

The Prince and his Tutor: Candour and Affection

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Introduction

I first met Hannah when she came as a graduate student to Somerville College, to work for an Oxford doctorate. I was her college adviser, and the subject of her thesis was letters of recommendation. I hope that the following account of the correspondence of Fronto and Marcus Aurelius will be thought an appropriate tribute to those early beginnings of Hannah's high distinction as a scholar and of our warm friendship that has lasted ever since. Like Marcus Aurelius, she has a genius for creating networks of friends.

Fronto's Correspondence

There are references to M. Cornelius Fronto as Marcus' teacher of rhetoric in the *Historia Augusta: Marcus* 24-5 and *Verus* 2.5, and in the historian Cassius Dio (71.35.1), but the principal evidence is in Book I of Marcus' *Meditations* and, of course, in their correspondence. 'Prince' in my title may suggest Marcus' pre-accession status as Caesar, but mention will also be made of the letters between the Emperor and his former tutor, and even of Emperors, since Marcus' adoptive brother, known as Lucius Verus after becoming joint Emperor in 161 AD, was also a pupil of Fronto. This correspondence as a whole is quite varied in subject matter, contributing much to social and cultural history and to the study of ancient literary tastes and techniques; it is also entertaining, as there is a lot of humour and teasing in the relationship between Fronto and his pupils, as well as much irony — not always fully appreciated.¹

It is natural that less literary and philosophical attention has been paid to these letters, in comparison with those of Cicero, Seneca, and Pliny, given the Herculean efforts that have been necessary to recover the text and establish some kind of chronology. Just to remind you briefly of the salient problems: there is only one manuscript that contains the correspondence with Marcus Aurelius, of which more than 40% is lost. (A Paris manuscript has some of Lucius Verus' correspondence.) The manuscript is a palimpsest, and over the Fronto correspondence, written in the fifth century, we find the *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* (451), written more than two centuries later. To make matters worse, part of that manuscript is in Milan, part in Rome; the order of the leaves of the manuscript is confused; and Cardinal Mai, who discovered it in the early nineteenth

¹ Gärtner 1983 gives a good general account of the correspondence, including the history of its recovery, the program of instruction it reveals, and the value of its many touching and amusing accounts of imperial private life. I am grateful to Werner Eck for making the article available to me.

century, is accused of damaging it by the use of chemicals. The restoration of the text has therefore been the aim of much scholarly work, culminating in the 1988 Teubner edition by van den Hout.²

Some knowledge of the correspondence is attested in the third and fourth centuries (Solinus and Charisius), but there is no way of knowing who compiled it. Champlin thinks it had ‘different editors at different times working for different purposes’; Cugusi, that Fronto started it off, but it was finished by others;³ van den Hout, that there was one editor, a *grammaticus*, who got hold of letters that had been preserved by Fronto’s daughter Cratia and her husband Aufidius Victorinus;⁴ Fronto himself apparently kept copies of his own letters (*Ant. Imp.* 1.2.5 = Haines II.38) and probably of some sent to him. Cova suggests that the correspondence could have been circulated first in the early third century to re-establish the family name after Victorinus, Fronto’s beloved son-in-law who rose to a second consulship in 183 and prefecture of the city, was forced to commit suicide under Marcus’ son, Commodus.⁵

In any case, the ancient editor focused on Fronto, and he clearly selected letters that show Fronto principally as tutor to the Emperors and as a consul, a position he attained, as we now know from a military diploma, in July and August of 142 (not 143).⁶ That the family thought these were Fronto’s two main claims to fame is shown by the inscription (*ILS* 1129) on the small sarcophagus of Fronto’s great-grandson, who died as a baby in 199: Fronto is described as *consul et magister imperatorum Luci et Antonini*.

Whoever was the original editor, he was not concerned to arrange the letters chronologically, as early modern editors tried to do, culminating in the arrangement by C.R. Haines in the Loeb edition, first printed in 1919. Van den Hout has largely reverted to the ancient editor’s order, with separate books for Fronto’s correspondence with Marcus, with Lucius Verus, with Antoninus Pius, with a varied collected of friends (the letters not being grouped by recipient), and finally for epistolary essays on various topics.⁷

Though Fronto is the unifying factor in the collection, there are actually somewhat more letters from Marcus to him, at least before his accession (72 vs. 56), which is not true of the other correspondents. The exchange of letters with Marcus apparently spans the nearly thirty years from 138, shortly after the time when Fronto is thought to have started to tutor the seventeen- or eighteen-year-old Marcus,⁸ to ca. 167, when Fronto

² The Prolegomena contain a full history of the text. Fleury 2012, 63-65, provides a short summary in English.

³ Champlin 1980, 3; Cugusi 1983, 247-249.

⁴ Van den Hout 1988, LXII-LXIII.

⁵ Cova 2004, 501.

⁶ Eck 1998.

⁷ For recent discussion of the arrangement of the Fronto correspondence, see Gibson 2013, 387-416; 2012, 65-66.

⁸ It is generally assumed now that Fronto began to tutor Marcus in 138 after his adoption by T. Aurelius Antoninus and the death of Hadrian, when the former became Princeps and Marcus was given the title of Caesar. The usual time for the study of rhetoric to begin was after the assumption of the *toga virilis*, which, for Marcus, was in 136 when he was 14 (*HA Marcus* 4.5). Van den Hout 1999, 243 gives two reasons for assuming this late date: that no

seems to have died, perhaps of the plague brought back by Lucius Verus' victorious troops from the east (HA *Marc.* 13.5; 2.5).⁹ Thus there is no overlap in time between Marcus' correspondence with Fronto and his *Meditations*, which probably belong to the 170s.

Marcus on Fronto in the *Meditations*

Marcus did not forget his old tutor, any more than he forgot his predecessor and adoptive father, who died earlier in 161, or his brother Verus, who died in 169, or some of his other teachers, who had died and are commemorated in the *Meditations*. Yet many scholars might agree with Richlin, who writes, 'Integrating the young Marcus of the letters with the old Marcus of the *Meditations* still poses problems both biographical and philosophical, yet a true account must at least juxtapose them'.¹⁰ In what follows, I shall try to integrate Marcus' later assessment of his debt to Fronto in the *Meditations*, with what the letters show of their relationship.

Παρά Φρόντωνος, τὸ ἐπιστῆσαι, οἷα ἡ τυραννικὴ βασκανία καὶ ποικιλία καὶ ὑπόκρισις, καὶ ὅτι ὡς ἐπίπαν οἱ καλούμενοι οὗτοι παρ' ἡμῖν εὐπατρίδαι ἀστοργότεροί πως εἰσὶν (*Med.* 1.11).

