

# 12th-Century Philosophers and the Filioque: The Case of Nicholas of Methone's Corpus on the Procession of the Holy Spirit

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## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The history of the controversy between the Greek and the Latin churches has never been written on the basis of the theological treatises composed by the authors involved in the discussions, both real and invented. Most probably one of the reasons why this has not yet been done is that the lives of many of these authors, especially those who lived during the 12th century, are obscure—too obscure for those of us who wish to understand the relationships among the intellectuals and their reciprocal influences.

Of Nicholas of Methone's life only scant pieces of information have survived. We do not know when he died, or whether he participated in some important church synods or encounters with Latin envoys,<sup>2</sup> but in his case the picture is even more obscure due to the accusation of plagiarism both in relation to his *Refutatio Institutionis theologiae Procli*<sup>3</sup> and his theological writings on

1 My heartfelt gratitude goes to Jonathan Greig and Joshua Robinson who not only carefully read this contribution but generously corrected my English and suggested relevant improvements for my interpretation of Nicholas' thought.

2 For an attempted reconstruction of the biography, see Νικολάου Μεθώνης, *Ἀνάπτυξις τῆς Θεολογικῆς Στοιχειώσεως Πρόκλου Πλατωνικοῦ Φιλοσόφου*, ed. A.D. Angelou (Athens / Leiden: Academy of Athens / Brill, 1984), pp. IX–XXIII. From now on abbreviated Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*.

3 The original Greek title is *Ἀνάπτυξις τῆς Θεολογικῆς Στοιχειώσεως Πρόκλου τοῦ Λυκίου πλατωνικοῦ φιλοσόφου πρὸς τὸ μὴ συναρπάζεσθαι τοὺς ἀναγινώσκοντας ὑπὸ τῆς ὑποφαινομένης αὐτῆ περὶ ἀναρχίας καὶ σκανδαλίζεσθαι κατὰ τῆς ἀληθοῦς πίστεως*. A thorough study, rich bibliography and an English translation are available in J.M. Robinson, *Nicholas of Methone's Refutation of Proclus: Theology and Neoplatonism in 12th-century Byzantium*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Notre Dame 2014. Other important analyses by the same scholar are J.M. Robinson, "Dionysius Against Proclus: the Apophatic Critique in Nicholas of Methone's Refutation of the *Elements of Theology*", in D. Layne, D.D. Butorac (eds), *Proclus and his Legacy* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 249–270; J.M. Robinson, "Proclus as Heresiarch: Theological Polemic

the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> This charge, in light of most recent studies on this important churchman and philosopher, should be reconsidered, especially on the basis of those internal pieces of evidence that show his corpus to have a coherent plan, designed to defend Byzantine orthodoxy against the threat represented by both the Latin addition of the Filioque sentence to the Creed and the “Hellenic tales” (οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων μῦθοι).<sup>5</sup>

Since most scholars are generally more interested in the “philosophical” writings of Byzantine intellectuals than in their theological writings, the aim of this paper is to offer the reader the most meaningful and original argumentative knots of Nicholas of Methone’s writings on the Filioque and to highlight the passages and arguments that would be interesting for a further analysis of the reception of classical, late antique, and medieval philosophy. Indeed, some scholars have already discussed the relevance of the theological writings of Nicholas to better understand the *Refutatio Procli*: the most famous and quoted is certainly the review of Angelou’s edition by Kazhdan, in which the relevance of the twelfth-century historical context, and the relationship between the churches for the composition of the philosophical refutation of Proclus, are left open for further research;<sup>6</sup> others have claimed that Nicholas’ philosophical production has no relationship with the theological literature and discussions of the time; and, furthermore, others defending Nicholas’ paternity of the *Refutatio Procli* have used the anti-Latin stance of the text in order to prove its date of composition during the 12th century.<sup>7</sup>

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and Philosophical Commentary in Nicholas of Methone’s *Refutation (Anaptyxis) of Proclus’ Elements of Theology*, in S. Mariev (ed.), *Byzantine Perspectives on Neoplatonism* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 103–136.

4 See for example A. Michel, *Humbert und Kerullarios: Quellen und Studien zum Schisma des XI. Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1930), vol. 2, p. 364: “Fast die ganze Schrift des Stethatos, größere Teile davon sogar doppelt, wurde von Nikolaos von Methone († vor 1166) übernommen, der lange Zeit zu Unrecht als der bedeutendste Theologe des 12. Jahrhunderts galt, heute aber als Koptiator großen Stils bekannt ist.”

5 Nicholas of Methone, “Τοῦ αὐτοῦ Νικολάου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης κεφαλαιώδεις ἔλεγχοι τοῦ παρὰ Λατίνοις καινοφανοῦς δόγματος, τοῦ ὅτι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεται”, in A.K. Demetrakopoulos (ed.), *Ἑκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Leipzig, 1866, repr. 1965), vol. 1, pp. 359–380, at § 11, p. 365, l. 5.

6 A.P. Kazhdan, “Review of Angelou’s edition”, in *Speculum* 64(1989), pp. 196–199.

7 J. Stiglmayr, “Die ‘Streitschrift des Prokopios von Gaza’ gegen den Neuplatoniker Proklos”, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 8(1899), pp. 263–301; E. Amato, A. Corcella, G. Ventrella, P. Maréchaux (eds), *Procope de Gaza. Discours et fragments* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2014), pp. XI–LXXXV, “Introduction générale”; M. Trizio, “Eleventh- to twelfth-century Byzantium”, in S. Gersh (ed.), *Interpreting Proclus: From Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 182–226; A. Gioffreda, M. Trizio, “Nicholas of Methone, Procopius of Gaza and Proclus of Lycia”, in D. Calma (ed.), *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes* (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2021), vol. 2, pp. 94–135.

The aim of this paper is neither to enter into the discussion of the paternity of the texts attributed to the Bishop of Methone, nor to interpret the theological side of the *Refutatio Procli*: Joshua Robinson<sup>8</sup> and Nicolò Carmelo Benvenuto<sup>9</sup> have already devoted their doctoral dissertations and articles to these controversial and complex topics; the goal of this chapter is instead to present Nicholas of Methone's theological writings on the Holy Spirit in order to add some relevant cases to the ongoing debate on the relationship between the theological and the philosophical realms in Nicholas' production, especially because those scholars who have also mentioned the anti-Latin writings generally refer to one or two of these texts, but do not take into account the entire corpus.



Four works attributed to Nicholas of Methone are preserved, but only one of them (no. 3) has recently received a critical edition.<sup>10</sup> These works include:

1. A reply to a question on the Holy Spirit, *Ad magnum domesticum* (Angelou, n. 7; *RAP* G19828)<sup>11</sup>

8 Robinson, "Nicholas of Methone's *Refutation of Proclus*". See above n. 3, p. 290.

9 C.N. Benvenuto, "Prime indagini su quattro scritti teologici di Nicola di Metone", Dottorato di Ricerca in "Storia, cultura e saperi dell'Europa Mediterranea dall'Antichità all'Età Contemporanea", Università degli Studi della Basilicata 2022. When this contribution was submitted in May 2022, several important works by Carmelo Nicolò Benvenuto had not yet been published. At the current stage of revision for publication, it is unfortunately no longer possible to take Benvenuto's research into account. I would therefore like to apologise to both the reader and to Benvenuto himself if any of our respective findings now appear to overlap. The following are his recent publications: N.C. Benvenuto (ed.), *Nicola di Metone: Refutationes theologicae doctrinae Latinorum*. Akribos anaginoskein 3. Potenza, Basilicata University Press, 2024; N.C. Benvenuto, "Nicola di Metone e il *De Spiritus Sancti processione* di Nicola IV Muzalone. Note per una nuova proposta attributiva", in *Medioevo Greco* 23(2023), pp. 13–39; N.C. Benvenuto, "Un 'quaderno' di *excerpta* d'autore: le *Memoriae contra Latinos de Spiritu Sancto* tra Niceta Stetato, Nicola di Metone e Niceta Coniata" in *Medioevo Greco* 24(2024), pp. 63–84.

10 The *RAP* numbers refer to the *Repertorium Auctorum Polemicorum de pace et discordia inter Ecclesiam Graecam et Latinam*, a research project, coordinated by Alessandra Bucossi and Marie-Hélène Blanchet, that is creating the first complete online inventory of the Byzantine literature dedicated to the relationship between Greek and Latin Christianity, accessible at the address, [www.unive.it/rap](http://www.unive.it/rap).

11 Nicholas of Methone, "Νικολάου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης, πρὸς τὸν μέγαν Δομέστικον, ἐρωτήσαντα περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος πῶς λέγεται οὐσιωδῶς ἐπιδημήσαι καὶ ἐνουκῆσαι τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις; καὶ εἰ οὕτως ἦν καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ αὐτοὶ χριστοὶ λέγονται; ἢ εἰ μὴ οὕτως, τίς ἢ διαφορά;"; in A.K. Demetrakopoulos (ed.), *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Leipzig, 1865, repr. 1965), vol. 1, pp. 199–218. From now on abbreviated: Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*.

2. A treatise on the procession of the Holy Spirit, *Adversus Latinos de Spiritu Sancto* (Angelou, n. 1, *RAP* G368)<sup>12</sup>
3. A collection of principal refutations of the new Latin dogma, *Refutationes theologicae doctrinae Latinorum*, also known as *Syllogismi*<sup>13</sup> or *Oratio* 7<sup>14</sup> (Angelou, n. 3, *RAP* G19831)<sup>15</sup>
4. Memoirs from various writings written against the Latin blasphemy on the Holy Spirit, *Memoriae contra Latinos* (Angelou, n. 4, *RAP* G19835).<sup>16</sup>

It is impossible to establish a definite evidence-based dating for these writings, however, according to the contents, it seems plausible to propose a hypothetical order of composition from one to four: number one is a general text on the Holy Spirit, which is not explicitly addressed against the Latins, but was composed in reply to a question posed by a *megas domestikos*, perhaps John Axouch (died 1150 ca.),<sup>17</sup> while the last one is a sort of “Reader’s Digest” of all the writings that Nicholas dedicated to the procession of the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup>

In this paper I discuss these four texts, which are clearly attributed to Nicholas, bishop of Methone by the manuscript tradition; however, as hinted in

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- 12 Nicholas of Methone, “Νικολάου τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης, λόγος πρὸς τοὺς Λατίνους περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐ μὴν καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεται” in K. Simonides (ed.), *Ὁρθοδόξων Ἑλλήνων θεολογικαὶ γραφαὶ τέσσαρες* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, 1858), pp. 1–39. From now on abbreviated: Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*.
  - 13 This is the title that will be employed in this publication to avoid confusion with the *Refutatio Procli*.
  - 14 The text is published by Demetrakopoulos under its original title, however, on the basis of the title used by the *TLG*, many publications refer to it as *Oratio* 7, which of course is not an appropriate title.
  - 15 Nicholas of Methone, “Τοῦ αὐτοῦ Νικολάου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης κεφαλαίωδεις ἔλεγχοι τοῦ παρὰ Λατίνους καινοφανοῦς δόγματος, τοῦ ὅτι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεται”, in A.K. Demetrakopoulos (ed.), *Ἐκκλησιαστικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη* (Leipzig, 1866, repr. 1965), vol. 1, pp. 359–380. From now on abbreviated: Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae* in the bibliographic references in the footnotes, but as *Syllogismi* in the main text. The reader should be aware that, although this text has since been published by Carmelo Nicolò Benvenuto (in his *Refutationes*, see above n. 9, p. 292) the references in this contribution have not been updated to reflect the new edition, and still refer to the printed version by Demetrakopoulos.
  - 16 Nicholas of Methone, “Ἀπομνημονεύματα ἐκ τῶν διαφόροις λόγοις γεγραμμένων κατὰ Λατίνων περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα βλασφημίας”, in *Два неизданных произведения Николая, епископа Меффонского, писателя XII века* (Novgorod, 1897), Arsenij Ivačenko (ed.), pp. 5–49. From now on abbreviated: Nicholas of Methone, *Memoriae contra Latinos*.
  - 17 A.P. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), vol. 1, p. 239, s.v. Axouch.
  - 18 More references on the correspondence in this paper at Section 5. *Memoriae*, at p. 339, and in the critical apparatus of the *Contra Latinos et de processione Spiritus sancti* attributed to Niketas Stethatos (*RAP* G19631) edited in A. Michel (ed.), *Humbert und Kerullarios: Quellen und Studien zum Schisma des XI Jahrhunderts* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1930), vol. 2, pp. 371–409. From now on abbreviated Niketas Stethatos, *Contra Latinos*.

this volume by Carmelo Nicolò Benvenuto<sup>19</sup> and widely discussed in his doctoral dissertation,<sup>20</sup> there are various problems of attributions for at least the *Memoriae* (attributed also to Niketas Stethatos)<sup>21</sup> and some parts of the *Syllogismi* (attributed also to the Patriarch Nicholas IV Mouzalon),<sup>22</sup> which I will mention only briefly in the dedicated sections.

A thorough study of Nicholas of Methone's theological doctrine on the procession of the Holy Spirit would deserve a monograph. Nevertheless, in this publication I will first concisely describe the *Ad magnum domesticum*, and then I will dedicate more space and attention to the main work on the procession of the Holy Spirit, the *Adversus Latinos de Spiritu Sancto*, trying also to highlight if and when we can find passages that should be analysed in the light of Nicholas' *Refutatio Procli*. I will then finally pinpoint the passages from the *Syllogismi* and the correspondences of *Memoriae* that complete this succinct overview.

## 2 *Ad magnum domesticum*

The title of the *Ad magnum domesticum* preserves the questions asked to Nicholas by a *megas domestikos*, by imperial order:<sup>23</sup> why is the Holy Spirit said to have descended on and dwelt in the Apostles οὐσιωδῶς, "in essence" (based on a passage from Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oration 41*, on Pentecost)? Is there any difference between the way in which the Spirit substantially inhabits the Apostles and the substantial relationship between the Spirit and Christ? Indeed, if there is no difference, then should the Apostles be called "christs"? But, if the relationship is different, what is the difference?<sup>24</sup>

19 C.N. Benvenuto, "Reconsidering Nicholas of Methone's Corpus on the Procession of the Holy Spirit", in this volume, p. 347–373.

20 Benvenuto, "Prime indagini su quattro scritti teologici di Nicola di Metone", quoted above n. 9, p. 292.

21 See above n. 18.

22 Nicholas IV Mouzalon, *De processione Spiritus Sancti* (RAP 63656) edited in Th. Zeses, "Ο πατριάρχης Νικόλαος Δ' Μουζάλων (Παράρτημα: Μουζάλωνος, Περί τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος)", in *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς* 23(1978), pp. 307–329.

23 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 199, l. 26–p. 200, l. 1: μάλιστα καὶ βασιλικοῦ προηγησαμένου κελεύσματος, τὴν λύσιν μοι τοῦ παρὰ σοῦ προτεθέντος ζητήματος ἐπιτρέποντος.

24 Cf. Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, titulus, p. 199: Νικολάου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης πρὸς τὸν μέγαν Δομέστικον, ἐρωτήσαντα περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος πῶς λέγεται οὐσιωδῶς ἐπιδημῆσαι καὶ ἐνοικῆσαι τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις; καὶ εἰ οὕτως ἦν καὶ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ αὐτοὶ χριστοὶ λέγονται; ἢ εἰ μὴ οὕτως, τίς ἡ διαφορά;

The passage by Gregory of Nazianzus that triggers the entire discussion is the following:

Ἄλλὰ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀμυδρῶς· τὸ δὲ δεύτερον ἐκτυπώτερον· τὸ δὲ νῦν τελεώτερον, οὐκέτι ἐνεργεῖα παρὸν ὡς πρότερον, οὐσιωδῶς δέ, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, συγγινόμενόν τε καὶ συμπολιτευόμενον.

But while the first manifestation was obscure, the second <was> more manifest and the present one is more perfect: because the Spirit is no longer present by his action, as before, but it is **substantially**, as one could say, that He is present to the Apostles and resides with them.<sup>25</sup>

This set of questions is not explicitly linked to anti-Latin polemics, but Nicholas' explanations form the basis of his theology of the Holy Spirit, his "pneumatology". The text opens with a series of references to the Spirit in the Old and New Testament (e. g. the chrism in Is. 61: 1; joy and exultation in Gal. 5: 22) and his role in the life of Christ: the Spirit and the Virgin, the Spirit and Christ's baptism, the Spirit as the finger of God that drives away the demons, and so on. The turning points in Nicholas' and Gregory's exegeses are after Christ's death and resurrection, when Christ himself breaths forth the Spirit (Io. 20: 21–23), on appearing to the Disciples, and later, after the Ascension, when he sends the Spirit at Pentecost (Mc. 16: 19; Lc. 24: 50–53; Act. 1: 6–11).

In order to explain how and why the Spirit exists differently in the Son and in the Apostles, Nicholas clarifies that the Spirit is "substantially" in the Son because the two are the unique substance of the Divinity, while the same condition is not applicable to the Apostles, who are creatures, and the divine substance cannot be confined within creation. The Bishop of Methone uses a passage from Gregory of Nazianzus' *Oratio 31*, on the Holy Spirit, to reinforce his first point:

[...] πάντα τῇ οὐσίᾳ πληροῦν, πάντα συνέχον· πληρωτικὸν κόσμου κατὰ τὴν οὐσίαν, ἀχώρητον κόσμῳ κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν [...].

[...] [the Spirit is] filling all with his essence, containing all: *filling the world*<sup>26</sup> in his essence, **not limited** by the world in his power [...].<sup>27</sup>

25 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 41*, §11, p. 340, l. 20–23.

26 Cf. Sap. 1: 7.

27 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 31*, §29, p. 334, l. 18–20; Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 204, l. 10–14.

Then he goes on to explain that since God is infinite, while the world is limited, and since the unlimited cannot be contained in the limited,<sup>28</sup> therefore, when the Spirit comes upon and dwells in the Apostles, he is not contained in his entirety in each one of them, as he is in Christ,<sup>29</sup> but in the Apostles the Spirit is divided and in parts.<sup>30</sup> It is important to highlight the two different expressions employed in these passages: the Spirit is *ἀχώρητον*, “cannot be confined”, but can be *χωριστόν*, “separable”. Nicholas’ point could be summarised in a simple concept: the Divinity is infinite but at the same time can be divided into parts, as the Spirit is in residing in each creature. The conclusion to one of the questions posed by the *meGas domestikos*, therefore, is: if the Spirit does not exist in the same manner in the Apostles and in Christ, then the Apostles cannot be called “christs”; rather they can be called “Christians”, a simple conclusion to quite a tedious question. One wonders if this was a serious matter for discussion in Constantinople, as Nicholas seems to present it in the proem, or if it was a personal curiosity of the *meGas domestikos*.<sup>31</sup>

Nicholas goes back to Gregory of Nazianzus’ passage from *Oratio 41* and draws attention to the three fundamental stages in the life of Christ—(1) before he was glorified by his suffering, (2) after the Resurrection, and (3) after the Ascension<sup>32</sup>—in order to clarify (always on the basis of Gregory) how the manifestation of the Spirit was possible only after the Resurrection. He explains at length the meaning of Gregory’s text and then concludes, clarifying that the Theologian did not use the expression “substantially” in a complete, absolute way<sup>33</sup> but “tempered”<sup>34</sup> it (*ἐκόλασε*)<sup>35</sup> by the addition of the words “as one could

28 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 205, l. 2–3: ἄπειρον γὰρ τὸ θεῖον, ὁ δὲ κόσμος πεπερασμένος, καὶ οὐ δήπου τῷ πεπερασμένῳ χωρεῖται τὸ ἄπειρον.

