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Negotiation and the Construction of Intimacy in the Letters between Fronto and Marcus Aurelius

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by

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B.A., Latin and Classical Studies, Randolph-Macon College, 2015

THESIS

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This book is dedicated to my father Mark Keith, whose love of the Classics inspired my own,
and in whose footsteps I proudly walk.

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Abstract

This project analyzes the letters between Marcus Cornelius Fronto and his student Marcus Aurelius as works of literature, rather than merely sites for historical mining. The letters, I argue, contain carefully constructed tropes of rhetoric and feature intentional polish that serve as opportunities for discussion about the virtues of philosophy and rhetoric during the Second Sophistic. Topics of discussions between both parties range between the imagery of sleep, and intimate spaces, like bedrooms, to substantive allusions to Plato's philosophy and his dialogue *Phaedrus*. By looking beyond the identification of concrete names and dates to the literary, referential, and personal world of Aurelius and Fronto's correspondence, the reader is afforded a valuable window into the development of letter writing, rhetoric, and education in the Antonine period.

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Introduction

Marcus Cornelius Fronto (ca. 90/95-167 CE) can be found on very few, if any, graduate reading lists, and is likely taught in very few Latin courses. Fronto, rhetorical tutor to Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE), has been largely neglected by scholars since the discovery of a corpus of his letters and those of his student, by Cardinal Angelo Mai (1782-1854 CE) in 1815. Since then, Fronto's unpopularity has been fueled by several misconceptions, or overstatements, promoted by scholars as early as Fronto's rediscovery: first, that the letters contained in the newly discovered manuscript are entirely frivolous, concerned only with hangnails and stories of personal ill health;¹ secondly, that the letters portray a passionate romantic relationship between Fronto and Aurelius, ruffling the feathers of the scholars and their Victorian sensibilities at the time of the letters' discovery;² the third misconception is closely tied to the second, that where scholars hoped for an Antonine-age Cicero to shed light on the political matters of the day, Fronto was found instead, uninterested in contemporary politics, and concerned most of all with his relationship with Aurelius;³ the fourth is more subjective, Fronto simply doesn't write good Latin.⁴

Some of these objections ring true, Fronto indeed had no time for politics, and spends little ink on it. However other issues are overstated, primarily because of the strength of the biographical tradition that has surrounded the study of Fronto, a tradition present even before the discovery of his manuscript. This latter tendency is so strong that the only English translation of Fronto's work rearranges his letters into an attempted chronological order based on the stages of

¹ Whitehorne 1977; van den Hout 1999.

² Richlin 2005, 2006.

³ Haines 1919, 1920; van den Hout 1999.

⁴ van den Hout 1999; Zetzel 2000.

Fronto and Aurelius' relationship.⁵ In this Introduction, I explain the ways in which the reading of Fronto's letters, in an attempt to construct a timeline of his life, or that of Aurelius, has obscured the literary nature of these letters. The importance of the letters between Fronto and Aurelius is allowed to shine more when we break free from attempts to organize the men's lives from their extant writings. Instead, the literary and personal details visible in these letters welcome us into a greater appreciation of the state of Fronto and Aurelius' epoch, the way that students and teachers in the high Roman empire forged their own way forward using *exempla* from the past, and how private elite men referred to one another, in letters to other correspondents, and within their epistolary exchange. This information, while perhaps not a map of politics of the time, may be as important, and is certainly more accessible in this corpus.

Fronto's Reputation

First, I provide a short summary of Fronto's life, and the life of his extant writings, details of which have been so influential to those attempting to reconstruct Fronto from the pages of his letters. Fronto was born around 90 CE in Cirta, a colonial city in modern-day Algeria, and came to Rome as a teenager to finish his education.⁶ He certainly grew up learning and speaking Latin, and probably Greek, and there are no signs of his having grown up with any other language.⁷ Fronto was a prominent senator and speaker, though no complete extant speeches exist, and for these eloquent qualities he was chosen to be the rhetorical tutor of Marcus Aurelius

⁵ C.R. Haines' 1919 and 1920 Loeb editions chronologically reorder the letters to tell a story of Fronto and Aurelius' relationship. This method depends on a view of Fronto and Aurelius' relationship connection with intense interest from Aurelius at first, then fizzling at *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13, where he seems to declare that he will focus on philosophy at rhetoric's expense. Given that arc, many letters that are more affectionate are deemed to be earlier letters, even when no other internal dating is possible. Champlin 1974 provides the most in-depth analysis of what dates can be extracted from the letters, but leaves more questions of dating than he answers.

⁶ van den Hout 1999: vii.

⁷ Claassen 2009: 50.

and Lucius Verus upon their adoption as royal heirs, and Antoninus' selection as Hadrian's successor in 138 CE.⁸ His close relationship with the imperial family earned him a suffect consulship for July and August of 143, and he would have become proconsul of Asia, had illness not interfered.⁹

It is from contemporary and near-contemporary *testimonia* that we have most of our information about Fronto's reputation. Those from closer to Fronto's time seem to have opinions that are compatible with the Fronto in his letters. Aulus Gellius (125-ca. 180 CE), a contemporary of Fronto, portrays him in the *Attic Nights* (II.26.1-23; XIII.29.1-6; XIX.8.1-16; XIX.10.1-14; XIX.13.1-4) as something of a sage, sick in bed, but welcoming visitors, and having rhetorical conversations and debates with figures like Favorinus and Metellus. Gellius's Fronto is particularly concerned with Latin etymology and the selection of just the right words for the right occasion.¹⁰ Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* IV.22 (ca. 2nd century CE) remarks on Fronto's attempts at remedying his constant *podaegra* (likely gout).

As we move further forward in time, we receive the opinions that misled so many centuries of scholars, and led to such disappointment at the discovery of Fronto's actual writings. Cassius Dio in his *Res Romanae* LXIX.18.3 and LXXI.35 (ca. 155-235 CE) calls Fronto one of the best orators of the Roman law courts, and notes his influence over Aurelius as his teacher of rhetoric. Eumenius' *Panegyricus* (ca. 3rd century CE) declares that Fronto is not second among the Romans in eloquence, but perhaps tied with Cicero for first-place.¹¹ In the *Breviarium* VIII.12.1, Eutropius (ca. 4th century CE) calls Fronto *orator nobilissimus*, and claims that

⁸ van den Hout 1999: viii.

⁹ van den Hout 1999: vii. Fronto wrote a letter, *ad Antoninum Pium* 1.8, asking to be released from the honor of his proconsulship due to his bad health.

¹⁰ A list of all Fronto's *testimonia* can be found in van den Hout 1999: 259-276.

¹¹ Eumeneus, *Panegyricus* Lat.8(V).14(a. 297).

Aurelius' rule was successful because of his education with Fronto. Ausonius remembers Fronto as one of the only scholars to teach an emperor who did not go wrong, and implicitly compares himself with Fronto, a *tantus orator*.¹² The *Historia Augusta* notes that Aurelius set up a statue for Fronto.¹³ Mamertus Claudianus (ca. 5th century CE) recommends Fronto's work for its *pompa*, in a list including Naevius, Plautus, Cato, Varro, Gracchus, Chrysippus, and Cicero.¹⁴ For Sidonius (ca. 430-489 CE), Fronto has impressive *gravitas*, and shone because of his speeches.¹⁵ Macrobius cites Eusebius' four styles of speaking: *copiosum, in quo Cicero dominatur, breve, in quo Sallustius regnat, siccum, quod Frontoni adscribitur, pingue et floridum, in quo Plinius Secundus quondam... luxuriatur* ("Copious style, in which Cicero is lord, short, in which Sallust rules, dry, which is given to Fronto, and thick and flowery, in which Pliny the Younger once reveled" [*Saturnalia* V.1.7]).

These *testimonia* are not untrue, but clearly focus on Fronto's eminence as an orator, not his production of epistles to his student. Fronto's reputation for speechmaking came crashing down after the discovery of his letters revealed a rather different persona than the Imperial-era Cicero substitute that many scholars expected. Cardinal Angelo Mai, who discovered the manuscript, has to date likely been the most positive editor of Fronto, but even he seems to be somewhat disappointed at the contents of Fronto's letters: "Fronto was not lacking marks of glory, though he was not a pragmatic man, nor does he seem to have been born in his habits fit for political life: for which reason, he makes mention in his writings infrequently of public matters."¹⁶ A later editor, Samuel Adrianus Naber (1828-1913 CE), goes much further: "I

¹² Ausonius, *Gratiarum acto* 7.32-33 (a.379).

¹³ *Historia Augusta, Vita Marci* 2, 4-5, 3.5.

¹⁴ Mamertius Claudianus, *Epistulum ad Sapaudum* (p. 206 Engelbrecht).

¹⁵ Sidonius, *Letter to Apollinarius* I.1.2, VIII.10.3.

¹⁶ Mai 1819: xxi; *non caruit igitur gloriae insignibus Fronto, etsi non fuit pragmaticus homo, neque politicae vitae genus aptum fuisse videtur eius moribus: quare et publicorum negotiorum satis infrequens in his scriptis mentio fit.* Translation from the Latin is my own.

confess, I do not love the flourishes and images and empty jingling of Fronto, if it must be spoken truly, I hate them.”¹⁷ Michael van den Hout, the first to write a commentary in any language on the entire corpus more than one hundred years later, attempts to hide his indifference to his subject by suggesting that Fronto did not mean for his letters ever to be read publicly: “we cannot blame him for the triviality of his scribbled notes. Who wants to see published all the letters he has ever written? Since Niebuhr, modern literati have passed devastating judgement on Fronto’s letters; not quite undeservedly, though Fronto was no simpleton, only a third-class writer.”¹⁸ James Zetzel, in his disapproving review of van den Hout’s commentary and lack of understanding towards Fronto, is still somewhat sympathetic to his view, that Fronto “is, in many respects, a bad writer; but he is a great bad writer.”¹⁹

These negative views seem motivated by the readers’ expectation that Fronto’s letters would provide in-depth political commentary, as Cicero’s did: Fronto is not Cicero, and Fronto’s style is not Ciceronian, though he admires Cicero. Fronto is likewise not the political player that Cicero was. This is one of the largest motivating factors for the older commentators above, and still affects more modern readers. Another issue may well be the expectation letters often bear, namely that they project an unedited truth about the author, as well as that they depict serious matters. In this way, letters of all sorts were anticipated to reveal the character of the man who wrote them, and thus silly letters, in antiquity then and now, seem to reflect a silly person.²⁰

¹⁷ Naber 1867: iii: *sed, fateor, Frontonis flosculos et imagines et inanes tinnitus non amo et, si verum dicendum est, contemno*. Translation from the Latin is my own.

¹⁸ van den Hout 1999: x. B.G. Niebuhr wrote his own commentary on some of Fronto’s corpus soon after Mai in 1821. Niebuhr’s edition is heavily relied upon by Naber, and shares Naber’s dislike of the letters, but to a lesser degree.

¹⁹ Zetzel 2000: 1.

²⁰ The difficulty of considering letters as either documentary or literary begins with Adolf Deissmann in 1923, who classified letters as either “real” or “literary.” W.G. Doty in 1969 was the first to oppose Deissmann’s binary, and instead argued that letters should be viewed on a spectrum from more private and intimate to more public and open. There are as many categorization methods as there are scholars of epistolography, but I, in particular, follow Patricia Rosenmeyer 2001, who contends that no piece of writing was ever truly written without consideration of an

Letters more concerned with personal health, and a personal relationship have been interpreted to reflect a person obsessed with health and with the approval of his student.²¹ However, I believe that scholarship should now move away from reading these letters as providing absolutes about the essence of Fronto or Aurelius, or about specific details of the politics and policy of the Antonines. These letters, while sent and received by real people, are not merely documentary briefs, or sites for historical mining. In this thesis, I argue that the letters are carefully constructed pieces of literature, sent between men of advanced education as devices of increasing that education. As such, they can be read as carefully constructed, with an eye to participating in the literary trends of the age, referring to literary allusions both outside and within their epistolary exchange. They also bear signs of intentional polish, serving their role as vehicles for each author's self-presentation. While I do not disregard their nature as actual correspondence, it would be a mistake to limit scholarly investigation to obvious facts of dates and names. We must also look beyond to the literary flourishes and play in the letters which was so meaningfully included, and features so prominently in the corpus. I argue that by looking deeper, we can become privy to a more nuanced understanding of Fronto and Aurelius. We can view their relationships with one another and their contemporary context as dynamic, much more life-like than a clean timeline, or a tidy relationship arc. We can also thus better appreciate Fronto and Aurelius' status as examples of the development of Roman letter writing, rhetoric, and education into the Antonine period.

audience, particularly by an elite Roman man, and thus cannot truly be free from considerations of intention and construction. For more categorizations and explanations, see Stirewalt 1993, Costa 2001, Trapp 2003, Morello and Morrison 2007, and Ceccarelli 2013.

²¹ Concern with the body was seen in several authors of the Second Sophistic, including Aelius Aristides and Artemidorus, as noted in Bowersock 1969. Foucault 1981-1982 links this concern for the body with an interest in regimen and a turn away from things outside one's control, like politics. Whitehorne 1971 attempts to clear Aurelius of the charge of hypochondria by attributing it to Fronto. Morello and Morrison 2007 show that health was a frequent topic of letters. For more on hypochondria and letters, see Beard 2002 and Horstmanshoff 2004.

To move into this new type of investigation, we must first examine the ways in which these letters have already been viewed. Despite the disdain with which many regard Fronto, he has been proven useful and even interesting for historical analysis. Edward Champlin has worked on Fronto's letters and their potential to inform us about the high empire in the second half of the 2nd century CE, though he also seems to disregard their value as literature.²² Champlin even goes so far as to write the only definitive biography of Fronto, in which he combines information from the letters with outside witnesses and accounts of Fronto in an attempt to reconstruct his life. Champlin's Fronto is a historical figure, but not a celebrated writer. For Champlin, chronology is the only way to better understand Fronto's writings, and thus his greater worth.

Others have focused on Fronto and Aurelius' personal connection in the letters, and argue that they depict an erotic relationship. Amy Richlin is the strongest advocate for reading the emotionally intimate nature of the letters as erotic, a view that seems to draw strength from the reconstructed chronological order of Haines' translation. She charts a relationship arc that begins with a deep romantic connection, then is broken by Aurelius' rejection of Fronto and rhetoric; then their relationship becomes distant, though at times nostalgic.²³ Richlin admits that the naturally effusive nature of letters from this time period, as well as the difficulty of parsing ancient friendship separately from modern, offers difficulties to any sure declaration of an erotic relationship in these letters.²⁴ Christian Laes strongly disagrees with Richlin's analysis; he argues that Fronto's letters to Aurelius show the same closeness as those to his family, and that "both

²² Champlin 1974: 157: "Fronto's work could be a first-rate source of imperial history, whatever their literary merit. The establishment of a chronological frame, however incomplete, and the separation of what can be known from what is merely surmised, are the first steps towards their rehabilitation."

²³ Richlin 2006: 112: "The usual outline of Fronto's relationship with Marcus holds that Fronto was cast aside like an old shoe when Marcus got tired of rhetoric. I would submit that it may have been the case that rhetoric was cast aside like an old shoe when Marcus got tired of Fronto." In either formulation, Richlin's view is firmly tied to Haines' chronological arrangement.

²⁴ Richlin 2005: 6.

the literary and sociocultural context do not allow the interpretation of a gay master and pupil playing dangerous games.”²⁵ More recently, Yasuko Taoka has moved the conversation from speculation of an actual, physical relationship depicted in the letters, to a consideration of the effect of such imagery on the epistolary relationship. While she sides with Richlin, Taoka invokes Michel Foucault to argue that “whether they had a sexual relationship is irrelevant. There is a prurient interest among us letter-readers to know the intimate details of the writers’ lives. Furthermore, there is a fixation upon the sex act when interpreting homoerotic discourse, as if the presence or absence thereof determines the nature of the relationship. As Foucault might say, this fixation unconsciously applies modern beliefs about gender, sexuality, and relationships to the ancient world. The premise of this essay is that the relationship of Fronto and Marcus lies in the epistolary rhetoric by which it was conducted.”²⁶ Taoka’s view of these letters significantly moves away from speculation of a biographical nature, to the consideration of the literary purpose for intimate and affectionate language, a trend which this project follows.

There are others who have recently taken more interest in the literary life and exchange between Fronto and Aurelius. Simon Swain has pointed out the significance of codes, namely the use of language of love and friendship, and reports of poor health, to construct their relationship; he compares such code-switching with that from Latin to Greek in the letters.²⁷ Importantly, Swain, too, steps away from a firm biographical tradition, noting that the occasions of love, friendship, and illness “may of course be taken at face value (and often are), but probably should not be wholesale.”²⁸ Annelise Freisenbruch takes a closer look at Fronto’s use of medical language and depictions of his own infirmity, arguing that such language allows each

²⁵ Laes 2009: 5-6.

²⁶ Taoka 2013b: 408-409 references Foucault’s *Hermeneutics of the Subject* 1981-1982: 157-159.

²⁷ Swain 2004: 19.

²⁸ Swain 2004: 19.

correspondent to portray himself as physically and mentally affected by the ill health of the other, and such an emotional co-dependency is significant in defining the pedagogical roles each adopts in the letters.²⁹ Taoka looks at the literary significance of the few women mentioned in the corpus, and their relationship with one another as opposed to Fronto and Aurelius',³⁰ as well as the use of metaphor and ekphrasis to portray rhetorical and pedagogical assignments and Fronto and Aurelius' personal connection.³¹ I follow the trend of these authors, who temper somewhat the biographical expectations and analysis with more focus on the intentional rhetoric used in the letters between two educated, elite men, about education and about one another.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 begins briefly with a review of scholarship on health language and its role in informing the intimacy between Aurelius and Fronto. Then, I argue that the language of sleep, dreams, and bedrooms works in a similar way to construct Fronto and Aurelius' educational relationship. Descriptions of resting, doing homework in bed, and namely writing letters in a private bedroom, not only invite the correspondent into that intimate space with them, drawing on their personal relationship, but also introduce questions of what educational assignments should be done where, at what time, and under what regimen. Freisenbruch has already shown how attention to regimen and balance shows in Fronto and Aurelius' discussions of bodily injury and ill health. Fronto often promotes moderation of work in favor of relaxation, which he likely intends to mean both sleep and casual reading of rhetorically significant texts. I argue that this particular point, Fronto's stressing of relaxation, is portrayed metaphorically through sleep

²⁹ Freisenbruch 2007: 242-249.

³⁰ Taoka 2013a.

³¹ Taoka 2013b.

language, discussions of sleeping, dreaming, and bedroom settings. By reminding Aurelius of his need for moderation both metaphorically and explicitly, Fronto pushes Aurelius to become the ideal rhetor, and, he hopes, the ideal emperor, one who uses rhetorical teachings to communicate with and to his advisors, the senate, and his people.

