THE EXERCISE OF FRIENDSHIP IN THE HIGH ROMAN EMPIRE

by

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Peter Derow.

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Abstract

In the introduction, I discuss the problems scholars experience in trying to define the concept of Roman friendship. I argue that *amicitia* cannot be equated with patronage, and present justification based on some primary literature. Brief words are then offered on the sociology of friendship, and an attempt is made to relate ideas from modern sociology to ancient friendship.

The first chapter is based on the *Letters* of Pliny the Younger, and begins with an analysis of the vocabulary employed by Pliny in describing his friendships. This is considered in conjunction with prosopographical data in order to establish the connection between vocabulary and practice. The derived results are used to conclude that friendship in the Roman world was more involved than simply patronage, and that it was one of the driving forces behind Roman social behaviour as it helps to integrate different levels of society. Chapter two follows a similar methodology, with the correspondence of Fronto as its focus. The conclusions drawn in this chapter are used to reinforce the arguments presented in the first. Also included in chapter two is a brief discussion of the ancient philosophical approaches to friendship, and a solution is presented to resolve the differences between philosophical ideals and the reality of friendship.

The third chapter begins with an examination of the secondary literature on the concept of friendship with the emperor. I maintain that scholarship is lacking in this field because it neglects the personal nuances such relationships could have. The chapter then turns to Pliny's

Panegyricus to determine his attitude regarding this issue, which is used as evidence against some modern interpretations of aristocratic perceptions of the emperor. Pliny's exchanges with Trajan are subsequently analyzed, and it is argued that it was as subject/ruler that Pliny and Trajan defined their association. Chapter four discusses the relationship Fronto shared with the Antonine emperors. I contend that Fronto related differently with each and experienced different levels of intimacy, which points to the importance of personal connections, even with people as uniquely powerful as emperors. I also conclude from this that even emperors were not above the rules and practices of friendship.

The concluding remarks draw attention to the advantages of exploring Roman social relationships through the prism of friendship, as opposed to the traditional perspective of patronage. Some future avenues of research are also suggested.

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Introduction

'To the Ancients, Friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue'.[1]

C. S. Lewis, in the introduction to his treatise on friendship, ascribes rather casually the value of φιλία/*amicitia* to this group of people he terms 'the Ancients'. 'The modern world, in comparison', he goes on to explain, 'ignores it'. The point Lewis is trying to make here is that somehow, somewhere along the way from the ancient world to modernity, the concept of friendship, which 'Aristotle classified among the virtues' and 'on which Cicero wrote a book', was lost. The type of love seen between those celebrated pairs of friends, Pylades and Orestes, or, to add to Lewis' own list, Achilles and Patroclus, or Theseus and Pirithous, was replaced by the romantic love of Tristan and Isolde, or Romeo and Juliet. The latter type enjoys much enthusiastic reception in the modern world, whereas the former does not. So what has happened to bring this about, Lewis ponders; why does the modern world place so little emphasis on friendship, a relationship which received such attention in our own cultural and historic past.

It is not the intention of this thesis to deliberate on the questions Lewis posed in his treatise. Whether friendship in modernity has indeed lost its value as a social relationship or whether Lewis was correct in identifying the marginalization of friendship in his society are not the concerns of the present study.[2] Rather, I am much more interested in the statement with which I started, that to these 'Ancients', friendship was of central importance, and that it

[1] Lewis (1960), 54.
[2] Lewis (1960, 54-55) says of friendship in his day, 'It is something quite marginal; not a main course in life's banquet; a diversion; something that fills up the chinks of one's time'.

was valued as the 'crown of life and the school of virtue'. Exactly how valid is this claim? Did the people of the ancient world really see the social phenomenon of friendship in this fashion? In fact, what was friendship to the Ancients?

Of course, one could question how qualified Lewis was to make such a statement in the first place. Certainly, he was an intelligent and highly educated individual, but he probably did not have expert knowledge of the ancient world.[3] This is most likely why he spoke in such general terms about 'the Ancients', without necessarily considering how large a scope this would encompass. And, if we were to think critically about the premise of his argument, i.e. the ancient world valued friendship, as was demonstrated by its cultural appreciation of famous sets of friends, we could immediately raise the point that these figures belonged to the world of myth, and, really, how much can be concluded about the Ancients' perception of friendship based on their supposed approval of such tales? But if Lewis were criticized in this fashion, if this elegant statement, however imprecise it may appear, were deconstructed in this way, it would be doing its author a grave injustice, as it certainly was not his intention to investigate friendship in Antiquity; rather, this was a way for him to contextualize his observations of friendship in his society. The task of exploring the nature of friendship in the ancient world, however, is the topic of the present thesis.

