LETTERS OF EUSEBIUS OF VERCELLI 
AND THE AUTHORSHIP 
OF THE DE TRINITATE: 
DID EUSEBIUS OF VERCELLI WRITE 
THE PSEUDO-ATHANASIAN DE TRINITATE?

Who wrote the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate*? This question is still an utter mystery. Nowadays, the traditional ascription to Athanasius supported by the majority of manuscripts has no followers at all. Several proposals starting in the 17th century (Vigilius of Thapsus, Eusebius of Vercelli and Gregory of Elvira), faced serious opposition and failed to draw a universal scholarly consensus. The Vigilian authorship proposed first by Chifflet was refuted by Ficker (1897) and no one followed it thereafter.¹ The Eusebian authorship was first proposed by Morin (1898) and rejected by the same author two years later.² The Gregorian authorship followed almost the same fate as the Eusebian proposal. It was first proposed by Morin (1900) and refuted by the same author two years later.³ Unlike the Vigilian and Gregorian authorship, however, the Eusebian authorship has attracted supporters intermittently over a century. As Datrino rightly observes, on the matter of the authorship of the *De Trinitate*, one can divide previous scholarship into two groups: those who support the Eusebian authorship and those who oppose it.⁴ I side with those scholars who find se-

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(1) For an introduction to the origin of the Vigilian authorship and its refutation, see Gerhard Ficker, *Studien zu Vigilius von Thapsus* (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1897) 42–79.


(4) Datrino provides a helpful list of a number of scholars and their works on this very question in L. Datrino, *Pseudo-Atanasio: La Trinità* (Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 1980) 8–9.
rious problems with the Eusebian authorship such as Künstle, Saltet, Dattrino, Simonetti, etc.

The aim of this essay is to demonstrate that Eusebius probably did not produce the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate*. This essay has been divided into four parts. Part One will provide a brief introduction to the text in question, namely, the seven books of the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate*. Part Two will examine the origin and history of the Eusebian authorship. Here we will summarize several arguments for the Eusebian authorship and at the same time, point out how shaky and fragile these arguments are. Finally and most importantly, Parts Three and Four will compare and contrast the surviving writings about and of Eusebius of Vercelli with the *De Trinitate* to see any affinity between them on historical as well as theological grounds. As a final remark before the discussion, anyone who deals with fundamental questions concerning the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate*, must bear in mind that it is always a matter of probability, not of certainty. There is no one single piece of evidence that will silence all debates. Sometimes there is need for much inference due to the scantiness of relevant information. A number of arguments for or against each issue are not conclusive for either position when they are individually considered. They are to be regarded as a whole. If all sources and arguments are considered comprehensively, the present author will argue that they orient us toward a certain specific direction rather than another one.

**Part One. Brief Introduction to the Text in Question**

When one picks up a Latin Migne vol. 62, there is found a treatise entitled “On the Trinity Twelve Books written by Vigilius of Thapsus under the name of Saint Athanasius Bishop of Alexandria.” This treatise, however, was not written by Vigilius, nor are the twelve books (I–XII) the work of one single author. According to contemporary scholarly consensus, only the first seven books (I–VII) comprise a unit written by one author and the remaining books (VIII–XII) share noth-

(5) What can be said positively about the identity of the pseudonymous author will be outside the scope of this essay.

ing in common with the first seven books or among themselves. Each of the five books differs from one another in style and theological expressions. Only later were they added to the first seven. Though this enigmatic treatise has been attributed to several figures such as Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, Eusebius of Vercelli and Vigilius throughout history, nothing is certain about who wrote it, when it was written and where it was written. In addition to the uncertainty in relation to the authorship and date and place of writing, the pseudo-Athanasian treatise comes down to us in two recensions; Recension I is shorter and unanimously considered prior to the second recension. Recension II is longer due to its correction and expansion of Recension I. When we speak of the pseudo-Athanasian De Trinitate and its authorship, we are referring not to the last five books (VIII–XII) but to the first seven books (I–VII) which “form a cohesive ensemble attributable to a single author.”7 The remaining five books are outside of the present study.

Part Two. Origin of the Eusebian Authorship

It was D. G. Morin who first proposed the Eusebian authorship of the De Trinitate in 1898.8 He proposed his hypothesis predominantly based upon viewing one manuscript (Vat. Lat. 1319) which contains the following note: SANCTI EUSEBII DE PROPRIIS PERSONIS ET UNITO NOMINE DIVINITATIS. EXPLICIT LIBER II. In addition to poor manuscript support, this Eusebian hypothesis faces serious opposition because the manuscript Vatican 1319 belongs to the 13th century. If one has to draw a conclusion on the question of authorship solely on the basis of manuscript traditions (as Morin himself admits), it is Athanasius who receives the almost unanimous attestation as the author.9 Morin is also aware of the problem of “the famous verse of three heavenly testimonies,” that is, the Johannine Comma, in terms of his Eusebian hypothesis.10 This Johannine Comma which the author of the De Trinitate cites twice in its complete form,11 Morin notes, “appears for the first time ... in the recently discovered writings of the Spaniard

(7) Williams, Ambrose of Milan..., 97.
(8) Morin, Les douze livres..., 1–10.
(9) “De nombreux manuscrits donnent un nom, et ce nom est presque invariablement le même: Athanase” (Ibid., 4).
(10) Tres sunt, qui testimonium dicunt in caelo, pater et uerbum et spiritus, et in Christo Iesu unum sunt [1 John 5:7].
(11) De Trinitate 1. 50, 69.
This suggests that the *De Trinitate* comes from Spain, not from Northern Italy. He further acknowledges another difficulty which his Eusebian hypothesis produces in relation to the Johannine Comma, that is, why after Eusebius no Italian bishop or even before him cites this text and why none of his contemporaries (Hilary and Lucifer of Caliari), nor later key Latin Fathers (Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine) have ever appealed to it.\(^\text{(13)}\) Two years later in 1900, Morin withdrew completely from the Eusebian hypothesis and came up with the suggestion that Gregory of Elvira might have been the author.

But the Eusebian authorship did not disappear with Morin. Unlike Morin, some scholars who returned to the question of the authorship of the *De Trinitate* were sympathetic with this hypothesis among whom we have to mention Prosper Schepens. Schepens deserves our attention not because he deepened the discussion, but mainly because later V. Bulhart, the editor of the most recent critical edition of the *De Trinitate* (CCSL 9) adopted wholeheartedly his view with respect to the authorship and date of the treatise. Schepens expressed his opinion regarding the authorship of the *De Trinitate* in two places. In his first article (1936), Schepens expresses his long-held “conviction” that the *De Trinitate* is from the pen of Eusebius, yet he fails to provide any evidence for it:

> Bien que j’aie acquis depuis longtemps la conviction que les huit premiers livres du traite susdit de la Trinitate sont l’oeuvre de saint Eusebe de Verceil, je n’ oserais revendiquer pour lui le symbole [= Quicumque].\(^\text{(14)}\)

His delayed answer appeared in his second article 15 years later. In this extremely brief essay,\(^\text{(15)}\) he offers two pieces of evidence to demonstrate the Eusebian authorship of the *De Trinitate*. The first is what Morin had already presented, namely, the testimony of Ms. Vatican


\(^{\text{(13)}}\) Morin, Les douze livres..., 8.