Chapter 2 approaches the question of Fronto's feelings towards philosophy, and seeks to disprove the idea, primarily van den Hout's, that Fronto hated philosophy. However, the text of the letters does not show a constant and consistent avoidance of philosophy. Rather, philosophers are denigrated along with other groups of people, and often only to specific people who felt dislike towards philosophy to begin with. Elsewhere, and often when writing to Aurelius, Fronto shows some affection towards philosophers. Therefore, I argue that Fronto uses philosophers as purposeful *exempla* in support of his rhetorical teachings, not in opposition to them. Fronto presents rhetoric as a tool that all philosophers need to hone, and to which Aurelius, too, will need to attend if he wants to effectively share and promote his philosophy. Such a dichotomy of Fronto's support of rhetoric and distaste for philosophy as considered by van den Hout suggests a certain powerlessness or ineffectiveness on Fronto's part when taken alongside the fact that Aurelius is famous for his philosophy. However, viewed through the new light of cooperation between rhetoric and philosophy, Fronto can be seen to have a larger effect on Aurelius.

In my conclusion, I argue that Aurelius' successful reign as emperor and his subsequent philosophical writings owe a huge debt to Fronto's tutelage. Ironically, perhaps, my more literary reading may provide some biographical results, namely that if Fronto is accepted as a larger influence on Aurelius' life and reign, his letters become relevant again to those attempting to construct an imperial biography, or to understand Aurelius as a historical and literary figure. Overall, this project aims to continue the investigation of Fronto and Aurelius' correspondences

in a literary way, and to increase the relevance and awareness of the letters as pieces of constructed rhetoric and self-presentation. This does not disregard the fact that these letters are written from a real person to a real person, and discuss their real lives, and thus may be read as somewhat documentary. Instead, I argue that it is by looking beyond the mere documentary, to the world that Aurelius and Fronto constructed together in their letters, that we can learn the most about each man, about educated elite Romans in the high Roman empire, and can truly appreciate the nuance of the text that survives.

Chapter 1

Dream a Little Dream of Me: Sleep and Persuasion in the Letters of Fronto and Marcus Aurelius

This chapter explores the construction of intimacy through images and tropes relating to sleep in the epistolary correspondence between Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE) and his rhetorical tutor Marcus Cornelius Fronto (ca. 90/95-ca. 167 CE). My argument is that these nocturnal and bedroom images are used by both Aurelius and Fronto as either introduction to or subject of letters that negotiate the terms of their educational relationship. In *ad M. Caesarem* 1.5, Fronto himself makes the connection between sleep and his educational intentions when he states: *sed sumne ego beatus, qui haec intellego et perspicio et insuper ab dom(ino) meo Caesare magister appellor? quo pacto ego magister, qui unum hoc quod te docere cupio, ut dormias, non inpetro?* (“But am I not blessed, I who understand and recognize these things and, moreover, I who am called teacher by my lord Caesar? How can I be called teacher, I who am unable to teach you the one thing I want, that you sleep?” [1.5.5.8-10]).¹ Fronto’s question expresses a disconnect between his learning objectives and what Aurelius takes away from his teachings: throughout the letters each correspondent continually negotiates his position in relation to the other. In their educational relationship, this presents itself as a tense grappling over which of the two is in charge. This negotiation is often expressed in terms of moderation, and the maintenance of an appropriate regimen.

¹ All Latin and Greek text of Fronto and Aurelius’ letters comes from van den Hout 1988. All English translations are my own, unless otherwise stated. In this quotation, I follow van den Hout 1999: 23-24 in reading *sumne* as *sum nonne*, and in taking *quo pacto* with the previous *appellor*. Fronto doubts his ability even to be called teacher if he is not able to teach Aurelius what he intends to.

Most importantly, *ad M. Caesarem* 1.5 introduces an overt connection in the letters between sleep and education. In the quotation above, Fronto claims that the only thing he wanted to teach Aurelius was to sleep. Below, we will see how an analysis of sleep and education reveals not only the way in which Fronto aims to educate Aurelius, but also with what agenda in mind. I argue that Fronto attempts to shape Aurelius within his ideology of what a Roman emperor should be, namely a benevolent ruler reminiscent of Aurelius' adoptive father Antoninus Pius (86-161 CE). Fronto's ideal ruler consults his subjects, and makes frequent use of rhetorical skill and eloquence to communicate with others, rather than withdrawing into philosophical seclusion.²

Before assessing Fronto's attempts to mold Aurelius into a model ruler, however, I will situate my arguments within scholarship on epistolography, particularly the effect of assumed sincerity on readers of letters, and how that assumption leads to a biographical interpretation of many correspondences, particularly those between Aurelius and Fronto. Then, I will detail the existing discussions of sleep in these letters and how little there is. To fill in this deficit, I turn to a parallel consideration of health in those epistles, and how language describing personal wellbeing—discussions of illness, recovery, injury, and pain—is used by Fronto and Aurelius to influence and negotiate their personal relationship. Their application of health imagery in these letters will prove useful to my analysis of Aurelius and Fronto's application of sleep.

² Van den Hout 1999: ix states that Fronto hated philosophy, and that for Fronto “a philosopher on the throne was a disaster,” but he does not explain the evidence for this assertion. The letters show Fronto often turning to philosophical allusion to engage with Aurelius. I do not think Fronto hated philosophy as much as he believed that it was a distraction for Aurelius, and took away time from his student's study of rhetoric. As argued below, Fronto believes that an emperor with excellent rhetorical skills would use them to engage with his subjects and advisors, behavior Fronto wanted to see in a ruler. Chapter 2 tackles this problem in detail.

Assumed Sincerity

A central treatment behind the concept of sincerity in letters can be found in a second century BCE rhetorical handbook written by Demetrius.³ In it he asserts the innate truthfulness of the letter as a form. His assertions likely reflected the views of his contemporaries and predecessors, and may have influenced later readers of his work to view letters similarly:⁴ σχεδὸν γὰρ εἰκόνα ἕκαστος τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς γράφει τὴν ἐπιστολήν. καὶ ἔστι μὲν καὶ ἐξ ἄλλου λόγου παντὸς ἰδεῖν τὸ ἦθος τοῦ γράφοντος, ἐξ οὐδενὸς δὲ οὕτως, ὡς ἐπιστολῆς (“Everyone writes a letter as a near image of his own soul. And on the one hand, one can even see the character of the writer in every kind of writing, but on the other hand, from no kind of writing in such a way as the letter” [277]).⁵ The assumption that the letter reveals the true reality of its writer influences the circumstances of its use,⁶ and has also accounted for many letters being disregarded, if they are suspected of not being “real” letters.⁷ Adolf Deissmann, a twentieth-century German philologist and scholar of Paul’s biblical letters, attempted to reconcile this problem inherent in letters. Specifically, he developed the binary of *Brief* and *Epistel*, which separates real letters (*Brief*)—letters which were actually sent by real people, and were spontaneous representations of the author’s actual thoughts and conditions, and received no

³ I follow Halliwell 1995 in dating Demetrius to the second century BCE. Halliwell 1995 also includes a summary of the debate over Demetrius’ chronology.

⁴ Malherbe 1988: 5.

⁵ Demetrius, *de Elocutione*.

⁶ On the one hand, some letters are embedded into historical narratives, lending an air of authenticity to support the surrounding text; See Olson 2010 for this phenomenon in Josephus. On the other hand, other letters are embedded into fictional contexts, designed to trick the viewer who would assume their sincerity. *Iliad* book 6 provides the first account of a letter in literature. Rosenmeyer 2001: 28 and Ceccarelli 2013: 59 note that Bellerophon’s trust in the letter as introduction, and not as execution order, reveals the early tensions between written correspondence and the truth. See Rosenmeyer 2013 for the use of the letter as deception in Euripides.

⁷ Pseudonymous letters, letters written in the style of an author, or purporting to be written by that author, have long come under fire for not being truthful, and thus not meaningful. Hanink 2010 shows that the pseudonymous letters of Euripides are not merely attempts to trick people, but instead represent the reception of Euripides’ legacy by a later audience, and an attempt to manipulate that legacy to support philosophical aims.

polish before transmission—from fictional letters (*Epistel*) that represent poetic, unrealistic, and thus in Deissmann’s view inconsequential pieces of literature.⁸

Much scholarship now considers correspondence along a spectrum rather than a binary, considering letters to be either more or less private with the understanding that all letters have some aspect of self-presentation. Yet many problems still remain, and there are as many categories as there are commentators.⁹ The assumption of letters as representing true and sincere attempts at communication often contributes to a biographical reading, in that letter collections are read as making up an accurate picture of their author’s life, intentions, and political and social surroundings. In seeking a narrative arc to this end, some letter collections are manipulated into an artificial and sometimes questionable chronology.

A Biographical Reading

Not unlike other letter collections, the correspondence between Fronto and Aurelius has been subject to rearranging, editing, and supplementation in an attempt to create a cohesive narrative.¹⁰ Fronto’s first editors, Cardinal Angelo Mai, B. G. Neibuhr, and Samuel Adrianus Naber, did not change the arrangement of letters first arranged by addressee in the manuscript.¹¹ C. R. Haines, however, broke with his predecessors and rearranged the letters into what he considered a chronological order. This order presents a narrative: Fronto and Aurelius began the letters as an educational exchange between affectionate correspondents, and over time Aurelius’

⁸ For more on Deissmann, see Malherbe 1988 and Rosenmeyer 2001.

⁹ See Doty 1969, Rosenmeyer 2001, Costa 2001, Trapp 2003, Morello and Morrison 2007, Ceccarelli 2013, and Hodkinson, Rosenmeyer, and Bracke 2013.

¹⁰ For example, many editors remove the letters of Cicero from their traditionally received books and put them into chronological order, so that a life of Cicero may be read from them. For the negative effect this has on the importance of the originally edited books, see Beard 2002. For a response to the chronological tradition, see Hall 2009 for a literary examination of the letters.

¹¹ For an account of the early editors and manuscript transmission, see van den Hout 1988: VIII-LXXX.

imperial duties and interest in philosophy began dividing them, until the “schism” of *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13, when Aurelius declares that philosophy is his major concern, not rhetoric.¹² After that, Haines’ narrative has it that the letters are polite and detached, though Fronto seems to long for the days of their old association more than Aurelius does. Haines’ arrangement has been highly influential, to the point that nearly all subsequent scholars of Fronto and Aurelius frame their arguments in these biographical terms, citing less affectionate letters as indicating a later date, and those more effusive letters that contain rhetorical work as dating earlier. Edward Champlin critiques Haines’ chronology, and although he succeeds in poking holes in Haines’ clean narrative, he consciously generates problems in the chronology while failing to offer answers.¹³ However, Haines still remains a fundamental influence on modern readings of the relationship between Fronto and Aurelius as portrayed in their letters. For example, Amy Richlin leans on Haines to establish her reading of a sexual relationship taking place between Fronto and Aurelius. She marks 4.13 as signaling a romantic breakup as well as an educational shift, and so views the letters as documenting the rise and fall of Fronto and Aurelius’ love.¹⁴

My analysis moves away from a biographical interpretation of these letters, due mainly to manuscript issues cited above;¹⁵ instead, I prefer to read these letters as moments within the text

¹² For the “schism,” see Haines 1919: 218. Richlin 2005: 112 believes that this happens around the time of Aurelius’ marriage to Faustina, and so represents Aurelius moving on from rhetoric to philosophy at the same time as he moves away from Fronto as a lover, towards his new duties as a husband. Champlin 1974 challenges the notion that 4.13 is about philosophy at all, but rather law, and so does not represent the great schism of Haines. This has been disregarded by all but Birley 1981.

¹³ Champlin 1974.

¹⁴ See Richlin 2006. Taoka 2013a: 408 builds on Richlin, believing that a romantic relationship is likely, but notes the undue emphasis the physical sexual act has received in considering Fronto and Aurelius’ relationship. Laes 2009 provides a strong rebuke of Richlin, particularly in his consideration of kisses not as romantic, modern kisses, but as ritualistic kissing typical of social relations between elite men.

¹⁵ Given the poor state of the manuscript, and the paucity of secure biographical information, I avoid rearguing the same points with Haines 1919, 1920 and Champlin 1974 in order to create yet another attempted chronological arrangement. I follow Champlin 1974 in accepting that letters marked *ad M. Caesarem* are sent to Aurelius before his ascension to emperor in 161 CE, and those *ad Antoninum Augustum* are likely afterwards, and that letters referring to specific family members must happen during their lifetimes. However, I break from previous scholars in attempting to avoid dating based on emotional tones or stages in their relationship, as these tend to be based on

and time of Fronto and Aurelius' relationship. In my reading, I treat each letter or exchange as an example of a mood or attitude in Fronto and Aurelius' relationship and not necessarily as a plot point in a predetermined biographical narrative. This reading will therefore be by definition less decisive and exact than many others, but I intend to shed light on the use of literary images and tropes concerning sleep, and the effect of such images on the construction of intimacy between Fronto and Aurelius in these letters. In turn, I argue that this intimacy is brought to bear to negotiate the educational obligations of each correspondent. Fronto in particular is invested in encouraging Aurelius to excel in rhetoric, in the hopes that he will use those eloquent skills to communicate with his subjects and advisors as an engaged and involved emperor.

Scholarship on Sleep and Health

The scholarship on the function of sleep in Fronto and Aurelius' letters is rather thin. In a discussion of health in this corpus, Richlin notes that the letters' concern with sleep imagery is "thought-provoking," but makes no argument about its effect on the text at large.¹⁶ One dream, in *ad M. Caesarem* 4.12, has received particular attention, but no study to date has attempted a larger scale look at what sleep, dreaming, and bedroom situations mean when they crop up in the correspondence.¹⁷ Therefore, my argument finds support in scholarship outside of the letters of Aurelius and Fronto. In particular, I lean on the findings of Andrew M. Riggsby and James Ker. Riggsby argues that the portrayal of the *cubiculum* emphasizes its role as a private and secret place, often out of sight of all those except trusted family and slaves, who could be asked to

artificially constructed narrative, and not on sure fact. I also realize that it is unlikely to be able to completely come out from under Haines' ideological umbrella, and I note areas in which my interpretation is likely tied to his.

¹⁶ Richlin 2006: 20.

¹⁷ See the discussion on 4.12 below.

leave.¹⁸ Ker builds on this, analyzing the commonalities between performative descriptions of *lucubrationes*, or nocturnal writing sessions, by Roman writers. *Lucubrationes* usually occur in the bedroom, taking advantage of the freedom this private location offers from embarrassment for a writer or speaker practicing their craft.¹⁹ Importantly for my argument, Ker asserts that letters which claim to be written at night hold extra weight, that their very nocturnality obliges the reader more than a standard letter, because a nocturnal composition requires more effort from a writer at a time usually reserved for sleep.²⁰ It should be noted that such a practice is not without its limits. Ker explains that “there was a strong tendency to see a person’s use of time as an indicator of his or her moral and social identity,” and so as Fronto and Aurelius explore this night-writing trope, emphasis is made on the appropriate bounds of such practice, and on keeping one’s behavior moderate.²¹ Fronto and Aurelius both show themselves writing at night, trusting that “the resulting performance is programmatic for the reception of each given text.”²² Such a performance and nocturnal setting is designed not necessarily to receive a night letter in response, but to add value to the letter, and to encourage the recipient to take the message more seriously because of the extra time spent on its composition. I use Ker’s concept of nocturnality to analyze the letters between Aurelius and Fronto, and the effect that it has on the men’s relationship. As I will show, sleep and nighttime are meant to oblige Aurelius to follow more closely Fronto’s instructions about education.

In addition to considerations of sleep, the scholarship on health imagery in Fronto and Aurelius’ correspondence has developed significantly within the last forty years. J.E.G.

¹⁸ Riggsby 1997: 43-47.

¹⁹ Ker 2004: 214-215.

²⁰ Ker 2004: 227-228.

²¹ Ker 2004: 216.

²² Ker 2004: 227.

Whitehorne calls Fronto's focus on health "hypochondria," and explains Aurelius' engagement in such discussions as characteristic of a student eager to please his "neurotic" teacher.²³ Richlin believes that exchanges of illness and injury are an opportunity for "mutual coddling" between the two men, an argument that relies on her interpretation that these letters show Fronto and Aurelius engaged in a romantic relationship.²⁴ Simon Swain offers a substantial look at what the presence of health imagery might indicate, arguing that description of illnesses and injuries is one register in which Fronto and Aurelius negotiate their relationship. This health imagery is an intentional literary construction in these letters, which does not necessarily represent the actual health or illness of each man.²⁵ Annelise Freisenbruch builds on Swain, and asserts that the letters show a competitive relationship between *magister* and *discipulus*, one in which Fronto maintains the upper hand.²⁶ Freisenbruch figures the relationship in terms of health because both Fronto and Aurelius represent themselves as reciprocally and causally connected, namely that the poor health of one weakens the health of the other, and one's recovery can help the other feel better. Fronto and Aurelius attempt to assert their control over the relationship by manipulating these conventions with the aim of provoking pity or worry in their correspondent.

I follow Freisenbruch's assertions about health when considering the construction of Fronto and Aurelius' friendship around mentorship. I argue that, just as health is used as a medium for Fronto and Aurelius to question their personal relationship, sleep imagery and language of the bedroom is likewise a medium for the dynamic negotiation of their educational relationship. I do not follow Freisenbruch in believing that Fronto maintains the upper hand but,

²³ Whitehorne 1977. He also connects Fronto's interest in health with the hypochondria of Aelius Aristides, following Bowersock 1969 in categorizing this as typical of the Second Sophistic.

²⁴ See note 14 above for Richlin's 2006 erotic argument.

²⁵ Swain 2004: 19.

²⁶ Freisenbruch 2007: 237.

instead, I read these letters as showing a tense, dynamic relationship in which a teacher fights for control over education against a student who holds a higher rank in social and political matters. Their competition is complicated by their clear affection for one another.

Both Fronto and Aurelius seem interested in regimen, and what behaviors made one moderate, and sleep often comes to represent this moderation. As I will show, Fronto puts a great deal of effort into encouraging Aurelius to be moderate, whether that means sleeping before a speech in the Senate, or actually taking time for relaxation on vacation.²⁷ Connecting sleep with education, as Fronto does above in *ad M. Caesarem* 1.5, allows us to better understand the dynamics of Fronto and Aurelius' educational relationship. Sleep as persuasive force reveals the goal Fronto has in mind while grappling with Aurelius, and what motivates him to continue to assert himself and his educational precepts.