From Fronto, to note what kind of thing is the envy, deviousness and hypocrisy that accompany absolute rule, and that, generally speaking, those who are called by us patricians are somewhat wanting in natural affection.

As Rutherford points out, in all these tributes in Book I the verb is missing, and what must be supplied is not 'I have learned or acquired', for Marcus did not claim to possess these qualities.¹¹ In *Med.* 1.17 he says explicitly, 'Though I still come somewhat short of this, by my own fault'. Moreover, as Brunt notes, the qualities praised do not add up to a consistent code of conduct: in chapters 3, 5, 6 he admires ascetic models, but in 16.4 he praises Pius' 'unascetic temperance'.¹² Marcus means that he is indebted to these people as *exempla* or παραδείγματα (a word he actually uses in 1.9), which often included explicit instruction.

Some have found the Fronto tribute puzzling, both because of its brevity and because of what it says, or fails to say. Considering that Marcus studied formally with Fronto for

letters can be dated before 139 and that Hadrian did not like Fronto (discussed at 62-63). Neither argument is conclusive, and recently Fantham (2013, 226 and 316, n. 28) has questioned the date, 'proposing in or soon after 135', as have others before. However, if the later date is correct, Marcus perhaps studied first with the Greek rhetors Aninius Macer and Caninius Celer before learning with the illustrious Fronto, apparently the only Latin teacher of rhetoric he had (HA *Marcus*, 2.4). *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.9.2 = Haines I.18, an early letter from Marcus, may suggest that, when he started studying with Fronto, he was more at home writing in Greek.

⁹ Champlin 1974, 139-142.

¹⁰ Richlin 2006, 512.

¹¹ Rutherford 1989², 145.

¹² Brunt 1974, 5, n. 26 = 2013, 367, n. 26.

about five years, went on — even as Emperor — addressing him as *magister*, and continued to ask his advice until Fronto's death, we may find it surprising that this is the briefest of the tributes to Marcus' teachers, especially as Fronto is the only teacher of rhetoric mentioned there and was, in fact, his only teacher of Latin rhetoric (HA *Marc.* 2.4). Given the circumstances of its composition, it is hard to know what significance to attach to brevity in the *Meditations*, for if, as Rutherford says of the entries on Pius and the gods, Marcus was 'writing things down almost as they came into his head',¹³ he might have intended to come back to it later. That Fronto's contribution to Marcus' oratorical training is not mentioned should not surprise, for Marcus is recording moral debts, and the *Meditations* as a whole are concerned single-mindedly with moral improvement. Thus the entry for his painting teacher Diognetus (1.6) lists avoiding idle enthusiasm, disbelieving in magic, not being excited about cock-fighting and other sports, learning philosophy, and aspiring to ascetic practices — not a word about painting! In the case of the extended tribute to Antoninus Pius, the lessons include political conduct and care of the body, but these are things clearly relevant to Marcus' role as an Emperor carrying heavy responsibilities.

Champlin argues that Marcus is essentially giving character sketches of his mentors and that Fronto is 'deftly portrayed by two dominant and related traits, candour and warmth of heart ... the two most obvious and attractive facts of his tutor's personality'.¹⁴ In fact, both his imperial pupils celebrate these qualities in their letters. Thus, Marcus' co-Emperor Lucius Verus, writing from Parthia, where he was campaigning in the early 160s, pays tribute to both of these characteristics of Fronto together (*Ad Verum* 1.1.2 = Haines II.116-118). Excusing his failure to write, not only because he did not want to burden Fronto with his military anxieties, but also because he did not want to write in a way that belied his state of mind, Lucius continues: *simulare Lucium quicquam adversum Frontonem, a quo ego prius multo simplicitatem verumque amorem quam loquendi polite disciplinam didicisse me praedico!* ('How could Lucius make pretences to Fronto, from whom I prefer to claim that I have learned candour and true love rather than the art of cultivated phrasing!'). This is taking van den Hout's reading *verum amorem*, not *veri amorem* ('love of truth'); but, in any case, Lucius has already said that he relied on Fronto's love and indulgence towards his writing to others before writing to him, his excuse being: *illis officium officio repensabam, tibi amorem pro amore debeam* ('to them I repaid duty for duty, to you I would owe love for love').

Marcus himself much earlier, when he began his lessons with Fronto (n. 8 above), spelled out the importance of Fronto's example in sending him truthful criticism (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.13 = Haines I.14-16). Fronto had written him two letters, one scolding him for writing a sentence carelessly, the other encouraging him by praising his efforts.¹⁵ Marcus declares his great delight in the first letter,

As I read it, I cried out again and again, "Oh happy that I am". Someone will say, "Are you happy for having someone to teach you to write a maxim more tersely, more

¹³ Rutherford 1989², xvi.

¹⁴ Champlin 1980, 120-121.

¹⁵ The second letter is *Ad Caesarem* 3.12, in which Fronto praises the *sententiae* Marcus has turned, in an exercise set him.

elegantly?” No, that is not my reason for calling myself happy. It is that I learn from you to speak the truth ... your criticisms or guiding reins at once show me the way, without guile or feigned words. And I ought to be grateful to you for teaching me above all to speak the truth, and at the same time to hear the truth’ (*verum me dicere satius simul et audire verum*).

In another letter (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.18.2 = Haines I.78-80), he thanks Fronto for continuing to lead him *in viam veram*, replacing the conventional *via recta*.¹⁶

As for affection, that too figures in an early letter by Marcus, this one written to Fronto during the latter’s consulship of 142 (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.5.2 = Haines I.112-114). Marcus here speaks of his delight at receiving a letter from him:

Even my mother never wrote me anything so delightful, so honied. Nor is this due to your fluency and eloquence, for, by that criterion, not only my mother but all who draw breath would, as they do, yield the palm to you; but that letter of yours to me, not for its eloquence or learning, but bubbling up with so much kindness, brimful of such affection, sparkling with so much love (*tanta adfectione abundantes, tanto amore lucentes*), such as I cannot express in words, has lifted my heart on high with joy, inspired it with glowing fondness

