

Annuario di storia della metafisica  
Annuaire d'histoire de la métaphysique  
Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Metaphysik  
Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics

# Quaestio

**Benet Perera (Pererius, 1535-1610).  
A Reinassance Jesuit  
at the Crossroads of Modernity**

**Benet Perera (Pererius, 1535-1610).  
Un gesuita rinascimentale  
al crocevia della modernità**

a cura di  
Marco Lamanna e Marco Forlivesi

2014

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pagina

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# Christoph Sander

## The War of the Roses

### The Debate between Diego de Ledesma and Benet Perera about the Philosophy Course at the Jesuit College in Rome

#### 0. Introduction

When Diego Lafnez was elected the second Superior General of the Society of Jesus in July 1558, the Jesuit college in Rome had decided to celebrate the event with an inauguration ceremony<sup>1</sup>. Since the weather was announced to be cold and a large audience was expected, it was quite clear that the Jesuits' own rooms, which were, at this time, located outside the city centre, would not suffice. Fortunately, the Pope himself arranged that the Pantheon could be used for a theological disputation celebrating Lafnez's election. The celebration lasted for eight days and attracted a large audience. by a large audience. It was in this very setting that a relatively unknown Jesuit – Benet Perera – entered the public stage and held his first theological disputation, presided over by Diego de Ledesma. He was only twenty-three years old by then, had become a member of the Society six years before and neither had he yet been ordained as priest nor ever lectured in philosophy or theology<sup>2</sup>. Only three months after the disputation at the Pantheon he should become professor in philosophy at the Collegio Romano.

<sup>1</sup> The scene is described in F. SACCHINI, *Historiae Societatis Jesu. Pars secunda sive Lainius, Filii M. Nuti, Antwerps 1620, lib. 2 (1558), p. 48*: “Ad caeteram gratulationem, qua Praepositi creatio celebrata est, pro ludis inanibus salubria ingenij atque doctrinae spectacula praebita. Locum his, quoniam Societas satis idoneum non habebat, ipse Pontifex destinavit abunde capacem, et pro tempestate frigidam aedem, quam ab figura vulgus, Rotundam; Ethnici, quod cunctis dicant diis, Pantheon nuncupabant. Initium factum postridie comitiorum, postquam Fulvius Cardulus (orator is bonus erat) eleganti oratione praeluserat, Lamberto Auero, et Benedicto Pereria doctis ingeniosisque iuuenibus de rebus Theologicis positiones tuentibus. Praeerant Emmanuel Sa, et Iacobus Ledesma. Generalis, ac reliqui Patres, Praesulum ingens corona, Cardinales octo cohonestabant. Continuatae disputationes in diem octauum, cum diebus singulis multa pro templi foribus carmina proponerentur; quae cupide spectabantur, et describebantur a multis”. For the historical setting, cf. E. RINALDI, *La fondazione del Collegio Romano: memorie storiche*, Cooperativa tipografica, Arezzo 1914, pp. 24 and 59; R.G. VILLOSLADA, *Storia del Collegio Romano dal suo inizio (1551) alla soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù (1773)*, apud aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, Rome 1954, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> There is only sparse information on Perera's biography. The most valuable secondary literature is M. SCADUTO, *Catalogo dei Gesuiti d'Italia, 1540-1565*, Institutum historicum S.I., Rome 1968, p. 114;

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