

A SOPHISTIC PREFECT: ANATOLIUS OF BERYTUS IN THE *LETTERS* OF LIBANIUS

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THE AIM OF THIS ARTICLE is to consolidate and extend our knowledge of the career path, cultural activities, and family connections of Anatolius of Berytus, the Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum (357–360) whose identity and career are the subject of an old controversy. For we possess evidence for two men called Anatolius of Berytus, both Prefects of Illyricum, the one firmly attested in Libanius and Ammianus as Prefect from 357 to 360, while the other appears from the evidence of Eunapius and the *Theodosian Code* to have been Prefect circa 344–347. Eunapius' memorable portrait of Anatolius is easily accessible and has long been known to scholars. However, the 26 letters of Libanius to Anatolius, extending from March 355 to Autumn 359 and offering a vivid portrait of the man's character, conduct in office, and intellectual pursuits, have never been set forth and adequately interpreted. The "Anatolius dossier" is exceptional within Libanius' corpus of letters, in part because of the style of the letters themselves, in part because of a rift in their epistolary friendship that led Libanius to describe and evaluate Anatolius' political and personal conduct with a *parrhesia* that is unparalleled in his epistolary corpus. Libanius' commentators all noted but never fully explained what Liebeschuetz called the "astonishing insolence" with which Libanius addresses a Praetorian Prefect.¹ This insolence is all the more remarkable when we consider that the Prefect Anatolius was the most powerful and reliable patron Libanius and his circle had at court in the last years of Constantius II. In fact, the dossier of letters to him offers a particularly fine example of the subtle interplay of *paideia*, politics, and patronage in the fourth century. I will begin by reconstructing the complicated episto-

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1. The Anatolius letters were first discussed by G. R. Sievers, *Das Leben des Libanius* (Berlin, 1868; reprint, 1969), 235–38; O. Seeck, *Die Briefe des Libanius* (Leipzig, 1906), 59–66, remains fundamental; P. Petit, *Les Fonctionnaires dans l'oeuvre de Libanius* (Paris, 1994), 33–37, sets the letters out in order with Foerster's numbering and a brief synopsis of each letter's contents as well as a brief commentary on the correspondent. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz' comment is found in his *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1972), 20, rightly correcting the view of A. Piganiol, *L'Empire chrétien (325–395)* (Paris, 1947), 99, that Libanius engaged in such insults in order to gratify a rival of Anatolius. Liebeschuetz rightly observes that Anatolius enjoyed such "rhetorical insults" and "very probably provoked them in his letters to Libanius."

lary friendship of Libanius and Anatolius, after which I will review briefly Eunapius' account of Anatolius, and, finally, offer my own observations about the identity, cultural activities, and family of the Anatolii of Berytus.

I. ANATOLIUS OF BERYTUS IN THE *LETTERS* OF LIBANIUS

Sophists had long played a crucial role in the interactions between the cities of the Greek East and Roman authorities.² Despite the shift over time in the character of Roman power, they continued in Late Antiquity to play a fundamental role as friends and petitioners, interceding with powerful patrons on behalf of their native cities, friends and acquaintances, and, of course, themselves and their families. In his native Antioch, Libanius carefully worked the patronage system in the time-honored way, through daily attendance on the high officials resident there, particularly the Praetorian Prefect of the East.³ For the Prefects were men, as Libanius observed, for whom it was easy to "imitate that cloud of Zeus from which he rained down gold on the Rhodians" (*Ep.* 348).⁴ Access to high officials, particularly Praetorian Prefects, was of course more complicated in other regions, and it is noteworthy that Anatolius of Berytus was the only Prefect outside *Oriens* with whom Libanius succeeded in forging a close epistolary friendship.

It is apparent from Libanius' letters that he had already enjoyed a close rapport with Anatolius for some years before their correspondence began in 355. He clearly knew Anatolius when he taught in Constantinople from 350 to 353 (*Ep.* 552.4) and it is probable that Anatolius was the Proconsul of Constantinople from Phoenicia who befriended him there, a man "guided by the Graces" (*Or.* 1.80).⁵ Since his home was Berytus (*Ep.* 438.5), the fact that Antioch is alluded to as the "city beautified by you" (*Ep.* 311.2) implies that Anatolius had sometime before 355 engaged in building projects while holding office in the East, perhaps as *Consularis Syriae* or *Comes Orientis*. We know too from the letters that he was offered, but declined, the Prefecture of the City of Rome in 355 (*Epp.* 391, 423) and that he served as Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum from 357 until his death in 360 (*Ep.* 549.1; *Amm. Marc.* 21.6.5).

Anatolius was clearly a "leaper and shouter," one of those enthusiasts for sophistic performance known to cry out, stamp their feet, and leap up at appropriate moments. But he was not merely an avid listener. He reveled in a form of sophistic banter that frequently became playful raillery, and he

2. G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1969); G. Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London and New York, 1993); M. W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1995).

3. The most stimulating discussion of men of *paideia* interacting with high officials is P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1992), 35–70.

4. I cite the letters from Foerster's Teubner edition. Several of the most important letters to Anatolius are now available in the excellent Loeb edition of A. F. Norman, *Libanius: Autobiography and Selected Letters*, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1992), *Epp.* 391 = *Letter* 4, 509 = *Letter* 20, 552 = *Letter* 22, 19 = *Letter* 40, 80 = *Letter* 46, 81 = *Letter* 47. I have employed Norman's translations whenever possible; otherwise, the translations are my own.

