

in subsequent centuries. As for his character, L's assessment is somewhat negative — 'he did not allow resentment to push him into corners, ... did not often have to revise decisions, ... was not easily frightened into sudden or violent action nor ... given to impulsive acts of generosity'. But, in more positive vein, 'steadiness was the Emperor's particular merit, ... (people) knew where they were and ... he provided a framework in which men could return to self-interested normality'. Her overall view is clear enough. The plaudits universally awarded to Vespasian cannot be justified. His reign was a 'return to normalcy', nothing more.

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Michel P.J. van den Hout, *A Commentary on the Letters of M. Cornelius Fronto*, Mnemosyne Supplementum 190, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999. xi + 725 pp.

M.P.J. van den Hout's excellent revised edition of the letters of Fronto (Teubner, 1988) is now accompanied by this impressive commentary. It includes a short introduction on the life of Fronto and a brief account of the history of the text, based on the detailed discussion printed in the *Prolegomena* to the edition, a survey of translations, seven Indices (grammatical and stylistic; *Latinitatis*; *Graecitatis*; Latin rhetorical, grammatical and literary terms; Greek rhetorical, grammatical and literary terms; matters (sic); passages of the *Vitae Pii, Marci* and *Veri* and of Marcus' *Meditations* compared with the Letters in the commentary),<sup>1</sup> a bibliography and a list of corrections to the prolegomena and the text of the 1988 edition. The main body of the book, in 629 pages, comprises a detailed commentary both on the letters and on the *testimonia et fragmenta*.

The commentary is extremely erudite and contains much valuable and illuminating material. It is concerned mainly with questions of textual criticism, the order of the letters (with welcome attention to the technique of the fourth-century collector of the letters), their chronology, prosopography, language (with a careful examination of the available translations of Fronto) and rhetorical terminology. In all these fields v.d. H. has many new and happy contributions that will be of use not only to those interested in Fronto and his age. Indeed, some of the discussions of rhetorical terms go much beyond what is found in the standard manuals,<sup>2</sup> which would make the detailed indices of this commentary an essential tool for anyone interested in Greek and Latin rhetoric.

The passages discussed in the commentary are marked only by page and line number as set in the author's 1988 edition, with no reference to the letters' numeration, which makes it barely manageable to anyone trying to look up a reference to

<sup>1</sup> A list of Fronto's lost works, an *index nominum*, a chronology of the letters and *conspetus editionum* accompany the 1988 edition.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, the discussion of *conditus* in 27.9.

one of the outdated earlier editions.<sup>3</sup> This may prove somewhat confusing for those interested in a specific letter and even more so for the indolent wishing to approach Fronto through the indices (alas, we sometimes do!), who must keep in mind that references to pages beyond 258 in the edition do not refer to Fronto's letters, but to passages from various authors from Gellius up to the twelfth century CE. The bibliographical references are also a bit cumbersome and must be traced in three separate lists: the *bibliographia critica* in the 1988 edition, an *additamentum* to this list in the present commentary and a separate list of 'other works' which follows it.<sup>4</sup> Once I mastered the system, I came across some minor *corrigenda*.<sup>5</sup>

It is also regrettable that the bibliography is not very rich in what has been written after 1988, and omits some very competent discussions of Fronto, including numerous articles in *ANRW* II.34.2 (1993), and in A. Foulon and M. Reydellet (eds.), *Au miroir de la culture antique: Mélanges offerts au Président René Marache* (Rennes, 1992) (marked *non vidi* in v.d. H.'s bibliography), as well as L. Holford-Strevens, *Aulus Gellius* (Oxford, 1988), A. La Penna, in *Storia di Roma II: L'impero mediterraneo, 3: La cultura e l'impero* (Torino, 1992) 491ff., M.L. Asatarita, *La cultura nelle 'Noctes Atticae'* (Catania, 1993); M. Grant, *The Antonines* (London, 1994), to mention only the most obvious ones, and a number of discussions of particular issues or passages in Fronto such as M.V. Ronnick, 'Substructural Elements of Architectonic Rhetoric and Philosophical Thought in Fronto's *Epistles*' in W.J. Dominik (ed.), *Roman Eloquence* (London and New York, 1997) 229-45 and A. Perutelli, 'Lutazio Catulo Poeta', *RFIC* 118 (1990), 257-81 (on the possible allusion in Fronto, *M.Caes.* 1.2.1, p. 2.6-7).

