he mostly follows the Greek commentators, namely Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, and Simplicius, even though he also admires the Scholastics, first of all Aquinas.³⁹ Moving on to Avicenna, he praises him above all for being a "medicus", but in metaphysics, despite some merits, he seems not to have studied well nor understood Aristotle.⁴⁰ This brings him to make a quite ambiguous statement about Averroes: Instead of plainly telling his judgment he refers to those who condemn him as a plague of the minds and those who praise him. There are even some who "eum laudibus in coelum efferant, et quasi Deum quendam Philosophiae, coolant".⁴¹ Well, Pererius says, "I think both attitudes are mistaken; however, the former [the condemnation] can be excused by ignorance and by some appearance of piety and religion, while the latter (the exaggerated praise) is stupid and for a Christian philosopher disreputable."⁴² The first part of his comment blames the detractors of Averroes of ignorance; the second appears to be the statement that Canisius might have required. For, we should note that Pererius here echoes the words of the German's complaint about extolling the Arab to divine honors. Surprisingly the text goes on in a different vein: it is nonsensical, Pererius adds, to defend at any cost the opinion of just one human, who is subject to error, as Averroes actually was in important tenets,⁴³ and whatever one might put forward in defense of the Arab Commentator, he simply didn't know Greek, worked on corrupt manuscripts, and lacked reliable translators, so that he "hallucinated a lot".⁴⁴ So, again, there is no point in sheepishly following this one authority. Let us make this *argumentum e silentio*: no word about the immortality and plurality of the soul, which was the bone of contention with Averroism ever since the times of Aquinas. Averroes was to be respected as an authority, among others, and had to be studied with due diligence.

What comes next seems to reflect Pererius' main objective in publishing this book. He points to two common errors that should be avoided for the sake of fruitful and pious philosophizing: there are people who refuse and condemn all philosophy, just for the fact that a few statements in philosophy books are contrary to Christian teaching, and, on the other hand, there are those who believe that everything can be proven by philosophy, and what cannot, is not probable at all.⁴⁵ The first group, those who despise all philosophy, have little knowledge of philosophy and no training in the liberal arts, and therefore try to cover their ignorance by making everyone else similar to themselves. The historic example is Julian the Apostate, who out of hatred against the Christians forbade the study of the arts. The contemporary target, however, are the heretics of his days, who in a similar way for the sake of capturing the ordinary people fight against philosophy and all other disciplines.⁴⁶ The argument that, indeed, Philosophers may err is countered by: "Of course they err, but these are the errors of the Philosophers, not of Philosophy, of the people, not of science."⁴⁷ Pererius' main counter-argument is that in the Holy Scripture, and even more in the Church Fathers there is plenty of philosophy, not understood by the unlearned readers, but appreciated by the learned ones. He now presents a list of the main authorities: "clarissima illa Christianae Theologiae luna" Basilus, the two Gregorys of Nazianzus and of Nissa, Augustine, Hieronymus, and most of all Aquinas, and a number of other Doctors of the Church. Pererius does not give names of those against whom he is arguing. But it is obvious that he refers to Luther's and the Protestants' anti-philosophical attitude.⁴⁸ However, his mentioning the Church Fathers as counter-examples induces to think of an author like Lorenzo Valla, who continuously attacked Boethius (who is missing in Pererius' list) for having been too philosophical in matters of faith, and in his curious speech in honor of Thomas Aquinas of 1457 Valla gave almost the same list of reliable Church Fathers but regretted that Aquinas – deviating from Patristic tradition – had introduced philosophical arguments in theological discourse.⁴⁹ Even though we are not used to look at intellectual history this way there was evidently an anti-philosophical strain in early modern thought, and it was this that worried the Jesuit.

To the other group of enemies of sound philosophy belong those who extol it too much. They admire the alleged divine minds of Plato and Aristotle for their learning and eloquence. And this tells us that we have to think of certain exaggerations of Renaissance Humanism. Indeed, according to the Jesuit, this syndrome is typical of the Pythagoreans who, due to their vanity and superstition, believe too much in authority. One should note that Angelo Poliziano, while polemicizing against the dogmatic Platonism of Marsilio Ficino, made similar mocking remarks against Pythagoreanism, in his "Lamia" (bogey), an oration that introduced his lectures on Aristotle.⁵⁰ Reference to Pythagoras does certainly involve not only this author alone,

but is – from an historiographical point of view – equivalent to the whole ideology of *prisca theologia*, because it was in this strain that Pythagoras was celebrated as harboring ancient wisdom, along with the Chaldeans, Egyptians, etc. a wisdom that, as we know, coincided with the Neoplatonic interpretation of Plato.⁵¹ Thus, the pretext of overstressing the competence of Philosophy converges, paradoxically, with an undue dependence on authority. If we consider that the Jesuits were doing precisely this, especially Ledesma, namely searching for the definite authorities in theology and philosophy, Pererius' criticism of the platonico-pythagoreans is quite irritating.

It is at this point that Pererius repeats his quasi rationalistic credo in saying: "I give much credit to Plato, even more to Aristotle, but most to reason. (...) Whatever I see in Aristotle as convenient and consistent, I take as probable. But what appears as coherent with reason I judge as true and certain."⁵² Of course, reference to reason above tradition and authority is a commonplace in philosophy, but it marked specifically Renaissance authors, e.g., Pietro Pomponazzi, who in his treatise on the immortality of the soul claims to put aside the teachings of the authorities and to explain only what he himself thinks.⁵³ Pererius concludes: "In Physics senses, long-term experience, and scrutinized and proven observation play the first role, reason the second, the philosophers' authority the least."⁵⁴

The Role of Metaphysics within Philosophy

As he was presenting his treatise on natural philosophy as his contribution to the ongoing development of a standard text book for Jesuit universities,⁵⁵ the author could not refrain from giving an outline of what he deemed philosophy is and should do. It is in this first book that he proposes his new division of metaphysics.

After having reviewed the main versions of the understanding of speculative sciences, i.e., Physics, Metaphysics, and Mathematics, he presents the standard definition of metaphysics. It deals evidently with three different topics: (1) God and angels, (2) the transcendentals (being, one, true, good, action, and passion), (3) the ten categories. In this understanding, Pererius observes, God and Angels are taken as the causes of everything, the transcendentals as passions of being, while the categories are the first species of being. There is an inner inconsistency of this assessment of metaphysics, because all three topics are quite diverse, and have neither epistemologically nor ontologically anything in common. The only communality would be their unity of attribution, as they all, in different ways, contribute to substance.⁵⁶ In this description of metaphysics (which, by the way will continue to be accepted far into the 17th century) the primary object, God and the intelligences, are distinguished from the others as being "abstract from matter both in reason and factually". This feature seems to make metaphysics equivalent

to natural Theology and at any rate the most noble of all disciplines.⁵⁷ The other two fields of metaphysical research depend on rational abstraction. The methodological contradiction, however, is blatant, as the difference of abstraction makes an ontological difference. Intelligences are transcendent, but not transcendentals. The only solution is, indeed, the unity of attribution. Logically speaking, the elements of metaphysics revolve around the same subject matter, being as such or substance.⁵⁸ Theologically speaking they are all one in depending on one creator, God. Pererius does not mention this second meaning of unity at this point, but he must have these theological implications in mind.⁵⁹

Pererius was unhappy with this doctrine,⁶⁰ and so he presented a solution that on the long run proved to be revolutionary. He postulated metaphysics to be “a universal science, different from all the others, that deals with the transcendentals, the categories, and the divisions of being (which pervade all other disciplines). This has as its subject matter ‘being as being’, its principles are the most general propositions (such as: everything either is or is not), and its first species are the categories.”⁶¹ Consequently, this science would not deal with the intelligences, unless indirectly in terms of being principles and causes of all beings.⁶² This entails that we actually deal with two distinct sciences: one (that of transcendentals and universalities) would be First Philosophy or Universal Science. The other science, then, would be metaphysics as equivalent with Theology, Wisdom, or Divine Science.⁶³