\(^{\text{(14)}}\) P. Schepens, Pour l’Histoire du Symbole Quicumque, *Revue d’Histoire Ecclesiastique* 32 (1936) 548–569. The main thesis of this article is that the Athanasian Creed “can come from the hand of the great bishop of Milan (566)” which was originally proposed by Henri Brewer in 1909. Only incidentally (2 pages) does he touch upon our pseudo-Athanasian treatise.

As we have shown above, this argument based upon manuscript traditions, in fact, goes against what Schepens tried to prove. All I need to say is that even those who support the Eusebian authorship recognize how fragile it is. The second is the testimony of Question 125 of Ambrosiaster which speaks of “a certain Eusebius” whom Schepens believes to be none other than Eusebius of Vercelli. Here is the text:

Memini me in quodam libello Eusebii quondam egregii in reliquis uiri legisse quia nec Spiritus sanctus sciat mysterium nativitatis domini Jesu Christi; et admiror tantae doctrinae uirum hanc maculam sancto Spiritui in fississe. Hoc enim dicens degenerem illum significauit. Neque enim potest dici de Deo esse, si nescit quae Dei sunt… Sin uero substantiae est eiusdem et diuinitatis, quomodo potest nescire quae sua sunt?… Quod plus est concedes et quod minus est retines.

(PL 35: 2373; CSEL, 50: 384–385)

According to Schepens, this distinguished man of so great learning (egregii uiri…tantae doctrinae uirum) can only be the famous Eusebius of Vercelli in the West during the latter half of the 4th century because it is typical that only the most renowned are mentioned with a simple name. I completely agree with Schepens that this “certain Eusebius” refers to the first bishop of Vercelli as the laudatory statements indicate. However, the same text which Schepens relies upon goes against his hypothesis that this Eusebius is the author of the De Trinitate. The text of Ambrosiaster says that this Eusebius holds that the Holy Spirit is “of the same substance and divinity” (substantiae eiusdem et diuinitatis) with the Father, on the one hand, and the same Spirit does not know “the mystery of the birth of Lord Jesus Christ” (mysterium nativitatis domini Jesu Christi), on the other hand. When

(16) Schepens, L’Ambrosiastre et Saint Eusebe de Vercel..., 296.

(17) Like Schepens, those Eusebian scholars who cite this text of Ambrosiaster as a proof for their hypothesis selectively make use of it, dismissing the Pneumatological statement.

(18) The application of “homoousios” (substantiae eiusdeum) to the Holy Spirit matches what we know about Eusebius of Vercelli. He must have learned this theological move from Athanasius whom he met in person at the Council of Alexandria in 362. In addition, the Pneumatological subordinationism can also be explained from Jerome’s comment that the bishop of Vercelli translated into Latin one of the works of Eusebius of Caesarea whose Pneumatology leaves no doubt about that heretical tendency. For a discussion on historical references to Eusebius of Vercelli, see below Part Three. For a
one compares this Pneumatological statement with the *De Trinitate*, one can come to a conclusion without much difficulty that the *De Trinitate* teaches exactly the opposite: there is no sign of subordinationism at all in relation to the Holy Spirit. The pseudonymous author repeatedly states that the Holy Spirit is divine as much as the Father and the Son are divine. This full divinity enables the third person of the Trinity to possess the same divine prerogatives and to do the same works of the Father and the Son, including *the mutual revelation* of the divine persons among themselves. One passage from the *De Trinitate* will suffice to show the dissimilarity between what “a certain Eusebius” taught and what the author of the *De Trinitate* declares:

Nam sicut pater declarat filium suum in deitate sua, quoniam deus uter est, ita et filius demonstrat patrem in substantia sua, quoniam deus uter est; sic et spiritus sanctus revelat patrem et filium in unita natura sua (aeterna), quoniam deus uter est. Haec est, inquam, unita omnipotens sempiterna trinitas.\(^{19}\)

Not only are both arguments of Schepens too weak to support his Eusebian position but his dating of the *De Trinitate* also has a serious problem. As for the dating of the *De Trinitate*, Schepens abruptly closes his second article with a short statement that the first recension is written between 345 and 347 and the second sometime (immediately) after the second synod of Sirmium (357) without providing any evidence except that he will offer reasons for his conviction elsewhere.\(^{20}\) Unfortunately, he did not have a chance to touch on this enigmatic issue once again.

Surprisingly, Vincent Bulhart accepts this extremely shaky, poorly argued position of Schepens without any criticism or modification and published a critical edition of the *De Trinitate* under the name of Eusebius of Vercelli.\(^{21}\) He says,


\(^{19}\) *De Trinitate* 5. 33. Emphasis is mine.

\(^{20}\) “La second édition mentionnant le deuxième synode de Sirmium tenu en 357 ne peut être antérieure à cette date. Quanta à la première édition, je suis convaincu qu’on n’en peut fixer la composition au delà de l’an 347, ni en deçà de 345. J’en donnerai ailleurs les raisons” [This is the ending of his essay] (Schepens, L’Ambrosiastre et Saint Eusebe de Vercell..., 299).

Synodorum Ariminensis et Sirmiensis secundae a. 357 habitae tantum rec. II mentionem fecit; recensio igitur I ante hunc annum conscripta esse uidetur, intra a. 345 et 347, ut Schepens putat. Recensionem II haud ita molto post annum 357 factam esse crediderim animis adhuc excitatis rebus in synodo Sirmensi gestis.

(CCSL, 9: vii) [Emphasis is mine.]

On this important issue of the authorship and date, the above four lines is all that Bulhart provides us. It is indeed puzzling why he echoes almost *verbatim* the poorly argued proposal of Schepens without further reflection on his part. In any case, his critical edition under the name of Eusebius of Vercelli gives a misleading impression that the question of the authorship has been settled and that Eusebius is the real author of the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate*.