5. Petit, *Fonctionnaires*, 35, favors Strategius Musonianus as the Proconsul who befriended Libanius in Constantinople.

expected Libanius to respond in kind. The second letter in Libanius' entire corpus (*Ep.* 391 = Norman 4), written at Antioch in March 355, replies to a "first letter" from Anatolius and describes in unusual detail Libanius' sophistic activities since his return to Antioch. He claims in *Epistle* 391 that Anatolius had in his first letter "touched [him] to the quick with several jesting remarks" (§ 3) and had added a postscript that he had "wiped the floor" (§ 3) with Libanius, who, in reply, refuted him with some appropriately playful syllogisms, then conceded that Anatolius was not only the "best of governors" but also the "best of sophists" (§ 5). He continues: "In my mind's eye I see you laughing and hear you calling and making one of your usual remarks . . . by all means one should poke fun at a correspondent as though present, but now I will pay you back with the real reason for my dilatoriness in not writing" (§ 5–7). Good-natured banter of this sort characterizes many of the letters. In thanking Anatolius in *Epistle* 492 for his help in securing him imperial permission to stay in Antioch, Libanius jests that he has no real praise or gratitude for Anatolius, since whatever he had done was done out of self-interest. He had merely wanted to have Libanius nearby when he returned to his native Berytus! He then concedes that he was joking in this way "so that you'll raise a shout and laugh, as you usually do" (§ 4).

Although Anatolius obviously enjoyed such exchanges, throughout most of 355 and 356 he wrote little from the court at Milan, where he was pre-occupied by the hunt for high office.⁶ As noted above, he was offered, but declined, the Prefecture of the City of Rome, either because he feared civic disturbances between aristocracy and plebs, as was rumored in Antioch (*Ep.* 391.14), or, perhaps, because he had his sights on a specific post. In any event, his name was also being canvassed for the Prefecture of the East, but he allegedly intended to refuse that office as well. Anatolius' supporters in Antioch greeted warmly the possibility of an Eastern Prefecture, but he also had enemies who feared his strict enforcement of the law.⁷

Despite Anatolius' silence, Libanius' letters continued to flow steadily toward Milan throughout 355 and 356, for Anatolius was one of his best hopes for securing imperial approval of his unsanctioned transfer to Antioch. In the winter of 355/6, Anatolius sent via a mutual friend the cryptic message that Libanius "ought not to be agitated to no purpose" (*Ep.* 438.2), which Libanius interpreted as a hopeful sign. He expressed confidence that things would go well now that Anatolius had arrived at court: "For none of those with the power to effect such things will fail to count it a gain to appear somehow to serve your designs" (*Ep.* 438.6). When the emperor finally relented, Libanius quickly attributed this success to the efforts of Anatolius in league with an old medical friend, Olympius, the two of whom allegedly

6. *Ep.* 509 (summer 356) and *Ep.* 549 (winter 356/7), both chiding Anatolius for failure to write.

7. Petit, *Fonctionnaires*, p. 35, with *Ep.* 509.5–6 (summer 356) speaking of "many provinces, many cities, and a multitude of men . . . praying that [Anatolius] take up the reins," only to be "slighted" by his refusal, and *Ep.* 512.4 (summer 356): "That you will rule over us is in our prayers since we know what you will accomplish, but since you know nothing of profiting illegally from office, it brings you no pleasure." Public approval in Antioch reported at *Epp.* 509.6 and 512.3, opposition at 509.7.

spurred on others, in particular, the powerful Christian courtier Datianus (*Ep.* 492.1, 6).

In the winter of 356/7, word reached Antioch that Anatolius had been appointed Prefect of Illyricum, a prized post for an energetic official because Pannonia was to be the theater of imperial military campaigns in 357–59, and we know from Ammianus and Aurelius Victor, who probably served as a *numerarius* on Anatolius' staff, that Anatolius proved a particularly able Prefect. Ammianus singles out for approval his efficient mobilization of resources for the campaign of 359 (19.11.2) and his reforms of taxes and the public post (19.11.3). Indeed, Ammianus states flatly that everyone accepts that the "northern provinces have never to this day, under any other prefect, been so prosperous with all blessings."⁸ In February or March 357, after Anatolius' assumption of the Illyrian prefecture, Libanius lodged yet another complaint about his friend's prolonged silence, this time claiming in jest that he knew the reason for it, first, because sophists, when their friends assume high office, usually show up with an oration and an empty purse, and second, because Anatolius had once at Constantinople promised Libanius a jacket (χιτωνίσκον), but had never produced it. Anatolius, he surmises, is afraid that he will show up and dun him for payment of the debt! Better to avoid the problem by not writing (*Ep.* 552.2–4). The letter then turns to an anecdote that Libanius had heard from Strategius Musonianus, Prefect of the East, about Anatolius' conduct before Constantius II at the confirmation of his prefecture. He had bravely proclaimed to Constantius that rank would not rescue wrongdoers, and with the emperor's approving nod, he had quickly translated this fine profession into action (§§ 5–7). The letter ends with a strong recommendation for the letter carrier, Letoius, an Antiochene *principalis* on embassy to Rome to celebrate the Vicennalia of Constantius II in spring 357. Anatolius is to insure that Letoius is introduced to all the people that count.

In replying to *Epistle* 552, Anatolius indulged in jesting remarks that Libanius did not find amusing. So much is plain from Libanius' own lengthy, indignant response found in *Epistle* 578. These remarks are the origin of the hostile tone that surfaces first in *Epistle* 578 and then escalates in later letters, as the gentle, good-natured barbs of the early letters become decidedly sharper and more capable of wounding. *Epistle* 578 is difficult, in places quite obscure, but the main thread of Anatolius' argument emerges clear enough. He had defended himself for his long silence, claiming (obviously in jest) that he had failed to write Libanius alone because Libanius had in anger given him a verbal thrashing (§ 2), an allusion to the tortuous syllogisms with which Libanius playfully refutes Anatolius in some of the letters

8. Amm. Marc. 19.11.3. Praise of Anatolius here is implicit blame of Sextus Petronius Probus, who was Prefect of Illyricum in 364, 368–75 and 383; useful commentary in G. Sabbah, *Ammien Marcellin, Histoire XVII–XIX* (Paris, 1989), p. 218, n. 275, and P. De Jonge, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XIX* (Groningen, 1982), 204–10. Cf. Aurelius Victor *Caes.* 13.6: *his annis suffectae vires Illyrico sunt praefecto medente Anatolio*, a comment made immediately after a bitter complaint about the burdens of the imperial post. For Victor's position under Anatolius, see H. W. Bird, *Sextus Aurelius Victor: A Historiographical Study* (Liverpool, 1984), 8–10.