Fronto not only afforded Marcus an example of truthful conduct and affection: he no doubt urged these qualities on him explicitly, just as he openly expressed in the letters his admiration of such behaviour. To Marcus he praises his son-in-law for his *veritas* (*De nep. amisso* 2.3 = Haines II.224), and to Lucius Verus (1.6.7 = Haines II.154) he commends his friend Gavius Clarus for his *simplicitas, castitas, veritas, fides Romana plane*, φιλοστοργία *vero nescio an Romana* (‘straightforwardness, continence, truthfulness, good faith, a plainly Roman quality, and warmth of affection, possibly not Roman’), continuing ‘for there is nothing of which, my whole life through, I have seen less of at Rome than a man unfeignedly φιλόστοργος. I imagine it is because no one at Rome is really φιλόστοργος that there is not even a word for this virtue in the Latin language’. The same virtue, with the same statement about its not being known at Rome, occurs in a letter of recommendation to the governor of Africa (*Ad amicos* 1.3.4 = Haines II.278). We can see why Marcus chose that word in paying tribute to Fronto in the *Meditations*.¹⁷ Then again, to Marcus, in reply to a letter wishing him a happy birthday and expressing ever increasing affection for his teacher and friend (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 5.47.1 = Haines I.230), Fronto writes, ‘All the blessings you have prayed for me are bound up in your welfare’, and he points to the pleasure he derives from seeing Marcus ‘so dear to your father, so sweet to your mother, a blameless husband, so good and kind to your brother’ (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.58.1 = Haines I.232).

As for Fronto’s preaching of truthfulness, that quality is the subject of a letter in Greek by Fronto to Marcus’ mother Domitia Lucilla, excusing himself from attending her birthday party because of his consular duties and taking the opportunity to say that he hopes the women who attend will be ‘genuine and truthful’ (ἄπλαστοι καὶ ἀψευδεῖς). He imagines himself shutting out of the celebration ‘those who pretend good will and are

¹⁶ Noted by van den Hout 1989, 139.

¹⁷ Later, as Emperor, he would sign off, *vale mi magister optime*, φιλόστοργε ἄνθρωπε (*fer. als.* 4 = Haines II.18).

insincere, “hiding one thing in their hearts while their lips speak another” (Hom. *Il.* 9.312), with whom everything from laughter to tears is fiction’ (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.15.2-3 = Haines I.148-150). Late in life, lamenting the loss of a grandson (*De nepote amisso* 2.9 = Haines II.230), Fronto takes comfort in a life well spent, saying: *verum dixi sedulo, verum audivi libenter. Potius duxi neglegi quam blandiri, tacere quam fingere, infrequens amicus esse quam frequens adsen<t>ator* (‘I have spoken the truth carefully, I have listened to the truth gladly, I have held it better to be ignored than flattered, to be silent than insincere, to be a negligent friend rather than a diligent flatterer’).

Haines (I.17, n. 1), commenting on Marcus’ early compliment in *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.1.3 (above, 70-71), is puzzled that Fronto is not actually thanked in the *Meditations* for teaching his pupil truthfulness. He apparently takes the tribute there to be simply about recognizing the deviousness and hypocrisy of tyrants. But I think Brunt and Rutherford¹⁸ are right to say that Marcus is stressing the kind of truthfulness that he had found particularly important as Emperor: the avoidance of the *dissimulatio* associated with tyrants like Tiberius or Domitian, and the flattery which rulers not only experienced (e.g. *Med.* 1.6, 16.3&4; 6.30.2; cf. Dio 71.3.4), but were also themselves tempted to practice (5.5; 11.18.10). Brunt also points out that only in Roman notions of statecraft do truthfulness and simplicity feature strongly — at least after Trajan, who was contrasted with Domitian in this respect, as attested by Pliny, Martial and Dio Chrysostom. In fact, he finds that Cassius Dio is here probably thinking of Trajan and his Roman eulogists in particular, because veracity also received much greater emphasis in Roman moral teaching than in Greek.¹⁹ In the *Meditations*, Marcus sets great store by it, not because he was tempted by the reverse — in fact he had been called ‘Verissimus’ by Hadrian (Dio 69.21.2; *AE* 1940, 62) — but precisely because, for him as Emperor, it might be difficult always to be candid. The different nuances in his early and late tributes to Fronto’s truthfulness may suggest that Marcus only came to see Fronto’s honesty in a more political light years later, when he had been playing that role for some time. Certainly he notes, among the many good traits of his adoptive father, who clearly was his model as Emperor, that he had few secrets and those only in matters of state (*Med.* 1.16.7).

In any case, Fronto taught, by word and by example, the two qualities of candour and affectionateness — the one distinctively Roman, as Brunt argues; the other, in Fronto’s own view, Greek. The *Meditations* show how important these qualities remained for Marcus. Brunt points out that Marcus refers to duties of sincerity and truthfulness in over fifty chapters, while φιλοστοργία is also celebrated in Book 1 as a virtue of his wife and of Sextus (1.17.7; 1.9.3), and later urged on himself (6.30.1; 11.18.9).

Candour and Affection in the Correspondence

I want now to examine both how Marcus responds to Fronto’s lessons of candour and affectionateness in his own letters to Fronto, and, more generally, how these modes of behaviour can be used to explain the dynamics of the correspondence. Freisenbruch,

¹⁸ Brunt 1974, 8-10 = 2013, 372-376; Rutherford 1989¹, 99.

¹⁹ Brunt 1974, 9-10 = 2013, 374-375.

discussing the correspondence with particular reference to the prevalence in it of health and sickness, concludes that it is a ‘unique epistolary pact between a tutor and a Caesar who cooperate and compete in a delicate balancing act between different power-sharing roles — *magister, discipulus, Caesar, amicus*’.²⁰ Though she views the correspondence too exclusively, in my view, from the perspective of power, with Fronto using his health as a way of pressuring Marcus into accepting his paedagogical authority, she is certainly right, to say that ‘there is an acute self-consciousness in the pupil’s epistolary posturing, a careful calculation of the right things to say and to placate his *magister*’.²¹

Contrast with the Correspondence with Lucius Verus

Before exploring further Marcus’ subtlety, it is worth noting, by way of contrast, the explicitness of Lucius Verus’ letters. In one already mentioned (*Ad Verum* 1.1.2 = Haines II.116-118), the special nature of the correspondence with Fronto is presented as one based on love, not (like most others) on duty: mention is also made there of a pact of some kind, presumably to be indulgent when the other does not write. Fronto too is explicit to Verus (*Ad Verum* 1.12.2-3 = Haines I.298-300). He spells out his gratitude for the way Verus and his brother Marcus, from their exalted position, reserve some of their love for him, going on to reveal that he wrote to a freedman in very courtly terms to ask if it would be convenient for him to visit the emperors who were in mourning for a member of the imperial family (probably Verus’ grandfather L. Ceionius Commodus [cos. 106]). Fronto also congratulates Lucius on his tactful method of avoiding the envy of his entourage, while still giving Fronto the honour of a kiss. Lucius had clearly asked Fronto for advice but then decided himself to admit him to his chamber rather than greet him in public (*Ad Verum* 1.11 = Haines I.294-296). As Champlin says of Fronto’s correspondence with Verus, ‘The mercurial relations between the two men invest it with a drama absent from the ultimately bland affection of the exchanges with Marcus’.²² Given the problems and revelations raised in the Verus correspondence about protocol, it looks as if Lucius, who was perhaps less intelligent and certainly less self-controlled than Marcus, and also less well-trained for his position by Antoninus Pius, is not as capable of performing in this double act and needs stage directions from Fronto.