If we compare Pererius’ solution with the previous definition of metaphysics, we see that he takes the second and the third realms (transcendentals and categories) together to construe a Universal Science. He also clearly subordinates natural theology under what we now call ontology insofar as he establishes the science of spiritual beings as second to First Philosophy. In order to do so he has to make two concessions, which are explained in his supporting remarks: first he has to state that this universal science is “indifferent” to all real beings, whether they be material or immaterial.⁶⁴ As far as I know he borrows this notion from Scotist metaphysics,⁶⁵ which had maintained that the difference between the abstraction of spiritual beings (God, Angels, and also the intellectual soul) and that of transcendentals and categories, which never occur without instantiations in matter, is bridged by a third kind of abstraction, named “abstractio per indifferentiam”.⁶⁶ This indifferent abstraction, then, would make the difference of metaphysics versus other disciplines, and it would prevent ontology from interfering both with physics and with theology. But this is only half of the truth. Because, secondly, natural theology, or rather that science that deals with immaterial beings, has its own realm, but it has become a particular discipline, in as much as it studies one species of being.⁶⁷ The problem that Pererius does not tackle directly is that thus God and Angels become species of being, and this – at least to scholastics – is anathema: God is no being.

His way out of this quandary is to admit a host of speculative disciplines: Physics, Mathematics, Intelligences, Ontology, and – why not? – a science of God as far as he can be known and as he is different from other spiritual beings.⁶⁸ We observe that establishing a universal science is prolific in bearing subordinate sciences. However, Pererius here reserves the right of error and claims to have made this proposition only “probabiliter”⁶⁹, which I think just indicates how much he was aware of the novelty of his proposal.

Now if all scholastics up to Pererius’ time and later were happy with the traditional confusion of immaterial beings and abstract reasons in metaphysics, why did the Jesuit make this effort? It is, as already said, the levels and methods of abstraction and the meaning of speculative science that prompt him. And it is precisely the attention to kinds of abstraction that makes it possible to allow for fields of scientific research that are both subordinate and – as such – dignified to pursue their relative competence.⁷⁰

Of course, some problems remained to be solved. For instance, the doctrine of the human soul, so eagerly debated in Renaissance Aristotelianism, is hard to locate in this system. Therefore Pererius has to admit that psychology is mixed of three disciplines: metaphysics for the separability of the intellectual soul, physics for its action in the body, and revealed theology.⁷¹ Why the soul is partly treated by theology is obvious. Pererius gives three theological aspects of the rational soul: the ultimate goal of the soul and the means of achieving it, i.e., beatitude; the question of the state of the soul after death (including the possibility that it might migrate back into the body or into another body!); the immortality of the soul. Especially the third point “cannot be known in a natural way”, Pererius asserts here.⁷² It is quite surprising that the Jesuit not only ponders the possibility of metempsychosis, he even seems to side with Pomponazzi on the ‘double truth theory’. This passage has passed the censure. Later, in book VI, he claims that Aristotle himself maintained the immortality of the soul, and attributes the position that this is a matter exclusively of faith to Scotus and Cajetan.⁷³

Another problem is the meaning of speculation in Metaphysics, Physics, and Mathematics. Here Pererius also makes his famous statement, that mathematics is not a science in the proper sense of the word, because, as he says, “science demonstrates effects, and demonstration (in the most perfect sense) consists of what is an essential property and not accidental”; as mathematics deals with accidental properties and does not consider the essence of quantity; consequently it is no science.⁷⁴ Two peculiarities of this statement should be noted: first, that in order to make his case the Jesuit refers to Plato and Proclus. Second, that Bernardino Telesio uses the same argument when he says that natural science reveals actual causes, while mathematics, as he puts it, works only on signs.⁷⁵ Both observations prove that Pererius addresses his argument to those contemporary readers who are familiar with Renaissance Platonism and anti-Aristotelian strains in

philosophy. He endorses the notion that principles of nature ought to be real causes and not mere interpretive concepts and shows that for this very reason – taking Aristotelian ontology for granted – mathematics does not qualify for a foundation of natural science.

Concessions to Platonism

What is of more interest for the author, is his statement about metaphysics as a speculative science. Our problem of understanding Pererius' point is the fact that he now uses the term metaphysics indiscriminately for natural theology and for his newly established First Philosophy as universal science. And he does so on purpose. In the first place he refers to Alexander of Aphrodisias who gave the etymology of *theoria* as 'intuition of the Divine'.⁷⁶ Then he refers to the leading role of metaphysics to keep away sophists and to supply the other disciplines with the universal concepts, i.e. the transcendentals. Obviously the author is juggling the two meanings of metaphysics. But all this serves only to introduce a lengthy passage from Plato's *Republic*, book 7, which deserves to be quoted in this place:

But all the other arts have for their object the opinions and desires of men or are wholly concerned with generation and composition or with the service and tendance of the things that grow and are put together, while the remnant which we said did in some sort lay hold on reality – geometry and the studies that accompany it – are, as we see, dreaming about being, but the clear waking vision of it is impossible for them as long as they leave the assumptions which they employ undisturbed and cannot give any account of them. For where the starting-point is something that the reasoner does not know, and the conclusion and all that intervenes is a tissue of things not really known, what possibility is there that assent in such cases can ever be converted into true knowledge or science?" "None," said he.

"Then," said I, "is not dialectics the only process of inquiry that advances in this manner, doing away with hypotheses, up to the first principle itself in order to find confirmation there? And it is literally true that when the eye of the soul is sunk in the barbaric slough of the Orphic myth, dialectic gently draws it forth and leads it up, employing as helpers and co-operators in this conversion the studies and sciences which we enumerated, which we called sciences often from habit, though they really need some other designation, connoting more clearness than opinion and more obscurity than science. 'Understanding,' I believe, was the term we employed. But I presume we shall not dispute about the name when things of such moment lie before us for consideration." "No, indeed," he said. "Are you satisfied, then," said I, "as before, to call the first division science, the second understanding, the third belief, and the fourth conjecture or picture-thought—and the last two collectively opinion, and the first two intellection, opinion dealing with generation and intellection with essence, and this relation being expressed in the proportion: as essence is to generation, so is intellection to opinion; and as intellection is to opinion, so is science to belief, and understanding to image-thinking or surmise? (...) "Do you agree, then," said I, "that we have set dialectics above all other studies to be as it were the coping-stone – and that no other higher kind of study could rightly be placed above it (...)"⁷⁷

Pererius quotes Marsilio Ficino's translation.⁷⁸ In the last phrase, which served to state the superiority of dialectics, the Jesuit adds: "intelligit autem primam Philosophiam". To understand Platonic dialectics as metaphysics is supported by Ficino's introduction to this book, as he states: "You may well name the business of disputing dialectics by its form, logic by its beginning, and metaphysics or theology by its end."⁷⁹ The fact that Pererius quotes Ficinian Platonism at such a strategic point of his treatise can either mean that he is influenced by Platonism, or that he wants to convince his audience that his philosophy complies with the expectations of Renaissance culture. Philosophically speaking he presents his Universal Science or First Philosophy as the universal method of science, as it deals with being and is not just "dreaming" of it, as mathematics does. At the same time he reestablishes the inner link between universal method (dialectics in the epistemological sense) and knowledge of the first essence, that would be granted by that same Universal Science. Indeed, Pererius repeats his reference to this passage from Plato when explaining that Physics cannot deal with the quiddities of things without borrowing from metaphysics and that ultimately everything has to be related to the actual first cause, God.⁸⁰ The dependency of the subordinate sciences from metaphysics is here asserted in the neoplatonic terms of emanation from God and the intelligences. In presenting the scholastic union of rational abstraction and supreme being in Platonic terms Pererius outplatonizes the Platonists. The same strategy can be found in Pererius' lectures on metaphysics and on theology: In both cases he offers an extended treatment on Plato's "Ideas" (Forms). By summarizing Aristotle's *Metaphysics* I 6 and drawing upon Augustine, Alcinous, and Dionysius the Areopagite he suggests that Plato's *ideae* – if correctly interpreted – were an appropriate tool to describe the essence of things in relation to God's creation.⁸¹ In his *De principiis*, then, he proves that the Platonic concept of the *idea exemplaris* is unnecessary, because implied in (but not contrary to) Aristotle's doctrine of the form in the mind of the architect.⁸² The message to his audience, inside and outside the Jesuit college, is: Look, we have what the Neoplatonists are longing for.