(*Epp.* 391, 552). But the central problem was that Anatolius had implied that Libanius was a flatterer (κόλακα), as emerges clearly from Libanius' indignant self-defense in §§ 3–6: “in calling me a flatterer (κόλακα), you reveal yourself to be an admirer of a flatterer. . . . I'm amazed if *you*, in order to get *your* office, *didn't* flatter, but *I*, though I needed neither to hold office nor to get rich from you, shamed *myself*, I who accepted poverty in order not to become a flatterer!” Moreover, he implied that Libanius praised to excess, and he claimed that he would prefer to hear less praise and more blame (§ 6)! The problem with Libanius' praise, Anatolius implied, was that Libanius praised everyone, good and bad alike (§ 8). Anatolius was presumably trying to be funny, but Libanius was stung by the label κόλαξ, which, we may surmise, hit rather close to home. He clearly found it difficult to overlook the insult, since both here (§ 9) and in several of the subsequent letters he alludes to Anatolius' desire for “blame” and to his distasteful habit of disparaging everyone, good and bad alike (cf. *Epp.* 583.1, 348.1, 19.7, 80.1). But verbal attacks on a Praetorian Prefect involve risk, however skillfully they are managed, and Libanius is thus careful to moderate his tone.

Epistle 578 closes with an allusion to the rough time Anatolius gives advocates who appear before him in court, and to a mysterious “Sale”: “Yet, certain people are accusing you and creating a brouhaha over the ‘Sale of the Phoenician,’ as are all those litigants who depart and flee from court under a rain of insults” (καίτοι τινές κατηγοροῦσί σου τὴν τοῦ Φοίνικος τραγωδοῦντες πᾶσιν καὶ ὅσοι περὶ τὰς δίκας οἴχονται φεύγοντες ὑπὸ τῶν ὕβρισμάτων). I shall demonstrate that they are talking nonsense, but if you don't stop doing such things, *I* shall appear as your prosecutor” (§§ 10–11). The allusion to Anatolius' insults (ὕβρισματa) is clear enough, but what is this obscure πᾶσιν τοῦ Φοίνικος? A sale, selling, or bribery of a Phoenician? Of Phoenix, tutor of Achilles? Of Anatolius? Although the context suggests an allusion to accusations of bribery against Anatolius, a later allusion in *Epistle* 314.3 makes it appear that the Phoenician is someone other than Anatolius. G. R. Sievers conjectured long ago that the πᾶσις was a literary work modeled on Lucian's Βίων πᾶσις, a satire perhaps on a Phoenician sophist, which would accord perfectly with other evidence for Anatolius' propensity to engage in a mocking humor that could be unpleasant for its targets.⁹ In any event, Anatolius took special pains in his reply to defend himself concerning the “Sale” and the critical rhetors, as we can see from *Epistle* 314 in which Libanius expresses satisfaction at how he has put Anatolius on the defensive:

I was particularly pleased to see you struggling over the “Sale” and the flight of the rhetors, not because you struggled nobly but because you did such a miserable job of it. For you claim that your “Sale” resulted in no harm to him [the Phoenician] and that the

9. Sievers, *Leben*, 238. Cf. *Ep.* 552.1 for Anatolius' ridicule of “some driveling pseudo-sophist” at Rome, and *Ep.* 80.1 accusing him of always “railing at sophists.” Seeck, *Briefe*, 64 suggested that the “Phoenician” was Cataphronius 1, a native of Byblus in Phoenice who was succeeded as Prefect of Egypt in 357 by Parnassius 1, perhaps, he hypothesized, through the efforts of Anatolius. But he offered no explanation of why Cataphronius should be described as “sold.”

speakers do not wish to profit from their labor—they who would walk through fire in order to make any profit!¹⁰

He concludes this letter with the observation that Anatolius has become As-tydamas (proverbial for self-praise) in vaunting his own deeds among the Illyrians (§ 5). He should, he is told, rely on Libanius' oratory if he wishes his noble deeds to be known by posterity (§ 4). *Epistle* 314, probably written in summer 357, reveals that Libanius has been mollified temporarily. Anatolius has been sufficiently defensive and apologetic in his reply to *Epistle* 578 that Libanius can regard their proper relationship restored. Anatolius, the consummate man of action, is likened in *Epistle* 314 to Achilles and is encouraged to defer to Libanius, the master wordsmith, in literary matters (§§ 4–5). The other letters of 357 and early 358 revert to the customary business of networking, offering praise and encouragement to Anatolius for his benefactions.

The court in these years (June 357–June 359) resided at Sirmium—also the headquarters of the Illyrian Prefect—while Constantius II waged campaigns against the Sarmatae and the Quadi in 358 and against the Sarmatae Limigantes in 359. Anatolius' presence on the emperor's consistory paid huge dividends for his connections in the Eastern provinces, and we find him credited with various political appointments in the prefecture of *Oriens*. Largely through his influence, Libanius' good friend Clematius was made governor of Palestine in 357 (*Ep.* 563), while his old friend Sabinus became *Consularis Syriae* in 358–59 (*Ep.* 339). Moreover, Anatolius invited to serve as his assessors men with whom Libanius had close relationships: Domitius Modestus, who would serve as *Comes Orientis* from 358–62 (again we may suspect Anatolius' influence), and Libanius' intimate companion Aristaenetus (*Ep.* 582). "What am I to do?" protests Libanius at the news of Domitius' summons, "you say you want criticisms, but you do things worthy of praise, and although you are hard on the bearer of praise, you give him nothing to censure!" (*Ep.* 583.1). We should note as well that Anatolius was an old acquaintance of Libanius' uncle Phasganius, and he received visits in these years from a number of people close to Libanius: his cousin Spectatus (*Epp.* 333, 512), his pupil Hyperechius (*Ep.* 311), and his kinsman Iamblichus, grandson of the philosopher Sopater (*Ep.* 574).