Unlike Schepens and Bulhart whose reflection on the Eusebian authorship is rather disappointing, Daniel H. Williams presents a most complex, tightly argued case for it in his *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Nicene-Arian Conflicts*. Since Turner and Burns, it took almost a century for another English scholar to take a serious look into Eusebius of Vercelli and the *De Trinitate*. Williams’ contribution definitely deserves our recognition. He not only has brought a neglected bishop back into his rightful place but also has succeeded in demystifying the role of Eusebius as a mere assistant to Hilary when the latter was engaged in restoring the West back to the Nicene orthodoxy after his return from exile. The present author completely agrees with his judgement that one major reason for the lack of attention with relation to the bishop of Vercelli “is undoubtedly due to the tiny literary heritage [= three surviving letters] which is connected to [him].” I again agree with him that “[i]f this work [= the seven books of the *De Trinitate*] is correctly attributed to him, the tendency to underrate his role in this period can be more effectively challenged.” Then he actually attempts to make a case for the Eusebian authorship of the *De Trinitate* with which I sharply disagree. He states that “no conclusive argument can be marshalled

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(23) Williams, *Ambrose of Milan…*, 50. Williams holds that all three letters are authentic.

(24) Ibid., 51. Emphasis is mine.
against the view which names Eusebius as the writer of the (shorter recension) first seven books of [the] *De Trinitate.*”

Agreeing with Bulhart and other Eusebian scholars before him, Williams holds that the first seven books of the *De Trinitate* comprise a unified whole and the remaining five books have nothing to do with the first seven. He also adopts Bulhart’s proposal that the author of the first seven is Eusebius of Vercelli. Yet he finds Bulhart’s chronology (345–347 for the first recension and sometime after 357 for the second recension) quite troublesome and comes up with his own, which was, in fact, first proposed by Morin (1898). He dates the mysterious treatise to be some time between Eusebius’ return from exile and his death, that is, between “late 362/early 363” and 370/1, preferably close to the latter date. Here are Williams’ main arguments which have led him to conclude that the *De Trinitate* was probably written by Eusebius of Vercelli during the latter years of the 360s. Williams’ hypothesis that “there is nothing in the *De Trinitate* which Eusebius could not have said” begins with two solid historical facts; the bishop of Vercelli had been exiled in the East “for over seven years;” he also participated in the Council of Alexandria in 362 before his return to the West. From the first historical datum, he theorizes that a long stay in the East might have provided the bishop of Vercelli with “a broadened theological perspective.” His theorizing continues:

Like Hilary of Poitiers, Eusebius would have become much more informed as to the complexity of certain contemporary issues, Tri- nitarian and Christological, at a date probably earlier than his western colleagues.

From the second historical reference, he argues that Eusebius may have been well aware of “such theological developments” found in the *Epistola Catholica* and the *Tomus,* documents produced at the Council of Alexandria whose theological assertions, he believes, find “some re-

(25) Williams, *Ambrose of Milan,*... 51. See also page 98 where he says: “Eusebian authorship is just as likely.”

(26) As we have seen above, it is, in fact, a proposal by Schepens.

(27) Williams, *Ambrose of Milan,*... 98, no. 198. Elsewhere he dates the treatise somewhat differently: “there is no reason why the first recension could not have been written between the years 365–80” (p. 240).

(28) Ibid., 241.

(29) Ibid.
semblance” with “the theological ideas expressed in the *De trinitate.*”

Then he lists several theological expressions common to both *De Trinitate* and two documents of Alexandria.

This brief survey on the Eusebian authorship with respect to the *De Trinitate* is to point out, perhaps apart from Williams, how little this hypothesis is based upon solid arguments. Now I will provide my case against the Eusebian authorship on two grounds. In Part Three, I will discuss a number of difficulties the Eusebian authorship has to face on historical grounds. Part Four will provide a theological comparison between the authentic writings of Eusebius and the *De Trinitate* which is my response to the theological comparison of Williams.

**Part Three. Historical Comparison**

What we know about Eusebius in history does not correlate well with Eusebian authorship. The first issue to consider is Hilary’s comment on the behaviour of Eusebius at the council of Milan. According to him, Eusebius, when he was forced to sign the condemnation of Athanasius by Valens and his group, said that it is necessary first to examine the faith of bishops at the council because some of them are found corrupt by heretical stain. Then he brought forth a copy of the Creed of Nicaea and said that he would do everything the leaders of the council would demand of him if they all signed the Nicene Creed. This abrupt yet shrewd movement on the part of Eusebius,

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(30) **Williams, Ambrose of Milan...**, 241.

(31) Historians find some difficulty reconstructing the ecclesiastical career of Eusebius immediately before and during the council of Milan. One such question, as Williams (*Ambrose of Milan*, 55) notes, is “when did Eusebius actually arrive at the council and find himself at odds with Valens and other anti-Athanasian bishops?” According to the traditional view, Eusebius arrived quite late, after the council had already begun, only at the request of his friends, enemies and even the emperor. Williams provides a new interpretation that “Eusebius came to Milan at the beginning of the council, but once he experienced the conflict with Valens and his allies...he left the city and returned to Vercelli (Williams, *Ambrose of Milan...*, 57). For a rebuttal to this new interpretation, see M. Simonetti, Eusebio nella controversia ariana, in: E. dal Covolo, R. Uglione, and G. M. Vian (a cura di), *Eusebio di Vercelli e il Suo Tempo* (Roma: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 1997) 170–172. Whatever view is taken, the discussion that follows is not affected by it.

(32) “…conuentus, ut in Athanasium subscriberet, ait: de sacerdotali fide prius oportere constare; compertos sibi quosdam ex his, qui adissent, heretica labe pollutos. expositam fidem apud Niceam, cuius superius meminimus,
drawing the attention of the participants away from the disciplinary plane (condemnation of Athanasius) to the doctrinal one by the introduction of the Nicene Creed, was no ordinary routine at that time. In the West, as in the East, the Nicene Creed and its watchword had been virtually ignored as the symbol of orthodoxy until the middle of the 350s. Though it had been set aside from the life and theological reflection of the Church for almost three decades since its creation, the Nicene Creed “formalmente conservava ancora valore ufficiale” because it was never rejected in an explicitly official manner. It was Eusebius together with Pope Liberius who brought out this forgotten Creed publicly at the center of these theological controversies as the test and rule of orthodoxy in the West. If this Creed was so dear to Eusebius, it is strange to find that the author of the pseudo-Athanasian De Trinitate shows virtually no interest in the Creed of Nicaea as well as in the term “homoousios.” The Nicene watchword “homoousios” appears only once at the closing moment of his entire treatise. Its Latin equivalent “unius substantiae (cum patre)” does not appear at all in Recension I. It appears once in Recension II in a substantially modified version of the Creed of Nicaea. Likewise, the term “Nicaea” is also mentioned only once in Recension II. Even there it is not used to underscore its authority as the symbol of orthodoxy, but is only mentioned in passing as a part of a polemic against Hosius who revoked the Creed which he signed at Nicaea. Throughout the entire treatise, the

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(33) For a brief history on how the Creed of Nicaea and its watchword were received by the participants in the Arian controversies after 325, see Williams, Ambrose of Milan…, 12–18.

(34) Simonetti, Eusebio nella controversia ariana…, 158.

(35) Concerning how dear Nicaea was to Eusebius, see the discussion below on the council of Alexandria (362) and its Tomus.