In the following, I demonstrate the basic level on which Fronto and Aurelius use sleep imagery and nighttime tropes to persuade one another in educational settings. Then, I show how sleep becomes personified and then deified, so that adherence to sleeping at the correct time becomes a matter of religious importance. These exchanges around the discussion of proper behavior and education build towards Fronto's desire to have Aurelius draw a similar, but larger connection between rhetoric and good rule. I conclude by examining what exactly Fronto's ideology of good rule was, and his intention that Aurelius follow the general pattern of his recent predecessors Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius, against the looming anti-example of Nero.

²⁷ Foucault 2005 discusses the tendency towards intense personal self-interest in this period, calling it the "care of the self," and is also concerned with its connection to moderation and education. Bowersock 1969 tends to view this self-interest as hypochondria. Johnson 2010: 36-42 discusses the importance of incorporating literary activity within other daily activities, and how shared habits develop the community of elite literary men.

Persuading with Sleep

Fronto and Aurelius use sleep and bedroom imagery to persuade one another to agree with their educational ideas, but that does not mean that all such letters are set at night. In *ad M. Caesarem* 3.7, Aurelius asks for help with ten rhetorical exercises (*εἰκόνας decem*), and claims that he has been working for a while in his bed (*lectulo*).²⁸ Only after establishing this bedroom setting does Aurelius ask Fronto for help to finish the assignment: *<in> nona te socium et optionem mihi sumo, nam minus secunda fuit in persequendo mihi* (“in the ninth exercise I call you as my partner and judge, for this one was less agreeable for me while pursuing it” [3.7.2.2-3]).²⁹ By depicting himself in his bedroom, Aurelius invites Fronto to share that imagined, private space with him. Only then does Aurelius ask for Fronto’s help. Aurelius means to draw on the intimacy provided by his bedroom setting to encourage Fronto to help him with his schoolwork. When Aurelius addresses Fronto as *socius* (partner) *et optio* (judge), he hopes that Fronto will embrace these roles, if he is a good teacher.

The intimacy constructed by the bedroom setting is not the only persuasive effect of this letter. By working in his bedroom, Aurelius subverts the intended, restful nature of the bed and bedroom by doing homework there. Ker has argued that when an author claims their work was written at night, they add extra importance to it because of the special time they converted from leisure in order to work on it.³⁰ Aurelius’ bedroom setting likewise adds weight to his homework attempts because he is working on them in a place where he should be resting. Aurelius’ extra

²⁸ Webb 2009: 161 describes such rhetorical exercises, *εἰκόνας*, as ekphrasis: “Ekphrasis is described as having an emotive and persuasive function, spurring the listener to wish to see the sight described with the eyes of the body.”

²⁹ See Taoka 2013a for more extensive analysis of the function of this rhetorical exercise and others in the corpus. Both Taoka 2013b: 416-417 and Richlin 2006: 48 note the martial meaning of *optio*; Aurelius wants Fronto’s aid in doing battle with his work.

³⁰ Ker 2004: 227-228.

effort in an unusual location is meant to show how hard he is working, and thus obligate Fronto to help him with his rhetorical exercises.³¹

Aurelius connects his care of the self with educational work when he compares his academic labors to Fronto's current care of his own arm: *bracchio curando operam dedisti* ("you have given attention to healing your arm" [3.7.1.2-3]). Whereas *opera* elsewhere refers to educational or imperial duties, Aurelius uses this term to compare his own homework to the work Fronto is doing towards preserving his health.³² *Opera* here comes to represent both educational work and self-care, the need to put effort into duties as well moderate rest. Such concern for maintenance and regimen is present throughout other letters as well: in *ad M. Caesarem* 5.1 and 5.2 Fronto urges Aurelius to sleep *si quicumque nos amas* ("if you ever love me" [5.1.1]), so that he can deliver a speech in the Senate. Aurelius agrees because of his love for Fronto: *ego te numquam satis amabo: dormiam* ("I will never love you enough: I will sleep" [5.2.1]). There is more here than simply a teacher's concern for his student. Rather, Fronto again connects sleep with his rhetorical teachings, and so recommends sleep as the key to Aurelius' success in the Senate. Fronto's concern for rhetorical education is linked with his concern for Aurelius' behavior and care of himself when he asks him to sleep *per istas noctes* ("through these nights" [5.1.1]). Fronto not only tells Aurelius to sleep, but urges normal patterns of behavior, framing care of the self in the service of Aurelius' upcoming rhetorical performance.

³¹ Such persuasion reveals that Aurelius as student is not naturally in control of the educational relationship, and so feels the need to persuade and control Fronto. See Morgan 1998: 246 for the expectation of ancient students as passive receptors of information, and teachers as active shapers of their students. This passivity is clearly not adopted by Aurelius, whose imperial position problematizes any total submission to a tutor, or individual of lesser rank.

³² For *opera* as educational or imperial duty, see *ad M. Caesarem* 1.7, 2.11, 3.17, 4.19, 4.13; *ad Antoninum Augustum* 1.2; *ad Verum* 2.1, 1.6; *ad Amicos* 1.15, *de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3.5, 3.9. As seen above, *opera* occasionally means attention to health, see also *ad M. Caesarem* 3.9, *de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3.1; but *cura* is more often used as concern for well-being, or as anxiety, see *ad M. Caesarem* 3.2, 4.3, 5.60; *ad Verum* 1.6, 2.2, 2.6, 2.7; *ad Amicos* 1.20.

The connection Fronto makes between sleep and education expands Fronto's sphere of influence to include Aurelius' extra-curricular regimen and behavior: if it serves education, Fronto as teacher has purview to advise. This in turn builds towards Fronto's goal to shaping Aurelius into the ideal ruler. If sleeping allows Aurelius to speak well in front of the Senate, and if the eloquence in speaking to the Senate is a desirable trait in a successful ruler, then Fronto has all the more reason to encourage this moderate behavior in his student.

Fronto's concern about Aurelius' behavior outside of his educational duties can be further seen in *ad M. Caesarem* 4.12. In *ad M. Caesarem* 4.11, Aurelius plays a trick on Fronto by making him think that he is gravely ill, when in fact it was his daughter who is sick. After Fronto describes his reaction, he takes the opportunity to discuss *haec frivola* ("these silly little things" [4.12.3.7]), namely how he has felt about his relationship with Aurelius: *nam ferme metu magno et pavore relevatis conceditur ludere aliquid atque ineptire* ("for it is allowed to those freed from great fear and terror to play a little and be silly" [4.12.3.4-5]).

Fronto's main proof of affection for Aurelius is figured specifically as a dream, and this dream becomes the medium through which Fronto addresses the current status of their relationship. He begins by explaining that, whenever he sees Aurelius in a dream, he always hugs and kisses his student (*video in somnis, numquam est quin amplectar et exosculer* [4.12.4.1-2]).³³ Fronto uses explicitly nocturnal words, pointing out this first "poetic and **dreamy**" proof of his love (*argumentum poeticum et sane somniculosum* [4.12.4.4-5]), which he then follows up with a more argumentative one (*accipe aliud, rixatorium iam hoc et iurgiosum*; "have another, this one now brawling and argumentative" [4.12.5.1]). This sets up Fronto's discussion of how, because of his great affection, he at times has spoken harshly about Aurelius' behavior.

³³ Richlin 2005: 123-24 argues that this letter takes place after the separation of *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13, and that when Fronto gets a chance to write to Aurelius again, he cannot hold himself back from expressing his passion.

*nonnumquam ego te coram pacusissimis et familiarissimis meis gravioribus verbis absentem insectatus sum: olim hoc cum **tristior quam par erat** in coetum hominum progredere vel cum in teatro tu libros vel in convivio lectitabas (nec ego dum tum theatris necdum conviviis abstinebam), tum igitur ego te durum et **intempestivum** hominem, odiosum etiam nonnumquam ira percitus appellabam.*

I sometimes reproached you openly to my few and very good friends with rather serious words when you were not around: once when you came more **seriously than was proper** into a meeting of men, or when you were reading books in the theater or at a party (not then when I used to avoid theaters or parties), and, therefore, moved by anger, I sometimes called you an **inappropriate** and even hateful man.

(*ad M. Caesarem* 4.12.5.2-7)

Here, Fronto mentions behaviors that are slightly strange and irregular. Aurelius' emotion has at times been more serious than proper, and he is *intempestivum*, literally doing things at the wrong time. Here, Fronto for the moment overlooks his educational concerns to comment directly on Aurelius' immoderate behavior. Fronto criticizes Aurelius, seemingly because he thinks this commentary to be in Aurelius' best interest. Fronto also introduces the affectionate behavior of kissing and hugging Aurelius in his dreamy proof of love to lessen the blow of the second, more argumentative proof, Fronto's criticism, which shows that Aurelius still has work to do. Just as above at *ad M. Caesarem* 5.1 and 5.2, Fronto uses sleep imagery to direct Aurelius' education, and the proper behavior that reinforces Fronto's rhetorical aims.

In *ad M. Caesarem* 3.17, Fronto uses wakefulness, rather than sleep, as a persuasive tool. Fronto writes that he has stayed up almost all night, sleepless, worrying about whether he has done all he could for his student: *quod tu me putes **somnum** cepisse, **totam paene noctem** pervigilari mecum ipse reputans, num forte **nimio amore** tui remissius et clementius delictum aliquod tuum aestumarem* ("Because you think I got **sleep**, I stayed up **nearly all night** considering with myself whether by chance because of **too much affection** for you I judged too

negligently and kindly some fault of yours” [3.17.1.1-3]). In this letter, Fronto invites Aurelius into his bedroom at night, an even more intimate and private setting than Aurelius’ daytime homework question in *ad M. Caesarem* 3.7. Whereas in *ad M. Caesarem* 5.1 and 5.2 sleep was figured as ensuring Aurelius’ rhetorical success, now Fronto’s worry of educational failure brings on sleeplessness. Fronto thinks that he may have overlooked some flaw in Aurelius’ education because of his strong feelings. While Fronto eventually determines that it is Aurelius’ choice of an epideictic speech, and not his performance as a student that gives him pause, clearly Fronto thinks there is room for improvement. He may be disguising his criticism of Aurelius by focusing on his own worry and guilt, and by praising Aurelius’ rhetorical accomplishments, which here fall under the more traditional sense of *opera* as attention to a duty: Aurelius has achieved skill *multum supra tempus quo operam his studiis dedisti* (“much beyond the time in which you gave **attention** to these studies” [3.17.1.6]). By explaining that Aurelius is good considering how little time he has dedicated to rhetoric, Fronto undercuts this praise with the unspoken suggestion that Aurelius would have been better if he had spent more time on his eloquence.

In *ad M. Caesarem* 3.17, Fronto intends to motivate Aurelius towards greater rhetorical achievement by encouraging him to spend more time on his studies. While Fronto certainly is concerned with refining Aurelius’ eloquence, in this letter he is also interested in reasserting his own position: if Aurelius no longer needs a teacher, then he no longer needs Fronto. This view can stand beside that of Fronto’s overall goal being Aurelius’ proficiency with rhetoric, through which he hopes to shape Aurelius’ future rule. I think it also follows that, in order for Fronto to realize his intentions for Aurelius, he needs to continue teaching him. This would suggest that a need to remain close to Aurelius may not be simple self-interest, but perhaps strategic planning.

The bedroom setting and intimacy of this letter support the goal of continued education, along with his avowed strong feelings for Aurelius. The only way for Aurelius to honor Fronto's extra effort and live up to his teacher's affection is to follow his wishes and attend more to his rhetorical work. Fronto's investment of nighttime spent on Aurelius' education intends to obtain a return, namely Aurelius' renewed attention to rhetoric.³⁴

Aurelius, too, uses sleep imagery to frame discussions about his education, but it is not always the education that Fronto intends. In *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13, Aurelius discusses his delay in completing an assignment from Fronto, and expresses his renewed attention towards philosophy.

nam quod scribendum dedisti, ne paululum quidem operae ei, quamvis otiosus, dedi. Aristonis libri me hac tempestate bene accipiunt atque idem habent male: cum docent meliora, tum scilicet bene accipiunt; cum vero ostendunt, quantum ab his melioribus ingenium meum relictum sit, nimis quam saepe erubescit discipulus tuus sibi que suscenset, quod viginti quinque natus annos nihil dum bonarum opinionum et puriorum rationum animo hauserim. itaque poenas do, irascor, tristis sum, ζῆλον πῶ, cibo careo. his nunc ego curis devinctus obsequium scribendi cotidie in diem posterum protuli. sed iam aliquid comminiscar et, quod orator quidam Atticus Atheniensium contionem monebat 'nonnumquam permittendum legibus dormire', libris Aristonis propitiatis paulisper quiescere concedam meque ad istum histrionum poetam totum convertam lecteis prius oratiunculeis Tullianeis. scribam autem alterutram partem, nam eadem de re diversa tueri numquam prosus ita dormiet Aristo uti permittat.

That which you gave me to write, **although I was free**, I have given not even a little **attention** to its work. The books of Ariston seize me well at this time, and they have me in a bad state at the same time: they not only teach me **better things**, but they also they clearly have me well; but when they truly show how much my temperament is removed from those better men, too often **your student** blushes and blames himself, because at twenty-five I have not yet drunk up with my mind good opinions and purer reasons. And so I pay the penalty, I am angry, I am sad, I'm jealous, and I lack food. Now conquered by these worries every day I put off writing to the next day. But now I will come up with something, and, that which the Greek Athenian warned the assembly '**sometimes the laws must be permitted to sleep**', after Ariston's books have been appeased, **I will allow myself to sleep a**

³⁴ Such expectation and exchange is typical of patron-client relationships. For Fronto and Aurelius' engagement with the tropes of *amicitia* and patronage, see Freisenbruch 2007: 243-4.

little and I will turn myself entirely to that stage poet, after I read Cicero's smaller speeches. But I will write one side, for **Ariston will never sleep so soundly** that he would allow me to examine both sides.

(*ad M. Caesarem* 4.13.2.2-3.8)

As noted above, very much has been made of this letter by those who seek a chronological view.³⁵ Chronology aside, this letter notes a tension between Aurelius' study of rhetoric and his pursuit of philosophy, rather than a definite end to his work with rhetoric and Fronto. Thus, the letter can be viewed as representative of the somewhat contentious nature of Fronto and Aurelius' relationship: they did not always agree about what ought to be studied.

In *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13, Aurelius also seems to be flaunting his ability to disobey Fronto's instructions. Certain phrases convey this. For example, *quamvis otiosus* ("although I was at leisure"), and Aurelius' assertion that he is not simply learning more with Ariston but that he is learning better things (*meliora*) than Fronto teaches. Aurelius has elsewhere described himself as *discipulus tuus* ("your student"), as he does here again.³⁶ However, he is no longer merely Fronto's loyal student but, instead, neglects Fronto's work to pursue the teachings of Ariston. Aurelius remains a student, but now looks up to a different teacher.

Furthermore, sleep also plays a part in the discussion and pursuit of education in this letter. Aurelius admits that, following Plutarch, he should give his philosophy reading a rest. And while Aurelius seems at least minimally willing to do Fronto's assignment, he asserts that it will be on his own terms: Aurelius will prepare only one side of the declamatory case, not both. As

³⁵ Haines 1919: xx, 218 argues that *scribam... permittat* at *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13 marks a "parting of the ways," and reads this letter as describing an autobiographical moment where Aurelius is taking on more responsibility in the empire, and so has less time to pursue rhetoric as well as philosophy. Van den Hout 1999: 186 notes that 4.13 "marks the end of an epoch. There is no letter in *ad M. Caesarem* later than 145 in which rhetoric plays a part [...] We may safely say that in 145 Fronto's tutorship came to an end and his contacts with Marcus slackened more and more, though they remained friends." Richlin 2005: 123 and 2006: 140 follows the chronological lines of Haines and van den Hout, and notes that at the time of this letter, Aurelius no longer uses the same affectionate salutations as he had in earlier letters. Richlin further suggests that Aurelius' marriage was the primary influence on this shift in his emotions.

³⁶ For Aurelius' use of *discipulus tuus*, see *ad M. Caesarem* 3.20, *ad Antoninum Augustum* 1.1.

though Ariston keeps an eye on Aurelius through his books, Aurelius writes that Ariston would never sleep deeply enough to allow him to argue both sides of a declamation. It is only the figurative and momentary sleep of Ariston that will allow Aurelius to turn any attention at all to Fronto and rhetoric. Here sleep, as in *ad M. Caesarem* 5.1 and 5.2 above, is connected to educational productivity, but not the kind that Fronto prefers. Aurelius uses sleep in this way to privilege philosophy over his study of rhetoric, while remaining under the terms of the educational discourse he and Fronto have developed. In *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13, Aurelius uses Ariston's sleep as a temporary reprieve from philosophy, a method of preventing immoderate obsession with his new study. For Aurelius, once philosophy is put to bed, it sleeps, but with one eye open. Aurelius' philosophical passion, represented by Ariston, is not so relaxed that Aurelius would un-philosophically manipulate both sides of a declamation. In flaunting his preference for another subject and another teacher—even one long dead—Aurelius attempts to take control of what will and will not take place in his and Fronto's epistolary instruction. Where Fronto exerts his power over Aurelius in other letters, here we see Aurelius' ability to push back.

Sleep as Metaphor

As seen above in *ad M. Caesarem* 1.5, Fronto claims that his interest is to teach Aurelius to sleep, and in *ad M. Caesarem* 5.1 and 5.2, that sleep benefits rhetorical activities, such as the composition and delivery of speeches. In *de Feriis Alsensibus* 3, Fronto takes that concept to a new level, attempting to correct Aurelius' obsession with work to the neglect of self-care. In this section, I argue that sleep and even Fronto's rhetorical aims serve a larger agenda. Fronto attempts to instill Aurelius with the current dominant ideology of what it means to be a good ruler, and does so by teaching Aurelius how to speak and write well. Fronto's desire to mold

Aurelius into a good ruler helps to explain Fronto's prior commitment and attachment to Aurelius and their educational relationship: if Fronto is successful in teaching his student to speak well, he believes he will be able to ensure that he rules well, too.

When Fronto writes to Aurelius at Alsium on the western coast of Italy north of Rome, he knows that even though the emperor is on vacation, he is working constantly and neglecting to relax or take care of himself. Fronto takes this opportunity to remind him of the type of day he thinks Aurelius *should* be having, including a midday nap, lots of reading, and at the end, a lavish banquet, complete with wines Fronto calls *felicitibus* ("happy" [3.1.16]), instead of *Faustiana* ("Faustian").³⁷ Fronto calls this odd choice of words "Senecan," and so contrasts his own way of speaking with Seneca's, and by use of difficult half-words makes the point that, even on vacation, when all else is relaxed, correct diction is always necessary.