Candour

Marcus in fact performs faultlessly, in his letters to Fronto, the honest, sincere, and unhypocritical behaviour that Fronto taught him to value, and which the *Meditations* celebrate. As Cassius Dio says, ‘That his whole conduct was due to no pretence but sprang from virtue is clear. For although he lived fifty-eight years, ten months and twenty-two days ... and had been Emperor himself nineteen years and eleven days, yet from first to last he remained the same and did not change in the least. So truly was he a good man and devoid of all pretence’ (71.34.4). In political terms, this is *civilitas*.

²⁰ Freisenbruch 2007, 237.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 249.

²² Champlin 1980, 110.

Salutations

Whereas the change in Marcus' status from Caesar to Princeps is marked by Fronto through a change of salutation — *Caesari suo Fronto* or just *Fronto Caesari* or *domino meo* giving way to *Antonino Augusto Fronto* or *Domino meo Antonino Augusto Fronto*, Marcus himself continues to address Fronto as *magistro meo*, his favourite salutation before and after his accession. Within the letters, Fronto sometimes addresses him when Emperor as *M. Aureli* (*Ad Ant. Imp.* 4.2 = Haines I.302) or *Marce* (*fer. als.* 3.13 = Haines II.18) or even *mi Marce carissime* (*De nep. Amisso* 4 = Haines II.232), and once he advises him, in the third person, as *Marcum meum* (*Eloq.* 4.8 = Haines II.78). Clearly Marcus' *civilitas* could be relied upon. We recall his admiration of Antoninus Pius for showing him that he could behave almost like a private citizen without loss of dignity (*Med.* 1.17.3).

Writing with his own hand

The continued intimacy and equality expressed in these letters is also indicated by the fact that they are normally written with his own hand. Seneca had said, 'That which is sweetest when we meet face to face is afforded by the imprint of a friend's hand on his letters, i.e. recognition' (*Ep.* 40.1). Cassius Dio (71.36) remarks that Marcus 'not only in his early youth but even later wrote most of his letters to his intimate friends with his own hand'. That is a bit exaggerated. He had so many letters to write, that he did dictate some to friends, once complaining, when still Caesar, that he had to write thirty in three days (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.7 = Haines I.184).²³ To Fronto, Marcus when Caesar mentions writing in his own hand (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.7 and 4.8.1 = Haines I.116 and I.184) but he also excuses himself, not only as Caesar (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 5.62 = Haines I.248) but as Emperor, when health prevents him from doing so (*De nep. amisso* 1.2 = Haines II.222). Fronto mentions Marcus writing in his own hand, when he himself cannot (*De bell. Parth.* 11 = Haines II.30).

The Herodes Atticus Case

However on one occasion, Fronto asks Marcus, when still Caesar, to write in his own hand (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.3.4 = Haines I.66), clearly in answer to a letter that was dictated. This exchange concerns the celebrated case involving Herodes Atticus, in which Fronto, who had not known previously of Marcus' closeness to Herodes,²⁴ was preparing to speak against him. Everything about this case is controversial: the date — 140s or 150s; the roles of Herodes Atticus and Fronto — prosecuting and defence lawyer, or defendant and prosecutor; whether Fronto's letters show that he capitulated or

²³ See on this, Millar 1977, 215.

²⁴ As Fronto says (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.3.2 = Haines I.64). Presumably the celebrated Attic orator had not yet become one of Marcus' teachers in Greek rhetoric (*HA Marc.* 2.4).

stood his ground, when asked by Marcus to wear a velvet glove;²⁵ and, finally, whether the fact that this letter (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.2 = Haines I.58-62) was clearly not written by Marcus in his own hand was a sign of ‘regal displeasure’,²⁶ a ‘gentle rebuke’²⁷ or neither.²⁸ In fact, Marcus was probably embarrassed about asking what he did, and so dictated the letter, in order that it might look less personal.

The correspondence about the Herodes Atticus case is further relevant to the issue of Marcus’ later tribute to Fronto, because Fronto says of the letter which Marcus dictated, ‘What could be more friendly, what more delightful, what more true (*verius*)?’ (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.3.1 = Haines I.62). It is the delicacy of this whole exchange (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.2-6 = Haines I.58-70) with Fronto that has led to most of the conflicting interpretations just mentioned. Marcus starts (3.2) by saying that Fronto can now make good his frequent offer to do what will please Marcus, thereby increasing his love for Fronto, if possible. He then deprecates his advice by saying that it may seem to come from a rash adviser or rash boy — he was at least in his twenties — and goes on to say that this is more a request than advice, but ends by hoping his advice will be accepted. The advice itself consists in urging Fronto *for Fronto’s own sake* not to put himself in a bad light by being too aggressive, and Marcus softens it by making it clear that he has similarly advised Herodes not to provoke Fronto. Fronto’s reply (3.3) starts with the compliment about Marcus’ truthfulness, denies the idea that Marcus has given childish advice, and even asks for more; how, he asks, is he to deal with the shocking facts about Herodes? Fronto claims to infer from Marcus’ friendship with Herodes that Herodes is likely to be a good man, while at the same time reciting a list of Herodes’ crimes of violence and avarice, making it clear that he would have to omit even what bears directly on the case, were he not to mention them. In a postscript letter (3.4) Fronto reminds Marcus that other pleaders may also speak ill of Herodes. Marcus replies (3.5) that he is only concerned with Fronto’s reputation and, answering his request for advice, agrees that whatever is relevant to the case must be said. In his reply to this (3.6), Fronto says he will always act as Marcus advises but goes on to warn that, as an advocate, he will have to show indignation by voice and gesture and that it is Herodes whom Marcus should prevent from speaking too harshly. Cova²⁹ seems to me right in suggesting that Fronto reserves his liberty of action on the most important issue; but Marcus’ point has been taken.

Rhetoric and the Light Touch

The finesse of this correspondence demonstrates in practice what Fronto advised in response to the disquiet Marcus expressed about rhetorical techniques, describing them as ‘crooked, insincere, and laboured, and by no means reconcilable with true friendship’. ‘Humankind’, Fronto writes, ‘is by nature resistant to scolding, responsive to coaxing.