Focus

In order to avoid some of the problems raised above regarding Lewis' uncritical approach to friendship and 'the Ancients', this thesis will be much more focused in its

[3] Lewis read for the Literae Humaniores in Oxford, receiving First in Honour Moderations (Greek and Latin Literature), Greats (Philosophy and Ancient History) and English. Although he was familiar with Antiquity through his undergraduate training, he was to pursue Medieval and Renaissance literature as the focus of his academic career.

methodology. Specifically, this thesis will concentrate on the friendship of the Roman world, what the Romans themselves termed *amicitia*. In addition, I have chosen to restrict this study chronologically, to the period between the reigns of Nerva and Marcus Aurelius, a period commonly recognized as the High Roman Empire. There are several reasons behind this decision. Primarily, as I have mentioned, it is to avoid the difficulties of scope and scale. It is erroneous, in my opinion, to view such a complicated concept as friendship as universal and unchanging for the whole of Antiquity, an opinion which is shared by many scholars. Much ink has been spilled, for instance, to explain the difference between the Greek notion of φιλία, along with the related idea of ξενία, and the Roman *amicitia*.[4] Some scholars have chosen to dedicate their attention to exploring the type of friendship experienced by the protagonists of heroic epics, inherently believing that they are of a different nature from the one practised in Classical Athens. There has also been some important literature on love and friendship in the Christian world, which maintains that the introduction of Christian ethics into contemporary social practices meant a refocusing of the values appreciated in friendship.[5]

Clearly, then, the understanding is that friendship is a concept which changes according to its historical and social circumstances, and must be studied within the context in which it was fostered. An overarching theory of friendship which spans the whole of Antiquity will undoubtedly prove unhelpful and overly generalized. Indeed, a statement such as 'the Ancients appreciated their friendship' is not very revealing about the nature of that friendship, nor about the nature of their society, since the same statement can probably be

[4] Konstan (1996b).
[5] I refer the reader to the bibliographical essay in Konstan (1997a), 174-176.

applied to civilizations throughout the history of the world.[6] However, if we direct our attention to a particular type of friendship within a particular period of time, not only can we make concrete remarks about that friendship, but it will also allow us to gain insight into the society in which such friendship was exercised.

There are also several reasons why I have chosen as the focus of this thesis *amicitia* in the High Roman Empire. The first has to do with the nature of my sources, which in essence consist of two sets of epistles, those by Pliny the Younger and by Marcus Cornelius Fronto. These two texts were selected as the basis of my study because they are uniquely informative about the society in which their authors lived, a topic which has seen surprisingly little attention from modern scholars. Moreover, the two authors of these epistles lived within a couple of generations of each other, which places them both in a comparable cultural, social and historical background, which also effectively defines the chronological boundaries of this thesis. This then addresses some of the concerns mentioned above of scope and scale. In addition, the similarity in genre of these two texts is convenient in that it allows us to read them as a collective, a consequence of which is not being compelled to explore the difficulties of working with different categories of historical writing. Fundamentally, however, it is in the nature of these two texts that this thesis finds its inspiration: that is to say, the very act of epistle writing is an expression of friendship, a demonstration of friendship in action, and by exploring the minutiae of these expressions this thesis will demonstrate the functionality of *amicitia*, and how vital friendship was for the continued existence of the society in which our authors lived.

[6] As Powell (1995, 54) concludes in his article about the Graeco-Roman preoccupation with friendship in philosophical discourses, '…friendship in its essence is much the same for human beings in all societies. In fact, I am not really sure what it would mean to assert otherwise'.

It should be pointed out that this is merely an overview of why these two particular texts were selected for my study. More detailed justification will be offered in the following chapters, along with some remarks about Pliny the Younger and Fronto, and their roles in their respective societies. Furthermore, the difficulties in using the two authors as sources will be explored fully in those chapters, as well as the ramifications such difficulties have in how *amicitia* was represented. Still, it is worth noting here that, despite the problems and caveats the two sources present, their value as windows which offer glimpses into their world should not be overlooked, and with a careful approach, as this thesis hopes to have adopted, we can gain many insights into the ways *amicitia* operated and its function in their society.

Secondary literature and misrepresentation of *amicitia*

Another reason for choosing *amicitia* in the High Roman Empire as the focus of my study is that secondary literature on this topic has been severely lacking. While there have been inquiries into various aspects of friendship in the ancient world, such as the ones mentioned above, very little systematic research has been done on the concept of *amicitia*.[7] What is more, the few studies that exist have tended to concentrate on the late Roman Republic. Titles such as Brunt's excellent '*Amicitia* and the Late Roman Republic' and Verboven's recent *The Economy of Friends: Economic Aspects of Amicitia and Patronage in the Late Republic* are two such examples. David Konstan's already brief chapter on friendship in Rome, while informative, dedicates only two short pages to *amicitia* under the emperors, with the rest taken up by discussion of the Ciceronian corpus.[8] Admittedly, these studies are valuable in their own right, and offer many insights into the ideas and ideals that made up

[7] *Amicitia* being a specifically Roman concept, as opposed to the more general friendship of the ancient world. Burton has expressed a similar concern (2003, 334).
[8] Konstan (1997a), ch.4.