29 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 205, l. 6–10: Ὡστε καὶ οὐσιωδῶς φώμεν ἐπιδημήσαι τὸ Πνεῦμα καὶ ἐνοικῆσαι τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις, ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ καὶ ὄλον αὐτὸ καὶ τὸ πᾶν ἐν ἐκάστω τούτων χωρηθῆναι δοίμεν, οὐδ’ οὕτως ἐνωθῆναι καὶ συνουσιωθῆναι ὡς τῷ Χριστῷ.

30 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 205, l. 22–25: Διαιρετῶς οὖν καὶ μεριστῶς ἐν τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις τὸ Πνεῦμα, ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὄλον ἐν ἐκάστω καὶ ἀδιαίρετον καὶ ἀμέριστον, οὐ μὴν οὐδ’ ἀχώριστον, ἀλλ’ ἔστιν ὅπου καὶ χωριστόν.

31 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 206, l. 6–13: Οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ χριστοὶ κυρίως λεχθεῖεν ἂν οἱ μήτε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ὃ λέγεται, πρώτης μήτε μὴν ἔπειτα συνουσιωθέντες ἀχωρίστως ὄλω τῷ χρίσματι, ἀλλ’ εἰς μὲν οὗτος, εἰς Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (συμφησαιμεν ἂν καὶ ἡμεῖς τῷ Παύλῳ)· οἱ δὲ ὡς μεριστοὶ τοῦ χρίσματός τε καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μέτοχοι χριστιανοὶ μᾶλλον ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρωνύμως κληθήσονται [...].

32 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 207, l. 6–8, cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 41*, § 11, p. 338, l. 9–15.

33 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 206, l. 16–19: Καίτοι ἔστιν εἰπεῖν, ὡς οὐδ’ ὁ Θεολόγος ἀπόλυτον τὴν οὐσιωδῶς λέξιν παρέλαβεν, ἀλλ’ ἐκόλασε τῇ προσθήκῃ τοῦ “ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις”.

34 Or “mitigated/chastened”.

say” (ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις). Therefore, the “substantial” (οὐσιωδῶς) presence of the Spirit in the Apostles is different from his presence in Christ, because in Christ the Spirit was present, quoting again Gregory, “not operating, but accompanying a person of equal dignity” (ἐὼ γὰρ Χριστὸν εἰπεῖν, ᾧ παρήν, οὐχ ὡς ἐνεργούν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ὁμοτίμῳ συμπαρομαρτοῦν),<sup>36</sup> “id est”—adds Nicholas—“as cooperating in the one and undivided operation, as supremely united and belonging essentially in a supra-essential manner according to the equality of honour of the nature” (τουτέστι συνεργούν κατὰ μίαν ἀμέριστον ἐνέργειαν, ὡς καὶ ὑπερηνωμένον καὶ συνουσιωμένον ὑπερουσίως κατὰ τὴν ὁμοτιμίαν τῆς φύσεως).<sup>37</sup>

In this way Nicholas concludes his reply,<sup>38</sup> but not the treatise; in fact he feels the need to explain fully why Gregory said that the Spirit was “substantially” present in the Apostles not in a “simple and open way” (καὶ οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἀπλῶς) but in a such a “tempered”<sup>39</sup> way (ἀλλ’ οὕτω κεκολασμένως).<sup>40</sup> To resolve the case, Nicholas mentions the hint left by Gregory himself (ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις) and interprets “substantially” (οὐσιωδῶς) as referring to Aristotle’s πρῶτην οὐσίαν.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, for Nicholas the Spirit was present in substance because the Divinity and the name, “God”, are common, and therefore the οὐσία is common, while each person of the Trinity is what the philosophers call ἄτομον, individual, but both what is common and what is personal are substance.<sup>42</sup> A reasoning that could sound quite eccentric in the panorama of the twelfth-century polemical writings, which are primarily concerned with clearly and rigidly distinguishing between the common substance (οὐσία) and the personal hypostases (ὑποστάσεις) and carefully identifying and specifying the personal characteristics, not common, and the collective substantial characteristic shared by the Divinity.<sup>43</sup>

36 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 41, § 11, p. 338, l. 10–11.

37 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 207, l. 19–22.

35 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 207, l. 15–16: Ὅποτε τοίνυν καὶ τὸ οὐσιωδῶς συγγίνεσθαι τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις ὁ Θεολόγος ἐκόλασε.

38 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 207.

39 Or “mitigated/chastened”.

40 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 207, l. 28–p. 208, l. 2: Εἰ γὰρ δὴ τὸ Πνεῦμα πάντα τῇ οὐσίᾳ πληροῦν ἐστίν, ὡσπερ εἴρηται, οὐ νῦν μόνον μετὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν ἀλλὰ καὶ πρότερον, πῶς νῦν ὡς καινὸν γινόμενον ὁ Θεολόγος εἰσάγει τὸ οὐσιωδῶς τοῦτο τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις συγγίνεσθαι, καὶ οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἀπλῶς, ἀλλ’ οὕτω κεκολασμένως;

41 Aristotle, *Categoriae*, 5; see e.g. 2b, l. 8–20.

42 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 208, l. 8–25: κοινὸν γὰρ ἡ θεότης καὶ τὸ Θεὸς ὄνομα, ἰδικὸν δὲ καὶ οἷον ἄτομον τῶν τῆς Τριάδος προσώπων ἕκαστον καὶ λέγεται γε καὶ ἔστιν οὐσία ἑκάτερον· οὐσία γὰρ καὶ τὸ καθέκαστον, εἰ καὶ μὴ τοῦτο μόνον, δ καὶ ὑπόστασις καὶ πρόσωπον κρατεῖ λέγεσθαι.

43 Cf. for example Niketas of Thessalonike, *Dialogi* (RAP 610079), in *Nicetae Thessalonicensis Dialogi sex de processione Spiritus Sancti*, ed. A. Bucossi, L. D’Amelia (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), § 19, pp. 9–11.

So, according to Nicholas, the Spirit had always been present in substance, following his Aristotelian interpretation of the adverb οὐσιωδῶς, together with the Father and the Son, but he was not present σωματικῶς, αἰσθητῶς<sup>44</sup> (“physically” and “sensibly”)—here quoting again *Oratio 41* by Gregory<sup>45</sup>—because he could manifest himself through his operation (διὰ μόνης τῆς ἐνεργείας)<sup>46</sup> only after the Resurrection, in the “tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them” (Act. 2: 3): this indeed was the time of his presence, of his personal and substantial manifestation, which human beings had not experienced before.<sup>47</sup> Finally, Nicholas clarifies that in this way it is also possible to understand the meaning of the passage of Io. 7: 39: “Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

[...] οὕτως πρότερον ἐνεργεία παρόν, ὕστερον οὐσιωδῶς ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις (ὁ περιττός τὴν ἕξω σοφίαν, κατὰ τὸ σημαίνόμενον δηλαδὴ τῆς κατ’αὐτὸν πρώτης οὐσίας, ὃν ὁ λόγος φθάσας ἐδήλωσε) τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἐπέδημησε συγγινόμενόν τε καὶ συμπολιτευόμενον [...].<sup>48</sup>

[...] so, the Spirit, being present **before through operation**, then descended upon the Apostles **substantially as one could say** (i.e., the remarkable one in pagan wisdom, according to the meaning of the primary substance as he defined it, which this writing has already elucidated) being **associated with the disciples and living with them** [...].

A third part follows, which in fact is as an addition to the main reply to the *megas domestikos*. Nicholas summarizes the previous conclusions, and then resolves three other issues against (1) those who think that the Spirit is the “inbreathing/infusion” (ἐμφύσημα) of Christ; (2) those who think that the Spirit is only a “simple activity” (ψιλὴ ἐνέργεια); and (3) those “who call him finger of the Son-hand”.<sup>49</sup> This set of errors brings with it the heresy of the Latins: in particular, calling the Spirit “inbreathing/infusion” (ἐμφύσημα) is proper to their heresy, which teaches that the Spirit proceeds from the Son.<sup>50</sup> Nicholas goes on

44 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, pp. 209–210.

45 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio 41*, § 11, p. 340, l. 23–25: “Ἐπρεπε γὰρ, Υἱοῦ σωματικῶς ἡμῖν ὁμιλήσαντος, καὶ αὐτὸ (i.e., the Spirit) φανῆναι σωματικῶς· καὶ Χριστοῦ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπανελθόντος, ἐκεῖνο πρὸς ἡμᾶς κατελθεῖν.

46 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, pp. 209–210.

47 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 209.

48 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 210, l. 13–18.

49 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 211, l. 19–22: καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐμφύσημα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οἱ δὲ ψιλὴν ἐνέργειαν, οἱ δὲ δάκτυλον καὶ ἔλαττον εἶναι τοῦ Υἱοῦ, ὡς αὐτοῦ χειρὸς ἐπέχοντος λόγον, τὸ Πνεῦμα νομίζοντες.

50 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 211, l. 31–212, l. 7: “Ὅτι μὲν οὖν

to list all the passages of the Scriptures where the Father and the Son are also called “spirit”, or where the name, “spirit”, is used in many different contexts, e.g. when Paul writes about the “spirit of slavery” and the “spirit of adoption” (Rom. 8: 15), etc.<sup>51</sup>

Most interesting is the following passage, where Nicholas explains why the Spirit cannot be a simple operation (ψιλή ἐνέργεια). Again, he starts from Gregory of Nazianzus:

Εἰ ἐνέργεια, φησίν, ἐστί, ἐνεργηθήσεται οὐκ ἐνεργήσει, καὶ ὁμοῦ τῷ ἐνεργηθῆναι παύσεται· τοιοῦτον γὰρ ἡ ἐνέργεια. Πῶς οὖν ἐνεργεῖ καὶ τὰδε λέγει καὶ ἀφορίζει καὶ λυπεῖται καὶ παροξύνεται, καὶ ὅσα κινουμένου σαφῶς ἐστίν, οὐ κινήσεως;

“And if [the Spirit] is activity”, as Gregory says, “he will be acted on, he will not be acting [i.e. as the agent], and when he will not be acted upon anymore he will cease to be: for such is activity. How then does he act, speak words, set apart, grieve, get angry, and do anything that clearly belongs to a moving [agent], and not to a movement?”<sup>52</sup>

After having quoted Gregory, he tries to offer an explanation that could also take into account Cyril of Alexandria, who calls the Spirit “natural, and essential, and enhypostatic operation” (ἐνέργεια φυσική τε καὶ οὐσιώδης καὶ ἐνυπόστατος).<sup>53</sup> Indeed, because the holy Fathers cannot contradict each other, we must therefore understand that one is the Spirit blown to the Apostles, through the Lord’s insufflation (διὰ τοῦ κυριακοῦ ἐμφυσήματος), and another one is the Spirit sent from the Father through the Son, in the form of tongues of fires, because this second one is not an insufflation, or an operation (ἐμφύσημα and ἐνέργεια), but the ἐνέργεια φυσική καὶ οὐσιώδης καὶ ἐνυπόστατος, i.e. the natural, essential and enhypostatic operation.<sup>54</sup>

ἐνεφύσησεν ὁπταθεις τοῖς μαθηταῖς μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν ὁ Σωτὴρ καὶ εἶπε, λάβετε Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, ὡς τὸ θεῖον φησιν Εὐαγγέλιον, καὶ ἡμεῖς συνομολογοῦμεν· τὸ δὲ τὴν ἐμφύσησιν ταύτην ἐκπορεύσιν εἶναι τοῦ τῆς ὑπερουσίου Τριάδος ἐνὸς ἁγίου Πνεύματος, ὡς διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα λέγειν εἶναι ἐμφύσημα καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεσθαι, τῆς τῶν Λατίνων ἐστὶ παρανομία, οὐχ ἡμέτερον λέγειν.

51 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 213, l. 1–2.

52 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 213, l. 16–20. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 31, § 6, p. 286, l. 9–13.

53 Cyril of Alexandria, *Thesaurus de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate* (= PG 75), col. 580A, l. 3–9: “Ὅτε τοίνυν ἄπερ ὑπέσχετο δρᾶν ὁ Θεὸς μετ’ ἐξουσίας τὸ Πνεῦμα πληροῖ, καὶ ποιμένας ἐγείρει κατὰ τὴν ἐν προφήταις ἐπαγγελίαν, οὐκ ἀλλότριον ἄρα τῆς θείας οὐσίας ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐνέργεια φυσική τε καὶ οὐσιώδης καὶ ἐνυπόστατος, ἐξ αὐτῆς προοῖουσα καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ μένουσα πάντα ἐργάζεται τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

54 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 215, l. 14–25: “Ἄλλο τοίνυν καὶ κατὰ τοὺς

Nicholas' writings, although not being addressed to the Latins, thus contain two crucial issues relating to the presence and coming of the Spirit, which will be reemployed by the theologian in his openly anti-Latin writings: the first issue, which is in fact the question posed by the *megas domestikos*, is how the Spirit can be present in each man, and if he is present substantially; the second issue, an additional explanation by Nicholas, is about the differences between the insufflation (ἐμφύσημα) from Jesus and the "physical", "sensible", and "substantial" descent at Pentecost. Among Nicholas' works, the reply to the *megas domestikos* is certainly the one most extensively devoted to the exegesis of patristic passages, and is clearly the one that is least motivated by the Filioque polemic; however, it seems that this text somehow lays the foundation for the pneumatology that Nicholas will develop in the other treatises.

### 3 *Adversus Latinos de Spiritu Sancto*<sup>55</sup>

The *Adversus Latinos de Spiritu Sancto* can certainly be considered the main treatise composed by Nicholas of Methone against the addition of the Filioque to the Creed. The text opens with a traditional invocation for assistance to the Holy Spirit and to the Son, the only source and teacher of the revealed knowledge. However, starting from the first lines Nicholas embroiders his treatise with references to the *De divinis nominibus*, using a sequence of adjectives, composed of the preposition ὑπέρ, typical of the *usus scribendi* of Dionysius the Areopagite:

Βασιλεῦ οὐράνιε, παράκλητε, ἀγαθέ, προσκυνητέ, θεὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ ἅγιον, τὸ ὑπερούσιον, τὸ ὑπέρφωτον, τὸ ὑπέρζων, τὸ ὑπέρσοφον [...].<sup>56</sup>

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ἀγίους Πατέρας καὶ κατὰ τοὺς θεῖους Προφήτας τὸ διὰ τοῦ κυριακοῦ ἐμφυσήματος αὐτίκα τοῖς Ἀποστόλοις ἐμπνευσθὲν Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, καὶ ἄλλο τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦτοῖς ἀποσταλέν, ἐν εἴδει πυρίνων γλωσσῶν διαμερισθέν· οὐδ' ἄρα τοῦτο τοῦ Κυρίου ἐστὶν ἐμφύσημα, οὐδὲ ἐνέργεια νῦν παρ' αὐτῶ καὶ νῦν ἀποτελούμενον, ἀλλ' εἴπερ ἄρα, καθὰ καὶ τῷ θείῳ Κυρίῳ δοκεῖ, ἐνέργεια φυσικὴ καὶ οὐσιώδης καὶ ἐνυπόστατος, οἷα καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς δύναμις, ἐκ τῆς θείας οὐσίας τουτέστι τῆς πατρικῆς προΐουσα καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσα καὶ πάντα ἐργαζομένη τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

55 The Greek title is: Νικολάου τοῦ ἀγιωτάτου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης πρὸς τοὺς Λατίνους περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς οὐ μὴν καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεται.

56 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 1, l. 1–3. Cf. e.g. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § 11, 3, p. 125, l. 15, ed. B.R. Suchla (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990).

The close dependence upon the Areopagite, of which many examples can be found later in this same text and in the *Memoriae*,<sup>57</sup> makes this treatise a fundamental work for understanding the context in which the *Refutatio Procli* was also conceived; it also closely links the two texts and provides a much more striking and meaningful analysis than the *Syllogismi*, which is the text that has almost exclusively been used when discussing the relationship between the theological and the philosophical productions of the Bishop of Methone.<sup>58</sup>

As for all the writings by Nicholas discussed in this publication, one must bear in mind that the printed editions of the texts are not fully reliable; however, in this case it is possible to get a general idea of the contents and the concepts that the Bishop of Methone developed in his theological production. After the opening prayer (εὐχή), the version printed by Simonides incorporates a sentence, attested by the manuscript tradition,<sup>59</sup> similar to the following:

Ἐκθεσις ἐν συνόψει τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς ὀρθοῦ δόγματος μετὰ τινος συμμέτρου κατασκευῆς.<sup>60</sup>

Exposition in a brief but comprehensive statement of our right dogma with the aid of some suitable (συμμέτρου) constructive reasoning (κατασκευῆς).

It is clear that a meticulous study is needed to clarify if these words are the title given by Nicholas himself, or if some marginalia were added by a scribe. However, this sentence perfectly sums up Nicholas' plan for his text: a brief but comprehensive exposition, which includes a full canonical arsenal, from the Sacred Scriptures to the ecumenical councils, with additional space<sup>61</sup> for suitable arguments based on constructive, logical reasoning.

Nicholas' exposition opens with the traditional profession of Faith: "We believe in one God, in three persons or hypostases, contemplated in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit [...]" (Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἓνα Θεὸν ἐν τρισὶ προσώποις εἴτουν ὑποστάσει θεωρούμενον Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ καὶ ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι [...]).<sup>62</sup> But what

57 See below Section 5. *Memoriae*, at p. 334.

58 E.g., see Trizio, "Eleventh- to twelfth-century Byzantium", p. 206.

59 Details about the manuscript tradition are available in the PhD thesis, Benvenuto, "Prime indagini".

60 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 3, l. 21–22.

61 This hint could also, possibly, give us a sense of the cautiousness that a twelfth-century theologian should display while navigating between philosophy and theology.

62 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 3, l. 23–24.

is noteworthy for our research, which aims at presenting the writings of Nicholas of Methone in the context of his *Refutatio Procli*, is the fact that this text, from the very first pages, hides a numerous hints, allusions, and references that can be read as addressed to Proclus' and Dionysius' readers, i.e. to those who could certainly recognise them at first glance.

After the basic presentation of the pillars of orthodoxy, Nicholas argues that the Sabellian confusion of the hypostases revives Judaism, and the Arian division of the divine substance inclines toward Hellenic polytheism, while the pious way is a secure middle way "that has the safe rope of the Lord's tradition" (ὡσπέρ τινος ἀσφαλούς ἐχομένη πείσματος τῆς κυριακῆς παραδόσεως).<sup>63</sup> This metaphor of the secure rope is not a generic image, but in fact comes from Plato's *Laws*<sup>64</sup> and is quoted many times in Proclus, in particular in a passage from the *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*:

Ταῦτα δὲ εἰδῶς ἡγοῦμαι δεῖν ὡσπερ ἀσφαλούς πείσματος ἔχεσθαι τῆς τοῦ καθηγεμόνος ἡμῶν παραδόσεως· διὰ γὰρ ταύτης τὰ μὲν πλημμελῆ τῶν δοξασμάτων φευξόμεθα, ταῖς δὲ καθαρωτάταις ἐννοίαις Ἰαμβλίχου συνεψόμεθα.<sup>65</sup>

Being mindful of this, I think that one should cling as if to a stout mooring-rope to the doctrine of our own teacher. For it is through this that we shall avoid discordant theories and follow the purest conceptions of Iamblichus.<sup>66</sup>

In Nicholas the ἀσφαλούς πείσματος (safe rope) is that of the παραδόσεως (tradition) of the Lord (κυριακῆς), while in Proclus it is of τοῦ καθηγεμόνος ἡμῶν (probably Syrianus).