(36) De Trinitate 7. 30.

(37) Ibid., 6. 9. II.

(38) “Sicut tu, Osi, iam in aetate prolixa, qui [non] per rudimenta in sinodo Syriensi catholicae auctor fuisti, ubi fidem tuam, quam in Nicaea conscriberas, irritam fecisti dum regiae potestati famularis, praeterea qui morti esses perquam uicinus” (De Trinitate 1. 60. II). A portion of the Creed of Nicaea also appears once in Recension II (6. 9. II).
pseudonymous author relates the basis of his orthodoxy as well as the Catholic faith again and again to Scripture (scriptura) alone; the Arian opponent constantly asks the author of the *De Trinitate* to demonstrate that the latter’s theological argument is in line with the authority (auctoritas), that is, Scripture. No council is mentioned to function as authority over theological debates between the “catholic” writer and his Arian opponent. On the contrary, the pseudonymous author discredits the authority of an Arian council by the authority of Scripture.39 If one is reminded of the fact that due attention was granted to the authority of the Council of Nicaea and its watchword by most Latin writers contemporary with Eusebius (Lucifer,40 Gregory,41 Phoebadius,42 and

(39) *De Trinitate* 5. 7. II.

(40) Lucifer asserts numerous times throughout his treatises that he upholds the faith proclaimed at Nicaea (apud Niciam) as the apostolic and evangelical faith (apostolica atque evangelica fides): *De non Conveniendo* 12; *De Regibus* 1, 9, 10 (twice); *De Athanasio* 1. 20, 1. 27, 1. 36, 1. 40, 2. 6, 2. 7, 2. 8; *De non Parcendo* 26, 32; *Moriundum* 4. At the same time, on several occasions he quotes the actual Creed of Nicaea: *De Athanasio* 1. 40, 2. 11; *De non Parcendo* 18. Hanson misquotes the first reference (*De Athanasio* 1: 40) in: R. Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 513, no. 31. His reference to “De Ath. I. x. I (68. 69)” must be changed into “De Ath. I. xl (68. 69).” The same reference mistake is on p. 514, no. 35 where he gives “De Ath. I. x.1 (69)” instead of “De. Ath. I. xl (69).” The reference to the texts of Lucifer for Hanson as well as the present author is based upon G. F. Diérecks (ed.), *Lucifer Calaritanus. Opera quae supersunt* (Turnhout, 1978) (CCSL, 8).

(41) Gregory begins his *De Fide* with a full quotation of the Creed of Nicaea (V. Bulhart, J. Fraipont, M. Simonetti (eds.), Gregorius Iliberritanus, Gregorius Iliberritanus (Ps.), Faustinus Luciferianus. *Opera quae supersunt. Dubia et spuria; Opera* (Turnhout, 1967) (CCSL, 69) 221) and ends the treatise with an assertion that he embraces and observes the text of the Nicene Council with all faithfulness and vigour: “Nicaenae autem synodi tractatum omni animi nisu ex tota fide seruantes amplectimur” (Ibid., 247). Furthermore, the major part of his treatise (ch. 20–95; Ibid., 225–246) is a detailed explication and defence of three interrelated expressions drawn from the Creed: 1) the Nicene watchword “homoousios,” 2) the phrase “deus de deo” and 3) the sentence that the Son of God is “mutabilis” and “conuertibilis.”

(42) Phoebadius, a contemporary of Eusebius wrote his treatise *Contra Arianos* without explicitly citing the actual content of the Nicene Creed or its watchword. But unlike the author of the *De Trinitate*, he certainly regards it as the symbol of orthodoxy. He portrays those who gathered at Nicaea as “men of blessed memory” (beatae memoriae viri) and asserts that they wrote “the perfect rule of the catholic faith” (perfectam fidei catholicae regulam) (*Contra Arianos* 6; *PL* 20, 17). Although he does not mention the Nicene watchword
Hilary\(^{(43)}\), little interest in the Creed of Nicaea by the pseudonymous author of the *De Trinitate* suggests that Eusebius is not a likely candidate for the authorship of the pseudo-Athanasian treatise. He who first re-introduced the Creed of Nicaea to the public arena as the basis of orthodoxy even at the cost of his being exiled should have affirmed the authority of Nicaea far more than what is said in the *De Trinitate*. He should have shown at least the same interest as his contemporary bishops did, if not more.

Secondly, Jerome's account of the bishop of Vercelli also puts in doubt the Eusebian authorship. According to Jerome, Eusebius of Vercelli translated into Latin *Commentaries on the Psalms* written by Eusebius of Caesarea.\(^{(44)}\) This is the only work Jerome mentions with respect to the literary work of Eusebius. First of all, his silence on the *De Trinitate* in the *De Viris Illustribus* 96 as a work of the bishop of Vercelli is worthy to note.\(^{(45)}\) If we take into account that in his own time Eusebius together with Hilary was regarded as the champion and ardent defender of Nicene orthodoxy as well as the leading authority in matters of doctrine, it is hard to understand why Jerome who was well informed of affairs in Rome and Northern Italy would have omitted mentioning a doctrinal treatise of the *De Trinitate* if Eusebius had actu-

“homoousios,” the fact that he defends vigorously the use of the term “substantia” immediately after praising the Fathers of 325 (*Contra Arianos* 7; *PL* 20, 17) indicates that he is, in fact, defending the Nicene watchword in his treatise. In the case of Phoebadius, we may argue that the absence of the term “homoousios,” while his defending its theology, probably derives from the fact that his treatise is written immediately after the blasphemy of Sirmium (357) which prohibits the use of “homoousios” and other substance language. In the case of Eusebius, he was already exiled in the East since 355 and there is no reason for him to be cautious about speaking explicitly of the authority of Nicaea and the controversial term “homoousios.”

\(^{(43)}\) Even Hilary who is not a rigid, recalcitrant defender of the Nicene Creed like Athanasius or Lucifer, regards “homoousios” and the Fathers of Nicaea as the symbol of orthodoxy in his *De Trinitate* 4. 4–7 (P. Smulders (ed.), Hilarius Pictaviensis, *De trinitate. Praefatio. Libri I–VII* (Turnhout, 1979) (CCSL, 62) 103–106) and gives extensive attention to the Nicene Creed and its watchword in his *De Synodis* 77–92 (*PL* 10, 530–546).

\(^{(44)}\) Jerome, *De Vir. Ill.* 96; *Epistula* 61. 2.