In the summer of 358, Libanius' cousin Spectatus arrived back in Antioch after serving as an ambassador to the King of Persia (Amm. Marc. 17.14.1–2). Libanius composed a brief panegyric on his successes, which he also trumpeted to a number of correspondents, including Anatolius, whom Spectatus visited in Sirmium, carrying *Epistle* 333 and the panegyric, while on his way to report to the emperor, who was campaigning in Pannonia in that summer. In *Epistle* 333, Libanius jokes with Anatolius about Spectatus' superb job on the embassy, serving him up a sample of the sort of

10. *Ep.* 314.3: πάντο ὅν ἥσθην ὁρῶν σε μαχόμενον ὑπὲρ τε τῆς πράσεως καὶ τῆς τῶν ῥητόρων φυγῆς, οὐχ ὅτι γενναίως, ἀλλ' ὅτι πάντο φαύλως ἐμάχου. φῆς γὰρ τῷ μὲν οὐδὲν γενέσθαι βλάβος τὴν σὴν πρᾶσιν, τοὺς δ' οὐκ ἐθέλειν ἀπὸ τοῦ πονεῖν κερδαίνειν, οἱ καὶ εἰς πῦρ ἐμβαίεν ἐπὶ τῷ τι κερδᾶναι.

arguments he made to the Great King.¹¹ He knew in advance what Anatolius' judgement of Spectatus' speech would be. No, he anticipated, this is not the work of a mere bureaucrat, but of a genuine orator (*Ep.* 333). Moreover, he feigns concern that his praise of Spectatus will wound Anatolius, since the latter doesn't believe anyone else should be praised so long as he is alive (§ 2). Libanius enjoys the thought of Anatolius "twisting and turning sleepless all night long" at the thought of the acclaim gained by Spectatus for refuting the Great King (§ 3). In closing, he tosses out a challenge for Anatolius to match the brilliance of Spectatus' arguments.

In his reply to *Epistle* 333, sent in summer or fall of 358, Anatolius once again gave offense, compounding his gaffe of the previous year with another, more serious insult. Some six months would pass before Libanius finally responded and described his own and his audience's reaction to the letter he had received in the previous summer. When the reply arrived, Libanius reports in *Epistle* 19, he had read it aloud to friends, as requested, and it excited as much laughter as Anatolius could have wanted, and he obviously wanted a lot, quips Libanius, but when he had finished reading, one member of the audience inquired whether he was "friend or foe" of Anatolius, and on hearing that he was a good friend, the man replied, "Well, rest assured that you are behaving like an enemy of his in disclosing the contents of this letter. You should have suppressed it." He went on to put a name—obviously unfavorable—to what Anatolius had written, but Libanius refuses to disclose the man's characterization of the letter (*Ep.* 19.1–2). He did not reply immediately to Anatolius, as we just noted, preferring instead to keep silent and to avoid his powerful friend's clumsy attempts at repartee (*Ep.* 19.18).

After describing in *Epistle* 19 (= Norman 40) the reaction to the recitation of Anatolius' letter, Libanius goes on to review the "charges" made against him in Anatolius' letter written back in the summer and which was itself, we must bear in mind, a reply to *Epistle* 333 about Spectatus' embassy. Anatolius claimed, doubtless in the complicated sophistic logic that he enjoyed, several vaguely contradictory things: 1) that Libanius' panegyric failed to match the greatness of Spectatus' deeds (Σπεκτάτον μέγαν ὄντα τοῖς ἔργοις μικρὸν γεγενῆσθαι τοῖς παρ' ἑμοῦ λόγοις [§ 4]); 2) that he was "envious that certain people had been praised" (μεμφόμενος δὲ τὸ τινὰς τιμηθῆσθαι λόγοις [§ 6]); and 3) that Libanius sang the praises of "many people" (τὸ πολλοὺς ἐπαινεῖν [§ 7]). Libanius takes these remarks to mean that he praises *too many* people and that he is, by implication, an indiscriminate flatterer. In defense of his practice as a panegyrist, he claims, in brief, that he praises what he can find to praise, but casts a veil of silence over people's faults. He then explains, in a passage heavy with irony, that he would, if he were to compose a panegyric on Anatolius, be obliged to follow the same practice (*Ep.* 19.10–11):

I would refer to your industry, your vigilance, your exertions, your correct judgement, your foresightedness, your upright character, keen intellect, powerful eloquence, and so

11. For a fuller example of Spectatus' arguments, see *Ep.* 331 (= Norman 35) to Aristaenetus.

on; but I would never call you handsome and tall. Your physical characteristics are not like that. If I mentioned money, I would say that you are far removed from peculation, but I would not assert that you enjoy no reward for your ability, for you possess gifts from the emperor and your long period of office has made your villas into towns! You have done wrong to no one, but you gather things to yourself. You would be a much better man if you had not, for the acquisition of fame brought by poverty is more splendid than all the pillars granted by a prince.

He then takes Anatolius to task for his rough tongue in rebuffing requests for favors, in particular for his harsh treatment of the philosopher Severus, an old school friend of Libanius who had tried to avoid his civic liturgies by securing an imperial post (§§ 12–14).