However, there is a second peculiarity in Nicholas' passage: the fact that, instead of insisting only on Arius, Sabellius, the Pneumatomachoi and the other heresiarchs, he adds the "heresies" of the Jews and the Hellenes.<sup>67</sup> The usage of the Hellenes-Jews couplet seems to be inherited from his beloved

63 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 5, l. 16.

64 Plato, *Laws*, x 893B: ἐχόμενοι δὲ ὡς τινος ἀσφαλούς πείσματος ἐπεισβαίνωμεν εἰς τὸν νῦν λόγον.

65 Proclus, *In Platonis Timaeum*, v, p. 174, l. 15, ed. E. Diehl, *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum commentaria* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1906), vol. 3.

66 Eng. tr. from Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, transl. H. Tarrant (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 53, l. 14–16.

67 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 5, l. 9–13: ἡ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ὑποστάσεων σύγχυσις, ἐκ τῆς σαβελιανῆς αἰρέσεως εἰσαχθεῖσα, τὸν ἤδη κατηργημένον Ἰουδαϊσμὸν ἀνεκαίνιζεν· ἡ δὲ τῆς οὐσίας κατατομὴ καὶ διαίρεσις, ἐκ τῆς ἀρειανικῆς προβιβαζομένης μανίας, εἰς πολυθεῖαν ἑλληνικὴν ἐξωλίσθαιεν.

Gregory of Nazianzus<sup>68</sup> or from the acts of the councils,<sup>69</sup> but it is quite unusual—I would say unattested—in the other twelfth-century polemicists, who rarely refer to the Jews and the Hellenes in the anti-Latin texts devoted to the discussion of the Filioque, while of course they abundantly refer to the Jews in the texts dedicated to the Azymes.<sup>70</sup>

A third point of interest in the opening of the *Adversus Latinos*, which—indeed—seems to be planned with the aim of clarifying all the important references that must be grasped to understand the text, is the following:

Τούτων οὕτως ἡμῖν ὠμολογημένων, φέρε τὸν σκοπὸν τῶν προκειμένων ὀνομάτων κοινή συνδιασχεψώμεθα· καὶ τῇ ἀναπτύξει τῶν ὀνομάτων, τὰς ὑπ' αὐτῶν σηματοδοτούμενας προσωπικὰς ιδιότητας θεωρήσωμεν.<sup>71</sup>

Having agreed on these <principles>, let us investigate by common consent the meaning of the proposed names, and through the explanation of the names let us perceive the personal characteristics communicated by them.

Here, it is clear at first sight that Nicholas, while proposing to investigate the meaning of the names of the Trinity through the **explanation** (ἀναπτύξει) of them, is invoking the authority of the Areopagite,<sup>72</sup> exactly as he does in the title of his *Refutatio Procli*: Ἀνάπτυξις τῆς Θεολογικῆς Στοιχειώσεως Πρόκλου.<sup>73</sup>

The following passage remains in the same context and is the most meaningful for our understanding of the relationship between Nicholas, Proclus and, of course, Dionysius the Areopagite. However, it is also an unusual approach to

68 cf. e.g., Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 38, § 8, p. 118, l. 17–19; 6 (= Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 45 (= PG 36), col. 628, l. 41–43): ἵνα μὴ πενίαν θεότητος κατακριθῶμεν, ἢ διὰ τὴν μοναρχίαν Ἰουδαῖζοντες, ἢ διὰ τὴν ἀφθονίαν Ἑλληνίζοντες; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 25, § 16, p. 194, l. 1–3: Μῆτε ἀρχὰς τρεῖς, ἵνα μὴ Ἑλληνικόν, ἢ τὸ πολύθεον· μῆτε μίαν μὲν, Ἰουδαϊκὴν δὲ στενήν τινα, καὶ φθονεράν, καὶ ἀδύνατον [...].

69 cf. e.g., ACO: *Concilium universale Ephesenum anno 431*, 1, 1, 7, p. 105, l. 24.

70 On the different usage of leavened and unleavened bread is dedicated Nicholas of Methone's *Adversus Latinos de azymis* (RAP 6364) in Два неизданных произведения Николая, епископа Мефонского, писателя XII века, ed. Arsenij Ivačenko (Novgorod, Parovaia tipografija I.I. Ignatovskago 1897), pp. 51–115.

71 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 5, l. 18–21.

72 Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § 1, 1, p. 107, l. 3–4: Νῦν δέ, ὦ μακάριε, μετὰ τὰς Θεολογικὰς ὑποτυπώσεις ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν θείων ὀνομάτων ἀνάπτυξιν, ὡς ἐφικτόν, μετελεύσομαι.

73 As it has been recently, and rightly, pointed out in Robinson, “Dionysius Against Proclus”, p. 249.

the Filioque question, where the author hints at his philosophical background and interests through his use of easily identifiable and peculiar “jargon”. The quotation is long, but Nicholas’ words deserve to be read in full:

What, then, does the name of the Father mean? And what does that of the Son mean? And what does that of the Spirit mean? Is it not because the Father is fertile principle (γόνιμός ἐστιν ἀρχή) and cause of Divinity (καὶ αἰτία θεότητος) and, to say it according to the great Dionysius, “primal source of Divinity” (πηγαία θεότης)?<sup>74</sup> <The primal source of Divinity is> in itself ungenerated, but by itself brings forward (προάγουσα) entities which are similar according to the substance (κατ’ οὐσίαν ὅμοι’ ἄττα), and both generates (γεννώσα) the Son and emanates (προβαλλομένη) the Spirit, according to the double **emanation**<sup>75</sup> of the **fertile power** (κατὰ τὴν διττὴν τῆς γονίμου δυνάμεως πρόοδον): in fact it is neither necessary that the Father is brought forth from another (οὔτε γὰρ ἄλλοθεν τὸν Πατέρα προῆχθαι πᾶσα ἀνάγκη)—that (ἐκεῖνο referred to ἄλλοθεν) in fact would be the Father, the principle that brings forth, not this—, nor <it is possible> that he, being himself *Father from whom every paternity in heaven and on earth is and takes its name*,<sup>76</sup> and having in himself the “auto-fertility” (τὴν αὐτογονιμότητα), halfway (ἕξ ἡμισείας) would have brought forth the fertile power (τὴν γόνιμον δύναμιν), so that perhaps he would have either generated only or emanated only. And further, because at any rate the generative capacity (γονιμότητος) is seen down here in some way with the senses, and shows the double way of **emanation** (τὸν διττὸν τῆς προόδου τρόπον); not only, in fact, the man generates (γεννᾷ) a man and horse generates horse according to the generative **emanation of fertility** (τὴν γεννητικὴν τῆς γονιμότητος πρόοδον), but also the root emanates (προβάλλει) the plant and the water proceeds from the source (ἐκπορεύεται) and the sun pours out (προχέει) the light through its ray according to the emanating power of him who is fruitful (κατὰ τὴν προβλητικὴν τοῦ γονίμου δύναμιν).

The “primal source of Divinity” (ἡ πηγαία θεότης) in itself, therefore, having preceded the entire generative power (τὴν γονιμότητα) and emanating it whole and perfect (ὅλην αὐτὴν καὶ τελείαν), both supernaturally

74 Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, §11, 7, p. 132, l. 1 and Proclus, *In Platonis Cratylum*, §142, p. 80, l. 19–20 and 23, ed. G. Pasquali (Leipzig: Teubner, 1908).

75 In a Trinitarian context ἡ πρόοδος should be translated as “emanation” and not “procession” (the latter being a standard translation for πρόοδος in Proclus and other Neoplatonists) as the Greek technical term for “procession” of the Holy Spirit is only ἡ ἐκπόρευσις.

76 Eph. 3: 15.

generates (γεννᾷ μὲν ὑπερφυῶς) the Son and in a supra-essential manner brings forth (ὑπερουσίως προάγει) the Spirit, and not one before and the other later, but both simultaneously, and each secretly and ineffably, since neither the generation nor the procession (ἢ τῆς γεννήσεως ἢ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως) can be circumscribed by time or age, but eternally and above all beginnings, above all reason and every notion: since the offspring, if in this way must be said, and that who proceeds are envisaged together (συνθεωρουμένων) as perfect, or rather supremely perfect by the originator and unoriginated hypostasis of the Divinity (τῇ ἀρχηγόνῳ καὶ ἀγενήτῳ τῆς θεότητος ὑποστάσει). And in this way, indeed, the theogonic hypostasis of the Divinity (ἢ μὲν θεογόνος ὑπόστασις τῆς θεότητος) also is and is called Father. <Of> the other <persons of the Divinity>, like sprouts sown by the divine (βλαστοὶ θεόφυτοι),<sup>77</sup> the one <is and is called> Son since certainly he is brought forth by generation (γεννητῶς προῆκται), the other <is and is called> the Spirit since <he is brought forth> by procession.<sup>78</sup>

This passage is markedly saturated with a lexicon that a reader of the *Refutatio Procli* will find extremely familiar. It is certainly not an aim of this publication to discuss this quotation from a genuinely philosophical point of view, but only

77 Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § II, 7, p. 132, l. 2.

78 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 5, l. 18–p. 6, l. 25: Τί τοῖνυν βούλεται σημαίνειν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς; Καὶ τί τὸ τοῦ Υἱοῦ; Καὶ τί τοῦ Πνεύματος; Ἄρ' οὐχ ὅτι γόνιμός ἐστιν ἀρχὴ καὶ αἰτία θεότητος ὁ Πατήρ, καὶ κατὰ τὸν μέγαν εἰπεῖν Διονύσιον, πηγαία θεότης; Αὐτὴ μὲν ἀγεννητος, ἑαυτῇ δὲ κατ' οὐσίαν ὅμοι' ἄττα προάγουσα, καὶ γεννώσα μὲν τὸν Υἱόν, προβαλλομένη δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα, κατὰ τὴν διττὴν τῆς γονίμου δυνάμεως πρόοδον· οὔτε γὰρ ἄλλοθεν τὸν Πατέρα προῆχθαι πάσα ἀνάγκη—ἐκεῖνο γὰρ ἦν ὁ πατήρ, τὸ προάγον, οὐχ οὗτος—, οὔτε Πατὴρ ὢν αὐτὸς ἐξ οὗ πάσα πατριά, ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ἔστι τε καὶ ὀνομάζεται, καὶ τὴν αὐτογονιμότητα (In the printed edition αὐτογονιμότητος) προσέχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἐξ ἡμισείας (In the printed edition ἐξημισείας) προάγειν ἔμελλε τὴν γόνιμον δύναμιν, ὥστε τυχὸν ἢ γεννᾶν μόνον, ἢ προβάλλεσθαι μόνον· καίτοι γε τῆς κάτω που θεωρουμένης περὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν γονιμότητος, τὸν διττὸν τῆς πρόοδου τρόπον ἐμφανιζούσης· οὐ γὰρ μόνον ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπον γεννᾷ, καὶ ἵππος ἵππον κατὰ τὴν γεννητικὴν τῆς γονιμότητος πρόοδον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ φυτὸν, ἢ βίξια προβάλλει· καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ ἀπὸ τῆς πηγῆς ἐκπορεύεται· καὶ τὸ φῶς προχέει μετὰ τῆς ἀκτίνος ὁ ἥλιος κατὰ τὴν προβλητικὴν τοῦ γονίμου δύναμιν. Ὅλην οὖν ἢ πηγαία θεότης ἐν ἑαυτῇ προειληφύα τὴν γονιμότητα, καὶ ὅλην αὐτὴν καὶ τελείαν προβαλλομένη, γεννᾷ μὲν ὑπερφυῶς τὸν Υἱόν, προάγει δὲ ὑπερουσίως τὸ Πνεῦμα· οὐ τὸν μὲν πρότερον τὸ δὲ ὕστερον· ἀλλ' ἄμφω ἅμα· καὶ κρυφίως καὶ ἀπορρήτως ἐκάτερον· οὐ χρόνῳ οὐκ αἰῶνι τινὶ περιγραφομένης ἢ τῆς γεννήσεως ἢ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως· ἀλλὰ προαιωνίως καὶ ὑπεραρχίως ὑπὲρ πάντα λόγον καὶ πάσαν ἔννοιαν· τῇ ἀρχηγόνῳ καὶ ἀγενήτῳ τῆς θεότητος ὑποστάσει, τελείων μᾶλλον δὲ ὑπερτελῶν· συνθεωρουμένων τοῦ τε γεννηματος, εἰ οὕτω χρὴ φάναι, καὶ τοῦ ἐκπορεύματος. Ταύτη τοι καὶ ἢ μὲν θεογόνος ὑπόστασις τῆς θεότητος, Πατήρ ἔστι τε καὶ ὀνομάζεται· οἱ δὲ ταύτης οἶον βλαστοὶ θεόφυτοι, ὁ μὲν Υἱός· ὅτι διὴ καὶ γεννητῶς προῆκται· τὸ δὲ Πνεῦμα, ὅτι περ ἐκπορευτῶς ὀνομάζεται.

to highlight those elements in Nicholas' approach to the Filioque question that are particularly distinctive and innovative in the contest of the polemical literature against the Latins. The analysis will be conducted mainly on the basis of the language used.

A first peculiarity is the choice of the adjective γόνιμος, -η, -ον (productive, fertile, fruitful), which Nicholas employs seventeen times in his entire literary production, but exclusively in the *Refutatio Procli* (7 times) and in the *Adversus Latinos* (10 times). This is an adjective that must have been particularly useful to express his point of view, if he even creates a neologism from this lemma, αὐτογονιμότης, *Fruchtbarkeit an sich* (fertility in itself), which according to our present knowledge of Medieval Greek seems to be a *hapax*.<sup>79</sup> Certainly the use of this adjective is a *hapax* in the context of the polemical literature against the Latins. In fact, a search conducted on the (published) texts composed from the ninth to the twelfth century, and dedicated to the Filioque, has produced no results: nobody before Nicholas had ever talked about the Father by using the adjective, "productive, fertile" (γόνιμος). There is no doubt that Nicholas was influenced by Proclus in this choice: in fact, the adjective γόνιμος, -η, -ον is one of the philosopher's favourites insofar as he uses it consistently, especially in the *Theologia Platonica* (92 times) and in the *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria* (55 times).<sup>80</sup> In general, according to the statistics that can be derived from the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, Proclus is the author who uses it the most (235 times; the second being Plutarch, with only 63 times, and the third being Aristotle, with 57), while Dionysius the Areopagite, whom Nicholas quotes openly in this passage, does not use it very often (four times in its entire corpus: two in *De divinis nominibus* and two in *De coelesti hierarchia*). On the other hand, if we analyse the term γονιμότης, Proclus does not use it at all, while the Areopagite employs it again only four times (three times in *De divinis nominibus* and once in *De coelesti hierarchia*).<sup>81</sup>

79 Cf. E. Trapp (ed.), *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität besonders des 9.–12. Jahrhunderts* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1994), s.v. αὐτογονιμότης.

80 As Robinson has already argued, it seems that Nicholas was acquainted with Proclus' *Commentary in Timaeus*, see Robinson, "Dionysius Against Proclus", pp. 108–109.

81 The exact references can easily be found using *TLG*, but for brevity's sake it is not considered necessary to list them here.

In this context it can be added another possible influential source of Nicholas' usage of the terms discussed above (θεόγονος, γόνιμος, γονιμότης): John of Scythopolis, "Scholasticus", in his *scholia* of the *De divinis nominibus*, ed. B.R. Suchla (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), *scholion* DN 229, 8, p. 453, l. 1–11. I am grateful to Joshua Robinson for this reference.

It can be noted, therefore, that Nicholas employs a passage from the Areopagite to support his orthodoxy but at the same time seems to interweave the patristic source with a markedly Proclean lexicon. The full passage from Dionysius, which backs Nicholas' opening, is the following:

Πάλιν, ὅτι μὲν ἐστὶ πηγαία θεότης ὁ πατήρ, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς θεογόνου θεότητος, εἰ οὕτω χρή φάναι, βλαστοὶ θεόφυτοι καὶ οἶον ἄνθη καὶ ὑπερούσια φῶτα, πρὸς τῶν ἱερῶν λογίων παρειλήφραμεν.<sup>82</sup>

Again, we have received from the Scriptures that the Father is primal source of Divinity (πηγαία θεότης), while the Son and the Spirit are, if one must say so, sprouts sown by the divine of the theogonic Divinity, and like flowers and supra-essential lights.

A second striking usage is the insistence (in very few lines) on the word πρόοδος (κατὰ τὴν διττὴν τῆς γονίμου δυνάμεως πρόοδον [...]; τὸν διττὸν τῆς προόδου τρόπον ἐμφανίζούσης ...; κατὰ τὴν γεννητικὴν τῆς γονιμότητος πρόοδον [...]). This is again a term widely used by Proclus, Damascius and also Dionysius in *De divinis nominibus* and, unsurprisingly, extensively employed by Nicholas in the *Refutatio Procli*.<sup>83</sup> However, and this time surprisingly, it is also used in the texts against the Latins, where Nicholas, instead of using a more “traditional” expression such as “modes of the existences” (οἱ τρόποι τῶν ὑπάρξεων), insists on using the “double emanation” or “double way of the emanation” to refer to the existences of the Son and the Spirit.

It is fundamental to insist on the words employed by Nicholas because, just as the Fathers of the Church built a precise set of expressions that could be used in the Christological discussions, the Greek theologians between the 9th and 12th century concentrate their effort (and Nicholas is one of the most accurate) on defining the exact theological lexicon for the procession of the Holy Spirit.

It could be interesting for scholars of philosophy, who try to understand Nicholas' *Refutatio Procli* and the reasons why it was composed, to highlight the fact that for a twelfth-century Byzantine theologian the term πρόοδος (eman-

82 Cf. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § 11, 7, p. 132, l. 1–3.

83 The exact references are, also in this case, redundant because they can easily be found through the *TLG*. However, it could be interesting to report here the numbers for ἡ πρόοδος (as from the *TLG*'s statistics feature): for Proclus, 864 (mainly in *Theologia Platonica*, 303; and *In Platonis Timaeum*, 259); Damascius, 351, Nicholas of Methone, 87, and Dionysius, 30 (only in *De divinis nominibus*).

ation), when interpreted—as in Nicholas—as a synonymic form for οἱ τρόποι τῶν ὑπάρξεων (way/modes of the existences), becomes a technical term that refers to the eternal origins of the Son and Spirit from the Father, and, therefore, cannot be interpreted according to the philosophical framework of Proclus' *Institutio theologica*. Moreover, it must be emphasized that although πρόδος is employed for “emanation, originating, coming from”, and—as it has been shown above—is also acceptable to describe both the Son's generation and the Spirit's procession, it should never be confused, especially by modern translators, with “procession”, which is a term that applies only to the existence of the Holy Spirit, for which the dogmatically correct term in Greek is only ἡ ἐκπόρευσις.