History of Philosophy against the Myth of Ancient Wisdom

My argument throughout this paper is, that Pererius is writing with Renaissance philosophy in view, trying to get the best out of it, to replace it by a reformed scholasticism, and to set things straight that are in conflict with religion. And there is a lot to do. How else should we explain that in book four of his natural philosophy (i.e., as a further preliminary before entering into the details of Physics) he gives an account of the ancient philosophers? It is very unusual at that time that scholastics would include in their philosophy

a chapter on the history of philosophy. So he rightly observes that “this hard work has been begun only by few and finished by none, but hoped for by many”.⁸³ Pererius wants to follow the lead of Aristotle, who frequently started his own doctrine by examining his predecessors.⁸⁴ His overview on the ‘sects’ in ancient philosophy evidently draws upon the sources common to all Renaissance thinkers, that is Eusebius’ *Praeparatio evangelica*, Augustine, Cicero etc. Among the recent sources he mentions Theodorus Gaza.⁸⁵ He also knows the ancient, non-Greek wise men, giving credit to Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, he mentions that Plato, Democritus, and Pythagoras are supposed to have studied in barbaric nations, and mentions Orpheus, Thales, Mercurius, Zoroastres, Athlas, Anacharsis, Pherecydes, as well as the sages or priests: the Druids, the Chaldeans, Magi, Gymnosophists, and Prophets, every time locating them in their proper nation and insisting they all were Barbarians.

The main effort that transpires from this treatment is that of historical precision. Therefore Pererius gives a precise account of the Greek calendar according to the Olympics.⁸⁶ He does so in order to give precise chronological data for every single philosopher, specifically of Thales, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Socrates, Plato, Aristoteles, Epicurus, and Zeno of Citium. These, in Pererius’s view, represent the main strains of ancient thought.⁸⁷ In these chronologies there is scarce mentioning of their individual philosophy, reliable chronology is the only intention. At the end of the paragraph on Pythagoras we read the advice that “when in Greece philosophy and wisdom were quasi in their childhood, they were already very ancient among the Hebrews and in decline, while – on the other hand – the youngest Hebrew wise prophets were contemporary with the oldest Greek sages”.⁸⁸ In the paragraph on Aristotle Pererius not only quotes Strabo in order to explain the fact that many of the original writings were corrupted or altered by unlearned followers,⁸⁹ he also mentions some of the best known Peripatetic authors. Here he quotes the *Miscellanea* of Angelo Poliziano for the chronology of Alexander of Aphrodisias.⁹⁰ But most interestingly he shuns Porphyry as not being worthy of being called a philosopher, because “he is committed to superstitions and magic tricks” and a fanatic enemy of the Christians.⁹¹ It is certainly not without reproach toward the Renaissance Platonists that Pererius adds that Porphyry’s teacher was Plotinus and his student was Iamblichus.

The usefulness of this chronology is never stated expressly, but it seems to be obvious that Pererius is fighting the main ideology of non-Aristotelian Renaissance thinkers, namely that of ancient wisdom. Even though he does not have the philological instruments and skills to demythologize the *prisca sapientia*, as Casaubon later did, the method is correct and promising, because it places thinkers like Pythagoras or Porphyry on a timeline, takes the veil of wisdom from them, and makes them just what they are: representatives

of specific and debatable schools of philosophy with individual merits and mistakes. With this move he implicitly opposes the preferences of neoplatonic authors like Ficino, but even more of Augustinus Steuchus, who advocated a kind of theoretical syncretism, in which whatever the ancients had said, and the more remote the better, converged in a general unified wisdom, a *philosophia perennis*, that in some vague concept of divine worship would enhance and support Christian religion.⁹² Pererius insists on the differences among the ancients themselves and on their divergence from true philosophy. Therefore he treats in a systematic way the various approaches to nature in these authors, and he specifically attacks Simplicius for having blurred over those differences.⁹³ In his commentary on *Genesis* he will continue his work on dismantling the alleged ancient wisdom by sorting out the timelines. Among others he proved that there is no document whatsoever of human wisdom extant before the deluge.⁹⁴

An important case in appropriating ancient philosophy was the interpretation of Parmenides.⁹⁵ It had been a controversial issue between Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, as it was a touch stone of the compatibility of platonic thought and Christian theology.⁹⁶ Pererius seems to take sides for Ficino in as much as he claims that Parmenides not only presented a dialectical exercise but positively maintained that being is and excludes nothingness. But at the same time he seems to support Pico's interpretation that the One is at the same time being in some way and consequently he denies the strict separation of the One and Being, advocated in Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Parmenides*. In his extended discussion of this problem Pererius emphasizes that the antinomy consists in referring the Parmenidean One and Being either to the supreme being or to finite beings. And in this he, again, would support Pico, rather than Ficino. His interpretation mostly draws upon the ancient testimonies, but he also mentions Cardinal Bessarion in support of his interpretation.⁹⁷

Having thus reviewed most of the ancient approaches to nature and metaphysics Pererius concludes by excusing himself for not having treated Plato at length. As the problem of Plato consists in the debate over his concordance or contrast with Aristotle (as had been discussed in Renaissance Italy ever since Gemistos Pletho's attack on Aristotle) he promises a separate book on this topic.⁹⁸ This, however, does not prevent him from giving an account of ten arguments in favor of the immortality of the soul, when treating the existence of forms that are separable from matter.⁹⁹ Even if he does not follow Ficino's great book on that topic, he seems to have taken his inspiration from it. He terms the argument from the transmigration of the souls as absurd, and the argument from the self-movement as the soul as compelling and truly demonstrative. As I mentioned before, he then maintains that the immortality of the human soul can be defended both with Aristotle and with purely philosophical reasons. He also complies, here, with

the complaints of Ledesma, supposed these were actually directed against his teaching.

Against Alchemy, Astrology, and Cabala

A further evidence for the fact that Pererius has contemporary scientific culture in mind is his treatment of alchemy in book VIII as an appendix to the chapter on causality. Quite traditionally Pererius states that while it cannot be excluded that making gold is possible supposed that the natural means are being employed, it nevertheless appears to be impossible, as so far no alchemist has ever succeeded in such attempts.¹⁰⁰ Here we find extensive quotations both from Julius Caesar Scaliger and from Girolamo Cardano. As Charles H. Lohr observed, this chapter was to be incorporated in Pererius' work "Against Superstitions" of 1591.¹⁰¹ This second of Pererius' philosophical books enjoyed popularity, because it offered a succinct and entirely non-occult summary on the value of magical arts.¹⁰² Superstition is the common denominator for the three parts, as the title reveals: *De magia, de observatione somniorum et de divinatione astrologica Libri Tres. Adversus fallaces, et superstitiosas artes*. In his dedication letter Pererius underscores the public damage caused by superstition. He therefore had decided to write the first book, on magic, anew and to republish the books on dreams and on astrology from his commentaries on the book *Daniel* and on the book *Genesis*,¹⁰³ because he thought they deserved a broader audience.