Anatolius' reply contained yet a further insult, from which the epistolary friendship of prefect and sophist never recovered. Apparently encouraged by his real successes and the perception in Antioch that he had great influence with Anatolius (cf. *Ep.* 362.8), Libanius had requested in a previous letter a position or honorary rank (ἀξίωμα) for himself. The request is not extant, but it may have occurred in the final sentence of *Epistle* 333 cited above and been deleted later out of embarrassment. That, at least, is what Otto Seeck hypothesized, noting what appears to be a lacuna in the last line of the *Epistle* 333, where Libanius tosses out a challenge to Anatolius: "Reply to my letter and write something similar [to Spectatus' arguments], O you who have left few people as private citizens—since the deluge of your nominations brings many men to the imperial feedtrough."¹² Apparently Libanius had asked, in a joking manner, that Anatolius grant him some rank or position, reasoning that, if everyone else was sidling up to the imperial feedtrough, why shouldn't he? The question of "rank" and the relative merits of the active life versus the life in *paideia* were themes they had already sparred over in the past (cf. *Epp.* 549.3–4, 314.4). We cannot know precisely how Libanius put the matter this time—he claims that it was merely a test of friendship—but Anatolius had weighed into him and scoffed at the suggestion of a position in such a way that the status and rank of "sophist" were belittled as well (*Ep.* 19.13). Libanius replies indignantly that he is perfectly content with the rank of sophist and that he has never felt inferior to people like Anatolius, whose "high-and-mightiness is such that your flatterers take their oath by it" (οὐδεπώποτε ταπεινότερον ἑμαυτὸν ἡγησάμην ὑμῶν, ὃν ἡ λαμπρότης ὄρκος τοῖς κόλαξι, § 13). This leads to another blunt assessment of why Anatolius fails to help his friends (*Ep.* 19.16–17):

To be sure, you are not completely lackadaisical. You are ready to assist your family, if ever a man was, and none of your relations remains an ordinary citizen. Again, you respect ability in others. If anyone who does not possess it attains office, you shriek more loudly than people on the operating table, and yet your family is so very dear to you that every connexion of yours must needs hold office, without a word being said against him.

12. *Ep.* 333.5: ἀμείβου δὴ μου τὰ γράμματα καὶ γράφε τι παραπλήσιον, ὃ πάνυ δὴ τινας ὀλίγους ἰδιώτας ἀφείς· ὥς ἡ τῶν δέλτων ἐπομβρία πολλοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλικὴν εἰσάγει φάτιν. Seeck, *Briefe*, 22, pointed out the loose connection of the ὥς clause with what precedes it and suspected a lacuna. Petit, *Fonctionnaires*, 36, doubts that Libanius seriously wanted to enter the imperial administration. I would agree, but this would not preclude a grant of an honorary position.

This is your excuse for ignoring your friends. If anyone accuses you of that, you bring this forward and rid yourself of the reproach. Well, then! Do you think that I too have some skill as a marksman or am I fit just to be a target? To put it another way, if you inflict a wound, you have been wounded yourself, but if your remarks were in jest, mine are not in earnest, either.

The tone of these exchanges has veered out of control; Libanius no longer knows how precisely Anatolius means his remarks to be taken, and he himself is saying things at which this powerful man could easily take offense. Once again, Libanius will fall silent for over half a year.

When Libanius finally did write, in autumn 359 (*Ep.* 80 = Norman 46), the tension between himself and Anatolius does not appear to have dissipated, though Anatolius had clearly written to defend himself and protested against Libanius' silence. With even less discretion and self-control, Libanius decried the shabby treatment he had received as a friend, alluding again to the obscure favor that Anatolius had rebuffed, a favor that was "nothing beyond your powers but merely the kind of thing you have daily scattered broadcast to people deserving and undeserving alike" (§ 2). Anatolius, he affirmed, needed a flatterer, not a friend (§ 4). He had repulsed the request with an insensitivity typical of the powerful: "Your attitude is not uncommon to your position: you people who enjoy such exalted fortune do not even appreciate the injustice you inflict on your victims: you think it proper for you to throw your weight about and for them everywhere to kowtow to you" (§§ 5–6). In the last extant letter to Anatolius (*Ep.* 81 = Norman 47), also dispatched in autumn 359, Libanius recovered himself somewhat and replied with more reserve, but the tone of the letter is tense and strained. He no longer knows how to respond. Anatolius had once again answered with "nonsense" (φλυαρία), and obviously at great length, for he complained constantly about the "laconic" brevity of Libanius' letters. Although bidden in the past to be frank, since Anatolius claimed he would put up with anything, Libanius was reminded by Aeschylus that lesser mortals ought not to be bold of tongue, and by Euripides that powerful people resent strong arguments made by their inferiors (*Ep.* 81.1). Hence, he would moderate his *parrhesia*, limiting himself to the observation that Anatolius had become deranged by the thought that his tenure as prefect was soon coming to an end (§ 3)! Anatolius died some months later in 360.

The strangely hostile character of these exchanges is not, as we noted, the whole story of their correspondence. Indeed, only four of the twenty-six letters contain such a hostile tone: *Epistles* 578 from 357, 19 from mid-358, and 80–81 from 359. These letters should not obscure for us how valuable a patron Anatolius was in this period for Libanius' circle of friends in the Antioch region. Moreover, he emerges from these letters as a model governor in many respects: so upright and incorruptible that it is feared his over-scrupulousness (τὸ λίαν ἀκριβὲς) in the enforcement of the law will quickly bring down his administration (*Epp.* 563.4, 557.5–7). Moreover, he is energetic, efficient as an administrator and keen to recruit capable men. He had indeed enriched himself while in office, but in acceptable ways, and he had

vigorously assisted family members as well as friends, as he was expected to do. He was, moreover, learned and self-confident, perhaps overly confident, about his own literary and rhetorical tastes and ability. He was a passionate devotee of sophistic pursuits and reveled in the playful raillery of sophistic debates, but he had trouble managing the tone of his remarks and he occasionally appeared harsh and ungracious to his social inferiors who had to endure his jesting insults. Libanius is at his most truthful, I suspect, when he complains of the way the rich and powerful ride roughshod over their inferiors and do not even realize they have given offense. The hostile tone of *Epistles* 578, 19, 80–81 is to be attributed to Anatolius' propensity, when engaged in sophistic repartee, to lapse into a mocking and sarcastic tone that could wound and give offense.¹³ On each of these occasions, Libanius felt constrained to respond in kind, despite the dangers inherent in waging verbal warfare with a Praetorian Prefect.