Even if Byzantine theologians use the “Hellenic” philosophy for discussing the procession of the Holy Spirit, and they indeed do it (e.g., the use of Aristotle in the *Ad Magnum domesticum* analysed before, but also, for example, the dialogues by Niketas of Thessalonica),<sup>84</sup> Nicholas feels the need to refute Proclus because his “theology” is not applicable to Christian orthodoxy, and it is not applicable especially in the struggle against the Latins, which at this point in history is not only a major concern but is also an utterly philosophical debate; it is sufficient here to quote the importance of Nicholas' contemporary Hugo Eteriano, who knew and refuted his positions.<sup>85</sup>

Here it could be interesting to recall Kazhdan's point of view:

Theology is a very delicate discipline in which nuances acquire the magnitude of dogma. One might emphasize the human nature of Christ to indicate the possibility of human deification; one might even emphasize the hierarchical structure of the Trinity [...]. Nicholas emphasized the monarchical principle. The unity of the Trinity was for Nicholas not an antiquarian question to be considered in connection with philosophical errors of the fifth century. [...] Nicholas lived and worked when the “Latin question” was the major problem that Byzantium faced. Nicholas, as is well known, took a clear-cut anti-Latin stand [...].<sup>86</sup>

Nicholas insists on the monarchy that is the paternal principle inside the Trinity and perceives Proclus' hierarchical emanations as a possible risk, because he feels that they could open the way to the procession of the Spirit from the

84 Niketas of Thessalonike, *Dialogi*, quoted above n. 43—p. 297.

85 Hugo Eterianus, *De sancto et immortalis Deo*, ed. P. Podolak, A. Zago (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020).

86 Kazhdan, “Review of Angelou's edition”, pp. 198–199.

Father “and” the Son. However, it must be clarified here that there is only one instance in the *Refutatio Procli* in which the Bishop of Methone explicitly mentions the Latins: this is the passage he inserts when discussing chapter 22 (κβ’), “All that exists primally and originally in each rank is one, and not two or more than two, but all are μονογενές.” He writes:

Ἡ τάχα κατ’ οὐδέτερον τῶν εἰρημένων τρόπων ὁ φιλόσοφος οὗτος ἐνταῦθα ἐξελάβετο τὸ μονογενές, ἀλλ’ εἶπερ ἄρα ὡς αὐτὸ τὸ πρῶτως καὶ ἀρχικῶς ὄν γένος ὄν καὶ ἀρχὴν τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ οὕτω τοῦτό φησιν. Οὕτω δ’ ἂν καὶ χρήσαιτό τις τῷ θεωρήματι τούτῳ κατὰ Λατίνων τῶν δύο τὰ ἀρχικὰ αἷτια τοῦ Πνεύματος λεγόντων, Πατέρα καὶ Υἱόν· πλὴν ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μεταφραστέον ἐπὶ τὸ εὐσεβές τὸ πρόβλημα καὶ οὕτως αὐτῷ χρηστέον.<sup>87</sup>

Or perhaps this philosopher does not understand μονογενές here according to either of the ways just mentioned, but rather he means it thus: as “that which exists primitively and originally”, being genus and principle of the things from it. And thus someone might even use this proposition against the Latins, who say that the Spirit has **two principal causes**, Father and Son; but indeed first one must paraphrase the proposition in a pious sense, and thus one must use it.<sup>88</sup>

Still, when analysing the relationship between the anti-Latin production and the *Refutatio Procli*, it is remarkable to note how in the *Refutatio* Nicholas puts a great effort into clarifying how both the noun πρόοδος, the verb παράγω, and its noun, παραγωγή, are misused by the philosopher. A very noteworthy chapter to consider in this context is number 29 (κθ’), which—according to Robinson’s thorough analysis of the *Refutatio Procli*—is also the first time that Nicholas uses πρόοδος in connection with the intra-trinitarian relationship.<sup>89</sup>

Ἄλλ’ ὁ σοφὸς οὗτος μὴδὲν τούτων διαστέλλων καὶ τὴν ὁμοιότητα προτίθησι τῆς ταυτότητος ὡς αὐτῆς αἰτίαν καὶ τῇ κατὰ γέννησιν προόδῳ ὕφεσιν δίδωσι καὶ τὴν πρόοδον ἀδιαφόρως ἀντὶ τῆς παραγωγῆς καὶ τὸ γεννηθὲν ἀντὶ τοῦ παραχθέντος λαμβάνει.<sup>90</sup>

87 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, § 22, p. 30, l. 10–17.

88 English translation from Robinson, *Nicholas of Methone’s Refutation of Proclus*, p. 217.

89 Robinson, *Nicholas of Methone’s Refutation of Proclus*, p. 233, note 611.

90 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, § 29, p. 39, l. 19–23.

But this wise man, failing to distinguish these, places “similarity” (ὁμοιότητα) before “sameness” (ταυτότητος) as cause of the this [emanation], and gives “decline” for the “emanation” (προόδω) by begetting, and takes “emanation” (πρόοδον) indifferently for “production” (παραγωγῆς), and “begotten” (γεννηθέν) in the place of “produced” (παραχθέντος).<sup>91</sup>

At section 30 (λ') Nicholas, again, takes great care in distinguishing the terms:

Καὶ τὸ τριακοστὸν τοῦτο κεφάλαιον ὡσαύτως σφάλλει τῷ πρὸ αὐτοῦ, ὡς ταυτόν τι πρόοδον ἦτοι προαγωγὴν καὶ τὴν παραγωγὴν λαμβάνον. Ἄντι γὰρ τοῦ εἰπεῖν τὸ ἀπὸ τινος προαγόμενον, τὸ ἀπὸ τινός φησι παραγόμενον καὶ ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐν τῷ προάγοντι, ἐν τῷ παράγοντι.

Ἄλλο τὸ ταυτόν καὶ ἄλλο τὸ ὅμοιον· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν οὐσίας, τὸ δὲ ποιοῦ. Ἐπὶ τῆς οὐσιώδους καὶ φυσικῆς προόδου οὐχ ἀρμόζει τὴν ὁμοιότητα παραλαμβάνειν ἀλλ' ἢ τὴν ταυτότητα καὶ τὴν ἑτερότητα· οὐσία γὰρ οὐσίας, καθὼ οὐσία, οὔτε ὁμοία οὔτε ἀνομοία λέγονται· ποιότητος γὰρ τὸ ὅμοιον καὶ τὸ ἀνόμοιον. Ὁ μὲν Υἱὸς καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα προΐασιν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς φυσικῶς καὶ ἀμέσως, οὐ μὴν καὶ παράγονται· συναΐδια γὰρ αὐτῷ καὶ συνάναρχα καὶ ὁμοοῦσια.<sup>92</sup>

And this 30th chapter causes bafflement (σφάλλει) in like manner as the previous one, since it takes “emanation” (πρόοδον), that is, “**bringing forth**” (προαγωγὴν), to be the same thing as “**production**” (παραγωγὴν). For instead of saying “that which has been brought forth from something”, he says “**that which has been produced from something**”, and instead of “**in the bringer forth**” he says, “in the producer”.

But “same” and “similar” are distinct, for the one is of substance, and the other is of quality. It is not fitting to understand “similarity” of the substantial and natural “emanation”, but rather “sameness” and “otherness”: for one substance is not said to be either “similar” or “dissimilar” to another, insofar as they are substances, for “similarity” and “dissimilarity” pertain to quality. The Son and the Spirit “advance/go forward/spring” (προΐασιν) from the Father “naturally” (φυσικῶς) and “directly” (ἀμέσως), and they are **not “produced”** (παράγονται), for they are co-eternal and co-unoriginate and consubstantial with Him.<sup>93</sup>

91 I have slightly changed Robinson's translation (Robinson, *Nicholas of Methone's Refutation of Proclus*, p. 233) and used “emanation” instead of “procession” to give a sense of Nicholas' understanding of the passage.

92 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, § 30, p. 30, l. 27–p. 40, l. 6.

93 Again I have slightly changed Robinson's English translation in order to avoid “procession” and “to proceed”, Robinson, *Nicholas of Methone's Refutation of Proclus*, p. 234.

Another example is from chapter 35 (λε'):

[...] ὁ δὲ σοφὸς οὗτος ἀδιορίστως τὴν πρόοδον ἐκλαμβάνων ὡς κοινὸν ὄνομα κατὰ τε τῆς παραγωγῆς καὶ τῆς ὑπερφυσιοῦς καὶ τῆς φυσικῆς εἰκότως ἑαυτὸν τε καὶ τοὺς αὐτῷ προσανέχοντας ἐκ τῆς ὁμωνυμίας κατασοφίζεται.<sup>94</sup>

[...] but this wise man, understanding the “**emanation**” without distinction as a common name concerning the “**production**” (παραγωγῆς), both the super-natural (ὑπερφυσιοῦς) one and the natural one (φυσικῆς), misleads both himself and those relying on him, as might be expected from this ambiguity.<sup>95</sup>

The *Refutatio Procli* is filled with these kinds of passages where the Bishop of Methone clarifies the meaning and proper acceptations of those terms when they are used to describe the Trinity. The noun, παραγωγή, and the verb, παράγω,<sup>96</sup> for example, cannot be employed to talk about the eternal generation and the eternal procession, because they imply the idea of making, or producing, something from non-being<sup>97</sup> and, therefore, the idea of creation. Creation—clearly in his perspective—cannot be applied either to the Son or to the Spirit, because “the Son and the Spirit are not produced,”<sup>98</sup> and this is the reason why Nicholas never uses this verb in his theological writings on the Holy Spirit.<sup>99</sup>

While a clear definition of the acceptations in which a term can be used and interpreted is certainly one of the major concerns of Nicholas, the focal point of the introduction of the *Adversus Latinos* is the alarming confusion of the personal characteristics of the three persons of the Trinity that can be introduced by the Latin innovation: the Bishop of Methone wants to safeguard the πατρικὸν ἰδίωμα, the “characteristic property of the Father”, which is being the only θεόγονος ἀρχή, the “theogonic principle”.

94 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, § 35, p. 45, l. 22–25.

95 Here I have interpreted the passage differently. Here Robinson's translation (*Nicholas of Methone's Refutation of Proclus*, p. 243): “But this wise man, understanding ‘procession’ loosely as a common name applicable to the [procession] according to production and to the super-natural [procession] and to the natural [procession], misleads both himself and those relying on him, as might be expected from this equivocation.”

96 Cf. Robinson, “Proclus as Heresiarch”, p. 113, nota 44.

97 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, § 41, p. 50, l. 6: παράγειν ἐστὶ κυρίως τὸ ἐκ μὴ ὄντων εἶναί τι ποιεῖν.

98 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, § 30, p. 40, l. 4–5: Ὁ μὲν Υἱὸς καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα προΐασιν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς φυσικῶς καὶ ἀμέσως, οὐ μὴν καὶ παράγονται.

99 Cf. Robinson, “Proclus as Heresiarch”, p. 120, and note 61.

This introductory part is split into two parts by a question (ἐρώτησις). Here the reader must be warned, again, that this analysis is based on the version of the treatise printed by Simonides and that, therefore, it will be possible to propose a reliable examination of the sections of the text (ἐρώτησις, ἀντιθέσεις, λύσεις, etc.) only after a proper critical edition will be published. However, according to Simonides' version, we have only one question in the entire text, followed by a series of six antitheses/oppositions. The question is,

Πότερον οὖν τὸ πατρικὸν τοῦτο ἰδίωμα, ὅπερ ἦν τὸ προάγειν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ θεογόνως τὸν Υἱὸν καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα, δώσομεν καὶ τῷ τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ, ἢ ὡσπερ τούτων ἐκάτερον πρὸς τε θάτερον καὶ πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα ἀκοινώτητος<sup>100</sup> ἢ ἰδιότης ἐστίν, οὕτω καὶ τῷ Πατρὶ ἀκοινώνητον πρὸς τὰ ἐξ αὐτοῦ διατηρήσομεν τὸ ἰδίωμα, ἵνα καὶ ὄντως ἰδίωμα ᾖ.<sup>101</sup>

Will we then give this **characteristic property** of the Father, which is the bringing forth from himself of the Son and the Spirit through divine begetting (θεογόνως), also to one of those from him, or, since for each of the two—both with the other and with the Father—the **specific character** is not sharable, will we also so maintain the **characteristic property** of the Father as unsharable with those who are from him, so that it is also an essentially **characteristic property**?<sup>102</sup>

Nicholas' conclusion is the very heart of Orthodox pneumatology: the personal characteristics of each person of the Trinity must remain unmovable and unsharable, and there should be no inferiority among the three hypostases. For example, it is not possible to allow the Son also to have the property of emanating the Spirit, otherwise he would have two properties, being generated and emanating the Spirit, and the Spirit would have only one property, that of proceeding, so that he would then be inferior to the Son. Indeed, Nicholas here recalls the main fearsome heresiarchs: Sabellius, Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius, and their followers, because among them some negate the Trinity, falling into Judaism, while others lower the Divinity to the rank of the creation, falling into paganism (πρὸς Ἑλληνισμόν).<sup>103</sup>

100 ἀκοινότητος in the printed text.

101 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 6, l. 27–p. 7, l. 2.

102 The same kind of reasoning, for example in Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 4-5-7-8, pp. 361–364.

103 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 7, l. 31.

After the main introductory part, dedicated to the fundamental pillars of faith (which, it is important to highlight, is a traditional opening for a text against the Filioque, although—as has been shown—it is constructed by Nicholas in a very idiosyncratic way), the Bishop of Methone organises his text in a series of questions and answers indicated, in Simonides' edition, by the words ἀντίθεσις (objection, opposing argument) and λύσις (solution): six objections and six solutions.

The first argument is based on two passages (Io. 10: 30, "I and the Father are one", and 16: 15, "All that belongs to the Father is mine") that represent the Latin objections, as presented by Greek authors, and should demonstrate that since the Son is equal in power to the Father (ἰσοδύναμον εἶναι τῷ Πατρὶ),<sup>104</sup> therefore they share the procession of the Holy Spirit. To these Scriptural passages Nicholas replies with a standard answer: the persons of the Trinity are one, but their personal characteristics are different and distinct in order to avoid confusion among the hypostases; he quotes various passages from the Areopagite that insist on the fact that there is only one source of the Divinity: the Father.<sup>105</sup> After this traditional explanation, Nicholas moves into a more philosophical approach, explaining why the "dyad" is unacceptable: because the risk is the introduction of a double cause in the Trinity, and, therefore, the Latin innovation.

In this respect, it is significant to present also a passage from Proclus' *In Platonis Parmenidem*, and a passage from Dionysius' *De divinis nominibus* to better understand Nicholas' background. Proclus writes:

[...] πανταχοῦ γὰρ ἡ δυὰς ἀρχὴ καὶ μήτηρ ἐστὶ τοῦ πλήθους, ἐν θεοῖς, ἐν νοῖς, ἐν ψυχαῖς, ἐν φύσεσιν· ἡ δὲ αἰτία τοῦ πλήθους ἐστὶ πως καὶ αὐτὴ κατ' αἰτίαν {τὸ} πλήθος, ὡσπερ καὶ τὸ ἐν τὸ αἴτιον τῆς ἐνώσεως κατ' αἰτίαν ἐστὶν ἐν· ὅλως δὲ ἡ δυὰς ἐστὶ μὲν ὅπερ λέγεται δυὰς, ἔρημος δὲ τοῦ ἐνός οὐκ ἔστι· πᾶν γὰρ τὸ μετὰ τὸ ἐν μέτεχόν ἐστι τοῦ ἐνός, ὥστε ἡ δυὰς αὐτὴ καὶ ἐν πῶς ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐνὰς ἄρα ἡ δυὰς ἐστὶ καὶ πλήθος, ἀλλ' ἐνὰς μὲν, ὡς μετέχουσα τοῦ ἐνός, πλήθος δέ, ὡς αἰτία τοῦ πλήθους. ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὖν οὔτε πλήθος αὐτὴν οὔτε ἐν εἰρήκασιν· ἡμεῖς δὲ καὶ ἐν καὶ πλήθος, καὶ τὸ τε πλήθος αὐτῆς ἐνοειδὲς καὶ τὸ ἐν δυοποιόν.<sup>106</sup>

[...] for the dyad everywhere—among the gods, among the intellects, in souls, in natures—is the principle and mother of plurality; and the cause

104 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 8, l. 1–2.

105 Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § II, 5, p. 128, l. 12; § II, 8, p. 132, l. 3; § XIII, 3, p. 228, l. 8.

106 Proclus, *In Platonis Parmenidem*, ed. C. Steel, t. I, § I, p. 110, l. 29–p. 111, l. 9.

of plurality is itself, in a way, causally plurality, just as the one, the cause of unity, is causally one. In general, the dyad is exactly what it is called, a dyad; but it does not exist when deprived of unity, for everything that comes after the One participates in the One, so that the dyad itself is also in a sense one, and therefore both unity and plurality. But it is a unity as participating in the One, and plural as the cause of plurality. These critics, then, assert that it is neither plurality nor unity, but we say it is both unity and plurality; its plurality is one in form, and its unity is productive of duality.<sup>107</sup>

The dyad, therefore, is a multiplier but in the intra-trinitarian relationship cannot be contemplated as a principle, because, as the Areopagite states, “Each dyad is not a principle; unity will be the principle of each dyad” (Πᾶσα γὰρ δυὰς οὐκ ἀρχή, μονὰς δὲ ἔσται πάσης δυάδος ἀρχή).<sup>108</sup>

The theme is widely discussed in the *Refutatio Procli* and it could be extremely interesting for scholars of philosophy to compare the *Refutatio* with the reply that Nicholas offers to the first Latin objection in the *Adversus Latinos*. An important detail must be added: in this treatise against the Filioque, Nicholas decides not to quote *verbatim* the famous passage from Gregory of Nazianzus, “For this reason the monad moved towards a dyad since the beginning and at the Trinity came to a halt” (Διὰ τοῦτο μονὰς ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς εἰς δυάδα κινηθεῖσα μέχρι τριάδος ἔστη),<sup>109</sup> although he quotes it both in the *Syllogisms*<sup>110</sup> and in the *Memoriae*.<sup>111</sup>

The reply is long and articulated,<sup>112</sup> but some passages are worth quoting. After citing a patchwork of passages from the Areopagite,<sup>113</sup> Nicholas starts a long commentary with a rhetorical question, which clearly places the discussion in the realm of theology in contradistinction to “Hellenic wisdom”: “Do you see how in all theology the One shines? (Ὅρᾷς ὅπως ἐν πάσῃ τῇ θεολογίᾳ προλάμπει τὸ ἕν;)<sup>114</sup> [...] For this reason one is God the Father, and only Father, so that

107 Engl. tr. from Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Parmenides*, transl. R.M. Glenn, J.M. Dillon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 85.

108 Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § IV, 21, p. 168, l. 22.

109 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 29, § 2, p. 180, l. 13–14.

110 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 40, p. 374, l. 17–19.

111 Nicholas of Methone, *Memoriae contra Latinos*, p. 11, l. 4–7 = Niketas Stethatos, *Contra Latinos*, p. 375, l. 15–16.

112 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 8, l. 5–p. 13, l. 15.

113 Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § II, 5, p. 128, l. 8–10; p. 128, l. 11; § II, 8, p. 132, l. 2–4; § XIII, 3, p. 228, l. 7–11.