Similarly as in his *De principiis* the author based his treatment on ancient and patristic sources. However, occasionally he refers to more recent testimonies. As for examples of miracles he mentions Ficino's *Theologia platonica*, Girolamo Fracastoro's *De sympathia*, and Cardano's *De subtilitate* and *De varietate rerum*.¹⁰⁴ As his book on physics dwelled at length on a general assessment of science and speculation, this book deals for the most part with theoretical questions. The first nine chapters are dedicated to epistemological and conceptual problems of magic that involve the credibility of reports on magical operations and the definition and possibility of spiritual agents. Then follow treatments of astrology, Cabala, necromancy, and alchemy. The book ends with four more chapters on the usefulness and feasibility of magic.

The entire chapter on astrology is presented as an abridged version of Giovanni Pico's *Adversus astrologiam*. Without going into details it is safe to say that the very first paragraph that presents the major authorities follows exactly Pico.¹⁰⁵ As can be expected Pererius refuted astrology and reduced it to either theological or physical explanations. He shared with Pico the concern that belief in superstitions jeopardizes Christian faith, and he shared with his fellow Renaissance thinkers an enormous amount of learning and reliance on ancient knowledge, but he looked into a future of organized and rationally argued science. For this reason, in his Commentary on

Genesis the Jesuit maintains explicitly that the science of the number of heavens belongs to the philosophers and that it would be outright insane if a Theologian would contend about it on the basis of the *Bible*, which does not determine anything in this regard.¹⁰⁶

Therefore he completely abated Cabala. Naming it ‘cabalistic magic’ he counts it among the ‘curiosities’, that is, scientifically unwarranted experiences, and likens it with Pythagoreanism for being mainly an oral tradition.¹⁰⁷ Drawing upon the symbolic and mystical meaning of numbers and letter Cabala promises more than it can yield. Pererius’ major blow at cabalistic speculation is his attributing it to the well known heretic John Wyclif, who is alleged to have linked cabalistic magic to Adam’s naming of things as recounted in the book of *Genesis*. Indeed, Wyclif adduced as one property of Adam in the state of innocence that he was able to give names to the natural objects that were presented to him (*Genesis* 2, 19). As relics of this original potency – the early Reformer surmises – remained the magical words of exorcists and wizards, as well as Hebrew words that seem to have more power than others.¹⁰⁸ As his source Pererius gives credit to Thomas Netter Waldensis, the most outstanding critic of the Wyclifite heresy.¹⁰⁹ This is a strategic move, since it suggests that cabalistic speculation leads to all the heresies Wyclif and his Hussite followers stand for, especially the non-authoritarian reception of the Holy Scripture.

The remainder of Pererius’ *De principiis* develops the major topics of science teaching in a systematic way without depending on the structure of Aristotle’s book. On the one hand, one can recognize the sequence of his *Physics*: Matter and privation, Form, Nature, Causes, Chance, Quantity, Place, Time, Eternity. But Pererius gives no thorough comment, but finds his way through the philosophical schools. Specifically his treatment of the intellectual soul within the chapter on Form shows that he has the metaphysical, speculative foundation of science in mind.

Conclusion

To sum up: Pererius’ influential *De principiis* were based on his lectures as a teacher at the Collegium Romanum, which earned him suspicion of being an advocate of Averroism. In reality, Pererius complied with the humanist and Renaissance requirements for scientific philosophical treatment: broad historic knowledge expressed in a pluralistic view on the matters in question. By way of integrating ancient, Arab, and neo-Platonic syncretistic knowledge into his program of Jesuit science he tried to meet the expectations of the broad academic public, while advocating a new ontology. Therefore it was justified that Pererius was mostly recognized for his innovation in metaphysics, because intentionally his metaphysics shaped the treatment of science.

Notes

¹ Also known as Benedetto Pererio; the original name might have been the Catalan version: Benet Perera; in this paper that discusses his works published in Latin the name as it appears in his printed books seems to be appropriate. The edition used in this paper is Pererius 1588. I am indebted to the Vatican Film Library of St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, for a Mellon Fellowship that allowed me to do research on Pererius manuscripts.

² Vollrath 1962, pp. 267 sq.; Feiereis 1965, pp. 15–16; Leinsle 1985, pp. 87–97; Blum 1998, pp. 157–158.

³ Sommervogel 1890–1930, vol. 6, cols. 409–507, and vol. 12, cols. 644, 1184; Lohr 1988a, pp. 313–320. Ever since Sommervogel's bibliography of the Jesuits other bibliographies and studies have mentioned a 1562 edition of this book; however, so far no scholar has been able to trace and see it; even Lohr 1988a, n. 23, refers to Sommervogel. Risse 1998, who records 14 printings from 1576 through 1618, mentions the 1562 edition (p. 111), but leaves the field blank that would indicate existing copies. Ribadeneira 1676, p. 112 sq., indicates: *Physicorum seu de Principiis rerum naturalium libros 15. Romae 1572.*

⁴ MPSI 4, no. 150, p. 664: Among the censors was the philosopher Petrus Fonseca; p. 665: "Primum, quod Averroes, quem ille Pater [Pererius] aliquando nimis sequi videbatur, non ita bene audiret. (...) 2° Si qua in re videbatur aut Averroi aut Aristoteli vel sententiae aliquorum esse nimis addictus, eundem Patrem Benedictum ex censura examinatorum omnia emendasse. 3° Nihil esse timendum ab eo quod Constitutiones monerent, cum philosophica haec multis in rebus sine periculo tractari diversis rationibus et sententiis possint; nec vero queat omnino arctioribus legibus astringi mens humana in iis quae probabilia sunt et in disceptationem cadunt."

⁵ Baldini 1992, pp. 569 sq.; Villoslada 1954, pp. 327, 329, 331. After teaching philosophy Pererius taught various fields of theology.

⁶ Manuscripts of his lectures are reported in Lohr 1988a, s.v.; Baldini 1992, p. 580, mentions three more in the Marciana, Venice, and in Biblioteca Nazionale, Rome. I saw microfilms of manuscripts from the Vatican library and from the Ambrosiana library, Milan. The codices Vat. Urb. Lat. 1295–1301 are written by one hand and usually spell the professor's name "Perrerus". They contain probably a complete set of Pererius' three year course: 1295: Logic; 1298: Physics; 1297: Propositions taken from Aristotle's Physics; 1299: *De coelo* and *De generatione et corruptione*; 1301: *De anima* book I–II; 1300: *De anima* book III; 1296: Metaphysics. Probably the same scribe wrote cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 569–570: *In Primam partem summae sancti Thomae R. P. Benedicti Perrerii* (sic). Cod. Ambros. D427 inf. (not mentioned in Lohr 1988a) contains the same text (Physics) as Vat. Urb. Lat. 1298 (Lohr 1988a, no. 18), including omission of *Physics* book 7, and addition, following book 8, of a treatise *De Uno*; the Ambrosiana ms. is written by at least two different hands, one of which also wrote Ambros. D426 inf. (*De anima*, dated on fol. 1r: 26 November 1566, and on fol. 383r: 12 May 1567) and part of Ambros. D428 inf. (*In primam partem D. Thomae*), which might contain the beginning of Pererius' theology lectures in 1567. From the date on Ambros. D426 inf. one may perhaps infer that the series of Urbinates manuscripts 1295–1301 contains Pererius course from 1564 through 1567. References to further manuscripts will follow in this paper. For codicological descriptions see Lohr 1988a, Stornajolo 1912–1921, Ceruti 1973, Gabriel 1968.