To most letters the commentary gives a short preface concerning chronology and prosopography. It does not provide a consideration of the general import<sup>6</sup> and structure of single letters, which would have made their line of argumentation easier to follow, especially in long and badly mutilated letters such as *Ver. Imp.* 2 and *Eloq.* 5. Nor does the commentary dwell much on cultural and social institutions and their history. The 'contubernium', so dear to Fronto's heart, is briefly described in 172.5, without tracing the origins and later development of this institution (cf. Champlin, 45-6). The ailments of Fronto and Marcus are duly indexed, but no attempt is made to inquire into the fact that Fronto's correspondence reveals a much greater concern

<sup>3</sup> The 1988 edition contains a concordance with pagination in Haines' Loeb edition (1919-20), and with the numbering of letters in v.d. H.'s earlier edition (1954). References to Naber's 1867 edition may be traced in the concordance of this earlier edition.

<sup>4</sup> One is a little surprised to find basic studies of Fronto such as R. Marache, *La critique littéraire de langue latine et le développement du goût archaisant au I<sup>e</sup> siècle de notre ère* (Rennes, 1952) and E. Champlin's *Fronto and Antonine Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 1980) in the *bibliographia critica* merely because they happen to have a textual conjecture in a footnote.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, R.B. Rutherford's *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* is of 1989, not 1922; J.M. Kelly's *Roman Litigation* should be dated 1966; and W. Eck, 'P. Aelius Apollonides, ab epistulis Graecis, und ein Brief des Cornelius Fronto' is in *ZPE* 91 (1992), 236-42.

<sup>6</sup> Champlin (p. 50) characterizes some of the letters in the collection as 'brief essay[s] on a single topic'.

with health than, say, that of Cicero or Pliny, and that this openness in discussing one's afflictions is prominent in other writers of this period,<sup>7</sup> which G.W. Bowersock has termed 'an age of hypersensitivity in literature and bodily care'.<sup>8</sup> This bit of self-indulgence is not the only trait Fronto shares with Greek intellectuals of his day, and it is regrettable that the commentary eschews the much debated question of the connection between Fronto and the Second Sophistic.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, perhaps a discussion of Fronto's Ἐρωτικὸς λόγος (250.10ff.), with its marked dependence on the *Phaedrus*, would have gained much from a comparison with similar discussions in Plutarch, *Amat.*, Ps. Luc., *Amores* (adduced in the note to 253.13), Maximus of Tyre (*Dialexis* 18.21), and Favorinus (Barigazzi 161-9), discussed in M.B. Trapp, 'Plato's *Phaedrus* in Second-Century Greek Literature', in D.A. Russell (ed.), *Antonine Literature* (Oxford, 1990), 141-73.

And finally, a short note on a point of chronology which might have serious implications for our understanding of Gellius' representation of Fronto. V.d. H. accepts the view that the Gellius mentioned in *ad Am.* 1.19 (p. 182.4) is Aulus Gellius, and that the passage refers to the reports in the *NA* of Fronto's learned conversations. He further assumes that Fronto saw these passages after the publication of the *NA*, which he dates to the last years of Fronto's life, that is, just before 167 CE (*ad p.* 260.6). He does not explain this dating, which he regards as 'far more probable' than Marache's 146-156 CE and Astarita's 158-159 CE, nor does he mention the later date of publication proposed by E. Castorina on the basis of Gellius' use of the perfect 'praestitit' with reference to Herodes Atticus in 19.12.1, which seems to imply that the note was written after Herodes' death in 177 CE.<sup>10</sup> This argumentation, I admit, is not incontestable, but it cannot be dismissed without consideration. It is, of course, possible that Fronto was shown the passages in which he is represented before the *NA* was published. But in such a case we can no longer be sure that the passages which have come down to us are the ones which irritated him. It would be very much like the tactful Gellius to alter his representation of the great luminary had he known of his