114 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 10, l. 18–19.

a dyad cannot be associated with the One (Διὰ τοῦτο εἰς Θεός ὁ Πατήρ, καὶ μόνον Πατήρ, ἵνα μὴ δυὰς παραζευχθῆ τῷ ἐνί).<sup>115</sup> Nicholas goes on to say that the same principle applies to the Son, who must be one and from one source, and to the Spirit, who again must be one and from one source. This is once more necessary so that “the One anticipates the dyad” (ἵνα τὸ ἐν πανταχοῦ τὴν δυάδα προφθῆ),<sup>116</sup> and then again the Father cannot share his own personal characteristics with the Son and the Spirit and,

[...] ἵνα μὴ πάλιν δυὰς παραζευχθῆ τῷ ἐνί πρόσυλος οὐσα· καὶ κάτω κειμένη καὶ περὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν εἰλουμένη· καὶ τῷ, τε πληθυσμῷ τῷ, τε μερισμῷ, τὴν ἀοριστίαν τε καὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν συμπαρεισάγουσα· καὶ τό γε καθ' ἑαυτήν, εἰς ἀχανές τι καὶ ἀφανές ἀνυπαρξίας πέλαγος<sup>117</sup> τὰ ὑπ' αὐτῆς καταλαμβανόμενα παραπέμπουσα, εἰ μὴ προφθάνον τὸ ἐν συνείχε τὰ πάντα τῆ ἑαυτοῦ μετοχῆ καὶ πρὸς τὴν οἰκείαν φύσιν ἀνέσωζεν.<sup>118</sup>

[...] so that the dyad again does not unite with the One, being connected with matter, and lying below [i.e. at the level of the creation], and being confined within the senses, and through both multiplication and division introducing infinitude and infinity, and wherefore guiding according to its very nature all the things possessed by her towards a kind of infinite and dark sea of nonexistence; if the One, anticipating <the dyad>, had not united all things by participation in himself and had not brought them safely to his own nature;

(and then again, he comes back to Dionysius the Areopagite)

οὐδὲν γὰρ τῶν ὄντων ἀμέτοχον τοῦ ἐνός· ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν πολλὰ τοῖς μέρεσιν, ἐν τῷ ὄλῳ· τὰ δὲ πολλὰ τοῖς συμβεβηκόσιν, ἐν τῷ ὑποκειμένῳ· καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῷ ἀριθμῷ, ἢ ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ἐν τῷ εἶδει.<sup>119</sup> καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τοῖς εἶδεσιν, ἐν τῷ γένει· καὶ τὰ πολλὰ ταῖς προόδοις,<sup>120</sup> ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ.<sup>121</sup> [...] Καὶ οὐκ ἂν εὕρης τί τῶν ὄντων, ὁ

115 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 10, l. 20–21.

116 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 10, l. 28–29.

117 Basil of Caesarea, *Adversus Eunomium*, ed. B. Sesboué, G.-M. de Durand, L. Doutreleau (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1982), §I, 16, p. 228, l. 4–10; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 38, §7, p. 114, l. 5–8; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 45, §3 in PG 36, col. 625, l. 37.

118 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 11, l. 12–19.

119 In Nicholas' printed text ἐν ταῖς δυνάμεσιν ἢ τῷ εἶδει.

120 In Nicholas' printed text προσόδοις, but not attested in the manuscript tradition of Dionysius.

121 Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § XIII, 2, p. 227, l. 13–16.

μη τῷ ἐνὶ καθὸ πᾶσα ἡ θεότης ὑπερουσίως ὀνομάζεται, καὶ ἔστι τοῦθ', ὅπερ ἐστὶ, καὶ τελειοῦται καὶ διασώζεται.<sup>122</sup>

in fact, nothing among existing beings is not a partaker of the one, but what is many according to the parts is one as a whole, and the things that are many according to the accidents are one in the subject, and those things that are many according to the number or powers are one in the species, and those that are many according to the species are one in the genus, and the things which are manifold in their emanations are one in the principle. [...] And you could not find any being that is without unity—wherefore the whole Divinity is called [such] suprasubstantially—which is what it is and reaches its perfection and is preserved.

And he finally concludes:

[...] ὡςπερ οὖν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας θεωνυμίας ὅσαι τὴν ὅλην θεαρχίαν χαρακτηρίζουσιν, ἐπίσης ἐκάστη τῶν θεαρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων, ἡ θεολογία προσάπτει, ἐξορίζουσα πᾶσαν ἐκείθεν θεωνυμίας ἑτερότητά τε καὶ ἀνισότητά τε καὶ ἀνομοιότητα καὶ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἥττον, ἃ τῆς ὕλης καὶ τῶν συνθέτων εἰσὶν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἐν ἐπίσης ἐκάστῳ τῶν θεαρχικῶν προσώπων ἔστι καὶ ὀνομάζεται· εἰς Πατῆρ, εἰς Υἱός, ἐν ἁγιον Πνεῦμα.

Ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ ἐν· εἰς γὰρ τὰ τρία Θεός· καὶ τὸ ἐν ἐκάστῳ ἓν, κατ' οὐδὲν ἕτερον τοῦ ἐν τῷ παντί· ἀπεληλαμένης ἐκείθεν, καὶ τῆς καθόλου τε καὶ ἐπὶ μέρος διαφορᾶς· οὐ γὰρ τρεῖς μερικᾶς οὐσίας τὴν θεότητα εἶναι πιστεύομεν· ἀλλὰ μίαν ἀμέριστον τοῖς φυσικοῖς πᾶσι πλεονεκτήμασιν εἰ καὶ τοῖς προσωπικοῖς μερίζεται ἰδιώμασιν [...].<sup>123</sup>

[...] therefore, as theology equally attributes all the other divine appellations that characterize the entire Godhead to each of the divine hypostases, driving away from there any diversity, inequality and dissimilarity of the divine appellation, **and the more and the less**, which are rather proper to matter and to composite entities, so also the One equally is and is called in each divine person: one the Father, one the Son, one the Holy Ghost.

Since they are also one, the three in fact are one God, and what is in each one is one, in no way different from the one who is altogether, and

<sup>122</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita, *De divinis nominibus*, § XIII, 3, p. 228, l. 15–16.

<sup>123</sup> Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 10, l. 18–p. 12, l. 13.

the distinction between what is universal and what is in part is eliminated here: we do not believe, in fact, that they are three partial substances of the Deity, but that it is one and undivided, in all its essential virtues, although it is divided in the personal characteristics [...].

A detail must be added here: the *Adversus Latinos* presents an atypical usage of the term θεολογία; Nicholas employs it fourteen times, while the other authors before him (e.g., Photios or Niketas Byzantios) use it very rarely (up to four times). This again is a sign of how difficult it was for the Bishop of Methone to deal with the “Hellenic theology” of Proclus, on the one hand, and the new “Latin theology”,<sup>124</sup> on the other—a battle that he needs to fight in order to safeguard the orthodox doctrine as it is taught by “our first and only teacher and master who, being himself both God and interpreter of the theology, will announce these things.”<sup>125</sup> It is easy to understand Nicholas’ concerns from these few words: even the term θεολογία must be handled with great care. It is God who is the teacher, the exegete, and the master: the “theology” proposed by Proclus does not fit into the orthodox, God-inspired “science of things divine”.

The following four refutations/solutions (λύσεις) are each also exegetical replies that clarify the Greek interpretations of some passages from the Gospel. The second objection is based on three widely used passages: “When the Paraclete comes, whom I will send to you from the Father” (Io. 15: 26); “He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you” (Io. 16: 13); and, “It is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you” (Io. 16: 15). According to Nicholas the Latins use these passages to demonstrate that whatever thing is sent, this very thing proceeds from the sender. The reply insists on a feature that is peculiar to Nicholas’ writings: the painstaking attention to the meaning of words—in this case, the difference between ἡ ἀποστολή (“sending forth”) and ἡ ἐκπόρευσις (“procession”),<sup>126</sup> the same clear distinction that can be found also in the *Syllogismi* where he distinguishes between ἐκπόρευσις, ἀποστολή, μετάδοσις, ἐμφύσησις,<sup>127</sup> while in order to explain Io. 16: 15 he goes back to a widely quoted passage from Photios’ *Mystagogia*, in which the Patriarch explains that there is a difference between saying “it is from me that

124 See for a compelling overview of the Latin side, G. d’Onofrio, “Quando la metafisica tornò in Occidente. Ugo Eteriano e la nascita della theologia”, in *Aquinas*, 55.1–2(2012), pp. 67–106.

125 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 29, l. 29–30: ὁ πρῶτος ἡμῖν καὶ μόνος καθηγητῆς καὶ διδάσκαλος, ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ Θεὸς καὶ τῆς θεολογίας ἐξηγητῆς, ἀναγγελεῖ ταῦτα.

126 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 16.

127 See below section 4. *Refutationes theologicae-Syllogismi*, at pp. 320–334.

he will receive” and “it is from mine that he will receive”, because in saying “from mine” Christ intends “from my Father and not from me.”<sup>128</sup>

The third reply is to the objections based on the passage of Io. 20: 22: “And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” Nicholas recalls some of the themes he used in the *Ad magnum Domesticum* in relation to the fact that the term, “spirit”, can be used in different ways: to talk about God and the Holy Spirit, but also to talk about angelic spirits, or about the spirit “of slavery” and the spirit “of adoption” (Rom. 8: 15),<sup>129</sup> etc.

It is also worthy of attention to note here how deeply Nicholas is engaged in tracing the limits of the usage of a word or, as in this case, in recognising the polysemantic value of a noun like “spirit”:

πῶς ἂν αὐτὸς συστειλῆς τὸ ὄνομα εἰς ἓν σημαίνόμενον; Εἰ δ' ἀνάγκη πολυσήμαντον ὁμολογεῖν τοῦτο καθὰ καὶ δέδεικται, προσήκοι ἂν τῷ νουνεχεῖ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐξεταστῆ, μὴ ἀπλῶς οὕτω καὶ ἀδιακρίτως ἐκδέχεσθαι τὴν φωνήν, ὡς ἔν τούτῳ σημαίνουσαν πανταχοῦ τὸ συμπληρωτικὸν τῆς τριάδος Πνεύμα· ἀλλὰ διαστέλλειν, οὐ μὲν τοῦτο, οὐ δὲ ἐκεῖνο σημαίνεται· ἵνα μὴ τῷ ἀλληνάλλω<sup>130</sup> τῆς ἐκδοχῆς· εἰς ἀτοπίας ἀποκρημνίζεται βάραθρα.<sup>131</sup>

How could you reduce the name <of the Spirit> to mean one thing? If it is necessary to recognize this <name> as having many meanings as it has been demonstrated, it would be convenient for the intelligent inquirer of truth not to accept the expression so simply and indiscriminately as if <this expression> in this way meant everywhere one, [i.e.] the Spirit who is an essential part of the Triad, but to distinguish where this means this and where that, so that he is not plunged into abysses of senselessness by confusing the interpretation.

A fourth solution answers to a hypothetical question, which is typical of the anti-Latin writings, on what can be considered ἄτοπον—which can be translated both with a theological sense, as “wicked/outrageous”, and with a more philosophical meaning, as “paradoxical/absurd”—in stating that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.<sup>132</sup> Nicholas lists seven reasons why the

128 cf. Photios, *De Spiritus Sancti mystagogia*, § 22–23 in *PG* 102, col. 301–303; Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 41, pp. 374–375.

129 Nicholas of Methone, *Ad magnum domesticum*, p. 213, l. 1–2.

130 τῷ ἄλλην ἄλλω in the printed text.

131 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 19, l. 22–p. 20, l. 2.

132 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 24, l. 30.

Filioque is ἄτοπον, and almost all of them refer to the fact that it does not respect the tradition and the teaching of the Scriptures and the Fathers and introduces “a new addition” (ἡ νέα προσθήκη) to the Creed.

The fifth question-and-answer cluster is dedicated to the passages in which the Spirit is called the “Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8: 9); “the breath of his mouth” (2 Thess. 2: 8); and “Spirit of truth” (Io. 15: 26). Nicholas uses a traditional reply: “procession” is not connected to “possession”, otherwise God, who is called the “God of Abraham [and] of Isaac”,<sup>133</sup> should come from the Patriarchs.

Ἐγὼ δὲ διαφορὰν οἶδα τοῦ εἶναι τι τοῦδε, καὶ τοῦ ἐκ τοῦδε· τὸ μὲν γὰρ οἰκειώσιν τινα βούλεσθαι δηλοῖ, τὸ δὲ ἀναφορὰν πρὸς τὸ αἷτιον.<sup>134</sup>

I know, instead, that there is a difference between being “of something” and “from something”: the first case shows a certain appropriation, the second case a reference to the cause.

In this reply we also find a clear explanation of what Nicholas intends for πρόοδοι, and why in his *Refutatio Procli* he tries so insistently to refute the Philosopher’s position:

[...] εἴ γε φυσικὴν ὁμολογητέον ἡμῖν εἶναι τοῦ Πνεύματος τὴν ἐκπόρευσιν· τουτέστιν ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς ὑπερφυσοῦς φύσεως τοῦ ἐξ οὗ ὁποῖαν καὶ τὴν γέννησιν τοῦ Υἱοῦ, ἵνα καὶ τῷ τρόπῳ μόνῳ διαφέρωσιν ἀλλήλων αἱ πρόοδοι.<sup>135</sup>

[...] if we must acknowledge the natural procession of the Spirit, that is to say from the very supernatural nature of the one from whom is also the generation of the Son, so that the “emanations” differ from each other only in the manner.

The sixth and last exegetical passage is dedicated to Io. 10: 30: “I and the Father are one.” Again, here we find the attempt to offer a very literal interpretation of the Gospel passage: Christ did not say, “I and the Father ‘am’ one”, but “I and the Father ‘are’ one” because he wanted to signify the distinction between the persons:

133 E.g., Gen. 28: 13.

134 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 27, l. 5–7.

135 Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 28, l. 3–7.

[...] οὐκ εἶπεν Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν εἰμί, ἵνα κατὰ πάντα τηρήσης τὸ ἐν· ἀλλ' ἐν μὲν εἰπὼν, ἔδειξε τὴν μίαν οὐσίαν· ἐσμέν δὲ πάλιν εἰπὼν, ἔδωκε καὶ τὴν τῶν προσώπων διαίρεσιν.<sup>136</sup>

Having concluded the exegesis of the traditional quotations from the Gospel, attributed by the Greek polemical literature on the Filioque to the Latins, Nicholas, starting with Paul, retraces the teachings about the Spirit and his procession from the Father that can be found in the New Testament, and concludes with an outline of the decisions of the first four ecumenical councils (Nicaea in 325, Constantinople in 381, Ephesus in 431, and Chalcedon in 451).<sup>137</sup>

#### 4 *Refutationes theologicae—Syllogismi*<sup>138</sup>

The *Refutationes theologicae*, *Κεφαλαιώδεις ἔλεγχοι*, which will be called *Syllogismi* to avoid any confusion with the *Refutatio Procli*, contain a collection of short refutations of the new Latin dogma of the Filioque, in the form of “syllogisms”<sup>139</sup> and summarize the main faults of Latin pneumatology, already presented in the other writings. The text was published for the first time by Demetrakopoulos<sup>140</sup> and divided into 47 sections. In this case as well, we cannot completely rely on the printed text, unfortunately, and need a proper critical edition in order to draw well-grounded conclusions, however, it is possible to obtain a general understanding of Nicholas’ way of refuting the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son. This section presents only selected passages from those which could enrich the analysis of Nicholas’ philosophical background.

<sup>136</sup> Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, p. 28, l. 24–26.

<sup>137</sup> Nicholas of Methone, *Adversus Latinos*, pp. 31–36.

<sup>138</sup> The Greek title is: Τοῦ αὐτοῦ Νικολάου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης κεφαλαιώδεις ἔλεγχοι τοῦ παρὰ Λατίνοις καινοφανοῦς δόγματος, τοῦ ὅτι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεται.

<sup>139</sup> Other contemporary authors use this kind of collections of syllogisms, see e.g. Andronikos Kamateros, *Sacrum Armamentarium* (RAP G11349), p. 219, titulus, ed. A. Bucossi (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014).

<sup>140</sup> The text is published by Demetrakopoulos under its original title, however, on the basis of the title used by the *TLG*, many publications refer to it as *Oratio 7*, which of course is not an appropriate title; the title from the manuscript tradition is Τοῦ αὐτοῦ Νικολάου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης κεφαλαιώδεις ἔλεγχοι τοῦ παρὰ Λατίνοις καινοφανοῦς δόγματος, τοῦ ὅτι τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεται. Now in the edition prepared by N.C. Benvenuto; see above, note 9, p. 292.

In this writing, as in the others presented above, one of the major concerns of Nicholas is how to explain the relationship between God as monad and God as Trinity. This is a “hot topic”, very well documented throughout the *Refutatio Procli*, starting from its very proem,<sup>141</sup> but we also see the issue here in the beginning of the *Syllogismi* where in a very short preface the Bishop of Methone summarizes his point of view. This is a rather conventional opening for a text dedicated to the Filioque: indeed, the theologians feel the urge to start from a common foundation that can be shared by Greeks and Latins; however, they do not usually refer to the difference between μονάς and τριάς but rather to that between οὐσία and ὑπόστασις, while Nicholas insists on the fact that the Godhead is monad and triad:

Ὁμολόγηται, ὅτι καὶ ἡ ὅλη θεότης μονάς ἐστὶ καὶ τριάς κατὰ τὸ κοινὸν τῆς οὐσίας, καὶ τριάς ἢ αὐτὴ κατὰ τὰς ὑποστάσεις, καὶ ἐκάστη τῶν ὑποστάσεων μονάς ἐστὶ καὶ ἔν κατὰ τὸ οἰκείον ἰδίωμα, ὃ τῶν λοιπῶν ὑποστάσεων διακρίνεται.

It is confessed both that the entire Divinity is monad and that is triad according to what is common to the substance, and is triad according to the hypostases, and each one of the hypostases is monad and one according to its proper distinctive feature, which distinguishes it from the other hypostases.<sup>142</sup>

In *Refutatio Procli* Nicholas expresses the same point in various passages, e.g.,

Τριάς οὖν ἡμῖν ἢ θεότης ὁμολογεῖται καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ μονάς καὶ τὸ ἔν καὶ οὔτε τὸ τριάς εἶναι ἀρνεῖται τὸ εἶναι τὸ ἔν οὔτε τὸ εἶναι τὸ ἔν ἀρνεῖται τὸ εἶναι τριάς, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἑκατέρου μᾶλλον ἐκότερον οὐσα βεβαιοῦται.<sup>143</sup>

We confess therefore that the Divinity is a triad and that the same is a monad and the One; its being three does not deny its being the One, nor does its being the One deny its being three, but rather from both it is confirmed to be both.<sup>144</sup>

141 E. g. Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, p. 4, l. 19–5, l. 15, proem.

142 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, p. 359, l. 1–p. 360, l. 3.

143 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, p. 4, l. 28–5, l. 3, proem.

144 Engl. tr. from Robinson, *Nicholas of Methone's Refutation of Proclus*, p. 85.

Even more notable is the first passage §1 in which Nicholas states that to say the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son would imply that one comes from two, that the Spirit would have two principles, as the Father and the Son are two and not one,

Εἰ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐκπορεύεται, εἶη ἂν τὸ ἐν ἐκ τῶν δύο καὶ δύο ἀρχαὶ τοῦ ἐνός· ἐν γὰρ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ εἷς καὶ ὁ Υἱὸς εἷς. Πατὴρ δὲ καὶ Υἱὸς οὐχ εἷς, ἀλλὰ δύο, εἰ καὶ τῆ φύσει ἓν· ἄλλος γὰρ καὶ ἄλλος, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο.<sup>145</sup>

If the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, he would be the one [coming] from two and there would be two principles of the one; for indeed the Holy Spirit is one, as also the Father is one and the Son is one. Father and Son are not one, but two, although they are one according to nature; two persons indeed but not two things.