\(^{(45)}\) Williams does not take this argument seriously: “Of course the strength of this argument is only as good as the general accuracy of Jerome’s notices, which is of itself a questionable assumption, and must not be given undue weight” (Williams, *Ambrose of Milan*..., 239).
ally written it, especially when the pseudonymous treatise excels all the dogmatic writings between 360s and 380s in terms of theological maturity.\(^{46}\) It is possible that either he was not aware of the treatise or he knew of its existence but did not wish to include it in his description of the bishop of Vercelli. The case that he might not have known the treatise is not convincing if one considers the fame and respect he had enjoyed as bishop. The other case, that the book was not worthy to be mentioned, is not a solid argument either. If Eusebius had written the treatise in question sometime after his return from exile before his death (370), this treatise must have been considered unique and found no equal for its extraordinary maturity of the Trinitarian theology. I do not see any reason why Jerome would have omitted it if Eusebius had actually written one.\(^{47}\)

With regard to his knowledge of Greek, Jerome indicates that the Latin bishop most certainly knew Greek very well. With that historical fact in mind, let us turn to the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate*. The treatise is written in Latin but there are instances, though extremely rare, where the pseudonymous author employs Greek terms. One such case is found in Book VII which he ends as follows: “ac per hoc unita est patris et fili et sancti spiritus substantia, quam Graeci dicunt omousion (usiam), sed et unita est eorum (eiusdem trinitatis) operatio in factura.”\(^{48}\) He equates the Latin “substantia” with the latinized Greek term “omousion.” This wrong equation causes Recension II to correct “omousion” into “ousiam.”\(^{49}\) This translation slip is something we should not expect from someone whose competence in Greek enabled him to translate a Greek text into Latin and who certainly knew the Latin version of the Nicene Creed. Even the contemporaries of Eusebius such as Lucifer and Gregory of Elvira whose knowledge of Greek may not have been as great as Eusebius, introduce the Nicene Creed and its watchword and translate the latter with a proper Latin phrase.

\(^{46}\) No other Catholic author in the 4th century has cited this text, either.

\(^{47}\) Is it not because Jerome knew some dogmatic works of the bishop of Vercelli and found them controversial like Ambrosiaster (*Question* 125) that he omitted mentioning them in his *De Viris Illustribus*?

\(^{48}\) *De Trinitate* 7. 30. The sign ( ) signifies the change that Recension II made of the original work.

\(^{49}\) In Recension II, another example of corresponding the Latin substantia to ‘usia’ is found in 2. 44. II: “[hoc] quod sentitur ueritas ac dealitas siue substantia, de qua graece [sic] dicunt usia, quae est manieste unita plenitudo diuinitatis.”
“unius substantiae.”\textsuperscript{50} If Eusebius of Vercelli had written the pseudo-Athanasian \textit{De Trinitate}, he probably would not have made such an obvious mistake in the first place. Furthermore, the Latin phrase “quam Graeci dicunt omousion” is an exact wording of the Latin version of the Nicene Creed in order to render “unius substantiae (cum patre).” That is to say, this interpretive sentence is located in the Christological context of the Nicene Creed and all the Latin writers from 355–370 do not go beyond this credal understanding. The pseudonymous author of the \textit{De Trinitate}, however, seems to take the same phrase from the Creed and applies it to the Trinitarian context (of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) which is more evidence that the \textit{De Trinitate} does not follow the typical patterns of Latin Trinitarian theology between 355 and 370.

\textbf{Part Four: Doctrinal Comparison}

In Part Three, I have pointed out two historical facts regarding Eusebius of Vercelli and how they are in conflict with the Eusebian authorship. Here we are to make a doctrinal comparison of the \textit{De Trinitate} and Eusebius’ own writings, namely, three letters and a short note in the \textit{Tomus ad Antiochenos}. I begin with the latter which contains the very words of Eusebius despite its briefness.

\textit{1. Tomus and \textit{De Trinitate}: Christology}

After the death of Constantius, Julian issued an edict to make all exiled bishops under the rule of his predecessor return to their sees. Eusebius, who had been exiled in upper Egypt at the time of Constantine’s death, participated in the Council of Alexandria (362) headed by Athanasius before his return to the West. At the latter part of the \textit{Tomus}, it is reported that Eusebius signs the document \textit{yet} with the following note:

I Eusebius, according to your exact confession made on either side by agreement concerning the Subsistences, also add my agreement; further concerning the Incarnation of our Saviour, namely that the Son of God has become Man, taking everything upon Himself wi-

\textsuperscript{50} Lucifer, \textit{De Athanasio} 2. 11; \textit{De non Parcendo} 18 (…deum verum de deo vero, natum non factum, unius substantiae cum patre, quod graeci dicunt homousion (g)...), 24 (…homoousion to patri (g), quod dicunt Graeci, nos vero Romani dicimus ‘unius substantiae cum patre’…); \textit{Moriundum} 4; Gregory of Elvira, \textit{De Fide} 1 (…unius substantiae cum patre, quod Graeci dicunt omousion…), 32–33 (Sed dicis mihi, omousion id est unius substantiae nomen...), 53–55.
thout sin, like the composition of our old man. I ratify the text of the letter. And whereas the Sardican paper is ruled out, to avoid the appearance of issuing anything beyond the creed of Nicaea, I also add my consent, in order that the creed of Nicaea may not seem by it to be excluded, and [I agree] it should not be published. I pray for your health in the Lord.\footnote{51}

This concluding note speaks of three things, all of which have been discussed one way or the other in the preceding part of the \textit{Tomus}: 1) the profession of faith articulated in Sardica (343), 2) the question on the one or three subsistences (hypostasis) and finally 3) the question on the incarnation of our Saviour. The setting aside of the profession of faith of Sardica (343) by Eusebius to have the authority of the Nicene Creed unchallenged is in harmony with Hilary’s account that it was the bishop of Vercelli who, for the first time in the three decades after the Council of Nicaea, put forward the Creed of Nicaea which had kept an official yet peripheral position in the West, to the center of the theological arena during the Council of Milan (355). This high regard of Eusebius for the Nicene Creed as the symbol of orthodoxy also agrees with a general acknowledgement of the \textit{Tomus} which considers Nicaea as the only authority on the matters of “faith and religion.”\footnote{52}

On the second question of “hypostasis,” Eusebius states that he agrees with the \textit{Tomus’} position on the question of one subsistence (hypostasis) and three subsistences in the Godhead. Since the first two questions in his personal note are completely in line with what precedes it, it is most likely that the real reason Eusebius added his own note when he was signing the \textit{Tomus} lies in his dissatisfaction with the Christological formulation of the \textit{Tomus}. According to Simonetti, the Christology of the \textit{Tomus} is expressed “in terms intentionally ambiguous” not to offend both Antiochene delegates of Paulinus and those of Apollinarius both of whom were present at the Council:

\begin{quote}
Atanasio non era uomo da abandonare un amico fedele in difficoltà e d’altro canto non poteva vedere di buono occhio l’insorgere di
\end{quote}


\footnote{52} The \textit{Tomus} frequently mentions the sufficiency and unique authority of Nicaea: 3 (twice), 4, 5 (3 times), 6, 8, 9, 10 (twice), 11 (twice).
una nuova questione che minacciava di dividere ulteriormente i già largamente minoritari niceni di Antiochia.\(^{53}\)