<sup>7</sup> In addition to obvious cases such as Aristides, we may also add a case in which Gellius speaks of his own ailment (18.10.2), and several others in which he reports on discussions held while he accompanied a teacher to visit a sick friend (12.5, 2.26, 19.10, cf. 12.1).

<sup>8</sup> G.W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1969), p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> On which see, e.g., P. Soverini in *ANRW* II.34.2, pp. 955ff.

<sup>10</sup> 'Gellio e la data di pubblicazione delle "Noctes"', *GIF* 3 (1950), 137-45; see further L. Holford-Strevens, 'Towards a Chronology of Aulus Gellius', *Latomus* 36 (1977), 93-109 and *Aulus Gellius*, pp. 13-14 with n. 30.

discontent. We thus cannot be sure whether the five chapters in which Gellius makes Fronto one of the interlocutors represent the reception of Frontonian ideas by a member of the contemporary Roman intelligentsia or an approved portrait, forming part of the rhetor's self-presentation. Regrettably, this doubt may impair the validity of attempts to discover in these chapters the reasons for Fronto's vexation.

To sum up: though not very user-friendly, v.d. H.'s commentary is an essential tool for readers of Fronto, and a thorough and stimulating one.

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Anna Maria Andermahr, *Totus in Praediis. Senatorischer Grundbesitz in Italien in der Frühen und Hohen Kaiserzeit*, Antiquitas, Reihe 3, Band 37, Bonn: Habelt, 1998. viii + 579 pp. + 4 maps. ISBN 3-7749-2846-0.

Anna Maria Andermahr is a pupil of Werner Eck and her book is a revised version of the dissertation that she presented at the University of Cologne in the winter semester of 1996/97. What immediately strikes the reader is how well she has absorbed the lessons of her supervisor in interpreting epigraphical evidence. The sophistication of her approach to technical matters sets in sharp relief the amateurish quality of some discussion of inscriptions to be found in recent books in English about the early Roman Empire which profess higher and more ambitious historical aims than Andermahr, but which still sometimes treat inscriptions as self-contained texts without reference to the lost statues and usually vanished monuments on which they were originally inscribed and which they were written to accompany and to explain.

The importance of landowning and landed estates to the Roman senatorial class has long been recognised, and it is significant that Andermahr's first footnote refers to the discussion of landed wealth in the Republic in the classic study by Israel Shatzman, *Senatorial Wealth and Roman Politics* (*Collection Latomus* 142: Brussels, 1975). However, whereas the evidence used by Shatzman was overwhelmingly literary, the evidence for senatorial landowning in the imperial period is predominantly epigraphical. Andermahr confines her attention to senatorial landowning in Italy between Augustus and the year 260, which she misdescribes in conventional fashion as 'der Regierungsantritt Galliens' (2). The book has three parts: first come methodological prolegomena, most of which discuss the evaluation of different types of epigraphical evidence (4-42); second in logical order, though printed third, is an enormous catalogue of senators and senatorial families whose ownership of land is attested in a specific place or places (126-496); between the prolegomena and the catalogue Andermahr presents her results (43-125).

The first part systematically reviews different types of evidence, such as fistulae, funerary monuments, honorific dedications (subdivided by categories of dedicants), building inscriptions, foundations, dedications to emperors and archaeological evidence. It also considers briefly such topics as senators holding municipal office, the origins of senators' slaves and senatorial names borne by freedman and their descendants. All this is conscientiously and competently done. One section, however,