⁷ For instance, cf. *De principiis* I, 5–8, with Vat. Urb. Lat. 1308, fols. 18v–21r, Vat. Urb. Lat. 1296, fols. 19r–23r, Vat. Urb. Lat. 1311, Ambros. D496 inf., fols. 100v sqq., and Ambros. D448 inf., fols. 208r sqq. For our purpose, a complete concordance would be exaggerated.

⁸ Cf. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1296, fols. 193 sqq. and Ambros. D448 inf., fols. 238r sqq.

⁹ The Jesuits' debate over the question, which topics should be treated in which section of the philosophical course is explained in Blum 1998, ch. 4.4.

¹⁰ Pererius 1588, Praefatio, fol. a 2 r: "(...) nobis (...) visum non fuerit, Commentarios in Aristotelem scribere (...)."

¹¹ MPSI 3, no. 256, p. 415, in a letter by Petrus Canisius, then Superior of the German Province, to Francesco Borgia, General of the Jesuits, dated 26 September 1567: "Sextum, radicitus extirpetur infoelix lolium Averroycae philosophiae, quae non tam haereticos quam atheos e nostris quosdam fecisse putatur, ut hinc etiam nostri apostatae, qui cum Averroystis nimium vixere familiariter, non parum depravati esse credantur. Et qui ex Urbe hoc anno venerunt, ingratos nobis fructus nunciant, quos attulerit plerisque Averroyca philosophia, dum sola illi duce ratione niti volunt, et nullius fere hominis vel doctoris

authoritatem reverentur. (...) Utinam nulli unquam concedantur ut suam vel alterius privatam opinionem contra communem scholarum sententiam privatim vel publice aliquis tueatur. Nunc divinum Averroem nominare quidam e nostris audent, et ex illo confirmantur in spiritu contradictionis (...) et in contemptum scholasticae theologiae (...).” And p. 416: “(...) dum huic Averroycae, ut dixi, philosophiae sunt vehementer addicti, et omnem ingenii iudiciiue simplicitatem, nostris paecipue necessariam, exuunt.” The same letter also in Canisius 1896–1913, 6, pp. 62–68.

¹² Cf. Vergil, *Georgica*, I 154: “infelix lolium”.

¹³ Blum 1998, chapters 4.3 and 4.4. Lohr 1976.

¹⁴ MPSI 2, no. 85, p. 670–685: *Brevis ratio studendi*. Cod. Ambros. D448 inf. contains, in addition to this and other texts of Pererius’, also an interesting study by Stefano Tucci (Tutius), S.J. (1541–1597): *Declaratio tabulae de divisione scientiarum* (fols. 48r–70r). He argues (fols. 56v–61r) that religion is a fourth discipline of ethics. According to Tucci (fol. 64r), mathematics deals with quantities “non ut sunt in quantitate sensibili, et mobili, sed in quantitate ut quantitate, magis enim potest abstrahi quantitas quam absolutum quodvis accidens (...) at quantitas sub quavis mistione, et in quovis subiecto potest produci, unde magis libere a quovis alio potest abiungi.” He concludes that calculations of qualities can be separated from physics and metaphysics (fol. 64r) but nevertheless belong to their area of competence, whereas pure mathematics forms a discipline in itself: “ea quae quantitati ut quantitati sunt propria, innumerabiliter fere variabilia sunt, ideo distinctam postulat disciplinam” (fol. 64v). As ‘subalternate’ disciplines of physics he counts (fol. 65r): “Medicina, magia naturalis, coniectrix facultas”, because “Medicina enim et magia in alternationibus et mixtionibus primum usurpant passiones et principia physica”. Tucci also refers to Cabala as a legitimate branch of theology (fol. 67r). Furthermore, the codex has “P. Augustini Justiniani quoddam fragmentum de divisione scientiarum” (fols. 72r–94r) and by the same Agostino Giustiniani, S.J. (1550–1597) *De ratione distinguendi scientias* (fols. 122r sqq.).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 677.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 685: “Homo est similis parvo mundo. Maior iis quaecunque sub Luna sunt. Angelis minor.” Reference to microcosmos is also made in the preface to Pererius’ lecture *Annotationes in lib. Poster. Aristotelis* (Lohr 1988a, no. 2), Cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1462, p. 197, the scribe uses Greek letters, in this case.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 671: “Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas. Cuius gratia oportet non solum ab aliis dissentire, verum etiam (si veritas id postulat) suas sententias et decreta mutare atque rescindere.”

¹⁸ MPSI 2, pp. 435 sq.

¹⁹ MPSI 2, no. 67, p. 459: “Mi pare che il corso deva durare tre anni et mezzo, acciochè le materie si trattino meglio, si legga più di metaphysica, et si possa leggere l’ethica.” This document disproves Scaduto 1974, p. 284, who insinuates that Pererius was not involved (“non fu interpellato”) in the reform of Jesuit studies. Lines 2002, pp. 354–356, 360 sq. shows Pererius’ role in the debate over establishing courses on ethics.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 458.

²¹ MPSI 2, no. 69, p. 476 and 479 with notes 47/48. Achille Gagliardi (1537–1607) had himself studied under Averroist professors in Padua: Lohr 1976, p. 213.

²² Cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1295, fol. 197r/v: “(...) non assentior iis qui levissimis ratiunculis adducti negant haec commentaria magna esse Averrois, qui non tam ob prolixitatem verborum quam ob maximam sententiarum et eruditionis copiam magnus inscribitur.” The same passage in Cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1462, p. 199.

²³ Canisius 1896–1913, 3, p. 172: “ (...) mandar a Roma li piu selecti ingegni che si potranno mandare perché cominciarà il corso maestro Benedetto Valentiano che adesso finisce vn’altro; et è tenuto vniuersalmente per eccellente lettore (...)” Pererius was born near Valencia. Also in November 1564 Pererius cannot have been discredited as a professor: it was then that the same Polanco proudly reported to Canisius about a public disputation in philosophy, several Cardinals attending, delivered by a Roman noble man and Jesuit who studied with Pererius; Canisius 1896–1913, 4, p. 715.

²⁴ MPSI 2, no. 73, pp. 496–503.

²⁵ Cf. Blum 1998, chapter 4.4.

²⁶ MPSI 2, no. 73 C, p. 502 sq. Things become not much clearer in the way Scaduto 1974, p. 284, presents this affair.

²⁷ MPSI 2, no. 84, p. 665 sq.: “Leggere Averroè è molto utile, sì per la sua dottrina, come per la fama che ha in Italia; et per poterlo intendere, leggerà li suoi seguaci, come Janduno, Barleo, Paolo veneto, Zimarra, Nipho.”

²⁸ MPSI 2, no. 62, p. 437 sq.

²⁹ MPSI 2, no. 84, Introductio, p. 664: “Averroes fuit singulare decus, gloria et praesidium Lyceion, cui uni (Alexandrum et Simplicium excipio), ausim dicere, plus debere disciplinam peripateticam quam omnibus aliis simul expositoribus.”

³⁰ Ibid. Only this quotation is given. The source is Cod. Ambros. D496 inf., fols. 25r–31v: *Documenta quaedam perutilia iis qui in studiis philosophiae cum fructu et sine ullo errore versari student*. Incipit: Meminerint philosophiam subiectam esse debere fidei; explicit: Sed revertamur ad institutam tractationem. As the *explicit* indicates this is an excerpt from some lecture. (The quotation on fol. 29v.) The manuscript also contains lecture notes from logic and metaphysics: Lohr 1988a, no. 1 (to which belongs also *Divisio logicae Pererii*, fols. 121r–125r, not noted in Lohr) and nos. 7 and 16. It further contains, fols. 93r–117, *Principia librorum suae Philosophiae*, which is an incomplete early version of book 1 of *De principiis*. The lecture notes on metaphysics (Lohr 1988a, no. 16) are dated 1567 (fol. 33r), but given the miscellaneous contents of the codex this date cannot be extended to the other items it contains.