Then he adds,

Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ὄντων πάντων οἱ λόγοι πρόεισιν ἐν τῷ Θεῷ, κάκειθεν εἰς τὰ ὄντα διανεμόνται· εἶη ἂν καὶ πᾶσα ἢ ἐν τοῖς οὖσι θεωρουμένη μονὰς ἐκ δυάδος, καὶ ἢ δυὰς ἀρχὴ τῆς μονάδος, ὅπερ ἄτοπον καὶ τῆ κοινή ἐναντίον ἐννοία, καθ' ἣν τὸ ἐν πάντες καὶ τὴν μονάδα δυάδος τε καὶ παντὸς προτάττουσιν ἀριθμοῦ, ὡς ἄρα τῆς μονάδος ἀρχῆς οὕσης δυάδος τε καὶ παντὸς ἀριθμοῦ.<sup>146</sup>

And because the reasons of all beings pre-exist in God, and from there are distributed to the beings, the entire monad would be contemplated in beings from a dyad, and the dyad would be the origin of the monad, a thing that is absurd and contrary to common understanding, according to which everybody places the one and the monad before the dyad and before every number, because the monad is principle of the dyad and of every number.

In §2 and §3 he insists on the fact that the double procession would imply double causes, that one of the two principles would be imperfect and that nothing perfect can have an imperfect cause and at the same time that the dyarchy would banish the monarchy from the one Divinity.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, §1, p. 360, l. 8–13.

<sup>146</sup> Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, §1, p. 360, l. 13–19.

<sup>147</sup> Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, §2, p. 360, l. 29–31: Πῶς γὰρ τὸ ἐξ ἀτελών; οὐδὲν γὰρ τέλειον ἐξ ἀτελών· καὶ ἅμα ἢ δυαρχία τὴν μοναρχίαν ἀπὸ τῆς μίας ἐξορίζει θεότητος.

The third section is more specifically devoted to the idea of God's perfection: if the procession from the Father is and must be perfect, then the addition of a procession from the Son is superfluous.

Εἰ τελεία ἡ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπόρευσις τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος (τελεία δέ, ὅτι Θεὸς τέλειος ἐκ Θεοῦ τελείου τοῦ Πατρὸς τὸ Πνεῦμα), τί δήποτε συντελεῖ πρὸς ταύτην ἡ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ; Εἰ μὲν γὰρ καὶ αὕτη συνεισφέρει τι, οὐ τελεία ἐκείνη [...].<sup>148</sup>

If the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father is perfect—perfect indeed because the Spirit is perfect God who comes from a perfect God who is the Father—what then does the <procession> “from the Son” contribute to this? If, in fact, also this [i.e. the procession from the Son] furnishes something, then that one [i.e. the procession from the Father] is not perfect [...].

The following sections (§§ 4-5-6-7) present some well-known refutations: if there is only one procession from the Father and the Son, it means that they share the same common characteristic, but this is impossible because in the Trinity a feature is either common to the three persons or is proper to one hypothesis: what is proper is not common, and what is common is not proper. If the Father and the Son share one property it means that either the Spirit is inferior to them, or he must share a property with the Father, that of generating the Son, which is of course an absurd consequence.

Section § 8 is dedicated to one of the crucial issues that potentially link the Latin heresy and the philosophical threat: the proliferation of persons in the Trinity, i.e., a new form of polytheism. Following the previous reasoning that leads Nicholas to say that the Spirit should also be cause of the Son, here he argues that even if we allow that the Son cannot be from the Spirit, however, in order to safeguard the equality in honour and power, the Latins must tolerate the Spirit's emanating something else, which must be equal in nature and power to the Spirit who emanates it and to those from whom the Spirit is brought forth (πρόαγω—not by chance the verb we have already discussed in the *Adversus Latinos*),<sup>149</sup> but these reasonings would lead to a proliferation of persons in the Trinity and even overtake Hellenic polytheism.<sup>150</sup>

148 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 3, p. 361, l. 1–6.

149 See above p. 310.

150 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 8, pp. 363–364: “Ἡ εἰ μὴ τὸν Υἱόν, ἀλλ’ ἕτερόν τι δοτέον ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἢ γεννάσθαι ἢ ἐκπορεύεσθαι, ὡς ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκείνων ἐκάτερον, ἵνα καὶ ἰσότημα τάχα καὶ ἰσοδύναμα φυλαχθῆ, ὁμοφυῆς ἂν εἴη καὶ ἰσοδύναμον καὶ τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύμα-

Although sections § 9 and § 10 discuss the famous passage of Io. 14: 28, “The Father is greater than I”—which in 1166 triggered a fierce debate that opposed Latin and Greek interpretations of the verse of the Gospel of John—it is not possible to ascertain whether Nicholas is somehow referring to contemporary events and debates, since the passage is widely discussed in almost all anti-Latin texts.<sup>151</sup>

Section § 11 again deals with the statement that nothing personal can be shared in the Trinity. In this case, if the Father were to share the procession of the Spirit with the other two persons, the Spirit would proceed from himself, being both cause of himself and caused—a thing, says Nicholas, that not even the tales of the Hellenes imagined.<sup>152</sup>

Sections §§ 12–25 allow Nicholas to go back to his main concern (the monad, the dyad, the triad) and try to entangle the Latin heresy by making ample use of Aristotle. Section § 12 in particular includes a passage that, in slightly changed form, appears also in the *Memoriae*, and that is worth mentioning again as a bridge between philosophy and theology:

Εἰ μὴ μόνον ὁ Πατήρ Πατήρ, καὶ μόνον ὁ Υἱὸς Υἱός, καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς μόνου τοῦ Πατρὸς ὁ τε Υἱὸς καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ἀλλὰ δύο Πατήρ καὶ Υἱὸς τὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς Πνεύματος αἴτια, ἡ δυὰς ἄρα καὶ τῆς μονάδος προτέτακται καὶ ὑπεράνω τῆς μοναδικῆς τριάδος βέβηκε, καίτοι κάτω που παρὰ τῶν ἔξω σοφῶν ἡ δυαδικὴ σύνθεσις τῆ ὕλη προσέριπται· ἡ γὰρ τοι καθ’ ἡμᾶς ἄνω παρὰ τῆς ἐναρχικῆς μονάδος ἐν τῇ τριάδι συνεκφωνηθεῖσα δυὰς, ἕως οὕτω τῆς πηγαίας μονάδος κεχώρισται,

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τος προαγόμενον τῷ τε προάγοντι καὶ τοῖς ἐξ ὧν τοῦτο προήκται· οὐκ ἔτι ἄρα τριάς, ἀλλὰ τετράς ἔσται τὸ πρεσβευόμενον, μάλλον δὲ εἰς ἄπειρον αἱ ὑποστάσεις οὕτω γε προχωρήσουσιν, αἰεὶ τῆς προαγομένης τῇ προαγούσῃ τῆς αὐτῆς οὐσης φύσεως καὶ δυνάμεως, ἵνα καὶ τὴν ἑλληνικὴν πολυθεῖαν οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα δοξάζοντες παρελάσωσιν.

151 For general introductions, see: P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For most recent studies, see: P. Podolak, A. Zago, “Ugo Eteriano e la controversia cristologica del 1166: edizione dell’opuscolo *De minoritate*. Appendice: edizione della lettera ad Alessio”, in *Revue des études byzantines* 74/1(2016), pp. 77–170; P. Podolak, “Il dossier latino sul concilio del 1166: *Pater maior me est*”, in S. Cosentino, M.E. Pomero, G. Vespignani (eds), *Dialoghi con Bisanzio: spazi di discussione, percorsi di ricerca. Atti dell’VIII Congresso Nazionale dell’Associazione Italiana di Studi Bizantini (Ravenna, 22–25 settembre 2015)* (Spoleto: CISAM, 2019), pp. 789–804.

152 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 11, p. 364, l. 31–p. 365, l. 5: Ἡ τοίνυν τοῦ Πνεύματος προβολὴ εἰ μὲν κοινῇ τῶν τριῶν εἶναι δοθείη, εἴη ἂν καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ Πνεύματος, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἄρα ἐκπορευθήσεται τὸ Πνεῦμα καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ αἴτιον ἔσται αὐτὸ ἑαυτοῦ, καὶ αἴτιον ἅμα καὶ αἰτιατόν, ὅπερ οὐδ’ οἱ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀνεπλάσαντο μῦθοι.

οὐδέπω θυάς, ἀλλ' ἡ μονάς κυρίως κρατεῖ, δι' ὃ και τριάς και εἶναι και νοεῖσθαι και λέγεσθαι.<sup>153</sup>

If [it is] not [the case that] only the Father is Father, and only the Son is Son, and only from one Father are both the Son and the Holy Spirit, but rather [that] two—Father and Son—are the causes of one Spirit, then the dyad would stand before the monad and mount above the monadic Triad, and indeed down here (= in creation) somehow the dyadic composition is assigned to matter by the “Hellenic philosopher”; indeed—let me tell you—according to us up there (= the divine realm) the dyad which is pronounced together in the Triad by the monad which is principle of unity, so long as it is not yet separated from the primal-source monad, it <is> never yet at any time dyad, but a monad legitimately rules and, because of this, also Triad both is, is perceived, and is called such.

Section §13 insists on the fact that two principles in the Trinity are inconceivable. Sections §14 and §15 implicitly discuss a reference to the Scriptural passage, “the Father is greater than I” (Io. 14: 28).<sup>154</sup> Nicholas concludes from this that the Son clearly cannot be a cause of the Spirit for the following reasons: the Father is cause of those hypostases who are from him, and therefore is greater than them by reason of hypostasis (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ὑποστάσεως) and not by reason of nature (τῷ λόγῳ τῆς φύσεως); since the nature is shared by the three persons, and since the Son is not the same hypostasis as the Father and cannot cause anything by reason of nature, otherwise he would be greater than the Spirit (as the Pneumatomachoi say), it clear that the Son cannot be cause of the Spirit.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, at §15 he adds that even if the Son were to be a cause of the Spirit by reason of hypostasis, he would be part of the hypostasis of the Father, and therefore he would complete him, since the Father would in that case be in need of fulfilment, which is clearly an absurd consequence.

Section §16 goes back again to discuss monad, dyad and triad, adding convoluted explanations of the relationship between the three concepts.

153 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, §12, p. 365. Compare the bolded section with *Memoriae* in Niketas Stethatos, *Contra Latinos*, p. 376, l. 21–p. 377, l. 4: **κάτω προσρίπτον τὴν θυαδικὴν σύνθεσιν τῇ ὕλῃ. ἡ γὰρ ἄνω παρὰ τῆς ἀρχικῆς μονάδος ἐν τῇ τριάδι συνεκφανθεῖσα θυάς, ἔως οὐπω τῆς μονάδος κεχώρισται, οὐδέπω θυάς· ἀλλ' ἡ μονάς τε κυρίως και τριάς κρατεῖ και εἶναι και νοεῖσθαι και λέγεσθαι· τὸ μὲν τῇ φύσει, τὸ δὲ τῷ ἀριθμῷ.**

154 See above sections §9–10, n. 151—p. 324.

155 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, §14, p. 366.

[...] οὐδαμοῦ δυὰς τῇ μιᾷ θεότητι παραζεύγνυται· οὐδεὶς ἐν τῇ τριάδι συνδυασμός· οὐ μετὰ τὴν μονάδα δυὰς, εἴτε καὶ τριάς, ἵνα καὶ δυάδα πρὸ τῆς μονάδος ἢ καὶ τριάδος νοήσω, ἀλλὰ μονὰς μὲν ἢ πηγαία τῶν ἐξ αὐτῆς δύο μονάδων αἰτία· φθάνει δὲ ταύτας ἑαυτῇ ἐνοῦσα· καὶ πρὸ δυάδος νοουμένη τριάς, καὶ ἅμα ἐνὶ μὲν φωτὶ περιαστράπτουσα καὶ τρισί [...].<sup>156</sup>

[...] in no case does the dyad join the one Divinity: there is no combination in the Triad, and it is not the case that after the monad there is a dyad and afterward there is a triad, so that I must know a dyad before the monad or the triad, but the monad is the fontal cause of the two monads that come from it; and she anticipates them, uniting them in herself and the Triad is thus known before the dyad and brightly shines, together, with one and three lights [...].

But the most intriguing passage is the following:

[...] οὐκέτι μονὰς μονάδων αἰτία πρὶν δυασθῆναι τρισσομένη, καὶ τριάς τὴν δυάδα προφθάνουσα, ἵνα κἂν τούτῳ τὸ ὑπερφυές αὐτῆς παραδείξῃ· ἀλλὰ μονὰς μὲν δυάδος, αὐθὺς δὲ δυὰς μονάδος αἰτία, καὶ δυὰς πρὸ τριάδος νοουμένη, καὶ ἀριθμὸς ἄλλος αὐτομάτως ἀναφαινόμενος ὑπερβαίνων τὴν τριάδα καὶ εἰς ἄπειρον προβαίνων, καὶ τὰ ἄτοπα ἄπειρα.<sup>157</sup>

[if the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, then] ... **monad is no longer cause of monads, being tripled before being doubled**, with triad anticipating the dyad, so that in this too it would demonstrate its supernatural [character], but monad is cause of dyad, and again dyad is cause of monad, and dyad is conceived before triad, and spontaneously another number appears that surpasses the triad and advances towards infinity and infinite absurdities.

The tortuous expression, οὐκέτι μονὰς μονάδων αἰτία πρὶν δυασθῆναι τρισσομένη, although remaining somewhat obscure, seems to have received the attention of at least one admirer, Joseph Bryennios (born ca. 1350, died before 1438, probably 1430/1), who created his treatises by assembling passages from numerous twelfth-century authors,<sup>158</sup> and quoted this passage twice *verbatim*.<sup>159</sup>

156 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 16, p. 367, l. 2–8.

157 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 16, p. 367, l. 25–p. 368, l. 2.

158 See Niketas of Thessalonica, *Dialogi*, ed. Bucossi, D'Amelia, p. 273–274.

159 Joseph Bryennios, *Oratio* 1, l. 250; *Oratio* 21, l. 38, ed. E. Boulgares, Ἰωσήφ μοναχοῦ τοῦ Βρυενίου τὰ εὐρεθέντα (Leipzig, 1768; repr. 1991), vol. 1.

Sections §§17–24 implicitly discuss the famous passage from Io. 16: 15, “All that belongs to the Father is mine”, and its exegesis is based again on the fact that the Son cannot have the same personal properties of the Father.<sup>160</sup> Nicholas uses a very common set of refutations: the Spirit would send forth a fourth person from himself, such that “the Spirit, as being from two causes, would not be simple: the Father, uncaused cause, and the Son both caused and cause”;<sup>161</sup> the Spirit would be son of the Son and nephew of the Father; the Spirit would have an intermediary in his procession from the Father (οὐδ’ ἂν ἀμέσως);<sup>162</sup> the procession and the generation must occur simultaneously (ἅμα).<sup>163</sup>

Although Nicholas employs Aristotle and refers to his logic quite often in order to construct his confutation of the Latin Filioque, and although many other theologians refer (even if they do not mention him by name) to Aristotelian logic,<sup>164</sup> sections §§24–28 are quite original in the panorama of anti-Latin polemicists. To be more accurate, one should say that Nicholas in these passages seems to be using more Porphyry, or other Aristotelian commentators (e.g. David the Conqueror, Pseudo-Elias/Pseudo-David),<sup>165</sup> than Aristotle himself, when he discusses the fact that a characteristic proper to the Father cannot be shared by the Son, by using a parallel with the property of the “ability to laugh” that belongs to human beings:<sup>166</sup>

§ 24 Πᾶν ἴδιόν τινος ἀπ’ ἐκείνου μεταλαμβανόμενον, οὗ περ ἂν ἴδιον ᾗ, καὶ καθ’ ἑτέρων τινῶν δύο λεγόμενον, εἰ μὲν κατ’ ἀμφοῖν ἐπίσης ἀληθεύεται, ὁμοφυῆ· εἰ δὲ κατὰ τοῦ ἑνός, τοῦ ἑτέρου δὲ μή, ἑτεροφυῆ τὰ δύο ταῦτα δείκνυσιν ὄντα· οἷον φέρε εἰπεῖν. Τὸ γελαστικὸν ἴδιον ὃν τοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον εἶδους, ἀπὸ τούτου

160 Cf. Io 15: 13–15: ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὀδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάσῃ· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει, καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν. πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ ἐμὰ ἐστίν· διὰ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λαμβάνει καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.

161 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 20, p. 368: κ’. Πῶς δὲ καὶ ἀπλοῦν τὸ μή ἐξ ἑνός, ἀλλ’ ἐκ δύο, τοῦ μὲν ἀναιτίου αἰτίου, τοῦ δὲ αἰτιατοῦ καὶ αἰτίου;

162 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 22, p. 369. Interesting to note that, most probably during the first half of the twelfth century, Niketas of Thessalonica writes six dialogues to explain the role of the Son as intermediary in the procession of the Holy Spirit, see especially Niketas of Thessalonica, *Dialogus II*, ed. Bucossi, D’Amelia.

163 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 23, p. 369.

164 See again especially Niketas of Thessalonica, *Dialogus II*, ed. Bucossi, D’Amelia.

165 Cf. for a recently updated general introduction R. Sorabji (ed.), *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence* (London / New York: Bloomsbury, 2016<sup>2</sup>).

166 Aristotle, *De partibus animalium*, 673a, l. 8, καὶ τὸ μόνον γελᾶν τῶν ζώων ἄνθρωπον. On the Aristotelian origin of the example, see J. Barnes (ed.), *Porphyry’s Introduction* (Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 208–209 and footnotes.

δὴ μεταλαμβανόμενον λεγέσθω πρῶτον κατὰ τινων δύο καὶ ἀληθεύετω, οἷον Σωκράτους καὶ Πλάτωνος· γελαστικὸν γὰρ ἐκάτερον τούτων· οὐκοῦν καὶ ὁμοφυεῖς Σωκράτης καὶ Πλάτων. Λεγέσθω πάλιν καὶ καθ' ἑτέρων δύο, καὶ κατὰ μὲν τοῦ ἐνός ἀληθεύετω, κατὰ δὲ τοῦ ἑτέρου μηκέτι· οἷον κατὰ τοῦ Σωκράτους καὶ κατὰ τῆς γεγραμμένης εἰκόνος αὐτοῦ· ὁ μὲν γὰρ Σωκράτης ὄντως γελαστικόν, ἡ δὲ εἰκὼν αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι· ἑτεροφυῆ ἄρα τὰ δύο ταῦτα Σωκράτης καὶ εἰκὼν αὐτοῦ.

Κατὰ δὴ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον ἐπειδὴ τὸ προάγειν τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ ἴδιον ἐστὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς, τοῦτο δ' ἀπὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς μεταλαμβανόμενον καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ λεγόμενον καὶ τοῦ Πνεύματος, κατὰ μὲν τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἀληθεύει, ὡς τὸ καινόν<sup>167</sup> δόγμα φησί, κατὰ δὲ τοῦ Πνεύματος οὐκέτι· οὐδὲ γὰρ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ προβάλλει· ἑτεροφυῆ ἄρα τὰ δύο ταῦτα, ὁ Υἱὸς καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα. Εἰ δὲ ταῦτα ὁμοφυῆ, ἢ κατ' ἀμφοῖν ἀληθεύετω τὸ προβάλλειν τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐξ αὐτῶν, ἢ εἰ μὴ κατὰ τοῦ ἐνός, οὐδὲ κατὰ τοῦ λοιποῦ ἀληθεύει.