The *Tomus* says that “the Saviour had not a body without a soul [apsychon], nor without sense [anaistheton] or intelligence [anoeton]; for it was not possible, when the Lord had become Man for us, that His body should be without intelligence [anoeton].”\(^{54}\) Despite the fact that the *Tomus* begins with a declaration that it was drafted by Athanasius together with Eusebius and Asterius, it is more likely that it was predominantly from the pen of Athanasius. Even if we take the text at face value that all three bishops are responsible for the making of the *Tomus*, Eusebius’ personal clarification with respect to the Incarnation seems to tell us that the bishop of Vercelli was not fully satisfied with what was expressed in the *Tomus*. The phrase “soma apsychon” can mean “a body without a soul” like the above translation. It can also be rendered as “a body without life or vitality” in a more general sense.\(^{55}\) In the latter’s case, Apollinarius and his party would have accepted it without much difficulty. This ambiguity seems to be what Athanasius wanted and what Eusebius did not wish to see. Then it follows that the additional note is a doctrinal clarification on the part of Eusebius without repudiating openly the patriarch of Alexandria.\(^{56}\) In stating that “the Son of God has become Man, taking everything upon Himself without sin, like the composition of our old man,” Eusebius makes it absolutely clear that what the Son of God took is a complete human being (Man) exactly like the first Adam except sin. His emphasis on the complete humanity of Christ in the *Tomus* is in total agreement with the doctrine of Christ which he expressed in his own second letter, which we will see shortly. Both the phrases “perfect man” of Letter 2 and “Taking everything…our old man” of the *Tomus* demonstrate how central the integrity of the humanity of Christ was to the bishop of Vercelli.

Now when we attempt to compare what we found in the *Tomus* with the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate* with regard to Christology, we see little resemblance. Of the seven books of the *De Trinitate*, the entire Book III is devoted to Christology proper. The predominant theme is the double condition of the Mediator (true God and true man)

\(^{53}\) Simonetti, Eusebio nella controversia ariana..., 164.

\(^{54}\) *Tomus ad Antiochenos* 7 (Schaff and Wace, Athanasius, *Select Writings and Letters*..., 485).

\(^{55}\) Simonetti, Eusebio nella controversia ariana, 164.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 164–165.
and a thorough distinction between God and man. Even if it discusses
the theme of Incarnation at length, the pseudonymous author, how-
ever, does not discuss at all the complete humanity of the assumed
man. Certainly it was outside of his theological concerns while he was
composing Book III. Elsewhere, there is one specific reference to the
humanity of Christ, mentioning explicitly that Christ is “totus homo”
who has both soul and body. But even here its significance is minimal.
It is found once in Recension II of Book IV as just one of a number
of anathema lists. From this near silence one may infer that the integri-
ty of human Christ does not concern the pseudonymous author of the De
Trinitate at the time of his writing it. If Eusebius were the author of the
De Trinitate, this lack of interest in the full humanity of Christ which
is undeniably clear in all his surviving documents is hard to explain,
especially if one considers that the Apollinarian controversy became
more and more intensified after the Council of Alexandria (362) and
during the latter part of Eusebius’ life. The fact that the De Trinitate
neither mentions Apollinaris nor indicates a sign of any Apollinarian
threat seems to lead us to the conclusion that probably the De Trinitate
is not from the hand of Eusebius.

2. The Letters of Eusebius and De Trinitate

Now we will turn to the three extant letters attributed to Eusebius
of Vercelli among which the first two are unanimously regarded as
authentic.57 The first letter written around late 354/355 is a short reply
to Emperor Contantius, that he would appear at the upcoming Coun-
cil of Milan (355). The second is a rather lengthy letter written some-
time between 355–359 during his first exile while he was kept in prison
under the supervision of the Arian bishop, Patrophilus in Palestine.58
If we first compare these authentic letters of Eusebius with the pseu-
do-Athanasian De Trinitate in terms of literary style and vocabulary,

(57) V. Bulhart et al. (eds.), Eusebius Vercellensis, Filastrius Brixiensis,
Hegemonius (Ps.), Isaac Iudaeus, Archidiaconus Romanus, Fortunatianus
Aquileiensis, Chromatius Aquileiensis. Opera quae supersunt.; Diversorum her-
esae liber.; Adversus haereses.; Opera quae supersunt.; De reconciliandiis paenitenti-
bus.; Commentarii in evangelia.; Opera quae supersunt (Turnhout, 1957) (CCSL, 9)
103–109. Bulhart believes the third letter to be also from the hand of the bishop
of Vercelli (CCSL, 9: 110). For literature on the question of authenticity of the
third letter, see Williams, Ambrose of Milan..., 50, n. 65.

(58) For the dating of the letters of Eusebius and the others related to him,
see Williams, Ambrose of Milan..., 238.
there is little commonality found between the two writings. Bulhart has noted a number of “remarkable linguistic particularities” of the De Trinitate in his preface and the lists take up 22 pages of his edition.\(^5^9\) Strangely, none of them appear in the surviving letters of Eusebius.\(^6^0\)

When we move to the doctrinal comparison between the two, the result is same. Though both letters are almost exclusively historical in nature, Letter 2 which he wrote to his congregation from Sythopolis in Palestine contains a brief doctrinal note which runs as follows:

\[\text{Nouit hic omnipotens deus, nouit et eius unigenitus inenarrabiliter de ipso natus filius, qui salutis nostrae causa deus sempiternae uiritutis hominem perfectum induit, pati uoluit, morte triumphata tertio die resurrexit, ad dexteram patris sedet uenturus iudicare uiuos et mortuos, nouit et spiritus sanctus, testis est ecclesia catholica, quae sic confitetur.}\(^6^1\)

The context suggests that the phrase “omnipotens deus” must refer to the Father. This description of the Father as “omnipotens deus” and the Son as “unigenitus deus” and the Holy Spirit with no further qualification is in perfect harmony with the contemporary status of the Latin Trinitarian theology between the late 50s and early 60s of the 4th century found in Phoebadius, Hilary, Gregory and Lucifer. It is also the same traditional pattern we find in the Creed of Nicaea which Eusebius cherished dearly.\(^6^2\) In stark contrast, the author of the pseudo-Athanasian De Trinitate, even without a hint of ambiguity, states the full divinity and complete equality of all three members of the Trinity. He says, “qualem et quantum in diuinitate confiteris esse patrem, talem et tantum dicas et filium, sic et spiritum sanctum.”\(^6^3\)