³¹ *Documenta quaedam*, Cod. Ambros. D496 inf., fol. 30r. For a list of Aristotle commentaries compiled by Pererius see Pererius 1981.

³² Ibid. fol. 31v.

³³ *Annotationes in Aristotelis libros de anima ex scriptis P. Benedicti Pererii* (Lohr 1988a, no. 30), Cod. Ambros. D497 inf., fols. 3r sqq.

³⁴ Cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1300 (lectures on *De anima III*; Lohr 1988a, no. 31), fol. 94v–95r: “Unde Averroes in quodam libello de beatitudine animae (quem ego locum numquam potui sine risu leggere) intellectum agentem dicit esse quem christiani vocant spiritum sanctum.”

³⁵ Canisius 1896–1913, 6, p. 59–62: Letters of September 1567 by Theodorus Canisius, Rector of Dillingen university and brother of Petrus, to Petrus Canisius. These letters prompted Petrus Canisius to write to Borgia about the Averroist danger. One student was Antonius Kleesl, who – “relicto cursu, quem sub P. Achille (Gagliardi) biennium audierat” – showed heretic and contemptuous attitudes. Pererius and Gagliardi alternated at that time in teaching philosophy, cf. Villoslada 1954, pp. 329 and 331. Hence, it is not true what Scaduto 1974, p. 284, maintains, namely that all suspected German students were pupils of Pererius.

³⁶ Villoslada 1954, p. 78–80.

³⁷ MPSI 2, no. 84, p. 666: “nondimeno non deve [sc. the teacher] esser sectario, massime di authori latini, che discordano dalli antichi”.

³⁸ As to the Jesuits’ positive response to humanism see Blum 1998, chapters 2.2 and 2.3.

³⁹ Pererius 1588, Praefatio, fol. a 2 v. In *Documenta quaedam*, Cod. Ambros. D496 inf., fol. 29r, Pererius says about Aquinas: “Commentarii eius in librum periherm. et libros de caelo (...) in quibus sequutus est graecos interpretes (...)”

⁴⁰ Pererius 1588, Praefatio, fol. a 3 r. In *Documenta quaedam*, Cod. Ambros. D496 inf., fol. 29r, Pererius argues: “quae spectant at philosophiam legere non magnopere curaverim, nisi ea de causa forte legenda sint quod is saepe reprehendatur ab Averroè, et a quibusdam Latinis philosophis in pretio habeatur (...)”

⁴¹ Pererius 1588, Praefatio, fol. a 3 r.

⁴² Ibid.: “utrunque profecto in vitio est, sed illud minus, habet enim vel excusationem ignorantiae, vel etiam speciem quandam et umbram pietatis atque religionis: hoc autem cuius Philosopho turpe est, et Christiano autem Philosopho etiam infame.”

⁴³ Ibid. fol. a 3 r: “qui labi potuit (et vero in rebus magni momenti non semel lapsus est).”

⁴⁴ Ibid. fol. a 3 r/v; fol. a 3 v: “(...) Averroem, interpretando Aristotelem, ob ignorationem linguae Graecae, mendososque codices, et bonorum interpretum penuriam, multifariam hallucinatum esse.” Marsilio Ficino refers in his *Theologia Platonica*, XV 1, to Averroes’ lack of Greek as a commonplace: Ficino 1964–1970, 3, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Pererius 1588, Praefatio, fol. a 3 v–a 4 r: “Illud autem studiosos Philosophiae diligenter volumus, si magno cum fructu, nulloque veritatis atque pietatis detrimento, Philosophari cupiunt, duos ipsis, hominumque de Philosophia male sentientium errores (...) esse fugiendos. Sunt enim nonnulli, qui propter

pauca, quae in libris Philosophorum reperiunt, a decretis sanctitateque nostrae religionis aliena, (...) omnem etiam Philosophiae cognitionem damnant (...).” Fol. a 5 r: “Sunt contra, nonnulli, qui divina ut vocant, Platonis et aristotelis ingenia, uberrimamque cunctarum rerum scientiam cum excellenti eloquentia coniunctam, usque adeo sunt admirati et amplexati ut eos, veluti numina Deosque Philosophiae colerent, eorumque decreta Philosophica, tanta animi assensione complecterentur, vix ut crederent quicquam esse posse probabile quo improbaretur ab illis; aut quod ab illis probaretur, improbabile.”

⁴⁶ Ibid. fol. a 4 r: “Huc quoque spectat Haereticorum nostri temporis artificiosa calliditas, Philosophiam, reconditioresque disciplinas, Christianis hominibus repudiandas, et execrandas esse clamantium, quo nimirum facilius, hominesque indocti ac simplices, argumentis quibusdam ipsorum in speciem modo probabilibus, captiosisque circumventi atque irretiti in eorum errores pertrahantur.”

⁴⁷ Ibid. fol. a 4 r/v: “Sed aiunt isti errasse Philosophos, errarunt sane, sed sunt illi quidem errores Philosophorum, non Philosophia[e]; hoc est, hominum non scientiae.”

⁴⁸ Cf. Frank 1995, pp. 52–58, and Frank 2003, chapter I.

⁴⁹ Valla 1886; cf. Blum 2004.

⁵⁰ Poliziano 1986.

⁵¹ Cf. Celenza 2001.

⁵² Pererius 1588, fol. a 5 v: “Ego multum Platoni tribuo, plus Aristoteli, sed rationi plurimum. (...) Si quid Aristotelis doctrinae congruens et conveniens esse intelligo, probabile duco. si quid autem rationi consentaneum esse video, verum certumque iudico.”

⁵³ Pomponazzi 1990, Prooemium, p. 4: “non nisi rem, quam possum, quid scilicet existimem”. Pomponazzi and his follower Simon Portius are extensively refuted in the lectures on *De anima* III, cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1300, fols. 23r sqq. and cod. Ambros. D426 inf., fols. 80r sqq.

⁵⁴ Pererius 1588, fol. a 5 v: “Itaque in Physiologia, primas iudicio sensuum, longam experientia et diligenti observatione explorato atque confirmato, secundas rationi, auctoritate Philosophorum postremas defero.”

⁵⁵ Ibid. fol. a 6 r: “de Philosophiae, Philosophorumque lectione”.

⁵⁶ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 6, p. 22 sq.: “quamvis haec tria usque adeo diversa sint inter se, videatur nihil esse commune intelligentiis transcendentibus et decem Praedicamentis, nihilominus tamen possunt recte comprehendendi una scientia, quatenus in ea tractantur prout habent ordinem et attributionem ad unum, quod praecipue in ea scientia spectatur, hoc autem in Metaphysica, est doctrina intelligentiarum, sicut ens est unum quidpiam, quia licet immediate significet multas res, tamen significat eas per attributionem ad unum, nimirum ad substantiam.”

⁵⁷ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 6, p. 22: “Una [pars/consideratio Metaphysicae] est principalis et quasi finis caeterarum (propter quam talis scientia dicitur Metaphysica. Theologia, et omnium nobilissima) in qua tractantur res seiunctae a materia secundum rem et rationem, cuiusmodi sunt intelligentiae et Deus.”

⁵⁸ Leinsle 1985, p. 93, suggests that Pererius follows here nominalist patterns; similarly Solana 1940, p. 388. It should be noted that modern interpretations of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, and by implication modern metaphysics, have not been able to solve this inherent paradox; see e.g. Patzig 1960/1961, p. 191: “Die erste Philosophie ist (...) eine Theologie von so besonderer Art, daß sie als solche zugleich allgemeine Ontologie sein kann.”

⁵⁹ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 6, p. 22: “ens ut ens, cuius primae causae sunt intelligentiae”.

