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# NUMEROLOGY AND LOGICAL SCHEMES IN BYZANTINE TRIADOLOGY OF THE 12TH CENTURY

The logical nature of Eustratius of Nicaea's triadological argumentation is the most explicit in the "mathematical" part of the *Sermon on the Holy Spirit* (still understudied, having been first published by Barmin in 2006). Here, Eustratius opposed to the Latin teaching schematised by him as linear (Father—Son—Spirit) his own scheme of an isosceles triangle (κατὰ σχῆμα τριγωνικόν; let us translate "according to the triangle scheme") with the Father at the top vertex and the Son and the Spirit at the two bottom vertices. The Trinity is, according to Eustratius, consisting of the Monad (Father)—that has the priority of being the cause of the Dyad (Son and Spirit)—and of the Dyad itself. He elaborated on the Neoplatonic, especially pseudo-Iamblichus's teaching on the numbers, where both Monad and Dyad were considered as exempted from the further numeral row. Eustratius's own teacher John Italos left a short triadological treatise in the same vein (although not polemical). The basic numerological statement of Eustratius is the following:

> Φύσει δὲ καὶ ἡ μονὰς προϊοῦσα καθ' ἑαυτήν, εἰς δυάδα πρώτην ποιεῖσθαι τὴν πρόοδον πέφυκεν· οὐκ ἂν προβησομένη εἰς ἀριθμῶν γένεσιν, εἰ μὴ πρώτην σχήσει δυάδα ἐξ αὐτῆς ἀναφαινομένην.
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> According to the nature, when the Monad is going forth by itself, it normally makes its proceeding to the first Dyad, because it would not step forward into generation of the numbers without previously having the Dyad appeared from it.

Thus, in the Eustratius's scheme, any breaking of symmetry between the Son and the Spirit (such as the *Filioque*) would destroy the whole Trinity, because the Son and the Spirit would cease to form a dyad not overlapping with Father's monad. This scheme is clearly anti-Latin and consistent in the sense of containing no contradiction.

The Eustratius's scheme, of course, did not convince everybody. The Latins would have objected—and already Niketas "of Maroneia" implicitly objected—that insisting on the perfect symmetry between the Son and the Spirit is somewhat inconsistent with the obvious asymmetry between the Father and the two other hypostases: if an asymmetry is allowed in this case, why it cannot be allowed in another case? Eustratius's answer was clear but hardly convincing for either Latins or Greeks: this would contradict to the (pseudo-Iamblichian) teaching on generation of the numbers, where the Monad must state the first and alone and the Dyad must follow it as the next unity.

The problem of pairing within the Trinity has been discussed from a traditional Byzantine viewpoint in one of the Byzantine treatises on the Holy Spirit presented to Emperor Alexios Komnenos in 1112, together with Eustratius's *Sermon on the Holy Spirit*. This is the *On the Proceeding of the Holy Spirit* (ch. 47) by Nicholas Mouzalon, then the recently (*ca* 1110) abdicated archbishop of Cyprus and, in a remote future (1147), patriarch of Constantinople. Nicholas explicitly rejected any idea of pairing within the Trinity and was not afraid to declare such an order of things "supernatural"—ὑπερφυές in contract to Eustratius's φύσει (the second passage below is taken from the list of true statements that would become false if the *Filioque* is true):

> Οὐδαμοῦ δυὰς τῇ μιᾷ θεότητι παραζεύγνυται· οὐδεὶς ἐν τῇ Τριάδι συνδυασμός· οὐ μετὰ τὴν μονάδα δυάς, εἶτα τριάς, ἵνα καὶ δυάδα πρὸ τῆς μονάδος νοῇς· ἀλλὰ μονὰς μὲν ἡ πηγαία τῶν ἐξ αὐτῆς δύο μονάδων, φθάνει δὲ ταύτας ἑαυτὴν νοοῦσα καὶ πρὸ δυάδος νοουμένη τριάς, καὶ ἅμα ἑνί με φωτὶ περιαστράπτουσα καὶ τρισίν.

<…> μονὰς μονάδων αἰτία πρὶν διαθῆναι τρισσούμενον, καὶ τριὰς τὴν δυάδα προφθάνουσα, ἵνα κἂν τούτῳ ὑπερφυὲς αὐτῆς παραδείξῃ.

Nowhere to the unique divinity is applicable a dyad. There is no pairing in the Trinity. The monad is not followed by a dyad and then by a triad, so that you would think a dyad before the monad, but the monad is the fountain [the term of the Areopagite, *De div. nom.* II, 7; *PG* 3, 645 B = ed. Suchla, p. 132.1] of the two monads which are from it, but it is preceding them thinking itself and being thought as the triad that is before the dyad and flashing around simultaneously as single and triple.

<…> the monad is the cause of the monads, which is becoming triple before being disposed (in order), and the triad is preceding the dyad, so that, in this way, it will show forth its supernaturality.

Nicholas Mouzalon's future defender (at his trial in 1151) and the leading theologian of the twelfth century, Nicholas of Methone (*ca* 1100s–1160/1166) in his refutation of Proclus (1150s) made explicit that, in this "arithmetic," "one" is equal to "three," even though "one" and "three" remain clearly distinct:

οὔκουν οὐδ' ἡ παρ' ἡμῶν σεβομένη τριὰς πλῆθος· ἦν γὰρ ἂν μόνον τριάς, ἡ δέ ἐστι ἡ αὐτὴ καὶ μονάς· διὸ οὐδὲ δυὰς πρὸ ταύτης, οὔτε μὴν ἡ μονὰς πρὸ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ δυάδος ἀλλ' ἅμα τῇ πατρικῇ μονάδι καὶ ἡ ἐξ αὐτῆς δυὰς συνεκφαίνεται, καὶ ἅμα τὸ ὅλον μονάς ἐστι καὶ τριὰς καὶ οὔτε μονὰς μόνον, ὅτι καὶ τριάς, οὔτε τριάς, ὅτι καὶ μονάς· ἀλλ' οὐδὲ δυὰς τὰ ἐκ τῆς μονάδος, ὅτι μὴ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἄμφω ἐκεῖθεν ἀλλ' ἰδίως ἑκάτερον, τὸ μὲν γεννητῶς, τὸ δὲ ἐκπορευτῶς. οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν τριῶν καὶ τὰ τρία ἅμα τὸ ἕν.

…Therefore the Trinity/triad we are worshipping is not a multiplicity either, as it would be in the case if it is only a triad, but this triad is both triad and monad. Thus, neither the dyad is before it, nor the monad is before the dyad that is within it, but the paternal monad and the dyad that is from it are showing themselves simultaneously, and the whole is simultaneously monad and triad and not only monad but also triad, and not (only) triad but also monad. However, what is from the monad is not a dyad, because the two are from it not in the same way, but each of the two in a specific way—one being born and another one being proceeded. Thus, also each of the three is simultaneously three and one.

These quotations are sufficient to demonstrate that Eustratius's numerical rationalism was going against the mainstream Byzantine theological teaching of his epoch. No wonder that his Triadology was later called for by the *latinophrones* such as Niketas "of Maroneia." No wonder either that Eustratius's Triadology was enrooted in Neoplatonic theological numerologies known to him both directly and *via* his teacher John Italos.