The rest of the book is a demonstration of his audacious claim. Except

\begin{itemize}
  \item \(^{(59)}\) Bulhart, Eusebius Vercellensis, Filastrius Brixiensis... (CCSL, 9) vii–xxviii.
  \item \(^{(61)}\) Epistula 2.5.1 (CCSL, 9:106). The predominantly historical nature of the letter keeps all previous scholars including Williams who propose the Eusebian authorship from making a doctrinal comparison with the De Trinitate.
  \item \(^{(62)}\) I owe this observation to Michael Slusser who chaired my presentation at the North American Patristic Conference, Chicago, in 2009.
  \item \(^{(63)}\) De Trinitate 2. 46.
\end{itemize}
for the personal property, he ascribes all the paternal titles to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son and the Holy Spirit possess the same common name (unitum nomen) with the Father such as “uerus deus,” “dominus” and “spiritus.”64 In addition, he does not hesitate to assign the title “creator” to all three persons.65 Even the term “omnipotens” which traditionally has been regarded as an exclusive title of the Father is equally dedicated to the Son and the Holy Spirit.66

In addition to the sharp divergence with respect to the maturity of the Trinitarian reflection, there is also a noticeable difference between Letter 2 and the De Trinitate in the doctrine of Christ. According to Letter 2, Eusebius describes the incarnation as God clothing the perfect man (deus sempiternae uirtutis hominem perfectum induit). He seemed to use “hominem perfectum” to highlight that, in the incarnation, God put on the complete human being who possesses both soul and body, as the adjective “perfectum” indicates. On the contrary, as noted above, the De Trinitate as a whole pays little attention to the full humanity of the Mediator. As Williams correctly notes, Book III of the De Trinitate which is exclusively devoted to the theme of Christology and contains “a lengthy discussion of the [I]ncarnation” does not deal with the full humanity of Christ at all.67 Both the verb “induit” and the noun phrase “hominem perfectum” of Letter 2 do not appear at all in the pseudo-Athanasian De Trinitate. Instead, the favourite expression to describe the Incarnation for the author of the De Trinitate is “deus hominem adsumpsit.”68 Except for rare instances of verbal forms such as “accepisse” and “suscepisse (suscepit),”69 the verb “adsumpsit” is predominant. If we search an expression of anything equivalent to “hominem perfectum” of Letter 2, it would be “uerus homo.” However, the latter almost always appears paired with “deus uerus” as a doctrinal formula to signify the dual condition of the Mediator (mediator est deus uerus et homo uerus), not to highlight the complete humanity of the Mediator. There is, however, one expression in Book VI

(64) De Trinitate 1. 11–14, 1. 51; 2. 5; 6. 5.
(65) "Vae uobis, qui absque (non per) hunc factorem deum patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum cuncta, quae in caelis sunt et in terra, id est uisibilia et inuisibilia, facta esse creditis" (Ibid., 6. 16. 10). Emphasis is mine.
(66) Ibid., 1. 12, 18; 5. 29–33; 6. 5. 2.
(67) Williams, Ambrose of Milan..., 241.
(68) De Trinitate 3. 22–25.
(69) Ibid., 3. 23, 27.
of the *De Trinitate* which explicitly underscores this full humanity of the Mediator and which can be compared with “hominem perfectum” in *Letter 2* of Eusebius. It reads, “Maledictus, qui hunc totum hominem, id est animam et corpus quod adsumpsit… non confitetur.”⁷⁰ This is the only instance that the author of the *De Trinitate* uses “totum hominem” and it appears in Recension II.⁷¹ To show the full humanity of Christ, *Letter 2* uses “hominem perfectum” and the *De Trinitate* “totum hominem” which is another proof that the two documents seem not to come from the same author.

Finally, both the *De Trinitate* and *Letter 2* differ from each other even in doxology. The former is completely Trinitarian: “Ipsi trinitati unitae inenarrabili honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.”⁷² On the contrary, the authentic letter of Eusebius betrays a completely Christological pattern:

... et ut nos, qui deprimimur, possimus uobiscum liberati gaudere; quod praestare dignabitur dominus petentibus uobis per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, qui est secum benedictus a saeculis et in omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.⁷³

Some might object that the comparison is not worthwhile because *Letter 2* is thoroughly Christological without mention of the Father and the Holy Spirit and the *De Trinitate* is Trinitarian. Of course, one wishes to know what doxological form Eusebius would have produced if he added the Father and the Holy Spirit into his surviving letter. That could have given more credit to the above comparison.⁷⁴ With all its shortcomings, one wonders who in the West between 362 and 370 would have used such a mature doxology of the *De Trinitate* where all three persons are equally adored. In short, this Trinitarian, Christological and doxological comparison between *Letter 2* of Eusebius of Vercelli and the *De Trinitate* of the pseudonymous author leads to a tentative conclusion that there is little resemblance between the two treatises.

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⁷⁰ *De Trinitate* 6. 15. 30b. II.

⁷¹ If one allows that the second edition is also by the same author.

⁷² *De Trinitate* 4. 24.

⁷³ *Epistula* 2. 10. 2 (BULHART, Eusebius Vercellensis, Filastrius Brixiensis... (CCSL, 9) 109).

⁷⁴ Led by Ambrosiaster’s criticism of Eusebius and his Pneumatology (*Question* 125), I am of an opinion that Eusebius could not have managed to produce the mature doxology we find in the *De Trinitate*.
3. Doctrinal Content of the *De Trinitate*

No source can bring up a more fruitful result regarding the authorship and date of the *De Trinitate* than the theological content of the treatise itself because each page of the seven books is full of doctrinal points that the pseudonymous author believes to be orthodox and catholic. Of course it requires a careful analysis of the theology of the text and its rightful positioning in Latin Trinitarian literature of the 4th and 5th centuries. Though both macro and micro approaches to the text will complement each other in narrowing down the question of whether Eusebius could have written such a text, we pass over the micro approach for the sake of brevity, that is to say, an examination of the details of its Trinitarian theology. Rather, we will briefly touch upon the macro approach to the text, namely, an examination of the overall structure of the treatise in question in relation to the Latin Trinitarian literature of the late 4th century and the 5th century.

The overall structure of the seven books can be summed up as Trinity followed by Christology and Blessings/Curses. The pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate* consists of seven books. The first two books are completely dedicated to the doctrine of the Trinity. Book III is exclusively Christological. Thus a clear structural pattern of Trinity-Christology emerges in the first three books. Books IV and V, overall, repeat and expand the Trinitarian and Christological subject-matters found in the first three books. Book VI introduces a new element to the structural pattern of the *De Trinitate*, that is, Blessings and Curses. And Book VII closes the entire treatise with the doctrine of the Trinity. What concerns us is that the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate* displays three key structural elements in order: Trinity-Christology-Blessings/Curses.