⁶⁰ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 7, p. 23: “non enim in praedicta responsione plane conquiescimus”.

⁶¹ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 7, p. 23: “Prima conclusio oportet esse aliquam scientiam universalem diversam a scientiis particularibus, quae agat de transcendentibus, et iis quae sparsa sunt per omnes disciplinas (eiusmodi sunt decem Praedicamenta, et generales divisiones entis) ita ut subiectum eiusmodi scientiae sit ens ut ens, principia entis sint dignitates quaedam generales (quarum princeps est illa. Quodlibet est vel non est) species proxime sint decem Praedicamenta.” I could not find this new solution in the manuscript versions of Pererius’ lectures on metaphysics: cf. codd. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1296, fols. 20r–23r; Vat. Urb. Lat. 1308, fols. 18v–19r; Ambros. D496 inf., fols. 99r–102r (*Principia librorum suae Philosophiae*).

⁶² Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 7, p. 23: “Secunda conclusio praedicta scientia universalis non debet agere de intelligentiis per se, et ut sunt species entis, sed tantum fortasse in ordinem ad suum subiectum, nimirum ut sunt generalia principia et universales causae omnium entium.”

⁶³ Ibid.: “Tertia conclusio. Necesse est esse duas scientias distinctas inter se; Unam, quae agat de transcendentibus et universalissimis rebus: Alteram, quae de intelligentiis. Illa dicitur prima Philosophia et scientia universalis; haec vocabitur proprie Metaphysica, Theologia, Sapientia, Divina scientia.”

⁶⁴ Ibid. lib. 1, c. 7, p. 24: “Secunda conclusio ita probatur: cum subiectum praedictae scientiae universalis sit indifferens ad omnes species entis particulares sive materiales sive immateriales, non debet scientia considerans ens universaliter sumptum descendere ad tractationem et considerationem omnium specierum eius particularium.”

⁶⁵ Other Scotist influences on Pererius are mentioned by Leinsle 1985, p. 91.

⁶⁶ Cf. Johannes Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* n. 124, ed. Vat. III 76 sq., “ens ut ‘hoc intelligibile’ intelligitur a nobis, sed si esset primum obiectum, hoc esset secundum totam indifferentiam ad omnia in quibus salvatur, non ut aliquod unum intelligibile in se – et quidlibet illius indifferentiae posset intelligi. (...) Ens in quantum ens, communis est quocumque alio conceptu nulla contractione omnino cointellecta – nec habitudine ad sensibile, nec quacumque.” Quoted from: Honnefelder 1979, p. 69 n. 39. A more elaborate theory of abstraction by indifference can be found in the *Metaphysics* of the Scotist Bartholomaeus Mastrius (first published 1646): Mastrius 1708, d. 1, q. 1, n. 10, p. 4: “Demum, ut apud omnes est in confesso, eas rationes tenetur Metaph. considerare, quae a materia, et secundum se, et considerationem abstrahunt; haec autem in duplici sunt differentia, quaedam enim sunt secundum esse abstracta a materia per indifferentiam, ut sunt rationes generales communes entibus materialibus, et immaterialibus; quaedam vero sunt abstracta a materia secundum esse per essentiam, et sunt illae, quae sunt rebus immaterialibus prorsus addictae, adeo ut nunquam in materia inveniri possint, et istae sunt omnes rationes propriae possibiles haberi ab intellectu creato naturali lumine ducto de intelligentiis separatis etiam primam includendo.” See P.R. Blum: *Astrazione per indifferenza: Bartolomeo Mastri all’inizio della metafisica moderna* (forthcoming in: M. Forlivesi [ed.], *Convegno di Studi sul Pensiero Filosofico di Bartolomeo Mastri da Meldola*); also Blum 2002. In lib. 1, c. 6, pp. 20 sq., Pererius stresses that “abstractio per indifferentiam” does not entail real immateriality (in the same way as ‘animal’ does not exist apart from man or beast) and that this kind of abstraction makes it possible that the categories are included in the realm of metaphysical research.

⁶⁷ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 7, p. 24: “Tertia conclusio facile probatur ex dictis, nam si quae conveniunt intelligentiis per se, et ut sunt species entis, sunt scibilia in aliqua scientia et non in illa universali (...).”

⁶⁸ Ibid. and p. 26.

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 26.

⁷⁰ Cf. Blum 2001a and Blum 2001b.

⁷¹ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 9, p. 35: “ut perfecta scientia eorum omnium quae conveniunt animae, sit mixta ex tribus doctrinis; nam partim est Physica, partim Metaphysica, partim est doctrina revelata.”

⁷² Ibid. pp. 34 sq.; p. 35: Immortality “licet, inquam, hoc vere possit responderi, tamen hoc naturaliter cognosci nequit, sed ex sacris literis acceptum, fide tenemus.”

⁷³ Pererius 1588, lib. 6, c. 19 and 20. Lohr 1988b, p. 606, maintains that Pererius “was willing to concede some of Pomponazzi’s points” in this matter. This may be true for the passage quoted in the previous note, but is not consistent with Pererius’ explicit treatment in book 6.

⁷⁴ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c.12, p. 40: “Scire est rem per causam cognoscere propter quam res est; et scientia est demonstrationis effectus: demonstratio autem (loquor de perfectissimo demonstrationis genere) constare debet ex his quae sunt per se, et propria eius quod demonstratur; quae vero sunt per accidens, et communia excluduntur a perfectis demonstrationibus: sed Mathematicus neque considerat essentiam quantitatis, neque affectiones eius tractat prout manant ex tali essentia, neque declarat eas per proprias causas, propter quas insunt quantitatis, neque conficit demonstrationes suas ex praedicatis propriis, et per se; sed ex communibus, et per accidens, ergo Mathematica non est proprie scientia.” Cf. lib. 3, cap. 3, pp. 114 sq.: “Res Mathematicae ea ratione ut sunt Mathematicae et in doctrina Mathematica tractantur, (si de causis proprie loqui volumus) nullum habent genus causae. Nam eas carere fine ac efficiente, auctor est Arist. in 3. Meta. tex. 3. (...) quantitas quae tractatur a Mathematico, non est forma quidditativa rei (...) nec Mathematicus speculatur essentiam quantitatis (...).” Cf. Giacobbe 1977. Maierù 1999, p. 63, after discussing Pererius’ approach to geometric quantities, observes that the Jesuit is not addressing mathematicians, but rather philosophers and theologians as his audience. On mathematics in the Jesuit

curriculum see Cosentino 1970 and 1971 (Pererius not mentioned). On Jesuit mathematics and philosophy of nature cf. Baldini 1992, chapter I i, Blum 2001a and 2001b.

⁷⁵ Tesio 1965–1976, vol. 3, lib. 8, c. 5.

⁷⁶ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c. 12, p. 42, cross referring to c. 11, p. 39.

⁷⁷ Plato Resp. 533b–534a; 534e (Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vols. 5 & 6 translated by Paul Shorey. Cambridge, MA/London 1969. <http://perseus.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/cgi-bin/ptext?lookup=Plat.+Rep.+533b>).

⁷⁸ Pererius 1588, lib. 1, c.12, p. 42 sq. Plato 1539, p. 627 sq. Apart from leaving aside some dialogical elements, Pererius has two misprints: “Plato” instead of “Placet”, and “imaginationem” instead of “imaginem”. These errors do not occur in the manuscript version of this chapter 12 (in ms. chapter 11): Cod. Ambros. D 496 inf., fol. 109r.

⁷⁹ Plato 1539, p. 619: “Tu vero disserendi industriam a forma quidem sua Dialecticam nomina, ab exordio Logicam, a fine metaphysicam, atque Theologiam.”