II. ANATOLIUS OF BERYTUS IN EUNAPIUS' *VITAE SOPHISTARUM*

When Eunapius arrived in Athens in the early 360s at the age of sixteen, Prohaeresius was already eighty-seven years old (x.1.2).¹⁴ In recounting his teacher's early career, Eunapius relied particularly on a fellow Lydian, Tuscianus, who had spent many years in Athens with Prohaeresius and whom Eunapius cites as his source several times in his account of Prohaeresius' life (ix.2.15, 17, x.4.2).¹⁵ The heart of Eunapius' long account of Prohaeresius is the narration of three memorable episodes, all involving virtuoso, extempore performances by Prohaeresius before high Roman officials, the last of whom was Anatolius of Berytus, Prefect of Illyricum (x.6.1–7.8). The first two encounters were now deep in the past, and the names of the proconsuls had apparently faded from Tuscianus' mind—although he could still recall bits of the speeches—but Anatolius was another matter, for much was remembered about his visit to Athens and Eunapius accords him an elaborate introduction and detailed narrative.

After his account of the triumph before the second proconsul and Prohaeresius' subsequent success, Eunapius reports that "in those times" (κατὰ δὲ τούτους τοὺς χρόνους, x.6.1) the imperial court put forth a man who was zealous for "fame and learning," Anatolius of Berytus, nicknamed "Azutrium" by those who envied him.¹⁶ After achieving the highest distinction in the study of law at Berytus, he went to Rome, achieved fame and renown in a variety of offices, and eventually became Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum

13. Petit, *Fonctionnaires*, 36: "Car la correspondance révèle entre les deux hommes une franchise et parfois une aigreur ironique ou amère, qui est exceptionnelle chez Lib. C'est que le caractère d'A. ne répond pas exactement à ses capacités."

14. I cite Eunapius in the edition of J. Giangrande, *Eunapii Vitae Sophistarum* (Rome, 1956).

15. For Tuscianus' background, see *PLRE* 1, s.v. Tuscianus 1. Petit, *Fonctionnaires*, 258, following Seeck's assumption that there was only one prefecture for Anatolius (357–60), equates Eunapius' Tuscianus with the Tuscianus summoned by Anatolius to be his *assessor* in 357 (Lib. *Ep.* 348). If we assume two Anatolii with different prefectures, the two Tusciani are not likely to be identical.

16. For the possible meanings of this obscure epithet, see R. J. Penella, *Greek Philosophers and Sophists in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Leeds, 1990), 130–31.

(x.6.2). He was fond of sacrifice (φιλοθύτης) and a Hellene, and upon becoming prefect, was seized with a “kind of golden madness to see Greece” (x.6.3). The Greeks had heard of his “wisdom and learning” as well as his invariably “upright and incorruptible” character (ἀκλινὴς ἦν καὶ ἀδωροδόκητος, x.6.4). In fact, his advent was more feared than the invasion of Xerxes (!), for he had dispatched in advance a sophistic problem or proposition (πρόβλημα) on which he wished the sophists of Athens to declaim. The problem was obviously subtle, for it required a complicated constitution or stasis, the term given to the establishment of the main issue and how it must be argued. Moreover, Anatolius had in mind a particular stasis, which he apparently regarded as appropriately clever. Eunapius, for his part, allows that he had never heard of anything “so ridiculous” (γελοιότερον) and “unworthy of consideration,” as this stasis, and he didn’t think Anatolius’ view should prevail (x.6.10). Nonetheless, Anatolius arrived in Athens, “sacrificed boldly and visited all the temples, as divine law commanded” (x.6.8). He then convened the city’s sophists for a competition and as they delivered their speeches in turn, Anatolius “laughed” at their pupils’ applause and “pitied” the fathers whose sons were educated by such men. However, Prohaeresius, the last to declaim, had learned from a friend on Anatolius’ staff the stasis favored by Anatolius, and when called upon to declaim, delivered a speech arranged in precisely the manner the Prefect favored. So beautiful and powerful was this speech that Anatolius “leaped up” while the entire theater burst into applause. Henceforth, he showed Prohaeresius particular honor and invited him to his table, for he was himself an “accomplished sophist on themes suited to dinner-parties and symposia; hence his symposium was not without learning and culture” (x.6.12). Eunapius allows that these events occurred “many years ago” (ταῦτα μὲν ἐγένετο πρὸ πολλῶν χρόνων, x.6.12), but he assures us of the accuracy of his reporting, and adds some further details, obviously gathered from Tuscianus. Anatolius had particularly admired a poet called Milesius of Smyrna, whom he nicknamed the “Muse,” and he joked that the problems (ζητήματα) set by the sophist Epiphanius were better called “Dissections” (διαρέσεις), a quip that was intended to poke fun at Epiphanius’ triviality and pedantic distinctions. Finally, he derided the professional sophists’ attempts to devise a stasis and observed that, if there had been more than the thirteen sophists, they would have devised yet further stases and would have approached the problem from every angle conceivable (x.6.15).

Eunapius locates these events in the reign of Constans, reporting that not long before (οὐ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου, x.7.1), Prohaeresius had been invited by the Emperor Constans to Gaul, where he won high favor before being sent on to demonstrate his ability to the Roman nobility, who admired him so intensely that they voted him a bronze statue with an inscription that called him the King of Eloquence (ΤΟΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΟΝΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΛΟΓΩΝ, x.7.4). Before returning to Athens, he was permitted by the emperor to claim a favor, at which point he requested that several, good-sized islands be awarded

to Athens, so that their tribute in grain might help feed the city. Constans granted the favor and named Prohaeresius “stratopedarch,” but stipulated that the grant be confirmed by the Praetorian Prefect on Prohaeresius’ return. Accordingly, after the competition from which he had emerged triumphant, he approached Anatolius, himself recently arrived from Gaul (νεωστὶ γὰρ παρὴν ἐκ Γαλατίας ὁ ἑπαρχος, x.7.6), in order that the request be confirmed. Prohaeresius had assembled not only many advocates for this cause, but nearly all the educated men of Greece were in Athens due to the Prefect’s visit. Anatolius, however, didn’t wish to hear the other advocates speak, but called upon Prohaeresius, who delivered a beautiful speech and, predictably, secured the islands for Athens (x.7.6–8).