As we have observed above, the overall structure of the seven books can be summed up as Trinity-Christology-Blessings/Curses. Then the question we should ask is “Where does one find a similar structure in Latin dogmatic history?” If we examine the overall structure of Latin dogmatic literature in the 350s and 360s, whether that of Hilary, Pheobeadius, Gregory of Elvira or Lucifer, the fundamental theological frame still centers around the Father and the Son while the Holy Spirit is put aside, enjoying only a peripheral status. Williams also comes to a similar conclusion with regard to the anti-Homoian writings between the 360s and 370s. It is Ambrose who first approached the doctrine of God comprehensively, including the Holy Spirit at the center of his theolog-

(75) Williams, Ambrose of Milan..., 83–103.
cal discussion together with the Father and the Son, around 380. It is also found in Augustine’s *De Trinitate* in a most explicit fashion. It is true that, like the dogmatic treatises published between the 350s and 370s, the main concern of the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate* is Arianism. The notable difference, however, is that the former refutes Arianism in a Christological context, but the latter treats it in a fully Trinitarian context. Again we begin to see this similar pattern of the Arian polemics in a Trinitarian framework in Ambrose’s *De Spiritu Sancto* and find its full-blown shape in Augustine’s *De Trinitate* and *Collatio Augustini cum Maximino Arrianorum episcopo/Contra Maximinum*.

Furthermore, this structure of Trinity-Christology-Blessings/Curses is virtually the same as that of the *Quicumque*. In addition to the overall structural resemblance of the *De Trinitate* to the *Quicumque*, the Trinitarian theology of the *De Trinitate* reveals the same maturity and same theological pattern as the *Quicumque* though the precise wordings are different from each other. The following is excerpts from each writing regarding the doctrine of the Trinity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Quicumque</em> (Kelly, Athanasian Creed…, 129–130)</th>
<th><em>De Trinitate</em> (CCSL, 9)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Increatus pater. increatus filius. increatus et spiritus sanctus. Inmensus pater. inmensus filius. inmensus et spiritus sanctus. Aeternus pater. aeternus filius. aeternus spiritus sanctus</em> (8–10). Et tamen <strong>non tres aeterni</strong>. Sed unus aeternus. <strong>Sicut non tres increati nec tres immensi</strong>. sed unus increatus et unus inmensus (11–12). Similiter omnipotens pater. omnipotens filius. omnipotens</td>
<td><em>Nam si haec una adque eadem ipsa est multiplex praesaga sapientia patris et fili et spiritus sancti, quae est una uirtus siue una forma magnitudinis siue una maestas siue una claritas, quae in hanc unitam deitatem plenitudinis secundum scripturae regulam in hoc loco collecta repperiuntur, numquid sic in eadem deitate trinitatis potest aduersus scripturas referri ut tres sapientias aut tres uirtutes aut tres imagines aut … tres claritates</em></td>
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(78) PL 42, 709–814. See also Fulgentius’ *Contra Fabianum* (J. Fraipont (ed.), Fulgentius Ruspensis, *Opera* (Turnhout, 1968) (CCSL, 91A) 763–866) and *De Fide ad Petrum* (Ibid., 711–760).
spiritus sanctus. Et tamen non tres omnipotentes. sed unus omnipotens. (13–14)

aut tres plenitudines diuinitatis uel cetera huiuscemodi pluraliter Arriomanitarum more dicamus? (1.58–59)

Ita deus pater. deus filius. deus spiritus sanctus. Et tamen non tres dii. sed unus est deus. Ita dominus pater. dominus filius. dominus spiritus sanctus. Et tamen non tres domini. sed unus est dominus. Quia sicut singulatim unam quamque personam deum et dominum confiteri christiana veritate conpellimus. ita tres deos aut dominos dicere catholica religione prohibemur. (15–20)

An ignoras, quia pater unus deus est et filius unus deus est et spiritus sanctus unus deus est? … Sic et unus spiritus est, quia unita est eorum [pater/filius/spiritus sanctus] deitas. Nam si tu … unitum nomen spiritus ter designasti, numquid tres spiritus edicere oportebit? Absit …. Nonne quia unitatis nomen per personas ter designau, numquid tres deos potero confiteri? … Idcirco nos, qui fidem euangelicam adque apostolicam patrum tenemus, nec tres deos nec tres dominos nec tres spiritus uel cetera ad huiuscemodi pluralitatis dicta nec tenemus nec in corde nostro suscipimus. (1.23–27)

Though it is hard to pinpoint the exact dating of the composition of the Athanasian Creed, it is generally agreed upon that it was written sometime between c. 435 and c. 535. The pattern of Trinity and Christology is also contained in the Creed of the First Council of Toledo which was held in 400 and in a group of several Latin creeds whose dating is generally put sometime after 380: Fides Romanorum, Fides Catholica, Libellus Fidei, and Fides Damasii. Then, this affinity with the Quicumque and other Latin creeds brings us to a position that the pseudo-Athanasian treatise was definitely written after 380. That is to say, the structural pattern of Trinity followed by Christology is a


(81) K. Künstle, Eine Bibliothek der Symbole (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1900) 43–45; Antipriscilliana (Freiburg: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1905) 46–58.
post-381 (more preferably 5th century and thereafter) *topos* in the theological writings of the West and the *De Trinitate* undoubtedly reflects that pattern.

We have compared the two surviving letters of Eusebius, his Christological note in the *Tomus* and historical references to Eusebius with the pseudo-Athanasian treatise and we have found little resemblance between them. In addition, an examination of the theological content of the *De Trinitate* on the macro level again indicates that the pseudo-Athanasian treatise shows little likeness to Latin theology during the lifetime of Eusebius of Vercelli. Rather, it reveals that the theological pattern of the *De Trinitate* shares a close affinity with the theological documents written after 380, preferably near the end of the 4th century or in the 5th century. This comparative examination together with an extremely shaky foundation for the hypothesis of Eusebian authorship leads the present author to the conclusion that Eusebius probably did not write *De Trinitate*.

**SUMMARY**

A number of studies have been undertaken concerning the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate* since the late 19th century. Almost all of them, however, were directed toward solving *who* and *when* of the text with little attention to the content of the treatise itself. In this essay I have attempted to fill this scholarly gap by returning to the question of authorship/date with a theological analysis of the *De Trinitate*. We have contrasted salient features of the Trinitarian theology of the pseudo-Athanasian treatise with those of Latin Trinitarian texts produced in the 4th and 5th centuries, with the surviving documents written by Eusebius of Vercelli and with historical references to the bishop of Vercelli. This comparative study has oriented us to a position that the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate* most likely did not derive from the bishop of Vercelli. I want to end this essay by repeating what I have indicated in the beginning of this essay: “What can be said positively about the identity of the pseudonymous author will be outside of the scope of this essay (footnote 5).” Indeed, the scope of this essay was modest and very limited, “Did Eusebius write the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate*?” If the present author has succeeded in stating *negatively* that Eusebius is not the author of the treatise in question, our next step is to return to the question of the authorship in a more *positive* way: “Who wrote the *De Trinitate*?” There is also a need for returning to the question of the date. The rather broad conclusion of the present author that the pseudo-Athanasian *De Trinitate* is a post-380 product requires more precise definition.