Quid hoc verbi sit, quaeras fortasse; accipe igitur: ut homo ego multum facundus et Senecae Annaei sectator Faustiana vina de Sullae Fausti cognomento "felicia" appello; calicem vero "sine delatoria nota" cum dico, sine puncto dico. neque enim me decet, qui sim tam homo doctus, volgi verbis Falernum vinum aut calicem acentetum appellare. nam qua te dicam gratia Alsium, maritimum et voluptarium locum et, ut ait Plautus, "locum lubricum" delegisse, nisei ut bene haberes genio utique verbo vetere faceres animo "volup"? qua, malum, "volup"? immo, si dimidiatis verbis verum dicendum est, uti tu animo faceres "vigil" (vigilias dico) aut ut faceres "labo" aut ut faceres "mole" (labores et molestias dico). tu umquam volup? volpem facilius quis tibi quam voluptatem conciliaverit.

Perhaps you may ask, what is this word; therefore attend: since I am a very eloquent man and a **follower of Seneca Annaeus**, I call wine "happy" after the name of Sulla Faustus; truly when I call the cup "without a treasonous brand," I mean without a mark, for it doesn't befit me, **I who am such a learned man**, to name Falernian wine or a markless cup with **the words of the crowd**. For why would I say that you sought Alsium, a seaside and pleasant place, a "slippery place" as Plautus says, unless it was so that you might have it well with your mind, and so that you might make for you mind, with an old word, "pleasu"? What, damn, "pleasu"? Indeed, if the truth must be spoken with half-words, so that you might make for your mind some "wakin" (I mean wakefulness) or so that you might make some "work" or "troubs" (I mean labors and troubles). Do you ever have "pleasu"? Anyone would compare a fox to you more easily than pleasure.

³⁷ *de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3.1.16.

Fronto sarcastically claims that his strange writing style is consistent with his status as a very wise man (*homo ego multum facundus*) and a follower of Seneca (*Senecae Annaei sectator*). For such a man, common words (*volgi verbis*) are not good enough. Fronto suggests that Aurelius' current location, Alsium, is a slippery spot (*locum lubricum*), which perhaps encourages Fronto then to slip into half words (*dimidiatis verbis*). It may also be that these silly forms are representative of someone not doing their utmost duty, like Aurelius in his half-hearted relaxation on the beach, not giving appropriate attention to resting himself.³⁹ Guessing how Aurelius has actually been spending his time, Fronto asks: *dic, oro te, Marce, idcircone Alsium petisti, ut in prospectu maris esuries?* ("Come on, tell me, Marcus, did you go to Alsium to be hungry in sight of the sea?" [3.3.1-2]).

In an intentionally ironic move, Fronto's half-words require enormous explanation to make his meaning clear, far more words than if he had used their more conventional counterparts. This futile attempt seems to mirror Aurelius' behavior, pretending to relax at the seashore, but instead continuing to work. This rhetorical demonstration attached to Seneca's name is designed to set Seneca up as a negative exemplar for Fronto's own rhetorical choices, and by extension those of Aurelius. Fronto here exhibits the way that a learned man's eloquence can go wrong: he is only understood with difficulty when he uses half-words. Without dropping his main point, Fronto's Senecan speech still encourages Aurelius to rest. Even in half-words,

³⁸ For this difficult passage, the half-word "pleasu" is adopted from Haines 1920. For the other half-words, I have used "wakin" where Haines uses "watchin" for watching, "work" where Haines uses "labor" for labour, and "troub" where Haines uses "vexat" for vexation.

³⁹ We have seen that working moderately in a bedroom at night is typical and even appropriate when the topic is rhetorical. Vacation seems to be considered in a way similar to night, as a time excised from regular working life. As we will see, the intersection of those two relaxing spheres is the nighttime during vacation. Aurelius is not only working at night, and not only working on vacation, but working at night on vacation. This double violation drives home Aurelius' extremely immoderate working schedule, and gives Fronto grounds to urge him to take better care of himself.

Fronto chides his student for intending to rest on vacation, but working instead. He even notes that pleasure, *volup*, eludes Aurelius to such an extent that a fox, the similar-sounding *volpem*, is more compatible with pleasure and relaxation than Aurelius is (3.2.10-12).

Fronto sets up Seneca as a rhetorical cautionary tale, but there may be larger historical parallels drawn in this letter than in literary style. Seneca, like Fronto, was an oratorical tutor to an emperor, in particular Nero (54-68 CE). Perhaps Fronto hopes not only to avoid Seneca's diction, and eventual fate, but also wants to avoid producing the type of emperor Seneca's pupil became. If Fronto has made Seneca a negative example for himself, it is not at all far-fetched that Fronto might suggest Nero as a negative exemplar for Aurelius. Unlike Trajan, Hadrian, and Pius, whom Fronto means Aurelius to emulate, Nero's immoderate dedication to pleasures and hobbies, to the detriment of his imperial duties, should be avoided by Aurelius.⁴⁰ Nero also, notably, had Seneca and others write his speeches for him, and so had no control over rhetoric himself.⁴¹ Fronto sets up two things for Aurelius to avoid: when Aurelius does agree to rest, he should not give himself entirely over to hobbies. He should also continue to cultivate his eloquence. Trajan, Hadrian, and Pius form the bulk of the ideology Fronto wants Aurelius to live up to. Aurelius' constant working does not fit the mold, but neither does Neronian-style hedonism. Fronto's encouragement of rest on vacation is not license for complete indulgence, and thus he presents Aurelius' recent predecessors as pictures of appropriate balance. Trajan, Hadrian, and Pius are shown to be successful emperors who did not reject rest or hobbies. Such hobbies in particular were not solitary, but involved interacting with the public, as Fronto seems to hope Aurelius will do during his own reign.

⁴⁰ See Barrett, Fantham, Yardley 2016: 231-264 and cited passages Suet. *Ner.* 10,11 and Dio 62.29.

⁴¹ Barrett, Fantham, Yardley 2016: 23, 25 suggest that Nero's substitution of his own eloquence for Seneca's indicates Seneca's influence at the time, and his attempt to maneuver Nero into following Claudius' policies. For this notion in the ancient sources, see Tac. *Ann.* 13.3.1-2, 13.10.1-2, Dio 61.3.1.

In this passage, first Fronto gives the impression that each of the previous emperors were successful rulers and still had hobbies: Trajan enjoyed actors (*histrionibus interdum sese delectavit*; “sometimes he amused himself with actors” [3.5.2-3]) and drank (*potavit satis strenue*; “he drank strongly enough” [3.5.3]); Hadrian was a world traveler (*orbis terrarium non regendi tantum, sed etiam perambulandi diligentem*; “he not only enjoyed ruling the whole world, but also enjoyed traveling it” [3.5.5-6]), and was devoted to flute players (*tibicinum studio devinctum fuisse scimus*; “we know that he was devoted to enjoyment of flute players” [3.5.6-8]). Antoninus Pius managed to surpass in nearly every virtue (*omnis omnium principum virtutes supergressus*; “he overcame every virtue of every ruler” [3.5.10-11]), and still boxed and fished and laughed at farces (*palaestram ingressus est et hamum instruxit et scurras risit*; “he went into the boxing gym, and he strung a hook, and laughed at fools” [3.5.11-12]). Fronto’s frequent use of *tamen* (“nevertheless”) notes that these hobbies, even popular, non-elite ones, were not the cause of these men’s success, but also did not hinder their work as emperors. Yet Fronto suggests that some men were able to serve Rome well *because of* their interests: *profecto neque esuriens quisquam neque abstemius animum induxisset virgines adultas de spectaculis rapere* (“certainly no one hungry or moderate had in mind to steal adult maidens from celebrations” [3.6.4-6]). Playing to Aurelius’ philosophical inclinations, Fronto adds Chrysippus and Socrates to the list, one frequently drunk, and the other taught by and teacher of immoderate men (3.6.9-14). The connection here seems clear: Fronto lists men that Aurelius does (and perhaps, Fronto encourages, *should*) look up to. Aurelius has been working his entire vacation. Instead, he needs to behave more like his predecessors: these men accomplished great things, and also found time for pleasures. This balance should not be shirked by Aurelius, and indeed may help him live up to the examples of the great men mentioned. On Fronto’s list of Aurelius’ predecessors, he

implicitly suggests that Aurelius should strive to become like those former emperors, kings, and philosophers. In this way, Fronto pushes Aurelius to conform to the dominant ideology of ruling, as seen through Trajan, Hadrian, and Pius.

Louis Althusser's concept of ideology offers one theoretical means by which to explain and clarify what Fronto hopes to achieve in steering Aurelius towards the example of his predecessors. Louis Althusser (1918-1990), the French Marxist political philosopher, argues in *On the Reproduction of Capitalism* that

in order to exist, every social formulation must, while it produces, and in order to be able to produce, *reproduce* the conditions of its production. It must therefore *reproduce* 1) the productive forms; 2) the existing relations of production.⁴²

The means by which social formulations reproduce their conditions of production in through Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). ISAs include non-governmental organizations like churches, family units, and, importantly for my argument, schools in particular are involved in this perpetuation of the current means of production.⁴³ Viewed this way, Fronto as an educator is implicated as part of an ISA: his job is to form his student into one who can use rhetoric successfully in his social and political life, and so he perpetuates the *status quo* by preparing his student to thrive in it. I argue that Fronto as an educator of Aurelius is really reproducing the current conditions of social production on the grandest scale, attempting to ensure that his student becomes the kind of emperor his predecessors were. Fronto's mission here then becomes clearer: he wants to provide stability for the empire and the people of Rome. He can do this by attempting to shape Aurelius into the same kind of emperor his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were. In the above section cited from *de Feriis Alsiansibus* 3, this involves

⁴² Althusser 2014: 48.

⁴³ Althusser 2014: 51.

encouraging Aurelius not to dedicate so much of himself to work, and instead to allow room in his life for relaxation and pleasure, as his predecessors had.

Sleep Personified

Fronto dedicates the rest of *de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3 to the personification of sleep, first as a participant in a mock legal battle between day and night, and then as a divinity created by Jupiter to correct the immoderate ways of men. Fronto depicts sleep as a god in order to convince Aurelius to respect nighttime and sleep, then further attempts to persuade Aurelius to relax by asserting the benefits of dreams and sleeping to Aurelius' performance as an emperor. Fronto portrays rest as beneficial for Aurelius as emperor, and characterizes his workaholic ways as directly detrimental to ruling effectively. Fronto argues that the quality of work Aurelius does at night is likely not of the highest standard because this signals time borrowed immoderately from relaxation:

si ignem de caelo nemo surrupisset, sol non esset tibi satis ad iudicandum? ne<c> cum animo tuo reputas cotidiano te mendacio adstringi, cum te diem cogitationi dare ais et nocte cognoscis, reum sive condemnes sive absolves mendax futurus? si quempiam condemnas, "parum cavisse videtur" ais: istuc quidem, si lucernae removeantur, nihil videri poterit. at tu, obsecro, vel ioco vel serio te exorari a me patere, ne te somno defrudes utique terminus diei et noctis serves.

If no one had stolen fire from the heavens, **would the sun not be enough for you to pass judgement?** Do you not consider with your mind that **you are connected** every day **to a lie** when you say that you give the **day** for a consideration and **you consider it at night**, that whether you condemn the matter or absolve it, **you will be false?** If you condemn anything, you say "it **seemed** negligent": indeed as to that same thing, if the lights were removed, nothing would be able to be **seen**. I beg, allow yourself to be persuaded by me, either by a joke or by something serious, so that you **don't cheat yourself of sleep, and that you respect the boundaries of day and night.**

(de Feriis Alsiensibus 3.7.3-10)

Fronto's rhetorical question has teeth: does Aurelius not think that daytime is enough? Would he be able to do his job within the natural confines of day, without fire to illuminate the night? Fronto plays with the comparison of a matter "seeming" too careless (*videtur*), because Aurelius would not be able to actually "see" anything at night without torches (*videri*), suggesting that Aurelius' honor may be in question if he appoints a "day" (*diem*) for a decision, knowing that he will actually decide at "night" (*nocte*). These points support Fronto's main theme of *de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3 that Aurelius should listen to Fronto and sleep more, saving the evening for rest. In this way, Fronto shows that working at night is likely hurting Aurelius' job as emperor. If Aurelius' work was all done during the day, his judgments would be unquestionable, and his honor would be unthreatened.

It should be noted that this argument seems to be contrary to Fronto's declaration in *ad M. Caesarem* 1.5. Here he says "if staying up makes you this eloquent, I would advise you to do it more often" (*si vigilia tibi hoc acuminis et leporis adfert, ego prosus vigilare te mallet.* [1.5.4-5]). However, in *de Feriis Alsiensibus* Fronto does not react to a situation in which Aurelius' insomnia is in the service of rhetoric or Fronto's teachings. Instead, Fronto sees Aurelius as filling his night and leisure time with duties, not studies. Wakefulness at night is not a suitable occasion for just anything but, instead, is only suitable for providing the privacy and focus one needs to focus on rhetorical matters.⁴⁴

Fronto not only advises Aurelius to respect night as a natural phenomenon, but then turns nocturnal sleep into the god Somnus. Jupiter creates Somnus as a divine moderating entity in response to men's total disregard of the boundaries of day and night: *tum Iovem ferunt, ubi iam iurgia et vadimonia nocturna sisti et noctes quoque comperendinari videat, cum corde suo*

⁴⁴ Ker 2004: 209-210, 213-216.

agitasse de suis germanis fratribus unum praeficere, qui nocti atque otio hominum curaret
("Then they say that Jupiter, when he saw that fights and trials were set up at night and also that nights were treated like days, with his own heart he was driven to select one of his brothers, who would preserve the night and leisure of humans" [3.9.8-11]). Neptune and Dis both refuse, and Jupiter can find no god that would prefer to have night dedicated only to rest. Therefore, Jupiter creates Somnus himself, to ensure that men rest at night, and only work during the day: *capit tum consilium Iuppiter Somni procreandi eumque in deum numerum adsciscit, nocti et otio praeficit eique claves oculorum tradit* ("Then Jupiter took the idea of **creating Sleep**, and he added him into the number of the gods, and he set him up **over nighttime and rest** and he gave him the keys to men's eyes" [3.10.5-8]).

Aurelius' constant working is much like that of the habits of men that Somnus is meant to remedy. By making Somnus a divinity, Fronto encourages Aurelius to believe that it is his religious duty not only to work, but to take care of himself and rest. Aurelius is currently trespassing on sacred ground, divided by Jupiter and governed by Somnus, and as emperor of Rome, cannot risk offending the gods. By crafting a narrative personifying sleep, Fronto necessitates Aurelius' compliance, if he buys into the story.

To close this letter, Fronto explains that sleep and relaxation are not the only benefits, but also the dreams that sleep brings. Dreams are not only pleasant representations, but visions according to one's hobby, with the power to make things happen while waking. Further, the hobbies Fronto describes are parallel to the enjoyments of Trajan, Hadrian, and Pius listed earlier in this letter, tying together Fronto ideology of good rule with his encouragement of appropriate sleep and rest. Fronto suggests sleep and moderation because he believes it will make Aurelius a

good speaker, and thus a good, communicative emperor. But he knows that Aurelius will be enticed by dreaming's potential to accomplish even more work while he's asleep.

ad hoc, quo iucundior hominibus Somnus esset, donat ei multa somnia amoena, ut, quo studio quisque devinctus esset, ut histrionem in somnis fautor spectaret, ut tibicinem audiret, ut aurigae agitandi monstrarent, milites somn<i>o vincerent, imperatores somnio triumpharent, peregrinantes somnio redirent. ea somnia plerumque ad verum convertunt.
Igitur, Marce, si quo tibi somni hinc opus est, censeo libens dormias tantisper dum quod cupis quodque exoptas vigilanti tibi obtingat.

Along with this, by which Sleep might be sweeter to humans, **he gave him many pleasant dreams**, so that, **according to which pursuit each was devoted**, a patron might see an **actor** in his dreams, he might hear a **flute player**, charioteers might advise a driver, soldiers might conquer in dreams, leaders might have triumphs in sleep, **travelers** might return home in sleep. **These dreams often turn into the truth.**

Therefore, Marcus, after this if there is any need of some sleep, **I think you should sleep** willingly for a while until **what you want and hope for happens for you while you're awake.**

(*de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3.12-13)

Fronto is not the first to suggest dreams reflect the interests of their dreamers.⁴⁵ Some of these interests match those of Aurelius' successful imperial predecessors: *histriones* (actors) were of particular interest to Trajan, and flute players (*tibicines*) and traveling (*peregrinantes*) hobbies of Hadrian. Whereas above at *de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3.5 Fronto showed that these emperors' accomplishments happened alongside these hobbies (*tamen*), now he seems to assert that sleep is what made these hobbies possible, which then became true for those dreamers when they are awake. Sleep here causes the hobbies to occur, which Fronto seems to suggest provided the moderation and relaxation necessary for imperial success.

This suggestion is strengthened by Fronto's last line, where he breaks away from the dream world of Somnus and appeals directly to Aurelius by urging him to sleep. If Aurelius

⁴⁵ Van den Hout 1999: 530 notes precedents in Accius, *Praetext.* 29ff., Cic. *Divin.* 1.45, and Lucr. 4.453 ff. and 4.962-1013.

dreams of what he hopes for, it will happen once he is awake. If Aurelius follows this directive, he does not need to choose between working at night and sleeping: Fronto explains that sleeping and dreaming are ways for him to accomplish the things that matter to him. If Aurelius still worried that getting more sleep would lower his productivity, Fronto shows that dreams are another, more moderate way to get things done. If dreaming can be equated to working, and if both make strides towards Aurelius' goals, then he leaves no excuse for Aurelius not to sleep enough. In this way and throughout the letter, Fronto argues persuasively for Aurelius to institute greater moderation in his life by emulating his predecessors in the following manner: one, by Aurelius giving more attention to rest and hobbies; two, by avoiding negative examples of speech and behavior; and, three, by achieving his dreams (literally and figuratively) through more sleep. Sleep, then, represents key virtues: moderation, the care of oneself, and those Fronto associates with past successful rulers. These components constitute the ideology Fronto attempts to instill in Aurelius.

Rhetoric and the Ideal Ruler

So far I have argued that Fronto uses the medium of sleep to advance his desire to educate Aurelius into a model emperor. I argue that Fronto's educational agenda equates eloquence to behaviors of "good" emperors, particularly Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius, each of whom features in *de Feriis Alsiansibus* 3 as noted above. These behaviors are, in particular, dependent on good speech, and the use of that eloquence to communicate with the Senate, advisors, and the Roman people. Fronto links speaking well with ruling well, and so dedicates himself to the task of inculcating Aurelius with the importance of eloquence, hoping that he can develop a ruler who resembles his predecessors and other "good" rulers.