²⁵ The first view is held by Champlin 1980, 105; the second by Cova 2004, 505-508.

²⁶ Champlin 1980, 105.

²⁷ Birley 1987, 79.

²⁸ Van den Hout 1999, 103.

²⁹ See n. 25 above.

Therefore we give way to entreaties more readily than we are frightened off by violence, and it is advice, rather than denunciation, that leads us to improve. We heed the courtesy of those who advise us but resist the inclemency of those who upbraid' ('courtesy' is here the important word *comitas*, used of good Emperors). Fronto also reassures Marcus that these techniques are reconcilable with truth by adducing Socrates, who, he says, did not lack seriousness and force, but saw that the dispositions of men, especially young men, are won over by courteous and sympathetic language rather than by the bitter unrestrained talk of Diogenes (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.16 = Haines I.100-102).

That Marcus accepted the need to combine truthfulness with a light touch shows, not only in the correspondence about the awkward Herodes Atticus case, but in exchanges with Fronto that are humorous, even teasing. Thus, more than once Marcus owns up *truthfully* to not doing his homework. Once, in the context of the flattery to which people in his position are subjected, he declares his devotion to Fronto and his studies, and then excuses his failure to submit his hexameters by saying that his secretary Anicetus did not pack the exercise when they left for Naples, knowing that Marcus would as usual put them in the furnace. But, he adds, 'to tell my teacher the truth', these verses were not in danger since 'I am thrilled with them' (*Ad Marcus Caesarem* 2.8.1-2 = Haines I.136-138). Another time, he says that his secretary was not on hand to copy an exercise, but goes on to admit that he did not like what he wrote, as he was in a hurry (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 5.41 = Haines I.212). We note that, in each case, Marcus adduces an omission by his secretary, a variation on the standard type of student excuse, but then goes on to show that the fault is really his own: his impetuous habits deterred his secretary from packing the homework; he did not think the verses were good enough to send.

Philosophy vs. Rhetoric

One of the excuse letters (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.13 = Haines I.214-218) has been solemnly taken to record Marcus' "conversion" to philosophy in 146 or 147, a view Kasulke is right to reject.³⁰ It starts with Marcus reporting the teasing of Aufidius Victorinus, not yet Fronto's son-in-law (which he became ca. 159), about how much nobler it is to be a judge than an orator like Marcus. Marcus then mentions pleasure, but also disquiet, at Fronto's coming visit, because he has not done his rhetorical exercises, despite having time for it. His excuse is the distress he has experienced in reading books by Aristo that make him realize his moral shortcomings: now at age twenty-five, he has not yet absorbed noble doctrines and purer principles. 'I do penance, am angry with myself, am sad, compare myself with others, and starve myself'. 'But', he says, 'I will now devise something, let Aristo's books rest for a while, and after reading some of Cicero's minor speeches, devote myself entirely to your stage poet'. Then he adds facetiously, 'I shall only write on one side or the other, since Aristo will not sleep so soundly as to allow me to defend both sides of the question'. Now Aristo of Chios³¹ was

³⁰ Kasulke 2005, 232-340.

³¹ I ignore the possibility that the Aristo meant is the jurist Titius Aristo, as advanced by Champlin 1980, 77, rejected by Rutherford 1989¹, 106, n. 41, and now not generally accepted (see Fleury 2012, 72).

a Stoic on the Cynic end of the school: he did not believe in any branch of philosophy but ethics; he did not believe in the Stoic doctrine of positive and negative indifferents or in giving precepts to govern practical decision-making. In other words, he had very simple ideas about how to behave morally and did not approve of the dialectic exercises exploring both sides of a question (D.L. 7.160-161). For him the essential thing was to drive out false opinions, as Seneca explains (*Ep.* 94.2-4; 5-17). He would not have approved of arguing on the other side against the truth.³²

This humorous letter can hardly mark a “conversion”. In fact, Marcus had been a devotee of philosophy since the age of twelve (*HA Marc.* 2.1; 2.6) and continued to be one, when marked out as the next Emperor (Dio 71.35.6), and, though he was exposed to other schools, Stoicism had the greatest influence on him. An early letter of Fronto, perhaps the earliest, already mentions philosophy as a study that should not be touched on superficially, as a parallel to the careful study required to achieve the proper selection of words (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.3.1 = Haines I.2). The concern with truth that troubles Marcus in his rhetorical training would have been well understood by Fronto from the start.³³ The Stoics believed the orator should speak the truth and not try to rouse the emotions of his hearers. The great example for Cicero was P. Rutilius Rufus, whose unjust condemnation was blamed on his refusal, as a good Stoic, to use the tricks of oratory (*De or.* 1.227-230; *Brut.* 114; cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.84). We already saw (76) Fronto invoking Socrates, revered by Stoics (as by all the philosophical schools), to support his idea that oratorical technique is not incompatible with truth. So such techniques even help moral improvement!

When Marcus became Emperor in 161, he realized that increased attention to oratorical technique was required, and his old tutor perceived that he needed reassurance both about his abilities and about the morality of using the tricks of the trade. So Fronto writes, ‘You will experience me as *magister* again’ (*De or.* 1 = Haines II.101). He reassures Marcus that, though he has rested on his oars for a while, his natural ability means that he is still the head of the regatta, and he praises his speech to the senate on the plight of the people of Cyzicus after an earthquake (*Ad Ant. Imp.* 1.2.2, 5, 6 = Haines II.34-40).³⁴ As for Marcus’ moral reservations about rhetoric, Fronto urges him, in the letters or essays known as *De eloquentia*, not to blame eloquence if he feels pleased with himself for saying something brilliant (*De eloq.* 2.9 = Haines II.63): it is the complacency that he must cure, not its occasion. Fronto also adduces eloquent philosophers,³⁵ and he carefully opposes rhetoric to the bit of philosophy about which Marcus himself had reservations, i.e. dialectic (*De eloq.* 2.13-14, 16 = Haines II.66-68; 70; *De eloq.* 4.10 = Haines II.78-80; *De eloq.* 5.4-5 = Haines II.82-84).

Finally, Fronto marshals the weapons of Stoic philosophy itself. He had, after all, been taught by Athenodotus, a pupil of the Stoic Musonius Rufus (*PIR*² A 1291; *Ad*

³² See Sedley 1999, 130-132, 146.

³³ Gärtner 1983, 42.

³⁴ Cf. *De eloq.* 4.5 = Haines II.74.3 on Marcus’ natural talent.