⁸⁰ Pererius 1588, lib. 3, c. 5, p. 124: “(...) si Physicus in definienda re naturali, exposuerit omnia praedicata essentialia eius quae sunt Physica, (...) talisque definitio censenda erit perfecta, non quidem simpliciter, sed Physice; nam absolute et omni ex parte esse non poterit, nisi cognita et explicata fuerint quaecumque insunt in quidditate, quod fieri non potest sine scientia Metaphysicae (...), quamobrem vocatur regina scientiarum et omnes disciplinae pendent ab ipsa, tum quia docet primas causas, hoc est intelligentias et Deum, a quibus manant et pendent res omnes, tum etiam quia declarat attributa (...)”

⁸¹ *In primam partem S. Thomae*, cod. Ambros D428 inf., fols. 107r–110v: “Disputatio de Ideis”; cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1296, fols. 173v–183r (end of commentary on book 4 of *Metaphysics*). Pererius used some of his reasons when he refuted Proclus’ argument to prove the eternity of the world from the eternity of the Idea: Pererius 1588, l. 15, c. 4, pp. 783 sq.

⁸² Pererius 1588, l. 8, c. 1 pp. 449 sq.; cf. cod. Ambros D428 inf., fol. 110v, and cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1296, fol. 177v.

⁸³ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 1, p. 187.

⁸⁴ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 1, p. 186. A different, still extraordinarily lengthy *Explanatio opinionum de principiis rerum naturalium quae olim fuerunt apud philosophos* was given in the lectures on physics cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1298, fols. 37r–50v.

⁸⁵ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 3, p. 195.

⁸⁶ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 3, pp. 192 sqq. Pererius was, indeed, one of the first Humanists to understand the value of historical chronology. He was worth being criticized for his chronographic studies in his Commentary on the biblical book *Daniel* by the most outstanding authority in these matters, Joseph Scaliger: Grafton 1983–1993, 2, pp. 395 and 424–426.

⁸⁷ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 4, p. 198.

⁸⁸ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 4, p. 203: “(...) quo tempore apud Graecos prope infans erat philosophia, et sapientia, eo tempore fuisse eam apud Hebraeos vetustissimam, et (si fas est ita loqui) pene decrepitam: novissimos enim sapientium, et prophetarum qui fuerunt apud Hebraeos, constat fuisse synchronos antiquissimis, ade primis Graecorum sapientibus.”

⁸⁹ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 4, p. 214.

⁹⁰ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 4, p. 216.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*: “Ego ne Philosophum [Porphyrium] quidem appellandum censeo, hominem usque adeo impiis superstitionibus, et magicis fallaciis deditum: fuit certe Christianae religionis nequissimus Apostata, et hostis acerrimus.”

⁹² Steuchus 1540. On Steuchus see Muccillo 1996, chapter 1, and Schmidt-Biggemann 1998, pp. 677–689 (neither refers to Pererius’ critique).

⁹³ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 10, pp. 238–243.

⁹⁴ Pererius 1601, vol. 1, lib. 1, c. 1, vers. 1, nn. 28–31, pp. 10–11. Extensively on chronology lib. 11, pp. 652 sqq.

⁹⁵ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 14–16.

⁹⁶ Allen 1986.

⁹⁷ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 16, p. 257, refers to Bessarion’s *In calumniatorem Platonis*, lib. 2, c. 12.

⁹⁸ Pererius 1588, lib. 4, c. 20, p. 272.

⁹⁹ Pererius 1588, lib. 6, c. 18, p. 386–388.

¹⁰⁰ Pererius 1588, lib. 8, c. 21, p. 504 sq. This chapter is reprinted in Matton 1998, pp. 432–438; on Pererius pp. 391–396.

¹⁰¹ Lohr 1988a, no. 23. I quote from the edition Pererius 1612. Chapters 19–20 of *De principiis* are lib. 1, c. 12, pp. 101–122, of *De magia*.

¹⁰² For instance, Pererius' book was still read in the 18th century and became a source for the Hungarian poet Ferenc Faludi (1704–1779), who had studied with the Jesuits in Graz; see Szauder 1957.

¹⁰³ Pererius 1601 and Pererius 1602.

¹⁰⁴ Pererius 1612, lib. 1, c. 3, p. 26.

¹⁰⁵ Pererius 1612, lib. 3, c. 1 § 1, p. 216 sq. cf. Pico 1946, lib. 1, p. 80.

¹⁰⁶ Pererius 1601: Liber Secundus. Qui est de Coelis et astris secundum sacram Scripturam, et de Divinatione astrologica.

qu. 4: De numero coelorum, n. 19, p. 94: “Haec omnia eo commemoravimus, ut palam esset nusquam in sacris litteris certum numerum caelorum esse proditum: nec eos qui caelos plures tribus ponunt, videlicet vel novem vel decem vel undecim, sacris litteris contradicere. Quapropter cum Philosophi et Mathematici manifestis et necessariis rationibus concludant esse octo aut novem, aut etiam plures caelos: inscienter admodum profecto, ne dicam stulte, nunc faceret Theologus et sacrarum litterarum Interpres, si eorum opinionem tanquam divinae Scripturae contrariam, vel alienam rejiceret atque damnaret.”

¹⁰⁷ Pererius 1612, lib. 1, c. 10, p. 78: “De Magia Cabalistica”. On Stefano Tucci's view on Cabala see above note 14.

¹⁰⁸ Wycliff 1922, De statu innocencie, c. 4, p. 496: “Nec legitur quod Adam artificialiter didicit plus loqui sed habuit noticiam et instructionem naturaliter a Deo ad nominandum propriissime secundum proprietates naturales naturas sibi subditas, sub quibus nominibus homini naturaliter obedirent. Et hinc reservantur reliquae potestatis innocencie in vocibus exorcite et naturaliter incantantis; et ad hoc credo voces Hebraeas habere maiorem efficaciam quam alias variatas.”

¹⁰⁹ Pererius 1612, lib. 1, c. 10, p. 79. The edition Pererius might have used: Thomas Waldensis 1571. Pererius refers to “De sacramentalibus”, which is vol. 3; however, I have not found the place Pererius seems to refer to, namely where Waldensis refutes the theory that Adam's capability of naming things allowed him to dominate them, and that this survived in Cabala. Secret 1985, p. 221, suggests that Pererius was inspired by Miguel de Medina (*Christiana paraenesis libri septem*, 1564) but has no evidence for this specific argument as used by Pererius (cf. Secret 1958, p. 543). Pererius seems to have known Medina, but only indirectly, because he mentions him in his treatise on fate, along with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, referring to Medina by saying: “existit etiam nostra memoria quidam Monachus Franciscanus, Hispanus, cui nomen est Michael Medina, qui in quadam opere, quod scripsit de recta ad Deum fide multa scripsit de Fato.” Cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1308, fol. 172r/v. The chapter *De Fato* is an appendix to the third book of Pererius' *Opus Metaphysicum* (Lohr 1988a, no. 16). Similar reference is made in the lecture on metaphysics, book 3, in Cod. Vat. Urb. Lat. 1296, fol. 142v–143r. Interestingly, a similar statement as that of Wyclif can be found in Steuchus, the permanent object of attacks in Pererius' Bible commentaries: Steuchus 1578, vol. 1, *Cosmopoeia*, In cap. 2 Genesis, fol. 68 C/D: “Prima igitur rerum nuncupationes, partim divinae sunt, partim humanae. Divinae rerum ante hominem natarum, caelum et terra, dies et nox, quibus vocibus audivit homo Deum res ipsas appellantes. Humanae nuncupationes, particularium rerum fuerunt. Nec vero difficile primohomini fuit notare nomina animalium, qui omnium eorum audivit a Deo proprietates, et sapientia ab eo largita cognovit. (...) Hanc et similem philosophiam, fecisse Adam credendum est, videntem et agnoscentem omnium animalium proprietates, et colores, habitusque corporum.”

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