Fronto's explicit task, for which he was selected by Hadrian upon Antoninus Pius' adoption of Aurelius, was to train the Caesar in rhetoric, the art of speaking well in official situations. As noted by van den Hout, Fronto's hiring was prompted by Aurelius' interest in philosophy, which Pius considered "behavior hardly befit[ting] a future emperor."⁴⁶ This has an historical precedent: Suetonius writes that Agrippina similarly had to discourage Nero from philosophy because of his imperial future, and Tacitus believes that Agricola likewise was led away from philosophy.⁴⁷ And if philosophy was considered inappropriate for a ruler, rhetoric was oppositely desired in emperors. As Thomas Habinek notes:

the ancient biographies of emperors still make much of their successes or failures as public speakers. Indeed, mastery of oratory, associated as it was with deliberation, analysis, respect for the audience, and acknowledgement of the history and procedures of the state, serves as a mark of a 'good' emperor in the eyes of the Roman elite; disdain for eloquence, on the other hand, signals unreliability and worse.⁴⁸

So, it would seem, emperors who studied and made use of rhetoric and eloquence were considered "good," and those who did not were less popular. This is likely because of the inherent reciprocity of rhetoric. Rhetoric meant to prepare a speaker to present something, either a speech, a law, or an argument, before a crowd. For an emperor, as Habinek notes above, such rhetorical skill would mark an ability and willingness to interact with others, including the Senate, the Roman people, and foreign dignitaries. Such interactions would provide feedback, direction, and even criticism about the emperor's performance as a ruler. The study of skills designed for such situations marks a willingness to accommodate the thoughts and wishes of others into how an emperor rules. The opposite, a complete lack of communication with any

⁴⁶ Van den Hout 1999: viii.

⁴⁷ See Barrett, Fantham, Yardley 2016: 3 and cited passages Suet. *Nero*. 52 and Tac. *Ann.* 13.2.1. See also Brunt 1975: 9-10.

⁴⁸ Habinek 2004: 35-36. See also Wallace-Hadrill 1982: 45-46. "The 'good' emperor may be synonymous with the 'pro-senatorial' one."

other person, or even an inability to consult others tactfully, might foretell an emperor's unwillingness to be advised, receive criticism, or counsel others. Fergus Millar writes that personal eloquence was expected of emperors, which is why Nero's lack of rhetorical skill was so remarkable:

The assumption that an emperor's *eloquentia* was, or should be, his own, and that it provided an important indication by which to judge him, is shared by earlier sources. Tacitus, commenting on the fact that Nero was the first emperor to need another's eloquence, notes that Julius Caesar had been the equal of the greatest orators; Augustus had the readiness and fluency which befitted the eloquence of an emperor; Tiberius was skilled in weighing his words, whether he intended to be clear or obscure; even Gaius' madness had not robbed him of the art of speaking, and Claudius was not short of eloquence, provided that his speech was prepared.⁴⁹

We have already observed that Nero forms a negative exemplar for Aurelius, both in lack of eloquence and in his personal behavior. The control of rhetoric by emperors and statesmen was clearly prized, and so the study of rhetoric and training in declamation and oratory was valued highly by Roman elite men. In fact, Teresa Morgan argues that it is this elite education that creates and maintains the distinction between elites and others in Rome. As a result, rhetorical skill becomes figured as the ability and right to rule. Morgan explains how Quintilian (35-100 CE), in his writings on oratory and education, explores and exposes this phenomenon:

The vocation of Quintilian's orator is above all to rule, and his rule is described in absolutist terms. This is no negotiation among equals, no wooing of the crowd. The orator controls his people, both physically and mentally. Describing the relationship of the orator with the crowd Quintilian tellingly invokes Virgil's description of a statesman quelling a riot. If we accept that the function of the orator is to rule absolutely, we can see why Quintilian's equation of rhetoric with truth, virtue and reason is desirable. To rule well a ruler requires them all.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Millar 1997: 203-204.

⁵⁰ Morgan 1998: 231.

Morgan asserts that, in teaching rhetoric “[w]riters such as Quintilian, the Senecas, Plutarch and Philo are advertising themselves as little less than kingmakers: pivotal figures in the creation, stratification and reproduction of society.”⁵¹

Fronto similarly approaches his education of Aurelius with this intellectual inheritance of earlier writers—namely, Quintilian, Plutarch, and both Senecas—commenting on the education of an orator, and for the ability of education to prepare one for a political career.⁵² Fronto himself, in several places, connects eloquence and his tutelage with Aurelius’ job as emperor. In *de Eloquentia* 2, written to Aurelius as emperor around 161/162 CE, Fronto explains to Aurelius that he needs to develop his eloquence because of its many applications for being emperor. Here, Fronto frames eloquence as a prerequisite skill for ruling correctly.⁵³

*Considera igitur an in hac secunda ratione officiorum contineatur eloquentiae studium. nam Caesarum est in senatu quae e re sunt suadere, populum de plerisque negotiis in contione appellare, ius iniustum corrigere, per orbem terrae litteras missitare, reges exterarum gentium compellere, sociorum culpas edictis **coercere**, bene facta laudare, seditiosos compescere, feroces territare. omnia ista profecto **verbis sunt ac litteris agenda**. non excoles igitur id quod tibi totiens tantisque in rebus videas magno usui futurum? an nihil referre arbitraris, qualibus verbis agas, **quae non nisi verbis agi possunt?***

Therefore consider whether, according to this second reason of duties, the study of eloquence should be continued. For it is the duty of Caesars to persuade things which pertain to the matter in the senate, to call the people into a meeting about many affairs, to correct an unjust oath, to keep sending letters throughout the whole world, to address kings of foreign peoples, to put pressure on the faults of allies with edicts, to praise well-done deeds, to suppress plots, to frighten fierce men. Indeed all these things **must be done with words and letters**. So will you not improve that which you see will be of great use to you very often in so many matters? Or do you think that it profits nothing, what kind of words you use, **which things are not able to be done except with words?**

(de Eloquentia 2.6.1-9)

⁵¹ Morgan 1998: 243.

⁵² Morgan 1998: 233 argues that through a rhetorical education “literates at every social level were being prepared to participate in a hierarchy of articulacy and authority.” See also Morgan 1998: 268-269.

⁵³ See van den Hout 1999: 313 for a full account of the history of this letter’s dating. Whether 161 or 162 CE, we are still nearing Fronto’s death of around 166 or 167 CE. This dating is influenced by Haines’ interpretation, in assuming that as Fronto ages, he is more concerned with ensuring Aurelius has received necessary lessons.

It seems likely that Fronto is responding to an occasion like *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13 above, in which Aurelius is unwilling to continue on studying rhetoric, or limits the time spent on developing his eloquence. Fronto combats Aurelius' antipathy by arguing that eloquence is necessary to complete the duties of a Caesar. Aurelius will need to persuade the Senate with speeches, call meetings with the Roman people, send countless letters, and frighten enemies, to name a few responsibilities listed in the above passage. As Fronto makes clear, eloquence is a required component of completing each of those tasks properly. Therefore, it is in Aurelius' best interest to cultivate a skill invaluable to his future leadership. Fronto expresses that much of being emperor can be accomplished by nothing except the use of words (*omnia ista profecto verbis sunt ac litteris agenda... quae non nisi verbis agi possunt* [2.6.6-9]). Here, Fronto clearly expresses to his student that eloquence is necessary for being emperor: if Aurelius neglects it, he does so at his own risk.

However, it seems that Aurelius did not always need to be convinced of the benefits that come with eloquence. In fact, another letter shows Fronto well pleased by his student. In *ad Antoninum Augustum* 1.2, Fronto rejoices at Aurelius' ability as a ruler, including the eloquence for which Fronto had hoped:

video te, Antonine, principem tam egregium quam speravi, tam iustum, tam innocentem quam spopondi, tam gratum populo Romano et acceptum quam optavi, tam mei amantem quam ego volui, tam disertum quam ipse voluisti. nam ubi primum coepisti rursus velle, nihil offuit interdum noluisse. fieri etiam vos cotidie facundiores video et exulto quasi adhuc magister. nam quom omnis virtutes vestras diligam et amplectar, fateor tamen praecipuum me et proprium gaudium ex eloquentia vestra capere.

I see that you are, Antoninus, **so excellent a leader as I hoped**, so just, so blameless as I intended, so beloved and accepted by the Roman people as I wished, **so loving of me as I wanted, and so well-spoken as you yourself wanted**. For as soon as you began to want it again, it hurt nothing that you sometimes didn't want it. **I see you become more loquacious every day, and I rejoice as if I were still your**

teacher. For although I cherish and embrace all your virtues, **nevertheless, I confess that I especially derive particular pleasure from your eloquence.**

(*ad. Antoninum Augustum* 1.2.2.1-8)

Significantly, Fronto seems to admit that he wants much more than just correct speech from his student. Fronto's emphatic use of *tam* links together all of Aurelius' achievements, putting them under the umbrella of things Aurelius has done well and, therefore, things that Fronto feels he has helped Aurelius accomplish. Aurelius is an excellent leader (*principem... egregium*), blameless (*innocentem*), beloved by the Roman people (*gratum populo Romano et acceptum*), affectionate towards Fronto (*mei amantem*) and well-spoken (*disertum*). By including the people's love of Aurelius as a mark of his effective rule, Fronto confirms the importance of interacting with the people. This, as Fronto noted above, was most often achieved through rhetoric. While Fronto shows that all these factors are involved in marking a good ruler, he puts special emphasis on Aurelius' eloquence. It gains emphasis as the last of the series of Aurelius' successes. Fronto can take credit for this eloquence, as Aurelius' teacher, and thus for all of the items on the connected list. Fittingly, Fronto is most excited by Aurelius' ability to speak well (*fateor tamen praecipuum me et proprium gaudium ex eloquentia vestra capere*; "nevertheless, I confess that I especially derive particular pleasure from your eloquence" [1.2.2.7-8]).

This passage shows that, while Fronto certainly desires Aurelius to succeed in rhetoric, he also has other larger goals in mind for his student, too, namely that he rule well. Fronto notes that, while it hurt when Aurelius seemed uninterested in rhetoric, perhaps referring to *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13 or a similar circumstance, it was a relief when he returned to the study of eloquence. Fronto takes great pride especially in Aurelius' eloquence, but notes that he cherishes all Aurelius' qualities. Fronto's statements in *ad Antoninum Augustum* 1.2 above show that, although he teaches rhetoric, he aims to instill in Aurelius more than just eloquence; he feels that

eloquence may even be responsible for Aurelius' success as a new emperor. Fronto feels that the work he has accomplished with Aurelius, especially as evidenced by the *ad M. Caesarem* letters, has played a significant hand in Aurelius' current status as a successful new emperor.

We have thus seen that Fronto explicitly associates the skills of speaking well and ruling well. This explains his investment in Aurelius' attention to eloquence and rhetorical detail. In Fronto's view, if Aurelius can take seriously the importance of proper speech and utilize it in his capacity as emperor, then he will rule in a way Fronto finds appropriate.

Conclusion

What history tells us about Marcus Aurelius complicates our view of his relationship with Fronto. Even if one disagrees that *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13 represents a massive schism and turning point in Fronto's education of Aurelius, it is indisputable that Aurelius eventually was more interested in philosophy than rhetoric. The greatest testament to this is Aurelius' *Meditations*, which offer thoughts on Stoic philosophy in Greek, not Fronto's Latin. However, does Aurelius' eventual turn away from Fronto's rhetoric mean that Fronto was unsuccessful in his ideological aims? Though not a rhetorician at heart, Aurelius' rule is considered one of the best of any Roman emperor. This is in no small part due to his adherence to habits of "good" emperors, specifically communication and cooperation, if only in name, with the Senate and the Roman people. If this successful reign was Fronto's aim, I believe he can be credited with victory. Apart from the question of success, the letters of Fronto and Aurelius can be viewed as a case study; how does an imperial relationship work when one party is the future emperor and must submit to the direction of a social inferior? To what end would a senator like Fronto teach a member of the imperial family? By manipulating the expectations of letters as a genre, and their own letters in

particular, Fronto and Aurelius negotiate what it means to be associates in Antonine Rome, and provide fruitful ground for further inquiry.

Chapter 2

A Convenient Philosophy: Fronto's Use of Philosophy in his Letters with Marcus Aurelius

Marcus Aurelius' (121-180 CE) most well-known accomplishment may well be his reign as emperor of Rome, but his composition of philosophical, stoically-inclined *Meditations* runs a close second. Aurelius, it seems, may be the closest Rome ever came to having a philosopher-king on the throne, and his philosophical inclinations began when he was young.¹ In fact, Marcus Cornelius Fronto (ca. 90/95-ca. 167 CE), Aurelius' rhetorical tutor, was perhaps hired to combat Aurelius' early interest in philosophy and inward examination, a preference which Antoninus Pius (86-161 CE) considered a "behaviour hardly befitting a future emperor, and so it was agreed between him and Marcus in 138 that the latter should stop behaving like a philosopher."²

Scholars who believe that Fronto's role as tutor was to oppose Aurelius' philosophical tendencies also conclude that Fronto himself must not have been a philosophical man. Michael van den Hout indeed claims that Fronto outright hated philosophy, but "was wise enough to refrain completely from any criticism of philosophy" during his tutelage of Aurelius.³ Jo-Marie Claassen drives a less hard line, and writes that Fronto "had no time for philosophy," but was not

¹ The concept of a philosopher-king first begins in book 5 of Plato's *Republic* (473d.108), in which Socrates argues that rulers should also be philosophers in order to govern correctly and maintain an ideal state. Stanton 1969: 571 argues that ancient sources began considering Aurelius to be such an ideal ruler, at least as early as the writers of the *Historia Augusta*, who believed Aurelius consciously modeled himself after Plato's philosopher-king [*SHA* Marcus 27.7]. Stertz 1977 notes that the emperor Julian looked back to Aurelius as such a philosopher-emperor, as did Julian's advisor Themistius. Moore 1936: 70 calls Aurelius a philosopher-king, and so does Whitehorne 1977: 413, in his attempt to clear Aurelius of the charge of hypochondria.

² van den Hout 1999: viii.

³ van den Hout 1999: ix. This claim by van den Hout does not include citations, and is to precede his explanation of his biographical reading of Fronto and Aurelius' relationship, specifically the turning point where Aurelius rejects rhetoric, and Fronto, in favor of his study of philosophy.

necessarily hostile towards those who did.⁴ I, on the other hand, believe that the letters between Fronto and Aurelius may reveal a more sympathetic attitude towards philosophy on Fronto's part. While Fronto may not have been personally interested in philosophy, I will show that he intentionally and frequently used philosophers and philosophical ideas in his rhetorical teachings. This strategy would have been more effective in steering his student towards rhetoric than enforcing a total ban on philosophical concepts and people.

First in this chapter, I look at the evidence brought by those claiming that Fronto has no interest in philosophy. Then, I show each letter in which Fronto centers philosophy to aid his rhetorical arguments. Finally, I examine *Additamentum* 8, a letter in which Fronto re-writes a portion of Plato's *Phaedrus*, adopting a philosophical speech-style to prove the strength of rhetoric, in opposite movement from Socrates' goal in the original dialogue. As I argue, a more careful look at Fronto's engagement with philosophy may provide significant insights into Fronto's effectiveness as a tutor of Aurelius. This would buck the popular biographical trend, in which Fronto's teachings were abandoned by a philosophically motivated student, and therefore Fronto's efforts were in vain, and had little influence on Aurelius' life as an emperor.⁵ I think that exhortations toward the type of rhetoric employed by prominent philosophers, as in the letters *de Eloquentia*, and suggestions to emulate the lifestyles of philosophers, as in *de Feriis Alsiansibus* 3, indicate that Fronto likely used philosophy as a tool for his rhetorical ends, and

⁴ Claassen 2009: 57 is primarily focused on Fronto's status as foreigner in Rome, but engages the question of his feelings toward philosophy in order to show his easily facility with Latin and Greek through his tutelage of Aurelius.

⁵ Haines 1919: 218 and van den Hout 1999: ix argue that the great schism between Aurelius and Fronto, between pursuit of rhetoric and turn towards philosophy, took place in *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13. Richlin 2005: 112 neatly summarizes the current opinion of this turning point: "The usual outline of Fronto's relationship with Marcus holds that Fronto was cast aside like an old shoe when Marcus got tired of rhetoric. I would submit that it may have been the case that rhetoric was cast aside like an old shoe when Marcus got tired of Fronto." For my take on the biographical tradition, see chapter 1.

thus Aurelius' philosophical nature and successful imperial reign took place not in spite of Fronto's teachings, but perhaps because of them.

The Anti-Philosophical Fronto

Van den Hout's assertion of Fronto's aversion to philosophy is the loudest because it is attached to the only commentary of the entire corpus of Fronto and Aurelius' letters. However, other scholars have recently taken a more nuanced look at the role of philosophy in Fronto's teaching. Amy Richlin analyzes *Additamentum* 8, the *Erotikos Logos* to which we will return later, and writes that "addressing a young man famous for his delight in philosophy, the eminent rhetorician, assigned to teach this young man rhetoric, chose to engage him with a Platonic dialogue that is, in a way, about rhetoric."⁶ Richlin argues that Fronto chose Plato's *Phaedrus* intentionally as his material because his student was already interested in philosophy, and was presumably already familiar with the text. Yasuko Taoka takes a similar stance; she writes that Fronto uses philosophical settings to express the importance of rhetoric.⁷ Using these arguments, I re-examine the letters that van den Hout believes prove Fronto as anti-philosophical, and I show that these letters have either been misinterpreted to show inordinate malice towards philosophy not expressed by Fronto, or have been viewed this way because of an assumption of Fronto's distaste.

Quoting from *ad Amicos* 1.2, Claassen writes that "the highest praise [Fronto] has for a man is, 'He is no philosopher,'" although she then admits that in *ad Amicos* 1.4, Fronto recommends a man for his study of Plato.⁸ I argue that 1.2 does show Fronto praising a man for

⁶ Richlin 2006: 113.

⁷ Taoka 2013: 409.

⁸ Claassen 2009: 57.

not being philosophical, but that this does not equate to a broader denigration of philosophy in general.