Anatolius emerges from Eunapius’ narrative as a striking personality: distinguished, learned, self-confident, and independent-minded. He was well trained in Roman law (and undoubtedly bilingual) and had earned the reputation for being upright and incorruptible in court cases. His devotion to traditional Hellenism was conspicuous, for it was illegal to engage in public sacrifices under the sons of Constantine. In addition, he had a reputation for learning and befriended poets and sophists, making his table open to those whom he esteemed. Although interested in literary matters, he appears to have been particularly interested in sophistic performance and argumentation, finding it entertaining to devise exceedingly complicated problems with clever stases. Far from remaining aloof and detached at sophistic performances, he was energetic, even boisterous in his interventions, and he sometimes laughed at and mocked the efforts of professional sophists.

III. CONCLUSION

The first issue to be addressed is the question of identity. Are we dealing with the same Anatolius of Berytus, or two different Anatolii, both of whom held the Illyrian prefecture, and if Libanius and Eunapius are speaking about the same man, how are we to reconcile their conflicting chronology? Eunapius’ account suggests that Anatolius was Prefect of Illyricum from circa 344–47, not 357–60. The four laws addressed to an Anatolius in the *Theodosian Code* support Eunapius’ dating, since two are directed to him as *Vicarius Asianae* in 339 (*CTh* 11.30.19, 12.1.28) and two others are directed to him as *Praefectus Praetorio*, the first in 346 (12.1.38), the second in 349 (12.1.39). Only this last is obviously wrong, since Vulcacius Rufinus 25 is clearly attested as Prefect of Illyricum from 22 June 347.¹⁷ Fragments survive of Himerius’ *Oration* 32 to the Prefect Anatolius, but there is no way of knowing whether the speech was delivered in the mid-340s or the late 350s.¹⁸ Otto Seeck concluded that there was only one Anatolius and accepted

17. The subscription to *CTh* 12.1.39, DAT. KAL. APRIL. ANTIOCHIAE LIMENIO ET CATULLINO CONSS. = 349 A.D., appears to be sound, but Vulcacius Rufinus 25 is firmly attested as Prefect of Illyricum in 349. The address, IDEM AA. AD ANATOLIUM PRAEFECTUM PRAETORIO, must be incorrect.

18. T. D. Barnes, “Himerius and the Fourth Century,” *CP* 82 (1987): 206–25, argues for a birth date for Himerius around 320, which would require that the speech was delivered during the second prefecture.

only the later prefecture (357–60), dismissing Eunapius' chronology and rearranging all the dates in the *Code* to produce a harmonious early career for Anatolius.¹⁹ In 1957, A. F. Norman rightly pointed out that Eunapius, although not normally careful about chronology, is well informed about the career of his teacher Prohaeresius and he anchors the encounter between Anatolius and Prohaeresius firmly in the reign of Constans. Moreover, the *Code* supports him. It would be fairer to the evidence, he concluded, to accept that Eunapius and Libanius are talking about two different men, perhaps related, both from Berytus, who held the Illyrian prefecture at different times.²⁰ In recent years, Robert Penella's work on Eunapius has offered further, strong support for Norman's view, but Seeck's position still has wide currency. It was, notably, adopted by the editors of *PLRE* I and it continues to be repeated in standard handbooks.²¹

Comparison of the two *portraits* of Anatolius' character and literary activities obviously complicates the debate over identity, since these portraits converge perfectly and convey the overwhelming impression that we are dealing with one and the same man. Anatolius could be a rare instance of a man who held a second Praetorian Prefecture in the same region, but Libanius' congratulations betray no hint of such an unusual occurrence.²² Or, alternatively, if we assume two Anatolii from Berytus, both of whom held the Illyrian prefecture, then we are dealing with an uncanny family resemblance. It is wisest, in my view, to maintain Norman's position, since

19. Seeck (*Briefe*, 59–60) noted, but did not attempt to resolve, the chronological problems. The redating of the laws is found in his *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.* (Stuttgart, 1919; reprint, 1964), 40–41: *CTh* 12.1.39 to the *Consularis Syriae* in 349, *CTh* 11.30.19 and 12.1.28 to the *Vicarius Asianae* in 352, and *CTh* 12.1.38 to the *Praefectus Praetorio* in 357.

20. A. F. Norman, "The Illyrian Prefecture of Anatolius," *RhM* 100 (1957): 253–59.

21. Penella, *Greek Philosophers*, 88–91, 96–98, 130–32. Two Anatolii are assumed by C. Vogler, *Constance II et l'administration impériale* (Strasbourg, 1979), 115–18 and T. D. Barnes, "Praetorian Prefects, 337–361," *ZPE* 94 (1992): 249–60, while Seeck's view prevails in V. Neri, "Le prefetture del pretorio in occidente nel periodo 346–350 d.C.," *RSA* 4 (1974): 89–113; R. von Haehling, *Die Religionszugehörigkeit der hohen Amtsträger des römischen Reiches seit Constantins I. Alleinherrschaft bis zum Ende des Theodosianischen Dynastie*, Antiquitas, Reihe 3, Bd. 23 (Bonn, 1978), 100; A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale et al., *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1: A.D. 260–395, s.v. Anatolius 3; *Der Kleine Pauly* 1 (1979), 335; *Der Neue Pauly* 1 (1996), 660–61; Petit, *Fonctionnaires*, 35–37.