³⁵ Chrysippus, Epictetus, Socrates, Xenophon, Antisthenes, Aeschines, Plato, Euphrates, Dio Chrysostom, Timocrates, Athenodotus (Fronto’s own teacher), Musonius Rufus (*De eloq.* 1.4 = Haines II.50-52; *De eloq.* 2.13-14 = Haines II.66-68; *De eloq.* 4.4 = Haines II.74).

Marcum Caesarem 4.12.2 = Haines I.204; *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.1.3 = Haines I.170; *De eloq.* 1.4 = Haines II.50). He produces, as a guide to our *officia*, something he learned from his teacher (*De eloq.* 2.4 = Haines II.56).³⁶ It is very like the Panaetian doctrine of the four *personae*, known from Cicero's *De Officiis*. 1.110-116.³⁷ Fronto mentions three *rationes* or *species*: general human nature (*substantia*), one's particular personality, talents, and social role (*qualitas*), and, finally, one's goal and choice of life (*res* or *negotium*), thus amalgamating Panaetius' second and third *personae*, i.e. one's particular nature; one's individual circumstances, in terms of social status and resources given by fortune. Fronto's first and second *rationes* are preconditions for achieving his third.³⁸ The pursuit of eloquence, for Marcus, belongs to Fronto's second *ratio*: as a Caesar he must persuade the senate and the people in speeches, and officials and foreign kings in written communications (*De eloq.* 2.3-6 = Haines II.56-58). Becoming Emperor does not come under the last *ratio*, for Marcus had no choice: 'Suppose, O Caesar, you succeed in attaining to the wisdom of Cleanthes or Zeno, yet against your will you must put on the purple cloak, not the philosopher's mantle of coarse wool' (*De eloq.* 2.11 = Haines II.62-64), Fronto says later in the letter.

After the *rationes* or *personae*, Fronto turns to the doctrine of the indifferents and their role as the raw material of virtue, in that making the right choices of them constitutes performing *officia*. Eloquence, Fronto argues, is a positive indifferent:

Who doubts that a wise man is distinguished from a fool particularly by his sagacity and choice of things and by his judgment, so that if there be an option and choice between riches and poverty, though they are both devoid of vice and virtue, yet the choice between them is not devoid of praise or blame. For it is the special obligation of the wise man to choose rightly, and not wrongly to put this first or that second ... A similar course must then be kept in eloquence. You should therefore not covet it too much, nor disdain it too much: yet if a choice must be made, you would far and away prefer eloquence to dumbness' (*De eloq.* 2.7-8 = Haines II.60-62).

Fronto clearly knew his Stoicism, which he uses with great urbanity in defence of rhetoric, reassuring Marcus that rhetoric is practically important and morally acceptable, even for a Stoic. Just after proclaiming himself a *magister* again, Fronto, in his treatise *De orationibus* (Haines II.100-104), proceeded to give Marcus a lecture deploring Seneca's style. It is Fronto, not, as Champlin thinks, the senator Q Junius Rusticus, who was the natural person to compare with Seneca, and Fronto himself jokes about it (*fer.*

³⁶ First he mentions two *genera*, which, in the text as we have it, are unspecified: possibly the distinction between *commune officium* (καθῆκον), an act for which a rational justification can be given, and *rectum* or *perfectum officium* (κατόρθωμα), such an act as performed by the Sage; see Cic. *Fin.* 3.59.

³⁷ For the continuing influence of these ideas of Panaetius in Epictetus, Musonius, and Marcus himself, see Brunt, 1975, 33-35 = 2013, 306-309. The treatment in Fronto's letter seems to have escaped notice in this context.

³⁸ Different Stoic writers added their own nuances to the basic Stoic idea of duties attending specific social relations, and to Panaetius' theory of the *personae*. See Brunt (n. 37 above), and for Epictetus in particular, Gill 1988; Long 2002, 257, suggesting that Epictetus' use of Panaetius' scheme 'or something like it is more fluid'.

als. 2.2 = Haines II.7): ‘I as a man greatly eloquent and a sectator of Annaeus’. For Rusticus taught Marcus Stoic philosophy (HA *Marc.* 3.2-3), whereas Seneca had been asked *not* to teach the young Nero philosophy, but rhetoric. Like Seneca, Fronto changed from a tutor into an *amicus principis* after his pupil’s accession. Like Seneca, Fronto had been chosen for his ability to advise on affairs of state. Like Seneca, too, Fronto here uses philosophy to inform the advice he gives to the Emperor.³⁹

The last essay *De eloquentia* is a critique of a recent speech by the Emperor. Fronto here again shows his truthfulness in criticizing it, but also illustrates how the light touch of rhetoric, in the form of the rhetorician Dionysius Tenuis’ fable, can make the criticism more palatable (*De eloq.* 5 = Haines II.80-84).

Affection

In the critique just mentioned, Fronto assures Marcus that his criticisms are an expression of his love. That brings us to the second part of Marcus’ tribute in the *Meditations*, and the way that it is reflected in the correspondence.

The language of the letters is effusively affectionate, filled with declarations of love and longing, for Fronto and his pupils were often apart. It is obvious that responding to Fronto’s gushing affection must have been difficult for Marcus, temperamentally and philosophically. He was perceived as *durus* (HA *Marc.* 22.5)⁴⁰ — not that he did not feel for people, as his weeping for his *educator* (HA *Ant. Pius* 10.5) and his generosity towards his adoptive brother Lucius Verus show. But he was naturally ascetic and austere. ‘It is as easy to reconcile you to pleasure as to a polecat’, wrote Fronto (*fer. als.* 3.2 = Haines II.6).

Some time into their relationship, but before Marcus’ accession, Fronto sent him a teasing letter about love (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 1.3 = Haines I.82-90). He was replying to a solicitous letter of Marcus about his health, in which the prince alluded to his teacher’s habit of diverting him from such concerns with his humour and wit (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 1.1.2 = Haines I.80-82). Thus challenged, Fronto set out his idea of love, picking up several Stoic threads but twisting them in an unorthodox direction. He starts and finishes with the notion that he has done nothing to deserve such affection from Marcus. After listing all the things that he could have done to deserve Marcus’ affection, and stating that he has not done any of them, Fronto goes on: ‘And yet there is nothing I like better than that there should be no reason for your love of me. For that seems to me no love at all, which springs from reason and depends on actual and defined causes: by love I understand such as is fortuitous and free and subject to no cause,

³⁹ Champlin 1980, 120. Rusticus is thanked in *Meditations* 1.7, for teaching Marcus philosophy and moral improvement, and introducing him to the works of Epictetus while turning him away from rhetoric. Seneca was engaged by Agrippina to teach Nero rhetoric and statemanship, not philosophy, though philosophy was added to the curriculum after his accession, and *De clementia* illustrates the use Seneca made of it (Suet. *Ner.* 52; Tac. *Ann.* 12.8.2; Griffin 1976, 62-65).