Φρόντων Ἀπ. Ἀπολλωνίδῃ

*Κορνηλιανὸν Σουλπίκιον φιλεῖν ἠρξάμην ἡσθεῖς τῷ τε τρόπῳ τάνδρὸς καὶ τοῖς λόγοις. πέφυκεν γὰρ πρὸς λόγους ἄριστα. οὐκ ἂν δὲ ἔξαρνος εἶην τὰ πρῶτα παρ' ἐμοὶ φέρεσθαι τὴν ἐκ παιδείας φιλίαν συσταθεῖσαν· παιδείαν δὲ ταύτην λέγω τὴν τῶν ῥητόρων· αὕτη γὰρ δοκεῖ μοι ἀνθρωπίνῃ τις εἶναι· **τῶν φιλοσόφων θεία τις ἔστω.** βοήθησον οὖν τὰ δυνατὰ **Κορνηλιανῷ ἀγαθῷ ἀνδρὶ κάμοι φίλῳ καὶ λογίῳ καὶ οὐ φιλοσόφῳ.***

Fronto to Appius Apollonides,

I began to love Cornelianus Sulpicius because I delighted in the manner of that man, and in his words. He is the very best at speeches. And I would not deny that friendship brought together by education is the most important to me, and I say this education is that of the rhetors. This seems to be a human thing, **let that of philosophers be divine.** So, help **the good man Cornelianus** as much as you can, **dear to me, educated, and not a philosopher.**⁹

(*ad Amicos* 1.2)

Here, Fronto clearly does advertise that Appius should help Cornelianus because of his rhetorical excellence, his personal friendship with Fronto, and his non-philosophical ways. However, I do not read this as stating that non-philosophical people are in any way better, or more recommendable. Fronto elevates philosophical training and education to a divine matter (**θεία τις**), and should be read as highlighting particular strengths that he knew would be attractive to his addressee, Appius Apollonides. In *ad Amicos* 1.4, Fronto recommends a Julius Aquilinus as a *virum... doctissimum, facundissimum, philosophiae disciplinis ad optimas artis, eloquentiae studiis ad egregiam facundiam eximie eruditum* (“a man most learned, most eloquent, educated by the teachings of philosophy for the best of the art, and educated by the studies of eloquence for an exceptionally apt fluency” [1.4.1-3]). Fronto’s addressee, Egrilius Plarianus, is believed to

⁹ All Latin text of Fronto comes from van den Hout’s 1989 edition, unless otherwise stated. All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

have been proconsul of Africa at the time, and perhaps in need of staff.¹⁰ Fronto's request on Julius' behalf is appropriately vague, promoting Julius' abilities in both rhetoric and philosophy, rather than one at the expense of the other, to suggest his suitability for a wide range of positions. It may then stand that Fronto knew that a man of eloquence, and no philosopher, may have been more appropriate in a recommendation to Appius Apollonides, who unfortunately is not known to us outside of this letter. It at least cannot be said, in the light of *ad Amicos* 1.4, that *ad Amicos* 1.2 definitively gives us evidence of Fronto's distaste towards philosophy. If anything, it may give us an indication of Fronto's ability to tailor his recommendations towards his audience. Whereas the addressee of 1.4 clearly could appreciate a man who was versed in philosophy, the recipient of 1.2 likely was less warm towards a philosopher. Fronto adapts his approach to best persuade each person he writes to.

When considering other letters, it seems that their English translation contributes to the impression that Fronto hates philosophy. In *ad Amicos* 1.14 Fronto is discussing the will of Matidia, Aurelius' great aunt, whose contested will was one of Aurelius' first challenges as emperor. Birley explains that Matidia included many parasites in her will, with the result that more than seventy-five percent of her will was bequeathed outside of her relations, a violation of the *lex Falcidia*.¹¹ As emperor, Aurelius would need to determine whether to overturn her will to follow the law, but was also involved in a conflict of interest, since he and his family would be the benefitting parties. Fronto writes to his son-in-law, Aufidius Victorinus, with his concerns about what Aurelius would decide, perhaps worried that Stoic abnegation would prevent him from upholding the law.

¹⁰ van den Hout 1999: 406.

¹¹ Birley 2000: 132.

Nec sine metu fui, ne quid philosophia perversi suaderet. Quid ad eum scripserim, exemplum litterarum misi tibi.

I was not without **fear** that **philosophy** would persuade something of perversion. What I wrote to him, I sent you a sample of the letters.

(ad Amicos 1.14.1.9-11)

C. R. Haines' Loeb translation stands "and I have not been without apprehension that Philosophy might lead him to a wrong decision."¹² This translation, which is also cited by van den Hout, portrays Fronto as quite concerned that Aurelius will be the one in the wrong. My more literal translation, "that philosophy would persuade something of perversion" still shows some of Fronto's anxiety (*metus*) over what role philosophy would play in Aurelius' public duties, but provides some of the distance from Aurelius that exists in the letter.

The Latin itself shows Fronto's worry. However, Haines' translation seems to stretch the text, misrepresenting the nature of the *metu* Fronto expresses here. Aurelius is not specifically joined to the fear clause *ne quid philosophia perversi suaderet*; the genitive *quid perversi* is somewhat generic, and does not include a direct misleading of Aurelius by philosophy, as Haines' translation would suggest. Although the fear clause suggests that Fronto does not believe this matter should be affected by philosophy, there is no concrete indication that philosophy would be acting on Aurelius to do so. The potential ambiguity of Fronto's words here, clearly referring to Aurelius but keeping him out of the grammar itself, may even be intentional. If questioned by Aurelius, he can claim innocence, that Aurelius can be read into the sentence, but was not placed there explicitly by Fronto. Meanwhile, his intention, that Aurelius might be led astray, remains clear.

Another example of interpretive translation can be seen in *ad Amicos* 1.15. Here, Fronto has been complaining to Praecilius Pompeianus about his bodily pains, which have greatly

¹² Haines 1920: 99; van den Hout 1999: 432.

slowed his literary productivity. He is unable to do work, but seems to scoff at philosophers who suggest that he should rise above physical infirmity.

Philosophis etiam, mirificis hominibus, dicentibus sapientem virum etiam in Phalaridis tauro inclusum beatum nihilo minus fore, facilius crediderim beatum eum fore quam posse tantisper amburienti in aheni prohoemium meditari aut epichiremata scribere.

Also, although **philosophers, those wondrous creatures**, say that a wise man, even shut up inside the bull of Palarides, would be no less happy, I would more easily believe that he would be happy than he, meanwhile, could reflect on poems in the burning bronze, or could write arguments.

(*ad Amicos* 1.15.2.4-5)

I have adopted Haines' translation for *mirificis hominibus* as "wondrous creatures" from Haines' Loeb edition.¹³ Van den Hout also uses Haines' words, and remarks that *mirificis*, seen also to describe Pythagoras in *de Eloquentia* 1.3, is "slightly pejorative."¹⁴ While sarcasm can be clearly detected in Fronto's remarks in *ad Amicos* 1.15, the assumption that such snark extends to other uses of the word *mirificus* is misleading. For example, van den Hout builds from this single example to extend his impression of Fronto's dislike of philosophers to other letters in the corpus. In *de Eloquentia* 1.3, Fronto continues a line of reasoning in which he asserts that even philosophers are in need of rhetorical training.

sed haec exempla fortasse contempnas. quid? philosophi ipsi nonne diverso genere orationis usi sunt? Zeno ad docendum planissimus, Socrates ad coarguendum captiosissimus, Diogenes ad exprobandum promptissimus, Heraclitus obscurus: involvere omnia, Pythagora mirificus: clandestinis signis sancire omnia, Clitomachus anceps: in dubium vocare omnia. quidnam igitur agerent isti ipsi sapientissimi viri, si de suo quisque more atque instituto deducerentur?

But perhaps you look down on these examples. Why? Do philosophers themselves not use different kinds of speaking? Zeno is most clear for persuading, Socrates is most deceptive for arguing, Diogenes is most public for criticizing, Heraclitus is intricate: to involve everything, **Pythagoras is wondrous**: to make holy all things with hidden signs, Clitomachus is wavering: to call everything into doubt. So what

¹³ Haines 1920: 89.

¹⁴ van den Hout's initial note on *ad Amicos* 1.15 is 1999: 426, and redirects to *mirificus*, seen in *de Eloquentia* 1.3 at 1999: 321, and it is on pp. 321 where the quotation appears.

would these wisest men themselves do, if they were drawn away from their own habit and custom?

(*de Eloquentia* 1.3.1-7)

Here, I reuse Haines' translation "wondrous," to show van den Hout's intention of linking its use to describe Pythagoras in *de Eloquentia* to the philosophers in *ad Amicos* 1.15. Van den Hout argues that the description of Pythagoras here is meant to mock. However, it seems odd that Pythagoras would be ridiculed here, when none of the other philosophers listed, described as *sapientissimi viri*, seem to be. Also, to belittle Pythagoras, or any of the philosophers in this passage, is contrary to Fronto's purpose. The intention behind this letter is to convince Aurelius that he does need to pay attention to his rhetorical studies, even if he is determined to pursue philosophy. Philosophers, as Fronto argues here, need rhetoric to support their aims. The adjectives that describe each philosopher are necessary specifically to accomplish the gerundive purpose phrase that follows (*Zeno ad docendum planissimus*, *Socrates ad coarguendum captiosissimus*, *Diogenes ad exprobrandum promptissimus* [1.3.2-4]). Without a signature style (*diverso genere*), as Fronto goes on to say in the rest of the letter, philosophers would not accomplish their philosophical goals. Fronto means for this to extend to Aurelius as well in that he must apply an intentional rhetorical style to his work, and thus must continue to study rhetoric. To undermine one philosopher in the list, rather than simply removing him, would be for Fronto to undermine his argument as a whole. Instead, I suggest that van den Hout assumes that the probable sarcasm present in *ad Amicos* 1.15 will apply to philosophers in general, rather than that particular situation in that particular letter. Such an interpretation of Fronto obscures a more careful attitude towards philosophy in these letters than van den Hout would like to allow.

A final example of van den Hout's opinion of an anti-philosophical Fronto can be seen in *de Nepote Amisso* 2, wherein Fronto describes his sorrow at the loss of his infant grandson. Van

den Hout, who dislikes much of Fronto's corpus, writes that "this is one of Fronto's better writings; it expresses the feelings of a man who is profoundly unhappy, let down by philosophy and religion."¹⁵ I pass over the more obvious contradiction, the fact that in order to be let down by philosophy, Fronto must have at one point been held up by it, to look more closely at the text of the letter. I argue that Fronto's feelings are certainly strong in this letter, but philosophy is by no means an exclusive target for criticism. After describing all the things he and his daughter and son-in-law miss about their son, he turns to criticize philosophy.

*si maxime esse animas immortalis constet, erit hoc **philosophis** disserendi argumentum, **non parentibus** desiderandi remedium.*

If it is completely agreed that souls are immortal, that will be an argument discussed by **philosophers**, **not** a cure for the longing of **parents**.

(de Nepote Amissio 2.5.9-11)

It seems that van den Hout derives his unfavorable opinion from this line, from Fronto's comparison of philosophers and parents (*philosophis...non parentibus*), and the failure he sees in philosophers' attempts to sooth grieving families. However, later in the letter, Fronto makes clear his displeasure is not directed against any one group or individuals, exclusively.

*neque ulla **poetarum carmina** aut **sapientium praecepta** tantum promoverint ad luctum filiae meae sedandum et dolorem leniendum, quantum **mariti vox** ex ore carissimo et **pectore** iunctissimo profecta.*

No **songs of poets** nor such great **teachings of wise men** will contribute to the resting of my daughter's grief and the lessening of her sorrow, as the **voice of her husband** from his sweetest mouth, and with **his heart** set so close by.

(de Nepote Amissio 2.7.4-7)

When this passage is considered along with the one before, it seems less like Fronto's issue in *de Nepote Amissio 2* is specifically with philosophy and religion, as van den Hout claimed. Instead, it is clear that songs of poets are not helpful (*poetarum carmina*), nor wise men at all (*sapientium*

¹⁵ van den Hout 1999: 534.

praecepta). The only thing that is helpful is the voice and heart of his daughter's husband (*maritis vox...et pectore*), anything else is worthless. I argue that Fronto is merely lamenting, and perhaps rebuking, any other possible remedy for mourning, because the closeness of a loved one is the only help. He does not lambast philosophers more than any other group, and so *de Nepote Amisso* 2 cannot be used to show Fronto's particular dislike of philosophers beyond others.

To complete my observation that Fronto's smaller comments on philosophy are not entirely negative, I introduce *ad Antoninum Augustum* 1.3. The letter describes Fronto's surprise visit to Aurelius' family, how he meets the *pullulos*, Aurelius' infant sons, and refers to the philosophical attributes of one of them with warm affection, not condemnation or worry.

*sunt autem dis iuvantibus colore satis salubri, clamore forti. panem alter tenebat bene candidum, ut puer regius, alter autem **cibarium**, plane ut **a patre philosopho** prognatus.*

They are, gods willing, with enough color of health, and with a strong shout. One was holding white bread well, like a royal son, and the other **brown bread**, clearly like one born **from a philosopher father**.

(*ad Antoninum Augustum* 1.3.2.1-4)

In this passage, Fronto could have taken the opportunity to chide his pupil for the philosophical air already present about one of his sons. Or, he could have praised the other, kingly brother, and attributed to him some sense of a speaker. Yet, both are described as having strong voices, and the reference to their philosophical father seems doting and warm, like a compliment. This is not the attitude of one who has bitterly lost the battle against the discipline he wanted to root out of his student.

The Philosophical Fronto

In this section, I show that Fronto not only has more regard for philosophy than previous scholars believed, but that he uses it in his educational letters to Aurelius in order to keep his student interested in the rhetorical subject matter. In my analysis, I argue that, in particular, Fronto uses the *exempla* and voices of ancient philosophers to defend his own, pro-rhetorical stance. If Aurelius is hesitant to develop his eloquence because of a devotion to philosophy, Fronto encourages him towards more attention to rhetoric using Aurelius' own philosophical icons. Fronto makes his argument about the importance of rhetorical education in a way he thinks will be most persuasive to his addressee. This approach can be seen in *ad Verum 2*, a letter to Lucius Verus (130-169 CE), another student of Fronto's, and Aurelius' adopted brother and co-ruler.

sed caput atque fons bonarum artium et studiorum ab eloquentiae disciplinis oritur, neque res militaris neque officii observantia, quam philosopham vocant, perfecta gigni potest, nisi cum eloquentia creata sit.

But the origin and the source of all good arts and studies arises from the teachings of eloquence, nor is the military, nor the observation of duties, which they call philosophy, able to be produced perfectly, unless it has been created with eloquence.
(*ad Verum 2.22.1-4*)

Lucius Verus was the head of military operations until his death in Parthia in 169. Accordingly, Fronto mentions military skill as well as philosophy when he lists those tasks that require eloquence to be carried out. Military matters seldom appear in Fronto's letters to Aurelius, and the existence of military consideration here further shows how apt Fronto is to tailor his message to his individual correspondent.

Whereas military matters suffice for encouraging Verus, for Aurelius philosophy is always engaged. In *de Feriis Alsiensibus 3*, Fronto writes to Aurelius on vacation. His concern

for Aurelius' health, and whether he's really taking time to relax, masks another concern: Fronto is on a mission to convince Aurelius to take more time for himself, and to behave more moderately.¹⁶ Fronto uses the examples of the hobbies and relaxations philosophers have enjoyed to persuade Aurelius to take his suggestions seriously.

*num tu esurialis ferias celebras? nec **Chrysippum tuum** praeteribo, quem **quotidie** ferunt **madescere** solitum et pleraque de prelo vina satis prompta respersisse examine referto. **Socratem** autem ex Socraticorum sumposiis et dialogis et epistulis existimes **hominem multum scitum et facetum fuisse**, **Socratem intelleges Aspasiae discipulum, Alcibiadi magistrum.***

Do you not celebrate festival days hungry? I will not pass over **your Chrysippus**, whom they say was accustomed **to drink every day** and usually to have drained wine out of a crammed press by the bucket. You already know that the **Socrates** of the Socratic symposia and dialogues and letters was a **very learned man and charming**, you know that Socrates was **the student of Aspasia and the teacher of Alcibiades**.

(de Feriis Alsiensibus 3.6.9-14)

Fronto mentions Chrysippus, a Stoic philosopher whom Aurelius looked up to (*Chrysippum tuum*). Also, Fronto clearly reminds Aurelius that “Socrates was not a frivolous man, but we should not forget that he was the pupil of a courtesan and the teacher of a man who was given to drinking.”¹⁷ We have noted that Fronto has used Socrates as an example of a philosopher whose particular rhetorical style makes his philosophical teachings possible (*de Eloquentia* 1.3). Now, Fronto uses his connection to excess, through his teacher and pupil, to convince Aurelius that an association with hobbies and relaxation, if not a full dedication to them, is not diametrically opposed to a philosophical life. Fronto uses Aurelius' regard for Chrysippus and Socrates to encourage him to adopt their lifestyles, frivolity, as well as introspection.

¹⁶ For a more in-depth look at *de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3, see Chapter 1.

¹⁷ van den Hout 1999: 521.

Above in *de Eloquentia* 1.3, we observed Fronto portraying philosophers as in agreement with his own education priorities. In another passage, this time from *de Eloquentia* 2, Fronto calls on Plato to aid his cause in an attempt to help Aurelius understand the importance of eloquence, even for a philosopher. Here, philosophy is not only being engaged to encourage Aurelius to live a certain kind of way, but is also being used to dissuade him from inappropriate behavior. It seems that Fronto either reproduces a previous complaint of Aurelius' against rhetoric, or that Fronto imagines what Aurelius would protest, and uses this scenario to set up his invocation of Plato.

audivi te nonnumquam ita dicentem: "atenim cum aliquid pulchrius elocutus sum placeo mihi ideoque eloquentiam fugio." quin tu potius illud corrigis ad mederis ne places tibi non ut id propter quod places repudies? nam ut nunc facis, alibi tu medicamenta obliges. quid tandem? si tibi placebis tibi pio aliquo cultu parentis, pietatem spernabere? places tibi cum facundus? igitur verbera te; quid facundiam verberas? tametsi Plato ita diceret itaque te compelleret: "o iuvenis, periculosa est tibi praepropera placendi fuga: novissimum namque homini sapientiam colenti amiculum est gloriae cupido; id novissimum exuitur." ipsi, ipsi, inquam, Platoni in novissimum usque vitae finem Gloria amiculum erit.

I have sometimes heard you speaking this way: "but when I have said something rather lovely, **I please myself** and so **I am avoiding eloquence.**" But why not rather correct this and heal it, so that you don't please yourself, so that you don't reject this because you are pleased by it? For as you are doing now, you are applying a remedy in the wrong place. Why? If you were pleasing to yourself because of some pious concern for your father, would you spurn piety? Do you please yourself when you are witty? Then beat yourself: why should you beat wit? **And even Plato would speak in this way**, and would compel you in this way: "O young man, **a sudden flight from pleasing things is dangerous for you**: the desire of glory is the last cloak for a man seeking wisdom; it ends last." I say that **for even Plato himself**, glory was his last cloak up to the end of his life.