22. Sievers, *Leben*, 236 assumed a second prefecture, as, more recently, did E. Groag, *Die Reichsbeamten von Achaia in spätromischer Zeit* (Budapest, 1946), 32–33. Second prefectures were rare and normally involved an expanded sphere of authority. Anatolius' successor, Vulcacius Rufinus 25, served as Prefect of Illyricum (347–52) and again many years later as Prefect of Italy, Africa, and Illyricum (365–68). Petronius Probus 5 served as Prefect of Illyricum in 364 and twice as Prefect of Italy, Africa, and Illyricum (368–75 and 383). Finally, Aurelianus offers an exact parallel, but from a later period, since he served twice as Praetorian Prefect of the East (393–94 and 414–16). It is possible that Anatolius wanted the second prefecture in Illyricum precisely because it would afford him proximity to the court. Certainly, his influence extended well beyond Illyricum. Penella, *Greek Philosophers*, 90, n. 23 notes that Libanius' allusion in *Ep.* 423.1 (from 355) to a future post as a *σχήμα πάλαι προσήκον* can be read to imply that Anatolius has not previously held a prefecture. If there had been a previous Illyrian prefecture, Libanius would probably have mentioned it in his congratulations on the appointment in *Ep.* 549.1–3, which reveals that the possibility of an Illyrian prefecture had been much discussed: "What was expected has happened! To put it another way, it is true to say that there is no one who didn't expect the present office. So you embark on your present tasks not as things unforeseen, rather, to be precise, you received your due, and all men raised a great cry, counting blessed those whom you will govern, while praising the man who appointed you, and rejoicing with you for seizing the opportunity to display your virtue. Here's the popular joke: Although you're still at the beginning of your office, they discuss it not as if you were about to perform many benefactions for the cities, but as if you had already done everything, and they discuss your future actions as if they were already completed! So great is your reputation that goes abroad in the realm."

Eunapius, though mentioning Constans only once by name (and the possibility of manuscript error shouldn't be discounted), clearly mentions encounters of both Prohaeresius and the Prefect Anatolius with the emperor in *Gaul*. Constans was in Gaul in the mid-340s, while Constantius II was present there only briefly, in 353/4.

We appear to be dealing with two members of the same distinguished Berytus family, which, for at least two generations in the fourth century, produced men who were in many respects model officials of the Constantinian dynasty: incorruptible, efficient, skilled in Roman law, and passionately devoted to Hellenic culture. The elder Anatolius was trained in law at Berytus before travelling to Rome, where he undoubtedly perfected his command of Latin and deepened his grasp of Roman law before entering upon a series of political offices. We find him serving as *Vicarius Asiana* in 339 (*CTh* 11.30.19, 12.1.28) and Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum circa 344–47 (*CTh* 12.1.38, A.D. 346). He was “wild” for sophistic culture and, far from maintaining an Olympian reserve, passed up no opportunity to display his own level of culture and to patronize professional sophists and men of letters. The younger Anatolius, whom we know more intimately from Libanius' letters, appears in every respect the image of his older namesake: skilled in Roman law, a capable administrator, and an impassioned devotee of sophistic culture with great confidence in his own rhetorical tastes and ability.²³ I infer from the evidence that he was himself an older man than Libanius, perhaps of the generation of Libanius' uncle Phasganius, with whom he corresponded. He had “beautified” Antioch as *Consularis Syriae* or *Comes Orientis* (*Ep.* 311.2) at some unknown date, served as Proconsul of Constantinople (*Or.* 1.80) in 353 or 354, was offered, but declined, the post of Prefect of the City of Rome in 355 (*Epp.* 391, 423), and, after a period of lobbying at court, was himself appointed Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum, the post in which he served conspicuously well from 357 until his death in 360. Like his elder relative, he was intellectually combative, and this could cause problems for the speakers with whom he interacted, whether the sophists who declaimed before him, or the advocates pleading court cases before him, or his educated correspondents. For he insisted on displaying his own level of culture while simultaneously commenting on others'

23. Photius (*Bibl. Cod.* 163) speaks of a Vindanius (perhaps Vindaonius or Vindonius) Anatolius of Berytus, the author of a compendium of agricultural practices (*Synagoge georgikon epitedeumatōn*) culled from previous authors. Photius judges the work to be “useful” but filled with pagan error and therefore to be handled with caution by Christian farmers. This work was one of the principal sources for the *Geoponica* commissioned by Constantine Porphyrogenetus in the tenth century. See A. Dihle, *Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire from Augustus to Justinian*, trans. M. Malzahn (London, 1994), 502. It was long ago suggested (*RE* 1 [1894]: 2071–73, s.v. Anatolios 14) that the agricultural writer, who apparently wrote in the fourth or fifth century, might be identical to the (conflated) Anatolius known from Eunapius and Libanius, a suggestion taken up by R. H. Rogers, “Hail, Frost, and Pests in the Vineyard: Anatolius of Berytus as a Source for the Nabataean Agriculture,” *JAOS* 100 (1980): 1–11 and *Der Neue Pauly* 1 (1996), 660–61. After an extensive study of the Geoponic tradition, E. Oder, “Beiträge zur Geschichte der Landwirtschaft bei den Griechen,” *RhM* 45 (1890): 58–99 and 212–22, and 48 (1893): 1–40, rightly concluded (pp. 97–98) that, apart from the convergence of a rather common name and origins in Berytus, there was no compelling reason to equate Vindanius Anatolius with the Prefect(s) of Illyricum. *RE*, Suppl. 1 (1903): 77, s.v. Anatolios 14, claims that the agricultural writer also published a separate work on veterinary practices.

performance, too often in a mocking or satirical tone or, in the case of Libanius, by insisting that they carry on a sophistic *agon* by correspondence. Libanius, for his part, favored clarity, charm, and decorum in his letters, but the “Anatolius letters” are, by contrast, unusually long, tortuously difficult, and packed with rhetorical tropes and literary allusions. Anatolius demanded as much. He had difficulty, however, managing the tone of his sophistic banter, and on more than one occasion offended Libanius, who found himself in a difficult position since he had no other friend so highly placed in the imperial administration and Anatolius’ benefactions to himself and his circle were incontestable. However, it was difficult to spar with this powerful man and, in the end, he could not overlook the slights he was forced to endure, particularly the indelicate manner in which his own bold request for a political “rank” had been rebuffed. The friendship of sophist and prefect never recovered.

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