⁴⁰ Fronto admits that he used to complain of his being *durus et intempestivus* (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.12.5 = Haines I.206), presumably before he began to teach Marcus.

conceived by impulse rather than by reason (*impetu potius quam ratione*),⁴¹ that needs no *officia* as a fire needs logs for its kindling, but glows with self-engendered heat' (§5). Fronto is attacking the idea of utilitarian friendship, rated below true friendship by the Stoics, following Aristotle. Thus, like Cicero, Fronto stresses that utility should play no part in creating friendship (*Amic.* 26-32) and that the love of friends should be spontaneous (*Fin.* 2.78). But Fronto equates friendship based on services rendered with that based on reason and arising from desert (§4-8),⁴² whereas for the Stoics a true friendship is deserved, being based on virtue, which requires reason, and on the natural attraction of various people to each other (Cic. *Amic.* 49-50). Fronto favours sudden and fortuitous love (§4-5), which he goes on to link with the Goddess Fortuna, proclaiming her superior to reason and human judgement (§6-7). This would, of course, be anathema to Marcus since Stoicism is designed to protect one from Fortune by rating her gifts as mere indifferenters.⁴³ But suddenly Fronto finds a way of demoting reason on Stoic grounds, by appealing to the Stoic belief in divination (§9-10). As Cicero makes the Stoic spokesman, his brother Quintus, say, natural divination is divine, whereas men who use reason to predict natural events are merely wise (*Div.* 1.111). So, according to Fronto, true love is based on intuition (*impetus*),⁴⁴ and its source cannot be understood by mere human intelligence and science, any more than the fountain-head of the Nile (Plin. *NH* 5.51).

One way in which Marcus responded to Fronto's love was by expressions of endearment, and his use of superlatives like *homo suavissimus*, *magister dulcissimus* or *carissimus* or *desideratissimus* or *Fronto iucundissimus* has often been noted.⁴⁵ But the most striking manifestation of his affection for Fronto is his concern for Fronto's health. The statistics show that the correspondence as a whole has a far higher percentage of letters about health and sickness than those of previous Latin prose letter writers. 45% of the letters by Fronto are on the subject, more than three times the percentage for Seneca (13%) and four times that for Pliny (11%), both of whom write far more about the subject than Cicero. The letters by Marcus show an even higher percentage than Fronto's, about 60%. It is notable that, in the Fronto correspondence, references to remedies and to regimen occur, as in the letters of Cicero and Pliny, but are swamped by the description of aches and pains.⁴⁶ Often the excuses that Fronto and Marcus offer for

⁴¹ *Impetus* does not seem to be the technical Stoic term ὄρμη, which, in Chrysippean doctrine, is perfectly compatible with reason. The colloquial contrast between emotion and rational response in Quintilian 6.1.28 seems more to the point. But *Med.* 7.55 does seem to use ὄρμητική κίνησις in opposition to λογική κίνησις, which, Brad Inwood suggests to me, may be one of the many marks of Platonism in Marcus, or a reflection of later Stoic work, starting with Panaetius, on the faculties of the soul.

⁴² Note in §7 the opposition of *sine ratione* and *officiorum ratione*.

⁴³ Cicero, in *Amic.* 54, includes an attack on Fortuna.

⁴⁴ As van den Hout 1999, 13, suggests, *impetus* here is akin to ἐνθουσιασμός, divine inspiration, as in *De div.* 1. 111: *auguria non divini impetus, sed rationis humanae*.

⁴⁵ See Fleury 2013, 66.

⁴⁶ For a fuller comparison of the treatment of illness in Latin letters from Cicero to Fronto, see Griffin 2011. The letters relating to health and sickness, many of which were collected by the ancient editor (see p. 68 above) in Book 5 of *Ad Marcum Caesarem*, are precisely those

not writing in their own hand mention specific physical complaints, such as the stiffness of the writer's hand or fingers. Fronto's letters to Marcus give details about neck pain, shoulder pain, pain in his knees, elbows, ankles, pain in both sides of the groin (in sequence), trouble with the sole of the foot, the arm, the fingers and toes, an accident in which he was burned at the entrance to the bath and had to spend the day in bed, diarrhoea and gastritis; Marcus often responds in kind, re-describing Fronto's ailments and, less often, his own insomnia, colds, chest pains, and poor digestion.

It may seem that we have two main options by way of explanation: either this is the way people talked in this period to their nearest and dearest, or Fronto was not typical in his self-pity, but a quite exceptional 'pain in the neck'. The first may seem more attractive, since the crescendo of concern with physical symptoms and regimens to promote health, from Cicero's correspondence to that of Fronto and Marcus, reminds us that Foucault dated the intensification of the care of the self, with its increased attention to the body, to the first and second centuries AD.⁴⁷

However, *souci de soi* is unlikely to be the whole story, for, if 45% of Fronto's letters deal with health and sickness, 35% concern his own illnesses, whereas the comparable figure for Marcus is 18%, and 30% of Marcus letters (half of all his references to health and illness) concern Fronto's illnesses. The imbalance in talking about their own illnesses was used by Whitehorne to argue that Marcus was not a hypochondriac, whereas Fronto was 'a selfish creature ready to complain to anyone foolish enough to listen'.⁴⁸ Fleury (2013), however, adduces the difference in age of the two correspondents (about twenty-six years) and their physical condition, for which there is outside evidence: mention is made of pain in Fronto's joints, notably his feet, by Gellius (*NA* 2.26.1; 19.10.1) and Artemidorus (*De somniis* 424), whether it was gout, rheumatism, arthritis, or a combination of them. But Marcus himself had delicate health even in youth (Cass. Dio 71.1.2; 71.36.3; 72.24.4; *HA Marc.* 3.7). It is true that he says little about his illnesses in the *Meditations*, except to complain about drowsiness and difficulty in getting up at the crack of dawn (5.1; 8.12), and to thank the gods for his physical endurance (1.17.6) and for sending dreams suggesting remedies for vertigo and spitting of blood (1.17.8); but Rutherford is probably right to suggest that this reticence is part of Marcus' rigorous asceticism.⁴⁹ There is also the fact that his "core project"⁵⁰ in the *Meditations* is moral improvement, to which only the references to being taught how to bear pain by precept (1.5; 1.8) and example (1.13; 1.16.7 and 10) are really relevant.