When whatever characteristic property of some given thing is conveyed far from that thing, of which it should be a characteristic property, and is said in relation to other two, if in equal terms it is truly predicated in relation to both, <they are> of the same nature; if instead it <is said> in relation to the one, and not to the other, these entities prove to be of a distinct nature; let us say an example. The ability to laugh, being a characteristic property of the species of human beings, conveyed far from this, must then be said primarily in relation to the other two [entities] and truly predicated, as for instance Socrates and Plato: each of them is, in fact, able to laugh; therefore Socrates and Plato are also of the same nature. And again, <the ability to laugh> must also be said in relation to other two, and now must be truly predicated in relation to one, and now not in relation to the other: as for instance in relation to Socrates and the depicted portrait of him: Socrates, verily, is able to laugh while his portrait is not; therefore, these two things—Socrates and his portrait—are of a distinct nature.

Then, according to this same reasoning, since it is a characteristic property of the Father to bring forward the Spirit by himself, if this is conveyed far from the Father and said in relation to the Son and the Spirit, in relation to the Son it is truly predicated, as the new dogma [i.e. the Latins' Filioque teaching] says, but in relation to the Spirit it is not: indeed he does not bring himself forward; therefore the two—the Son and the Spirit—are of distinct nature. But if these are of the same nature, either

<sup>167</sup> κοινόν in the printed edition.

the bringing forward of the Spirit from them is truly predicated in relation to both, or if it is not true in relation to one, it is not true also in relation to the other.

Sections §§ 25–26 concentrate on the fact that what is common (κοινόν) cannot be a characteristic property (ἴδιον) and *vice versa*. Section § 27 goes back to the τὸ γελαστικόν, “to be able to laugh”, but in this case Nicolas also opens the section by quoting an uncommon passage from Photios’ *Mystagogy*:<sup>168</sup>

Οὐδὲν ἴδιόν τινος ὑποστάσεως ἑτέρα ὑποστάσει ἐφαρμόζειν δύναται· ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴν ἴδιόν τι ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτως ἐξιδιωσαμένου μεταλαμβάνομενον κατὰ τινος ὑποστάσεως πραγματικῶς ἀληθεύει, ἐκεῖνο τὸ πρώτως αὐτὸ ἐξιδιωσάμενον εἰς λόγον ἀνάγεται φύσεως· οἷον τὸ γελαστικὸν πρώτως ἐξιδιοῦται ὁ καθόλου λεγόμενος ἄνθρωπος, ἀπὸ δὲ τούτου μεταλαμβάνομενον ἀληθεύει πραγματικῶς κατὰ πάντων τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἀνθρώπων· ἀλλ’ ὁ καθόλου ἄνθρωπος, ὁ πρώτως τὸ γελαστικὸν ἐξιδιωσάμενος, οὐχ ὑποστάσεως ἀλλὰ φύσεώς ἐστιν ὄνομα. Εἰ τοίνυν καὶ τὸ προάγειν τὸ Πνεῦμα πρώτως μὲν ἐξιδιοῦται ὁ Πατήρ, ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ μεταλαμβάνει τοῦτο καὶ ὁ Υἱός, ὑπόστασις ὢν, ἀκόλουθον ἂν εἶη καὶ τὸν Πατέρα λέγειν μὴ εἶναι ὑπόστασιν, ἀλλὰ φύσιν· εἰ δὲ τοῦτο, μὴδ’ εἶναι ὄλως Πατέρα.

No characteristic property of a hypostasis can apply to another hypostasis, but whenever what is a characteristic property—being conveyed far from “the one to which it is primarily peculiar”—is truly predicated in reality in relation to another hypostasis, that one “to which it is primarily peculiar” itself is brought up to a dimension of nature. The ability to laugh, for example, is primarily peculiar to what we call man in general and then, if it is conveyed far from this, is truly predicated successively in relation to all men. But man in general—the first to whom the “ability to laugh” is peculiar to—is the name of a nature and not of a hypostasis. If, therefore, on the one hand the Father first has as his peculiar property also to emanate the Spirit, but on the other hand from him also the Son

168 Cf. Photios, *De Spiritus Sancti mystagogia*, § 19 in PG 102, col. 297, (1θ') Καθόλου δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων τῶν κυρίως ἰδίων, ἐπειδ' ἂν τι τούτων κατὰ τινος πραγματικῶς ὑποστάσεως ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτως ἐξιδιωσαμένου μεταλαμβάνομενον ἀληθεύει, εἰ καὶ μὴ τὸ ἀξίωμα τῆς ἀντιστροφῆς αὐτῷ συνεπάγοιτο, ἐκεῖνο δὴ τὸ παρέχον ἑτέρῳ μετέχειν τοῦ ιδιώματος εἰς λόγον ὁράμεν ἀναγόμενον φύσεως. Εἰ οὖν ὅπερ ἦν ἴδιον ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐγνωσμένον τοῦ Πατρὸς, τοῦτο δίδωσιν ἢ τόλμα παρῆναι καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ, συνοράτω καὶ ἀκουσα, πρὸς οἷον αὐτῆς τέλος καταστρέφει τὸ θεοστυγές· ἀκόλουθον δ' ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἦν τοῖς ἐρασταῖς τοῦ ψεύδους, κατὰ τῶν ιδιωμάτων ἐφάπαξ ἐκμεμνήσιν, τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ αὐτὴν γε παντελῶς τὴν ὑπόστασιν εἰς φύσιν ἀναλῦσαι καὶ τὸ αἷτιον ὄλως περιελεῖν τῶν θεαρχικῶν ὑποστάσεων.

partakes of this, being a hypostasis, it would be consequent to say also that the Father is not a hypostasis, but a nature, and if this is so, he would not be Father at all.

Section § 28 still remains in a strictly logical context:

Ἔτι τὸ Πνεῦμα ἢ ἴσον εἶναι ἀνάγκη ἢ μείζον ἢ ἔλαττον τοῦ Υἱοῦ· ἀλλ' ἴσον μὲν οὐκ ἂν εἶη τὸ ἐκ δύο, ὡς φασι, τὸ ἐξ ἑνός· ἦν γὰρ ἂν καὶ αὐτὸ ἐξ ἑνός ἢ κάκεινος ἐκ δύο· λοιπὸν δὲ ἢ μείζον ἔσται, ὅπερ οὐδεὶς ποτε τῶν κατὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ λυττησάντων εἶπεῖν ἐτόλμησεν, ἢ ἔλαττον, καὶ πάλιν ἀναζῆ Μακεδόνιος.

The Spirit must be either equal to, greater than, or inferior to the Son, but what is from two, as they (the Latins) say, would not be equal to what is from one: indeed it would also be from one or that would also be from two, so it will be either greater, a thing that no one of those who raged against the Son has ever dared to say, or lesser, and again Macedonius revives.<sup>169</sup>

Sections §§ 29–30 are dedicated to the exegesis of Io. 15: 26 and Io. 20: 22, while from § 31 onward we have various sections dedicated to the proper lexicon that should be used to discuss the procession: § 31 (ἐκπόρευσις, ἀποστολή, μετάδοσις, ἐμφύσησις); §§ 32–33 (χορηγείσθαι τὸ Πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ἐκπορεύεσθαι); § 34 (πέμπεσθαι and ἐκπορεύεσθαι); § 35 ἀποστολή καὶ ἐκπόρευσις, and the ministering spirits (καὶ πάντα τὰ εἰς διακονίαν ἀποστελλόμενα λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα).

Sections §§ 36–38 recall the themes that Nicholas treated in the *Ad magnum domesticum*, which go back to the treatise's main question: is Pentecost the essential manifestation of the Holy Spirit? The Bishop of Methone concludes that there must be a difference between ἐμφύσησις καὶ ἐκπόρευσις, between ἐμφύσημα καὶ πνεῦμα: in one case we must understand a manifestation in time, an economic operation, while in the other case we must understand the eternal existence of the Spirit and his τρόπος τῆς ὑπαρξέως (mode of subsistence).

More interesting and original in the panorama of 9th–12th-century writings on the procession of the Holy Spirit is section § 39,<sup>170</sup> where Nicholas explains

169 Nicholas is referring to the Arian heresy (“those who raged against the Son”) and to the bishop Macedonius, believed to be the heresiarch of the heresy of the Pneumatomachoi, i.e. the heretics that denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit during the 4th century.

170 Later authors will use the κοινή εὐδοκία in this context; e.g. Joseph Bryennius, *Oratio* 18, l. 348–352, but also Gennadios Scholarios (referring to Gregory of Nazianzus) in his *Tractatus de Processu spiritus sancti II*, p. 327, l. 5–12 and in his *Responsio ad syllogismos*

the difference between τὴν ἐκπόρευσιν καὶ τὴν ἐκπομπήν (“sending forth”) and quotes Io. 15: 26:

[...] τῷ μὲν γάρ, “Ὅταν ἔλθῃ, εἰπεῖν τὸ αὐτεξούσιον ἐδήλωσε τοῦ Πνεύματος καὶ τὸ αὐτοκίνητον· τῷ δὲ εἰπεῖν, Πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς, τὴν τε ταυτοβουλίαν τῆς ὅλης Τριάδος καὶ τὸ ἐν καὶ κοινὸν ἔδειξε θέλημα· κἀνταῦθα γάρ τὴν εὐδοκίαν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀποστολήν εἶναι νομιστέον, ὡς ἂν εἰ εἶπεν, ὅτι ἐλεύσεται κατὰ κοινήν εὐδοκίαν καὶ θέλησιν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ὁμοῦ καὶ ἅμα· ὅθεν καὶ ἡ πρόοδος αὐτοῦ παριστᾷ [...].<sup>171</sup>

[...] by saying “when he comes”, [Christ] made clear the Spirit’s free will and “free movement”, but by saying “I will send [him to] you from the Father”, he showed the identity of the will of the entire Triad and the one, shared desire: from there indeed it must be understood that his good will and that of the Father are the sending forth, as he said that <the Spirit> will come according to a **common good-will**, [according to] his and the Father’s intention, together and simultaneously, from which his emanation also occurs [...].

Again Nicholas insists on a clear differentiation of terms and here, quite originally, introduces in the “sending forth of the Spirit” the idea that there is a common action that shows “the identity of will and the one and common desire”,<sup>172</sup> an insistence on a link among the persons that is not usually highlighted and that could have opened a way to reconcile with the Latin opponents, if it had been pursued further.

Nicholas moves to section § 40, where he links § 39 with § 40 by reference to the idea of movement, or better, of the two movements (procession and generation) and quotes the famous passage from Gregory of Nazianzus’ *Oratio* 29, which Nicholas repeatedly uses both in his writings on the Filioque and in the *Refutatio Procli*: “the monad in the beginning is moved to a dyad until it rests in the Triad.”<sup>173</sup>

*Marci Ephesi de processu spiritus sancti* p. 515, l. 13–32, both edited in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 2–3, ed. M. Jugie, L. Petit, X.A. Siderides (Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1929–1930).

171 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 39, p. 374, l. 4–11.

172 This concept also shows up in Nicholas of Methone, *Refutatio Procli*, § 76, p. 79, l. 10–20, where Nicholas links God’s causality to one common will between the three Trinitarian persons in strict opposition to Proclus’ causation by being alone (αὐτῷ τῷ εἶναι). I am grateful to Jonathan Greig for pointing out this passage to me. See J. Greig, “Nicholas of Methone on Divine Ideas: Between Proclus and the Early Byzantines” in this same volume at pp. 201–232.

173 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 29, § 2, p. 180, l. 13–14.

Sections §§ 41–42 are dedicated to the Photian exegesis of Io. 16: 14: “He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.” But again, Nicholas finds his “original” way to discuss it, concentrating on the vocabulary of the intra-Trinitarian relationship and the difference between *λήψις* (“reception”) and *ἐκπόρευσις* (“procession”).

The sections from § 43 onward are dedicated to the exegesis of the passage from Gal. 4: 6: “Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father.’” Nicholas here discusses the difference between being “from” something and being “of” something, mixing Biblical examples and Aristotelian echoes (§ 44 and § 45)<sup>174</sup> that bring the reader directly to the end of the text at paragraph § 51 (at least in the version printed by Demetrakopoulos).<sup>175</sup> The foolish consequences of saying that the Spirit should proceed from the Son, since the Spirit is “of the Son”, are the following: the Father, being “Father of Christ” would proceed from Christ, and the Son, being of the Father would proceed (instead of being generated) from the Father, so they all would share in procession (τὸ ἴδιον τοῦ Πνεύματος).

At § 46, Nicholas is again inspired by his beloved Aristotelian logic, where the reasoning is supposed to be “universal” and not according to likeness (“Ἡ καθόλου μὲν οὕτως, οὐχὶ κατὰ λόγον δὲ τῆς ὁμοιότητος”).<sup>176</sup> In this case, since the Spirit is of the Father and proceeds from the Father, in the same way since the Spirit is of the Son, he should also proceed from the Son: therefore, following the same logic, since both the Father and the Spirit are of the Son, according to the same equivalence of signification (κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀδιαφορίαν), the Spirit being of the Son would be paternal cause of the Son (πατρικὸν αἴτιον τοῦ Υἱοῦ). At § 47 moreover, always following the same logic, we would conclude that since they are both from the Father, they should come from him in the same way: therefore either they should both be by procession or by generation. § 48

174 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 45, p. 377, l. 3–5: Καὶ ἔτι τὰ πρὸς τι ὅσα αὐτά, ἅπερ εἰσὶν ἐτέρων, εἶναι λέγεται ἀλλήλων, ὅτι καὶ ἀλλήλων, ὡς τὸ διπλάσιον καὶ τὸ ἡμισυ.

175 A part of the manuscript tradition contains three additional sections e.g., ms. Brescia, Biblioteca Civica Queriniana, A.IV.3, Dyktion 9826, f. 225<sup>ra</sup>; Città del Vaticano, BAV, Barb. gr. 291, Dyktion 64837, f. 90<sup>r</sup>; Firenze, BML, Plut. 9.12, Dyktion 16100, f. 158<sup>r</sup>, inc. Καὶ ἄλλως δ’ ἂν ἐξελεγχθεῖ τὸ ἄλογον τῆς σφῶν ὑποθέσεως, expl. διὰ τῆς τοιαύτης κατατομῆς καὶ συμφύσεως. Cf. P. Podolak, A. Bucossi, “Per una futura edizione di Ugo Eteriano: censimento della tradizione manoscritta e problemi di cronologia. Con un’appendice sui codici che conservano i frammenti greci di Alessandra Bucossi”, in *Sacris Erudiri* 56(2017), pp. 273–346, pp. 321–328; A. Bucossi, C. Gazzini, A. Rigo, “Contro Roma e contro Gregorio Palamas. Il manoscritto Città del Vaticano, BAV, Barb. gr. 291 da Costantinopoli a Leone Allacci”, in *Revue d’Histoire des Textes* 16(2021), pp. 1–73, p. 32.

176 cf. Aristotle, *Analytica priora*, 47b, l. 17.

adds the last exegetical passage of the Biblical quotation that identifies the Son as light (Io. 1: 7–9; Hebr. 1: 3; Ps. 35: 10; Io. 8: 12). Here Nicholas insists again on the fact that although the Son is said to be the light of the world, he does not of course come “from” the world, but he comes “to” the world.<sup>177</sup> From § 49 to § 51 the Bishop of Methone focuses on the fact that, although the Father and Son are also called “spirit”, and although there are other spirits (angels, souls, etc.), the procession is proper only to the Holy Spirit (ἴδιον τὸ ἐκπορευτόν).<sup>178</sup>

Nicholas’ final conclusion lies in the middle of section § 51: the Latin innovation is neither proved through logic nor proved through doctrine (τὸ ἀναπόδεικτον καὶ ἀμάρτυρον):

Τῷ γὰρ αὐτῷ λόγῳ ἀνεξέλεγκτόν τε καὶ ἀναπόδεικτον πᾶν τὸ περὶ ἑνὸς καὶ μόνου προσώπου λεγόμενον καὶ μὴ ἀπὸ τινος καθόλου ὀρμώμενον· ἐκ γὰρ τῶν καθόλου καὶ ὡς ἐπὶ πάντων καθόλου αἱ ἀποδείξεις ἐξ ὧν καὶ οἱ ἔλεγχοι· ἀμάρτυρον δέ, ὃ μήτε ὁ μάρτυς ἐδογματίσεν ὁ πιστός, μήτε τις τῶν θεοπνεύστων ῥητῶς ὑπηγόρευσεν.<sup>179</sup>

For the same reason, anything that cannot be proved or demonstrated about a single and only person, cannot even be said to derive from any universal principle: for demonstrations –from which refutations also arise– proceed from universals, and <are valid> insofar as they apply universally; while that which lacks testimony is what neither the faithful witness has taught nor any of the divinely inspired authors has explicitly declared.

The choice of Nicholas appears clear: the *Κεφαλαιώδεις ἔλεγχοι*, a text that is structured as a sequence of logical reasoning and questioning to Latin opponents, must rely on Aristotelian logic. How far Nicholas is inspired by Aristotle himself, or by his commentators, is a complex field of research that requires the competencies of both philologists and philosophers, and cannot be dealt with here. However, it is unquestionable that Nicholas feels the need to approach the Latins through a “syllogistic” method that has its ancestor in Aristotle, although most probably it is inherited primarily from Photios.

This clear case, together with the fact (for example) that the *Sacrum Armentarium*, written at the order of Emperor Manuel Komnenos by Andronikos

177 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 48, p. 378, l. 7–8: ὡς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου προερχόμενον, ἀλλὰ μὴ ὡς εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐρχόμενον.

178 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 51, p. 379, l. 2.

179 Nicholas of Methone, *Refutationes theologicae*, § 51, p. 379, l. 6–12.

Kamateros, includes a collection of “syllogisms” from Nicholas of Methone, Theophylact of Ohrid, Photios, Niketas Byzantios, and the previously condemned philosopher, Eustratios of Nicaea, all seem to prove that during the Komnenian era the “guardians of Orthodoxy”<sup>180</sup> did not altogether condemn applying Aristotelian logic to dogmatic discussions. Rather, as Michele Trizio has clearly argued in his book on Eustratios, they condemned the use of Aristotle in discussions on the two natures of Christ,<sup>181</sup> because those dogmatic discussions were perceived as concluded, “pacified”, clarified and sanctioned by the ecumenical councils, while the discussions with the Latins on the procession of the Holy Spirit were still “works in progress” that needed the help of the ancient philosophers and their logic, as was the case in the Patristic age.