(de Eloquentia 2.9)

Fronto deals with Aurelius' struggle, a typical Stoic rejection of pride and vanity, not by rejecting philosophical ways of living, but instead by using philosophy to combat Aurelius' hesitation. While the rest of Fronto's strategy seems clear, the quote that he attributes to Plato has interesting and complex significance.

There are two separate sections to Fronto’s quotation of Plato, that of the danger of avoiding pleasure, and that of glory’s constant presence for a wise man. Neither section comes from any extant edition of Plato, so Fronto’s use of this language likely refers to other authors, and should be explained to understand the full force he intends. I begin with the second part, Plato’s supposed assertion that the desire for glory follows a wise man to his grave, because it is more straightforward and has more readily identifiable ancient influences than the concept that avoidance of pleasure is dangerous. Van den Hout notes that the concept of unavoidable and everlasting fame is present in Tacitus,¹⁸ when writing about the life and career of Helvidius Priscus, who was put to death under the reign of Domitian: *erant quibus adpetentior famae videretur, quando etiam sapientibus cupido gloriae novissima exiit* (“There were some for whom he seemed too eager for fame, since even for wise men the desire of glory dies last” [*Historiae* 4.6.1-2]).¹⁹ Athenodotus attributes the line to Plato: ἦν δὲ ὁ Πλάτων πρὸς τῆς κακοηθείας καὶ φιλόδοξος, ὅστις ἔφησεν· ἔσχατον τὸν τῆς φιλοδοξίας χιτῶνα ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτῷ ἀποδύμεθα, ἐν διαθήκαις, ἐν ἐκκομιδαῖς, ἐν τάφοις, ὡς φησι Διοσκουρίδης ἐν τοῖς Ἀπομνημονεύμασιν (“Plato was also prideful about a bad character, he used to say that “in old age we will shed the cloth of pride in death, in our wills, in our funeral processions, in our burials.” Thus the son of Dioscuros said in *The Memoirs*” [*Deipnosophistoi* IX.507d.2-6]).²⁰ Independently of Plato, Simonides, preserved by Plutarch, presents a similar belief in the lifespan of fame: πολιτεία δὲ δημοκρατικὴ καὶ νόμιμος ἀνδρὸς εἰθισμένου παρέχειν αὐτὸν οὐχ ἥττον ἀρχόμενον ὠφελίμως ἢ ἄρχοντα καλὸν ἐντάφιον ὡς ἀληθῶς τὴν ἀπὸ βίου δόξαν τῷ θανάτῳ προστίθησι. τοῦτο γὰρ ἔσχατον δύνεται κατὰ γὰς, ὡς φησι Σιμωνίδης (“After a man has been

¹⁸ van den Hout 1999: 334.

¹⁹ Latin text comes from Moore and Jackson’s 1931 Loeb edition.

²⁰ Greek text comes from Olson’s 2009 Loeb edition.

accustomed to rule a democratic and law-abiding city no less being ruled helpfully than ruling, truly reputation is a beautiful offering they give after life to the dead. For this in old age sinks under the earth, as Simonides says” [*Fragments* 594]).²¹ While the only direct quotation of this opinion of reputation belongs to Simonides, and there is no direct quotation of Plato available in his extant works, Fronto clearly had some support for attributing this concept to Plato. In both Tacitus’ and Athenaeus’ renderings, wise men knew and were known to retain their concern about their reputations throughout their entire lives, and in Simonides honor was given to a man who lived his life correctly, as a gift after his death. Fronto then uses this well-known concept to remind Aurelius that, like other philosophers, he cannot possibly avoid pride in his own knowledge, or the appreciation of others for his gifts.

The first part of the quote, the danger of avoiding pleasure, is more difficult to reconcile with ancient sources. Van den Hout gives Lucian’s work on the death of Peregrinus as the only possible source for the danger of fleeing reputation all together. Lucian explains his project about Peregrinus in the work’s opening lines: Peregrinus changed himself continually for attention, and eventually jumped into a pyre at a crowded Greek festival, so that his death would bring him enormous fame. Lucian witnesses Peregrinus’ public suicide, and then considers the effect of fame on men, and gives us the quote that Fronto seems to adopt.

Ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπανιῶν ποικίλα, ᾧ ἑταῖρε, πρὸς ἑμαυτὸν ἐνενόουν, τὸ φιλόδοξον οἶόν τι ἐστὶν ἀναλογιζόμενος, ὡς μόνος οὗτος ὁ ἔρωσ ἀφυκτος καὶ τοῖς πάνυ θαυμαστοῖς εἶναι δοκοῦσιν, οὐχ ὅπως ἐκείνῳ τάνδρῃ καὶ τᾶλλα ἐμπλήκτως καὶ ἀπονενοημένως βεβιωκότι καὶ οὐκ ἀναξίως τοῦ πυρός.

While coming back I considered, friend, I wondered to myself what kind of a thing love of reputation seems, **that this love alone is inescapable even for those entirely considered to be excellent**, not only for that man living amazingly and desperately and who was not unworthy of the fire.

(*Peregrinus* 38)

²¹ Greek text comes from Cambell’s 1991 Loeb edition.

When comparing Fronto's quote of "Plato" in *de Eloquentia* 2.9 to Lucian's, it appears that Fronto does not so much quote Lucian as mirror his text and idea. Fronto's assertion that the love of glory pertains even to men seeking excellence (*novissimum namque homini sapientiam colenti amiculum est gloriae cupido* [2.9.9.10]) mirrors the grammar and sense of Lucian's (*ὁ ἔρωσ ἀφυκτος καὶ τοῖς πάνυ θαυμαστοῖς εἶναι δοκοῦσιν*). *Gloriae cupido* can be seen to replace Lucian's *ὁ ἔρωσ ἀφυκτος* ("inescapable love"), and would suggest that Fronto's *cupido* is not only a *novissimum amiculum* ("a final cloak"), but is also *ἀφυκτος* ("inescapable"). Both *gloriae cupido* and *ὁ ἔρωσ ἀφυκτος* are linked to their respective datives, *homini sapientiam colenti* ("a man seeking wisdom") and *τοῖς πάνυ θαυμαστοῖς εἶναι δοκοῦσιν* ("those men considered to be excellent"). Fronto's Latin refers to men who are on intellectual journeys, whereas Lucian's refers to men whom others think to be good, but I think the similarities between the Latin desire of glory and the Greek inescapable love provide enough similarities to argue that Fronto borrows the sense from Lucian for this quote, while not adopting his direct wording. In doing so, Fronto's aim in *de Eloquentia* 2.9 is to present the folly of extreme behavior, Peregrinus' extreme love of attention, as somewhat parallel to Aurelius' determination never to be pleased with his own work, or take any pride in cultivating his rhetorical abilities. He also wants to remind Aurelius of Lucian's concept that no man is free from the love of reputation; Aurelius can either accept it as a human condition, or behave rashly as Peregrinus does. The fact that Peregrinus was a Cynic and, for a time, a radical Christian believer, adds all the more to Fronto's negative *exemplum* of one whose extreme philosophical beliefs destroyed him. Fronto couches all this that he wants Aurelius to gather from Lucian's account of Peregrinus, in a quote attributed to Plato, to catch his attention, perhaps to make him check his editions of Plato, before finding the reference

Fronto intends. Such a lesson, once realized, likely would have had a sticking effect because of the journey Aurelius would have had to undergo to decipher its meaning.

Whereas *de Eloquentia* 2.9 above uses philosophy to tell Aurelius how to behave, or rather not behave, Fronto takes a different tact in *ad M. Caesarem* 3.16. In this letter, Fronto tells Aurelius that his philosophical dreams will not be possible without the careful cultivation of eloquence. This letter is less about how Aurelius should be living, and instead focuses more on the practical use for eloquence in Aurelius' day-to-day philosophical writing and speaking.

at ego sine istis artibus omnem orationem absurdam et agrestem et incognitam, denique inertem atque inutilem puto. neque magis oratoribus arbitror necessaria eiusmodi artificia quam philosophis. in ea re non oratorum domesticis, quod dicitur, testimoniis utar, sed philosophorum eminentissimis, poetarum vetustissimis, excellentissimisque, vitae denique cotidianae usu atque cultu artiumque omnium experimentis.

But I think that **without these skills**, every speech would be absurd and common and confusing, and finally lazy and useless. **Nor do I think that skills of this kind are more necessary for speakers than for philosophers.** In this matter I will not use family testimonials of orators, as is said, but **the most famous of philosophers**, the oldest and most excellent poets, and finally the daily use and habit of life and the trials of all arts.

(ad M. Caesarem 3.16.1.3-9)

Here, Fronto throws the book at Aurelius. If Fronto's encouragement and reasoning is not enough, surely he will heed not only philosophers, but also poets and everyday common sense. Fronto here is not telling Aurelius to reject philosophy, but to embrace the role that eloquence must play within it. The letter ends without the promised reference to poetry, but instead includes an extended passage on Socrates' rhetorical techniques.

quidnam igitur tibi videtur princeps ille sapientiae simul atque eloquentiae Socrates? huic enim primo ac potissimo testimonium apud te denuntiavi: eone usus genere dicendi, in quo nihil est oblicum, nihil interdum dissimulatum? quibus ille modis Protagoram et Polum et Thrasymachum et sophistas ceteros versare atque inretire solitus?

Then how does **this prince of wisdom and eloquence at the same time, Socrates**, seem to you? I offer you the witness of that first and most able man: **Did he make use of this style of speaking**, in which nothing is tricky, and nothing at all is unclear? **With what ways** did he use **to spin and snare** Protagoras and Thrasymachus and other sophists?

(*ad M. Caesarem* 3.16.2.1-6)

The passage goes on to note how Socrates attacked from ambushes (*ex insidiis*), may have been the first to use irony (*quo ex homine nata inversa oratio videtur, quam Graece εἰρωνείαν appellant*), and still was a strong and serious man (*neque deerat Socrati profecto gravitas aut vis*). His conscious style of speech, Fronto argues, is not a sign of lack of a philosophical nature, but an indication that he knew his audience, as Fronto does:

*sed vidit profecto ingenia partim hominum ac praecipue adolescentium **facilius comi atque adfabili oratione leniri quam acri violentaque superari.***

But he clearly saw that the minds of men in general, and especially of young men, are **more easily softened by kind and friendly speech than overcome by sharp and violent speech.**

(*ad M. Caesarem* 3.16.2.13-15)

Fronto uses the example of Socrates' control over speech, and the probability that such a skill was developed and not innate, to persuade Aurelius to follow Socrates' example. Philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Chrysippus, as we have seen in *de Eloquentia* 1.3, 2.9, *de Feriis Alsiensibus* 3, and *ad M. Caesarem* 3.16, are utilized by Fronto to bolster his own argument: philosophy requires the careful and correct use of words, skills best mastered through study of rhetoric.

Far from prohibiting or discouraging Aurelius' philosophical passion, we have seen that Fronto uses philosophy to his own advantage. He uses the examples of the lives of philosophers to encourage Aurelius to live moderately; he refers to philosophers' rhetorical skill to convince Aurelius of the need for eloquence in his own development as a student and as a philosopher. In

circumstances where Aurelius is perhaps less likely to heed Fronto, a mere teacher of rhetoric with no philosophical background, Fronto brings his own witnesses, the very philosophers Aurelius studies and looks up to, to argue on his behalf, and plead the case for the significance of eloquence, and how crucial it is for Aurelius to adhere to Fronto's teachings. If he will not pursue eloquence for its own sake, he cannot deny, Fronto hopes, its role in the development of his philosophical expression.

The Philosopher Fronto?

I have argued thus far that Fronto has no particular hard feelings towards philosophy, and even weaves it into his rhetorical education to keep Aurelius interested and engaged in his subject matter. Now, I take a step further, suggesting that Fronto not only uses the philosophical *exempla* of others, but also, in fact, might produce quasi-philosophical material of his own, through which to show how eloquence aids in the production and success of philosophical texts. The best model for my argument is *Additamentum* 8, a Greek letter in which Fronto recreates the scenario of the *Phaedrus* with his own argument against lovers. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, young Phaedrus meets Socrates walking outside the walls of Athens. Phaedrus presents a discourse from contemporary rhetorician Lysias, which argues that non-lovers should be gratified and indulged instead of lovers. Socrates listens, and then performs two recreations of Lysias' speech, the first following the same argument about the supremacy of non-lovers, the second uplifting the divine and philosophical purpose of *eros*. Finally, Phaedrus and Socrates discuss the nature of rhetoric, what is required for its perfection, and eventually come to the conclusion that true rhetoric is rather more like philosophy than speeches such as Lysias' from the start of the dialogue. Harvey Yunis argues that "to move [Phaedrus] away from sophistic epideictic rhetoric

and towards philosophy is [Socrates'] goal from the moment he accosts him at the outset."²² I argue that Fronto adopts the argument of the importance of non-lovers from the *Phaedrus*, but attempts to lead Aurelius in the opposite direction. Fronto plays with the philosophical form, attractive to Aurelius as rhetoric initially is to Phaedrus, to attempt to lead Aurelius on a journey towards eloquence.

To set our scene, in *ad M. Caesarem* 3.9, Fronto has told Aurelius of his Greek dialogue's existence, but Aurelius has not yet received it.

Graece nescio quid ais te conpegisse, quod ut aequae pauca a te scripta placeat tibi. tunc es qui me nuper concastigabas, quorsum Graece scriberem? mihi vero nunc potissimum Graece scribendum est. 'quamobrem?' rogas. volo periculum facere, an id, quod non didici, facilius obsecundet mihi, quoniam quidem illud, quod didici, deserit. sed si me amares, misisses mihi istud novicium, quod placere ais.

You say that you've linked **something in Greek**, which pleases you as much as the little things written by you. Is it you who recently criticized me because I wrote in Greek? Truly, Greek must be written most of all by me. "Why" you ask. I want to test whether that which I have not learned might come more easily to me, since that which I did learn has left me. If you loved me, you would have sent me **this new little thing, which you say is pleasing**.

(*ad M. Caesarem* 3.9.2.1-6)

Van den Hout believes that this may be one of the earliest letters in Fronto and Aurelius' corpus; the preceding letter where Fronto teases this new work of his does not seem to have survived as part of the collection.²³ However, we can assume that whatever Fronto said, it was enough to tantalize his student, who above demands to see this new Greek writing.²⁴ This is the first step in Fronto's plan, his educational seduction: if Aurelius is the one to request Fronto's new work, then it generates more interest than if Fronto had shoved his new pseudo-philosophical treatise

²² Yunis 2011: 4.

²³ van den Hout 1999: 112.

²⁴ Fronto's interaction and facility with Greek writing is covered in van den Hout 1999: 60, Swain 2004: 6, Claassen 2009, and Taoka 2013: 421. His use of Greek and reference to golden-age Athens in the upcoming *Additamentum* 8 is indicative of the cultural movement of the Second Sophistic. For more on the Second Sophistic, see Bowersock 1969, Bowie 1970, Swain 1996, and Jones 2004.

on him. This also mirrors Socrates' philosophical seduction of Phaedrus, allowing Phaedrus to solicit him for additional dialogues that become more philosophical in nature, unaware that he plays directly into Socrates' plan.²⁵

The letter itself, *Additamentum* 8, is also called the *Erotikos Logos*. Van den Hout believes that his letter is Fronto's pedagogical introduction to his student, and I follow his assertion that "knowing Marcus' nature, Fronto chooses a philosophical argument, which actually is a sophistry, as well as Lysias' speech in Plato."²⁶ Van den Hout also remarks that this letter should not be taken as literal, or as Fronto warning Aurelius away from homoerotic relationships. Amy Richlin takes a different approach, arguing that Fronto is making use of both the philosophical nature of the *Phaedrus* and its rhetorical significance, as well as the erotic components of the dialogue.²⁷ She notes that Fronto addresses Phaedrus as the subject of the dialogue, much as Socrates addresses Phaedrus in Plato's text, and that "this frame enables him to call Marcus beautiful (repeated many times); and to talk about Marcus carrying on with another man, sometimes in graphic terms; and to joke about keeping Marcus' name "inviolated"... and to talk about his own desire for Marcus; and to warn Marcus for the need for secrecy and the value of coded speech; and to end with an elegantly Platonic proposition: let's go down by the Ilissus... He gets to say all these things, and it's educational."²⁸ I do not attempt to dispute the erotic nature of this letter; instead, I focus on the educational and rhetorical implications inherent in Fronto's choice of a Platonic dialogue, and his intended outcome of such a composition.

²⁵ Pender 2007: 5 argues that the setting for Socrates and Phaedrus' discussion is highly reminiscent of the meadow of erotic Greek lyric poetry, adding an intentionally sexual implication to their encounter underneath the plane tree. Brown and Coulter 1971 argue that the speeches within the *Phaedrus* are designed to decrease in amount of sophistic rhetoric while also gradually increasing in philosophical dialectic, thereby leading Phaedrus gently to a philosophical discussion consistent with a seduction.

²⁶ van den Hout 1999: 560-561.

²⁷ Richlin 2005: 113-117.

²⁸ Richlin 2005: 116.

Fronto begins the letter very similarly to the first speech Phaedrus reads to Socrates (230e6-234b5).

Ὡ φίλε παῖ, τρίτον δὴ σοι τοῦτο περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιστέλλω, τὸ μὲν πρῶτον διὰ Λυσίου τοῦ Κεφάλου, δεύτερον δὲ διὰ Πλάτωνος τοῦ σοφοῦ, τὸ δὲ δὴ τρίτον διὰ τοῦδε τοῦ ξένου ἀνδρός, τὴν μὲν φωνὴν ὀλίγου δεῖν βαρβάρου, τὴν δὲ γνώμην, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, οὐ πάνυ ἄξυνέτου. γράφω δὲ νῦν οὐδέν τι τῶν πρότερον γεγραμμένων ἐφαπτόμενος, μηδὲ ἀμελήσης τοῦ λόγου ὡς παλιλλογοῦντος. εἰ δέ σοι δόξει τῶν πρότερον διὰ Λυσίου καὶ Πλάτωνος ἐπεσταλμένων πλείω τάδε εἶναι, ἔστω σοι τεκμήριον ὡς εὐλόγα ἐξιῶ, ὅτι οὐκ ἀποροῶ λόγων. προσέχεις δ' ἂν ἤδη τὸν νοῦν, εἰ καινά τε ἅμα καὶ δίκαια λέγω.