The great number of Marcus' references to Fronto's health (in nearly a third of his letters) is the most revealing statistic. Fronto's letters are in general very demanding. Not only are they full of physical details of his symptoms, but they make it clear how much attention he expects. For example in writing to Lucius Verus about his friend the senator

whingeing letters that have induced commentators to believe that Fronto cannot be responsible for the collection as we have it (Champlin 1974, 157; van den Hout 1988, LX).

⁴⁷ Foucault 1988.

⁴⁸ Whitehorne 1977 is the most helpful treatment of the topic of illness in the Fronto correspondence. The quotation is on p. 416.

⁴⁹ Rutherford 1989¹, 120.

⁵⁰ For a serious analysis of Marcus' "core project", see now Gill 2013, xxi-xxxiv.

Gaius Clarus (*Ad Verum* 1.6 = Haines II.150), Fronto explains that his friend devoted himself to his health, sitting up with him when he was ill, and feeding him when Fronto's rheumatism kept him from using his hands. Again to Verus, Fronto writes: 'How often have you supported me with your hands, lifted me up when scarcely able to rise, and practically carried me when hardly able to walk from bodily weakness' (*Ad Verum* 1.7 = Haines II. 240).

Whereas Marcus and Lucius are always sympathetic to Fronto's account of his symptoms, the Emperor Antoninus Pius had a rather crisp way of dealing with them. Writing to the Emperor to excuse himself for not attending the celebrations for the anniversary of his accession (*Ad Ant. Pium* 5 = Haines I.227), Fronto says: 'severe pain in my shoulder, and much more severe in my neck, have so crippled me, that I am still scarcely able to bend, sit upright, or turn myself, so rigid must I keep my neck'. To this we actually have the reply (*Ad Ant. Pium* 6 = Haines I.228), of which Champlin says, with justice, 'Pius' reply has an audible ring of formality, if not of the secretariat' and goes on to compare it to some of Trajan's replies to Pliny about such occasions. Pius writes:

As I have well ascertained the entire sincerity of your feelings towards me, so I find no difficulty, my dearest Fronto, in believing most deeply that this day in particular, on which it was ordained that I should assume this station, is kept with true and scrupulous devotion by you above all others.⁵¹

If the Emperor, who had probably hand-picked Fronto to teach his adopted sons, thought a standard reply like this would suffice, it is hard to believe that he found the details Fronto gave about his condition unusual or alarming.⁵² Pius was used to such letters from Fronto and ignored the sufferings but Fronto's devoted pupils reciprocated in kind and offered sympathy, while praising Fronto's fortitude (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 1.2.2 = Haines 1.82). It was their way of meeting their tutor's demand for affection.

Homosexuality?

The physicality of the exchanges between Fronto and Marcus has led Richlin to see their relationship, before Marcus' accession, as homosexual. One indication she points to is the emphasis on kissing, though she is aware that kissing was regarded as an honour, as we have already seen in the correspondence with Verus (*Ad Verum* 1.7 = Haines II.238). A letter of Fronto to Marcus is also revealing. It starts with what seems like erotic fervour: 'What is sweeter to me than your kiss? That sweet fragrance, that delight dwells for me in your neck, on your lips' (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.14.3 = Haines I.220). But Fronto then continues, 'Yet the last time you were setting out, when ... you were delayed by the *crowd* of those who were saying good-bye and *kissing* you, it was to your

⁵¹ Champlin 1980, 98.

⁵² Pius got used to such letters. In *Ad Pium* 8.2 = Haines I.238, Fronto excuses himself for not taking up the proconsulship of Asia allotted to him; he tells Pius how he tried, by abstemiousness in food and drink, at least to postpone attacks of illness, and how, after feeling better, he had a serious relapse: the fragments that follow may have contained more details.

advantage that I alone of all did not embrace or kiss you. So too in all other things I will never set my convenience before your interests'. Clearly, many people had the privilege of kissing the Emperor and his heir, so much so that it became a nuisance for them.

Richlin also overlooks the physicality of Fronto's relationship with others, such as Gavius Clarus, already mentioned (81-82 above), and of his relationship with Lucius Verus, who writes, for example: 'I seem to myself to see you hugging me tightly and kissing me many times affectionately (*Ad Verum* 1.4 = Haines II.236). And there are also the comparisons made with love for others. Once Marcus writes: 'Last year it happened in this very place and at this very time that I was consumed with passionate longing (*desiderium*) for my mother. This year you inflame my longing' (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 3.9.4 = Haines I.20), and Fronto writes that Marcus' mother is wont at times to say she envies him for being loved so much by Marcus (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 1.3.2 = Haines I.84). Fronto can compare his naming both Marcus and his mother in a speech in honour of Antoninus Pius to lovers (ἐρασταί) naming their beloved in every toast (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 2.3.4 = Haines I.134). Fronto also speaks of Marcus' baby daughter, 'whose tiny hand and plump little feet I shall kiss with more zest than your royal neck and honest and merry lips' (*Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.12.7 = Haines I.208).

In an illuminating analysis of the language of Roman friendship, Craig Williams notes that Fronto's correspondence reminds us that *amor*, especially but not only in conjunction with *amicitia*, often lacks the connotational penumbra of passionate elusivity that so frequently accompanies English "love", and he adduces *Ad Marcum Caesarem* 4.1.1, 4 (= Haines I.72, 74) where Fronto praises Marcus for creating a network of mutual affection among his friends. Williams shows, through comparison with Cicero's letters, how *amor* in letters signals *amicitia* and is best rendered as 'affection'. Cicero even draws attention to the similarity of his revulsion from Pompey, because of his flight from Italy in 49, to that experienced ἐν τοῖς ἐρωτικοῖς (*Att.* 9.10.2).⁵³

We must conclude that we are dealing with a *façon de parler* designed to convey deep affection. The hypochondria and solicitude about health are just another way of doing the same thing.⁵⁴

Conclusion

I hope that I have gone some way towards showing that the qualities and lessons for which Marcus remained indebted to Fronto — his candour and his affectionateness celebrated in the *Meditations* — were well appreciated at the time of the letters and provide guiding themes through this remarkable correspondence between the prince and his tutor.

⁵³ Williams 2012, 219-222, 245-246. In his discussion of the Cicero letters Williams follows Hutchinson 1998, 17, who points to 'the ardent and affectionate language with which these letters overflow' and discusses (162) this letter.

⁵⁴ I am grateful to the members of the Corpus Christi Seminar on Marcus Aurelius in the summer of 2013, whose comments on an earlier version have proved most helpful in revision.

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