## 5 *Memoriae*

It is necessary to say a couple things about this text, because at present it exists in two published forms and is attributed to two different authors: one was published in 1897 by Arsenij Ivačenko under the paternity of Nicholas of Methone and entitled *Memoriae contra Latinos*—Ἀπομνημονεύματα ἐκ τῶν ἐν διαφόροις λόγοις γεγραμμένων κατὰ Λατίνων περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα βλασφημίας (Angelou, n. 4; *RAP* G19835);<sup>182</sup> another was published in 1930 by Anton Michel and attributed to Niketas Stethatos (11th century), with the title *Synthesis contra Latinos et de processione Spiritus Sancti* (or *Contra Latinos et de processione spiritus sancti*)—Ἐτέρα σύνθεσις κατὰ Λατίνων, ἐν οἷς βλασφημοῦσι εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον λέγοντες ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦτο ἐκπορεύεσθαι. Τοῦ Στηθάτου (*RAP* G19631).<sup>183</sup>

The second “version” of the text is probably the most famous, because it was included in the dossier dedicated to the so-called schism of 1054 by Michel. This ample work, which remains even today one of the most important contributions on the primary sources of the reciprocal excommunication between the papal envoy, Humbert of Silva Candida, and the Patriarch of Constantinople,

180 Definition from the title of chapter 5 of Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, 1143–1180.

181 cf. e.g., M. Trizio, *Il neoplatonismo di Eustrazio di Nicea* (Bari: Edizioni di Pagina, 2016), p. 13. A seminal work on this discussion is certainly G. Podskalsky, *Theologie und Philosophie in Byzanz: Der Streit um die theologische Methodik in der spätbyzantinischen Geistesgeschichte* (14./15. Jh.), *seine systematischen Grundlagen und seine historische Entwicklung* (München: C.H. Beck, 1977), pp. 107–124.

182 Nicholas of Methone, *Memoriae*, pp. 5–49.

183 Niketas Stethatos, *Contra Latinos*, pp. 371–409.

Michael Cerularius,<sup>184</sup> is unfortunately not reliable in many aspects. It is possible to mention, for example, the attribution to Michael I Cerularius of a *Panoplia*, which was exhaustively rejected by Jugie, Laurent, and Darrouzès, who together proved that the anthology had been assembled in the context of the Council of Lyons II in 1274.<sup>185</sup> Regrettably even Michel's studies on the paternity of the *Synthesis* seem to be built on a rather unsound analysis of the manuscript tradition. In this volume, Carmelo Nicolò Benvenuto hints at the problems,<sup>186</sup> and in his doctoral dissertation he thoroughly discusses the manuscript tradition and presents some convincing evidence. The reader should refer to the recent publications by Benvenuto for further details, but it can be said that it appears extremely uneconomical for Nicholas to have copied a treatise composed by Niketas Stethatos, and to have used it, dismembered into bits and pieces, in his other writings; rather, it would be more realistic (also on the basis of the titles and the dedicatory closing) to consider the *Memoriae* certainly as a compilation, but assembled by Nicholas of Methone from his own corpus of writings, and not from a text by Niketas Stethatos, as was stated by Michel.<sup>187</sup>

The title of the *Memoriae* is:

Νικολάου τοῦ φιλοσόφου ἐπισκόπου Μεθώνης συλλογή τῶν γραφέντων αὐτῷ ἐν διαφόροις λόγοις περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος κατὰ τὰς τῶν Λατίνων βλασφημίας.

By Nicholas of Methone, a gathering of things written by him in various treatises on the Holy Spirit against the Latins' blasphemies.

While the title of the text attributed to Niketas Stethatos is:

Ἐτέρα σύνθεσις κατὰ Λατίνων, ἐν οἷς βλασφημοῦσι εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον λέγοντες ἐκ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦτο ἐκπορεύεσθαι.

184 To mentioned only a very recent contribution on this event, see A. Kaldellis, "Keroularios in 1054: Nonconfrontational to the papal legates and loyal to the emperor", in N.G. Christis, A. Kolia-Dermitzaki, A. Papageorgiou (eds), *Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality (9th–15th c.)* (Abingdon / New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 9–24.

185 The reviews of the publication by V. Laurent in *Échos d'Orient* 31(1932), pp. 97–110 and M. Jugie in *Byzantion* 8(1933), pp. 321–326 are clear enough on this point. For a reliable analysis see, V. Laurent, J. Darrouzès, *Dossier grec de l'Union de Lyon (1273–1277)* (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1976), pp. 116–127.

186 C.N. Benvenuto, "Reconsidering Nicholas of Methone's Corpus", in this volume at pp. 347–372.

187 Benvenuto, "Prime indagini su quattro scritti teologici di Nicola di Metone"; and see also above n. 9 at p. 292.

Another synthesis against the Latins, who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, saying that he proceeds from the Son.

Even the mere analysis of the nouns chosen for the titles, where σύνθεσις (synthesis) and συλλογή (gathering) are used, would be enough to correctly identify this kind of composition: a patchwork of other writings,<sup>188</sup> but the conclusion of the text, printed by Arsenij, is even more decisive:

Ταυτά σοι ἐν τῷ παρόντι, πανσέβαστε καὶ πάντιμε κεφαλῇ, παρ' ἡμῶν ἐσχεδίασται ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἐν διαφόροις λόγοις γεγραμμένων ἡμῖν κατὰ τῆς τῶν Λατίνων εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα βλασφημίας, ὅτι μὴ τὸ τοὺς λόγους ἔχον βιβλίον προχείρως εἶχομεν δοῦναί σοι.

These memories of the things that we have written in various treatises against the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of the Latins, for you in the present <composition/booklet>, *pansebastos* and excellent head, were put together on the spur of the moment by us because we did not have the book that contains these treatises readily accessible to give it to you.<sup>189</sup>

Where the words μὴ προχείρως εἶχομεν δοῦναί σοι (“not to have something ready to be given as a present”) explain also how Nicholas worked, how he extracted so many verbatim quotations from his other writings, the Bishop of Methone, in fact, does not say that he did not have the book with him; he says that he does not have a book “readily accessible” to be donated to the *Pansebastos*, words that could also mean that he did not have a spare copy ready to be given to his reader and, therefore, he needed to ἐσχεδιάσται, which certainly means “to improvise”, “to put together on the spur of the moment”—but, most probably, it could also include the idea of “summarising, giving an outline”.<sup>190</sup>

Having already presented, in some details, the other treatises, this section does not insist on the contents, but offers a table with the correspondences, that can help the reader to get a sense of the treatise's structure.

188 A seminal presentation of the term συλλογή and its culture can read in P. Odorico, “La cultura della συλλογή. 1) Il cosiddetto enciclopedismo bizantino. 2) Le tavole del sapere di Giovanni Damasceno”, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83/1(1990), pp. 1–21.

189 Nicholas of Methone, *Memoriae*, p. 49.

190 Cf. Luciano Canfora, “Introduzione: Thesaurus insignis, non liber”, in Fozio, *Biblioteca* (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2016), pp. XI–LXIV.

The *Memoriae*—whether attributed or not to Nicholas of Methone<sup>191</sup>—are a patchwork of passages that can also be found in Nicholas’ writings on the Holy Spirit’s procession. It is not thorny to identify these long, sometimes verbatim passages of “self-plagiarism”; as the reader has seen in the previous pages, Nicholas has some very idiosyncratic habits: the painstaking precision in distinguishing the meaning and the usage of a word; the philosophical background reflected in the choice of words that he uses; and the introduction of very few—and always the same—quotations from Church Fathers.

### 5.1 *Text and Correspondences*

This treatise can be divided into nine sections: the opening passage, closing section, and seven question-and-answer clusters, as the reader has seen in the *Adversus Latinos*, entitled ἀντιθέσεις (antitheses, contradictions, objections, opposing arguments) and λύσεις (solutions, refutations); the long seven solutions are triggered by seven Latin doubts expressed by a fictitious interlocutor, who here and there Nicholas calls “dear Latin”. From 1 to 5, it is possible to follow a strict correspondence that comprehends the entire anti-Latin corpus by the Bishop of Methone. The last two sections, 6 and 7, are not attested in the other writings, and include the replies to the hypothetical accusation of having added “only” before “from the Father” to the article about the procession of the Holy Spirit of the Symbol of Faith, and therefore, this “antithesis” transposes the traditional Greek accusation against the Latins of having tampered with the Creed with a new addition (προσθήκη) into the mouth of the opponents:

Ἄλλὰ καὶ σύ, φησί, προστιθῆς τὸ “μόνου ἐκ πατρὸς”, λέγων “μόνου”, καίτοι μηδ’ αὐτοῦ τοῦτο τῆς θείας γραφῆς παραλαμβάνουσῃς. Εἰ τοίνυν σοὶ ἔξεστι προστιθέναι, οὐ πολλῶ μάλλον ἐμοί, τῷ πρώτῳ θρόνῳ, τῷ κορυφαίῳ, τῷ τὰς κλείς τῆς βασιλείας ἐκ διαδοχῆς Πέτρου τοῦ θεοῦ παρὰ τοῦ σωτῆρος πεπιστευμένῳ;<sup>192</sup>

191 Among the authors who trust Niketas Stethatos’ attribution there is certainly Dirk Krausmüller, who dedicated to this text various publications, cf. e.g. D. Krausmüller, “Establishing Authority in the Constantinopolitan Religious Discourse of the Eleventh Century: Inspiration and Learning in the Writings of the Monk Niketas Stethatos”, in S. Steckel, N. Gaul, M. Grünbart (eds), *Networks of Learning. Perspectives on Scholars in Byzantine East and Latin West, c. 1000–1200* (Münster: LIT-Verlag 2014), pp. 107–124; D. Krausmüller, “The procession of the Holy Spirit from the divine substance: observations about the Trinitarian theology of Symeon the New Theologian and Nicetas Stethatos”, in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 60 (2015), pp. 75–91. While Alexei Barmin already in 2001 was not convinced by Michel’s attribution, see A.V. Barmin, “Кто написал ‘Другой свод против латинян’?”, in *Византийский временник*, 60.85 (2001), p. 121–125.

192 Nicholas of Methone, *Memoriae*, p. 46.

But you too, he says, add the phrase “from the Father only,” saying “only,” even though this is nowhere found in the divine Scripture. If it is permitted to you to make additions, how much more to me—who occupy the first throne, the highest, the one to whom the keys of the kingdom were entrusted by the Saviour through the succession from the divine Peter?

And:

Ἄλλ' οὐδὲ τὸ ἐμόν, φησί, προσθήκη συννοεῖται, γὰρ ὡσπερ ὅτε λέγεται “τοῦ πατρὸς” τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ “ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς”. οὕτως, ἐπειδὴ καὶ “τοῦ υἱοῦ”, λέγεται τὸ “ἐκ τοῦ υἱοῦ”.<sup>193</sup>

But my <doctrine/position>, he says, must not be understood as an addition, for just as when the Spirit is said to be “of the Father”, also “from the Father” [is said], in this way because he is also “of the Son”, he is said to be “from the Son”.

From the point of view of the contents, the rest of the text cannot be considered particularly interesting, because—as the author himself clearly states—this treatise is a gathering of memories, but from the philological point of view the *Memoriae* are an extremely interesting challenge of textual criticism: an edition of this treatise should include the traditional reconstruction of the text, the analysis of the quotations internal to Nicholas' corpus of writings, the cross-references, the self-plagiarism, and also the collation with later testimonies (12th–13th century) of reworked versions of the text preserved in Niketas Choniates' *Thesaurus of Orthodoxy* (or *Panoplia dogmatica*, *RAP* G13013)<sup>194</sup> and in the bilingual *Three Syntagmata* by Nicholas/Nektarios of Casole (*RAP* G12762).<sup>195</sup>

A table of the correspondences, based on the critical apparatus assembled by Michel, could be a useful starting point for future research.

193 Nicholas of Methone, *Memoriae*, p. 48.

194 Partially printed in *PG* 139, col. 1101–1449; *PG* 140, col. 9–281.

195 cf. Podolak, Bucossi, “Per una futura edizione di Ugo Eteriano”, pp. 324–328; J. Hoeck, R.J. Loenertz, *Nikolaos-Nektarios von Otranto, Abt von Casole: Beiträge zur Geschichte der ost-westlichen Beziehungen unter Innozenz III. und Friedrich II.* (Ettal: Buch-Kunstverlag, 1965). It is in its final stage the critical edition by Paraskevi Toma, foreseen for 2023, with the provisional title *Nikolaos of Otranto: The Three Syntagmata. Editio princeps and Commentary*.

Nicholas of Methone, <i>Memoriae</i>	Niketas Stethatos, <i>Contra Latinos</i>	Nicholas of Methone, <i>Adversus Latinos/Ad Magnum domesticum/Syllogismi</i>	Biblical/canonical references/topic/keyword
Introduction, pp. 5–16	pp. 371–379	<i>Adv. Lat.</i> , pp. 2–3, 7–8; <i>Ad M. dom.</i> , pp. 201–202; <i>Syll.</i> , n. 8, 10, 15, 18, 29, 40.	
n. 1, pp. 16–19	pp. 379–381	<i>Adv. Lat.</i> , pp. 8–13; <i>Syll.</i> , n. 5, 9, 15.	<b>Io. 10: 30</b> (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἑσμέν)
n. 2, pp. 19–23	pp. 381–384	<i>Adv. Lat.</i> , pp. 13–18; <i>Syll.</i> , n. 39, 41.	<b>Io. 16: 14–15</b> et <b>20: 22; 15: 26</b> (ἐκ τοῦ ἔμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ)
n. 3, pp. 23–30	pp. 384–390	<i>Adv. Lat.</i> , pp. 18–21; <i>Ad M. dom.</i> , pp. 212–215; <i>Syll.</i> , n. 37, 38, 50.	<b>Io. 20: 22</b> (λάβετε Πνεῦμα ἅγιον)
n. 4, pp. 30–37	pp. 390–396	<i>Adv. Lat.</i> , pp. 24–26–28, 31–33, 12; <i>Syll.</i> , n. 44, 45, 15.	<b>Gal. 4: 6</b> (πνεῦμα τοῦ Υἱοῦ); <b>Rom. 8: 9</b> (πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ)
n. 5, pp. 37–46	pp. 396–407	<i>Ad M. dom.</i> , pp. 204–210, 217.	<b>Io. 1: 16</b> (πλήρωμα); <b>1 Cor. 10: 4</b> (πνευματικὸν πόμα); <b>1 Cor. 12: 13</b> ; Greg. Naz., <i>Or. 41</i> (οὐσιωδῶς)
<i>lacuna</i>	p. 403, l. 21– p. 407, l. 24	<i>Adv. Lat.</i> , pp. 34–38.	Concilia Oecumenica
n. 6, pp. 46–47	p. 407	-	προσθήκη
n. 7, p. 48	pp. 408–409	-	προσθήκη
Closing dedication, p. 49	<i>Vacat</i>		

## 6 Conclusion

This contribution has attempted to present the main lines of development behind the reasoning and the central doctrinal arguments that Nicholas of Methone employed in the four treatises that form his corpus dedicated to the Holy Spirit against the Latin Filioque. This exposition's aim was to offer, in a shortened English version, the contents of a collection of works that are otherwise almost completely ignored, and to highlight the unique aspects and

innovative ideas that a corpus on the procession of the Holy Spirit can offer to a reader. In this respect, the conclusion of these pages should highlight three major issues that arise while studying the literary production of twelfth-century intellectuals.

The first, fundamental issue is the fact that it is necessary to study the complete production of a learned Byzantine philosopher, not necessarily to understand his reasons completely, but rather at least to obtain a more reliable picture of the motivations behind his writing—as it is in this case—the refutation against a fifth-century pagan philosopher. A twelve-century bishop involved in the dispute on the Filioque—a difference with the Latin Church that had not been resolved by conciliar decision, and that did not have a ready, clear theological answer from the Fathers—needed to go back to Hellenic wisdom, as was the case in the Patristic age, to develop a full doctrine of the intra-Trinitarian relationships. But going back to the Hellenic wisdom, a Byzantine theologian needed also to write against a hierarchical emanation framework, such as the Proclean one, that could be dangerous in the development of the doctrine of the procession. Indeed, the twelfth century was a time of elaboration, creation, and exploration, prompted by the confrontation with the Latin intellectuals who were present in-person in Constantinople (e.g., Hugo Eterianus).

A second issue is linked to the main concern of Komnenian-era theologians (who in many cases should indeed be considered philosophers too): they needed to develop a proper theology of the procession of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, they strove to establish and clearly define a lexicon that could be used to express that “pneumatology”. Nicholas of Methone, in this respect, is one of the most remarkable examples, inasmuch as he gave painstaking attention in selecting the exact word and in commenting on wrong usages by the Latins (and also by Proclus).

A third and last point is the importance of the historical context; banal as it could sound, this is still a desideratum in many studies. Kazhdan’s review of Angelou’s edition of the *Refutatio Procli*, which all the publications on Nicholas of Methone quote, suggested some streams of research in 1989:

Theology is a very delicate discipline in which nuances acquire the magnitude of dogma. [...] One might even emphasize the hierarchical structure of the Trinity—Niketas of Maroneia [...]. Nicholas emphasized the monarchical principle. The unity of the Trinity was for Nicholas not an antiquarian question to be considered in connection with philosophical errors of the fifth century. [...] Nicholas lived and worked when the “Latin question” was the major problem that Byzantium faced. Nicholas, as is well known, took a clear-cut anti-Latin stand. [...] But what was the major

difference between the Latins and Byzantium as seen by the Greeks? Kinnamos, Nicholas's contemporary, wrote about the crusaders: "Their dignities are peculiar and resemble distinctions descending from the height of the empire, since it is something more noble and surpasses all others. A duke outranks a count; a king, a duke; and the emperor, a king. The inferior naturally yields to the superior, supports him in war, and obeys." Byzantine monarchy, on the one hand, and Western hierarchy, on the other—such was the social confrontation of two worlds, and in this context the *Refutation*, with its emphasis on the divine "monarchy" and with its rejection of hierarchical emanation, can be read as a genuine twelfth-century document.<sup>196</sup>

Unfortunately, it seems that thirty years of research have not fully exploited these hints yet. Kazhdan suggested two fields of research: the first one is related to the theological analysis of the issue. Greek theologians strenuously defended the monarchy within the Trinity because it was dreadful for them to conceive a second source of Divinity, and they suspected that the Latins, claiming a role for the Son in the procession of the Spirit, could assign to the Son a characteristic that, being proper to the Father, was not shareable: the property of being the only principal cause, origin. Moreover, to introduce a role for the Son could create a hierarchy within the Trinity that was not conceivable either: it is possible to have a monarchy (one cause) in the Trinity, but not to have an emanative hierarchy of three main causes, because this would create a sort of polytheism (which in fact brings Nicholas back to the Hellenic tales, and therefore also to Proclus). In this respect, Kazhdan's reference to Niketas of Maroneia is not completely convincing, but he did not know the whole text now published.<sup>197</sup> A second hint is left in the review of Angelou's edition, which could even sound "overly reductive", as Robinson wrote,<sup>198</sup> but cannot be overlooked. Kazhdan traces a parallel between the Byzantine monarchy and the Latin hierarchy, on the one hand, and the monarchical principle of the Trinity and the Proclean emanative hierarchy, on the other. It is certainly not the case that Nicholas of Methone defended the monarchical principle of the Trinity against Proclus in reaction to the Latin political structure—nor did he attack Proclus' philosophy merely because it resembled Western models. Yet, it is worth considering the possibility that he may have rejected both the Latin social order and Proclus'

196 Kazhdan, "Review of Angelou's edition", pp. 198–199.

197 Niketas of Thessalonica, *Dialogus II*, ed. Bucossi, D'Amelia.

198 Robinson, "Proclus as Heresiarch", p. 117, nota 54.

emanative hierarchy precisely because neither reflected the monarchical principle at the heart of Trinitarian theology and of the ideological framework of the Greek, medieval Roman Empire: one God, one City, one Emperor.

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