O dear boy, I send to you this third thing about these topics, the first one on the one hand **from Lysias son of Kephalus**, and the second on the other hand **from Plato the wise**, and on the other hand this third **from a foreign man, a such speech of a nearly barbaric man**, but as I see it, the purpose is not completely unintelligible. I have written now, **laying hold to nothing of the previous writers**, so you might not abandon it as a repeated speech. If it will seem to you that this is longer than the ones already sent from Lysias and Plato, let it be a sign for you that I seek praises, because I am not at a loss for words. Pay attention now, **to whether I say new and just things.**

(*Additamentum* 8.1)

In this introduction, Fronto elides his position with that of Lysias and Plato. Both are composing a speech intended for a young man, on the same topic: the danger of lovers and why non-lovers are to be preferred. However, Fronto then immediately distances him from those other writers; he will say nothing said before, he will write new and different things, and wants to make sure Aurelius is on the look out. Fronto will take advantage of the philosophical frame of Plato's *Phaedrus*, but he makes it clear that his use of the frame will be completely different. Fronto, in fact, reverses the intention of the *Phaedrus*. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates sought to lead Phaedrus towards a greater appreciation of philosophy through examining rhetoric and speeches. His approach seems to be successful; Phaedrus begins the dialogue calling Lysias *δεινότατος ὦν τῶν*

νῦν γράφειν (“the cleverest of those writing today” [228.A.2]).²⁹ By the end of the dialogue, Phaedrus agrees (*Οὐ γὰρ οὕν*, “It’s not any other way” [277.E.3]) to Socrates’ assertion of the worthlessness of Lysias’ written texts:

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

Ὡς εἴτε Λυσίας ἢ τις ἄλλος πώποτε ἔγραψεν ἢ γράψει ἰδία ἢ δημοσία νόμους τιθείς, σύγγραμμα πολιτικὸν γράφων καὶ μεγάλην τινὰ ἐν αὐτῷ βεβαιότητα ἠγούμενος καὶ σαφήνεια, οὕτω μὲν ὄνειδος τῷ γράφοντι, εἴτε τις φησιν εἴτε μή·

SOCRATES

If Lysias or any other ever has written or will write, privately or publicly, setting down laws, writing a political composition, thinking that is has in it any great sureness and clarity, in this way it is reproach against the author, whether someone should say so or not.

(*Phaedrus* 277.D.4-7)

Phaedrus’ initial praise of Lysias has been at least shaken, if not completely dismantled by the end of the *Phaedrus*. Not only does Phaedrus lose faith in Lysias’ writings, but indeed agrees with Socrates’ assertion that men who practice true rhetoric are better called philosophers than anything else.

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ

εἰ μὲν εἰδὼς ἢ τὸ ἀληθὲς ἔχει συνέθηκε ταῦτα, καὶ ἔχων βοηθεῖν εἰς ἔλεγχον ἰὼν περὶ ὧν ἔγραψε, καὶ λέγων αὐτὸς δυνατὸς τὰ γεγραμμένα φαῦλα ἀποδείξει, οὗ τι τῶνδε ἐπωνυμίαν ἔχοντα δεῖ λέγεσθαι τὸν τοιοῦτον, ἀλλ’ ἐφ’ οἷς ἐσπούδακεν ἐκείνων.

ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ.

Τίνας οὕν τὰς ἐπωνυμίας αὐτῷ νέμεις;

ΣΩΚΡΑΤΗΣ.

Τὸ μὲν σοφόν, ὦ Φαῖδρε, καλεῖν ἔμοιγε μέγα εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ θεῶ μόνῳ πρέπειν· τὸ δὲ ἢ φιλόσοφον ἢ τοιοῦτόν τι μᾶλλον τε ἂν αὐτῷ ἀρμόττοι καὶ ἐμμελεστέρας ἔχοι.

ΦΑΙΔΡΟΣ.

Καὶ οὐδέν γε ἄπο τρόπου.

SOCRATES

If, knowing the truth, he has set down writings, and being able to help by going into argument about the things he has written, and if the very power of his speaking shows his writings to be unimportant, it is necessary that he not be called something derived from those writings, but from those things more serious than them.

²⁹ All Greek text of Plato taken from Fowler 1914.

PHAEDRUS

Then what sort of names do you assign for him?

SOCRATES

On the one hand, Phaedrus, to call him a wise man seems to be to be a big thing, and more fitting for a god. But on the other hand either philosopher or such a thing would be more fitting for him and is more proper.

PHAEDRUS

And indeed not out of custom.

(*Phaedrus* 278.C.6-D.8)

Socrates thus seems to effectively turn Phaedrus' praise and admiration away from a Lysias-style rhetorician, and towards the consideration of rhetoric as a philosophical act, when done correctly. In almost the exact opposite way, Fronto seeks to lead Aurelius towards a greater appreciation of rhetoric through his manipulation of philosophical discourse adopted from the *Phaedrus*.

In his *Erotikos Logos*, Fronto sticks to his promise not to make the same arguments or use the same examples that Lysias' and Plato's letters did in the *Phaedrus* (*οὐδέν τι τῶν πρότερον γεγραμμένων ἐραπτόμενος* "laying hold to nothing of the previous writers" [8.1.5]). Rather than utilizing the images of the madness of lovers, or their jealousy from the *Phaedrus*, Fronto compares lovers and non-lovers to men with fevers and men at the gym: both sweat, but for different reasons (8.2). Fronto discusses the benefits of Aurelius' association with himself, declaring that because he is a non-lover, he offers no harm to Aurelius, like a lover would. To further prove that he is beneficial to Aurelius, Fronto engages the metaphor of non-lovers tending to boys, like natural waters tend and care for plants.

Ἄλλ' οὐκ ἔμοιγε ἐπ' ὀλέθρῳ πρόσει οὐδὲ ἐπὶ βλάβῃ τινὶ ὀμιλήσεις, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παντὶ ἀγαθῷ. καὶ ὠφελοῦνται γὰρ καὶ διασώζονται οἱ καλοὶ ὑπὸ τῶν μὴ ἐρώντων μᾶλλον, ὥσπερ τὰ φυτὰ ὑπὸ τῶν ὑδάτων. οὐ γὰρ ἐρώσιν οὔτε πηγαὶ οὔτε ποταμοὶ τῶν φυτῶν, ἀλλὰ παριόντες οὔτω δὴ καὶ παραρρέοντες ἀνθεῖν αὐτὰ καὶ θάλλειν παρεσκευάσαν.

But in my case, you will not be near to disaster, nor will you come near to any harm, but only every good. Beautiful boys are helped and preserved more by non-lovers, just like plants are by water. For springs and rivers are not the lovers of plants, but indeed being near and flowing by they prepare the plants to bloom and to grow.

(*Additamentum* 8.3.1-5)

Here, Fronto not only continues to stress his benefit to Aurelius as a non-lover, but extends his helpful role to that of teacher. Here, Fronto introduces agricultural metaphors frequent in educational situations. Typically, the teacher is depicted as the active farmer, planting and manipulating the passive earth, figured as the student.³⁰ In this situation, Aurelius is the blooming plant, carefully tended and watered not by the usual farmer, but by a natural stream, representing Fronto. This stream metaphor references the water through which Phaedrus and Socrates walk to find their eventual resting place under the plane tree [229.A.3], but also reinforces the role in which Fronto establishes himself during this dialogue. Fronto becomes the figure of Socrates from the *Phaedrus*, both speaking as a teacher to an eager student, as Socrates does in his speeches to Phaedrus, but also as a propositioning pederastic “non-lover” to a possible *eromenos* (“beloved”), all the while denying the typical power dynamic that would come with the relationship between *erastes* and *eromenos*.³¹ While Fronto assures Aurelius that his friendship comes with no risk of harm, he also asserts his position at the head of their relationship, both by using accepted educational language of the period, as well as playing with the pederastic conventions provided in the *Phaedrus*.

Fronto ends *Additamentum* 8 by extending his educational metaphor to refer to the sunflower, following its beloved across the sky. However, in this case, Fronto himself is the flower, the passive role traditionally assigned to students, as we saw above in 8.3. Aurelius is the natural sun, object of the sunflower’s affection, and neither gaining nor losing anything from that

³⁰ Morgan 1998: 255 explores in depth the active and passive roles adopted in literature discussing teachers and students, and the frequency of agricultural, as well as familial, metaphor in describing such relationships.

³¹ Yunis 2011: 14 argues that Lysias is figured as a traditional *erastes*, and Phaedrus thus the traditional *eromenos*. The later criticisms of lovers by Socrates thus serve to criticize the traditional *erastes/eromenos* structure of pederasty. Foley 1998: 68 argues that the erotic dynamics between the philosophical lovers in Socrates’ second speech are less classically pederastic, and more based on the reciprocal erotic relations depicted in the circle of women in Sappho’s poetry.

association. In this way, Fronto argues that he not only will not bring harm to Aurelius as the traditional active participant in the relationship, but also he indeed questions the existence of the strict hierarchy of teacher over student.

*Ἐν τί σοι φράσω πρὸς τούτοις, ὁ καὶ σὺ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους λέγων παῖδας **πιθανὸς εἶναι δόξεις**. εἰκὸς δέ σε ἢ παρὰ μητρὸς ἢ τῶν ἀναθρεψαμένων μὴ ἀνήκοον εἶναι ὅτι τῶν ἀνθῶν ἐστὶν **τι ὃ δὴ τοῦ ἡλίου ἐρᾷ** καὶ πάσχει τὰ τῶν ἐρώντων, ἀνατέλλοντος ἐπαιρόμενον καὶ πορευομένου καταστρεφόμενον, δύνοντος δὲ περιτρεπόμενον· **ἀλλ' οὐδέν γε πλέον ἀπολαύει**, οὐδὲ εὐμενεστέρου πειρᾶται διὰ τὸν ἔρωτα **τοῦ ἡλίου**. ἀτιμότατον γοῦν ἐστὶν φυτῶν καὶ ἀνθῶν οὔτε εἰς ἐορταζόντων θαλίας οὔτ' ἐς στεφάνους θεῶν ἢ ἀνθρώπων παραλαμβόμενον. Ἔοικας, **ὦ παῖ**, τὸ ἄνθος τοῦτο ἐδεῖν ἐθέλειν· **ἀλλ' ἔγωγέ σοι ἐπιδείξω, εἰ ἔξω τείχους πρὸς τὸν Ἰλισσὸν ἅμα ἅμφω βαδίσαιμεν**.*

I will show one thing to you beyond these, which thing **you should be persuasive in telling** the other boys. Likely you have certainly heard from your mother or from other caretakers that **of flowers there is one which follows the sun** and endures the things of lovers, lifting up when the sun rises, following as it goes, and setting back down when it sets, and turning itself when it sets. **But it does not benefit at all from the sun**, and it does not experience it as kinder because of its love. For it is dishonored of plants and flowers neither for festivities of festivals nor in the crowns of gods or men it is received. Perhaps, **boy**, you want to see this flower. **And I will show it to you, if outside the wall along the Ilissus we might walk together.**

(Additamentum 8.10-11)

The ring composition of the final **ὦ παῖ** in this passage reminds Aurelius, and we as readers, of the beginning, where Fronto asserts his status as a non-lover, neither benefitting from nor harming Aurelius. Fronto expresses his willingness to show his abilities as a teacher, in the metaphor of a flower, to Aurelius, and only at the end of the letters does he suggest a walk outside the city walls to the Ilissus, a river running outside of Athens. Such a journey occurs at the very beginning of Plato's *Phaedrus* (Δεῦρ' ἐκτραπόμενοι κατὰ τὸν Ἰλισσὸν ἵωμεν, "Let's go down to the Ilissus, turning right here" [229.A.1]). Socrates' journey with Phaedrus comprises the entire dialogue, until they decide to part ways after their philosophical and rhetorical conversation. Here, because the invitation to take a journey together comes at the end, it seems to be more of an

invitation for a walk that will take place for the rest of their educational relationship. On this journey, inspired by and framed in Greek philosophical terms, Fronto will show his student how he can be of use to him, like the nourishing stream, and certainly bring him no harm, as the sunflower does not negatively impact the sun. This journey will be educational, but also companionable. And begun as it is with a play on Greek philosophy, it seems highly unlikely that Fronto would ever continue this same relationship with no mention or use for philosophy along the way. This is not a composition of someone who hates philosophy, or one who merely adopts its use to humor his student. This journey, and Fronto's education, is about and towards rhetoric *through* Aurelius' presupposed interest in philosophy, and utilizing philosophical language, *exempla*, and precedents. Fronto's education does not take place despite Aurelius' philosophical nature, but alongside and in the light of it.

While I would not go so far as to say that Fronto was himself independently philosophical, despite the title of this concluding section, I would say that Fronto cannot be read as having resentment towards philosophy, or as carrying out an educational mission in opposition to philosophy. Such an assertion of Fronto's relevance necessarily challenges the popular biographical tradition that Aurelius' love of philosophy caused a rift in his and Fronto's relationship, and that subject matter came between these two men in the end. Instead, I think that a more dynamic relationship can be read through Fronto's use of philosophy in his letters to Aurelius, a relationship that reveals much more about the give and take of royal tutelage, and the complexity of this educational relationship, than originally believed.

Conclusion

In this project, I hope to have shown that the letters of Fronto and Marcus Aurelius are not so easily categorized as frivolous letters, or as a mere site for the mining of documentary facts. Instead, the letters between Fronto and Aurelius are full of opportunities to examine the literary play that occurs in ostensibly real letters between two educated, elite Roman men in the high Roman empire. However, even my more literary approach cannot overlook how contemporary reality affects the interpretation of the letters. Fronto and Aurelius were real men, and were significant figures of the empire. It has often been asked, and should be asked, what effect Fronto's tutelage had on Aurelius as a ruler? In Chapter 1, I argued that Fronto's main goal was to forge Aurelius into his ideal emperor, ready to use rhetorical skill to communicate with his people and senators, and to participate in a process of ruling that included input and advice from others. In Chapter 2, I combatted the myth that Fronto's opposition to philosophy meant an ultimate failure of his tactics, because of Aurelius' deep philosophical study and writings. Instead, because Fronto coopted the tools and examples of philosophy in his rhetorical teachings, even Aurelius' subsequent philosophy can be read as owing somewhat to Fronto's education.

Perhaps Aurelius himself can provide the greatest insight into Fronto's effect on his life. In the first book of his *Meditations*, Aurelius lists all the people who have taught him something. Fronto is, of course, featured.

Παρά Φρόντωνος, τὸ ἐπιστῆσαι, οἷα ἢ τυραννικὴ βασκανία καὶ ποικιλία καὶ ὑπόκρισις, καὶ ὅτι ὡς ἐπίπαν οἱ καλούμενοι οὗτοι παρ' ἡμῶν εὐπατρίδαι ἀστοργότεροί πως εἰσίν.

From Fronto: to know what kinds of jealousy, versatility, and hypocrisy are typical of a tyrant, and that, in general, those we call highborn are somewhat more heartless.
(*Meditations* 1.11)

This remembrance of Fronto is shorter than other accounts of Aurelius' other instructors in the *Meditations*. Antony Birley writes that Fronto would likely have been satisfied by this small note from his student. Birley's biography of Aurelius for the most part adopts the chronological arrangement and translations of Haines' edition of Fronto's letters. Thus, he holds that Fronto "never had much sympathy for philosophy and philosophers."¹ As I argued in Chapter 2, if Fronto was anti-philosophical, then Aurelius' philosophical interest may be seen as a failure for Fronto. Birley claims that Fronto's letters to Aurelius showed a desire to reintroduce older, pre-Ciceronian forms of Latin, "and to enrich or revive the literary language by drawing on authors earlier than Rome's Golden Age of literature and on the language of daily life. The intention was good, though the result seems a little half-baked."² Birley's analysis focuses specifically on Aurelius, and only acknowledges that Fronto believed in *ad Antoninum Augustum* 1.2 that he had an effect on Aurelius' rule, not that Aurelius necessarily was so influenced.

Edward Champlin, who wrote a biography of Fronto's life, appropriately reads Aurelius' dedication to Fronto in the *Meditations* as somewhat more important. He notes that the smaller length of the description of Fronto's contribution doesn't necessarily indicate a smaller debt or less affection. "Marcus' tributes to his mentors are in essence character sketches, and Fronto is deftly portrayed here by two dominant and related traits, candor and warmth of heart; even the most casual reader of his letters will agree that Marcus has remembered the two most obvious and attractive facts of his tutor's personality."³ Champlin's biography of Fronto includes the opinion that he was opposed to philosophy, but also Aurelius was never definitively converted to

¹ Birley 2000: 94.

² Birley 2000: 25.

³ Champlin 1980: 121.

philosophy and away from rhetoric.⁴ This view allows for Fronto to have had more influence on Aurelius, but not as much as my argument allows, that Fronto actively used philosophy, and so can be seen to be effective in Aurelius' philosophical and rhetorical future.

There are avenues other than *Meditations* 1.11 by which Fronto's effect on Aurelius can be assessed. Although Champlin warns that "it is particularly dangerous to press the correspondence into providing background for the *Meditations*," Fronto's specific grammatical precepts in the letters *de Eloquentia* and *de Oratore* could be compared to Aurelius' later proclamations and speeches.⁵ Also, any literary themes in the *Meditations* could, with caution, be compared to Aurelius' early writings to Fronto. My hope is that this project has demonstrated the ways in which the biographical tradition informing Fronto and Aurelius' letters—promoted by Haines, van den Hout, and Richlin—can be expanded to show a fuller picture of the importance of these letters for Roman history. By reexamining exactly what we can learn from the letters, I believe that the importance of these writings for understanding the lives of Fronto and Aurelius can be better evaluated.

However, I hope that the letters' historical significance is not the only advance this project puts forward. I also hope to show that the line between documentary and literary is blurred in these letters. Their status as real writings from and to real people does not diminish the fact that many are highly polished, and contain literary themes both indicative of the elite educated men that wrote

⁴ Champlin 1974 and 1980 argue that *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13, considered the "parting of the ways" between Fronto and Aurelius, and between Aurelius' study of rhetoric and philosophy (as discussed by Haines 1919: 218), does not necessarily refer to Aurelius' delight in reading Aristo, the philosopher, but perhaps Aristo as the legal writer. Therefore, while Aurelius could be read as not doing his rhetorical assignments in favor of reading philosophy, it could just as easily refer to a preference for jurisprudence. If this is true, the major turning point in Fronto and Aurelius' educational and personal relationship falls away. Champlin thus argues that Aurelius was philosophical his entire life, before, during, and after Fronto's instruction. Birley does adopt Champlin's suggestion about the legal nature of *ad M. Caesarem* 4.13, but does not continue with Champlin's line of thought on Fronto's overall influence on Aurelius.

⁵ Champlin 1980: 173.

them, and the trends of the Second Sophistic in which they were written. The letters' nature as both biographical and literary has yet to be fully realized, and I hope that this project takes a step in that direction, and can encourage other scholars and readers to do the same.

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