Roman *amicitia*; but we must not forget that the political atmosphere of the Late Republic was considerably different from that of the High Empire,[9] and whether the type of friendship Cicero experienced under the circumstances of the Late Republic would have had any resonance with Pliny or Fronto remains to be seen. It is also for this reason that Cicero will figure little in my thesis, because many of the previous works on *amicitia* have revolved around the writings of this one individual. Of course, reference will be made to Cicero where relevant, in particular to his own set of correspondence, and some of his philosophical treatises, such as *De Amicitia* and *De Officiis*, will also receive attention; still, it needs to be pointed out here that this thesis has made a conscious choice to move away from Cicero to other authors of potential.

More fundamental, however, than the lack of literature about *amicitia* in this particular period is the fact that some of the few references in academic writings to friendship in the Roman world have misrepresented the essential character of *amicitia*, and consequently have misunderstood the importance of such a relationship in the functioning of Roman society. In fact, it is without great exaggeration to claim that scholarship has been rather unkind to the topic of Roman friendship. For instance, *amicitia* has been described repeatedly by scholars as a front with which the Romans masked political connections. Syme, in an oft-quoted reference, has said that '*amicitia* was a weapon of politics not a sentiment based on congeniality'; '…Roman political factions were welded together, less by unity of principle than by mutual interest and by mutual services (*officia*), either between social equals as an alliance, or from superior to inferior, in a traditional and almost feudal form of clientship: on a favourable estimate the bond was called *amicitia*, otherwise *factio*'.[10]

[9] See p.7-9.
[10] (1939), 12; 157.

Lily Ross Taylor, following in Syme's footsteps, maintained that 'the old Roman substitute for party is *amicitia*', and repeated the same sentiment several times in the course of her study.[11] And Hellegouarc'h, who, even whilst recognizing the tradition of philosophical and idealized friendship, nonetheless states that 'Bien au contraire, les *amicitiae* constituent un élément important de la vie politique; elle se font et se défont au gré des circonstances et des nécessités du moment; l'intérêt seul commande et le sentiment n'y a guère de part. L'influence d'un personnage est en quelque sorte proportionnelle au nombre des amis qu'il a su acquérir'. After some further examination, Hellegouarc'h concludes that 'Il apparaît immédiatement que l'amitié politique telle que nous venons de definer, n'est pas très différente de la clientèle'.[12]

Again, the historical context for these studies is to be located in the turbulent times of the late Republic, and as such it is perfectly understandable why these scholars interpreted *amicitia* in this fashion, as a relationship of political convenience, deprived of intimacy or any sense of personal connection. After all, one of Cicero's primary concerns in *De Amicitia* was precisely to explore the ways in which friendship could be maintained in the face of opposing political interests.[13] Moreover, other contemporary literature, such as the electioneering manual attributed to Cicero's brother, Quintus, which encouraged the liberal attribution of friendship to any potential political backers, also supports this reading.[14] However, some scholars have called into question the underlying basis of such an interpretation of *amicitia*. For example, Konstan notes that even in the electioneering manual, Quintus's advice 'is not

[11] (1949), 7. Also, 'friendship was the chief basis of support for candidates for office, and *amicitia* was the good old word for party politics' (8), and 'The noble's family…was strengthened into a party grouping by his bonds of friendship with other noble houses. We have already seen that *amicitia* was the time-honored substitute for party' (23).
[12] Hellegouarc'h (1972), 41-54.
[13] Konstan (1997a), 131.
[14] *Commentariolum* V; Brunt (1988b), 360.

wholly stripped of a personal dimension', as one needed to appear 'earnest and sincere' such that 'his friendship will be solid and enduring, not transient and electoral'.[15] Brunt also believes that friendship in the Roman experience had a variety of meanings, ranging from emotional attachment to simple vote-canvassing, and to restrict *amicitia* to 'purely political connections…must not be assumed'.[16] It is through this conclusion that Brunt tries to resolve the conflict between the highly idealized accounts of friendship in the philosophical treatises, the references to affection and personal attachment in the letters, and the obviously utilitarian and politically driven practices of *amicitia*.[17]

The vital question to ask is, how much of this can be applied to the purposes of the present thesis. If Syme and his supporters are correct, would it be acceptable to describe *amicitia* in this fashion, as a tool for political convenience, even down to the High Empire? Can we necessarily assume that the same politically charged notion of *amicitia* would persist for nearly two hundred years, when the entire face of politics had been transformed through the upheavals of the Early Empire, the decline of the Julio-Claudians, the subsequent rise of the Flavians, and the tyranny of Domitian? Needless to say, canvassing still existed under the empire, and having 'friends' on one's side in various political struggles remained important; but the type of political campaigning alluded to in the electioneering manual and advocated by Syme belonged to the world of the Republic. With the introduction of the Roman emperor into this scheme, the importance of votes, and as a result the importance of friendships, took on a whole new perspective.[18]

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[15] Konstan (1997a), 128-129; *Commentariolum* VI.21-23. See also Taylor (1949), 64-65.
[16] Brunt (1988b), 381.
[17] The majority of this was derived from Cicero.
[18] For the transition of the *suffragium* from the Republic to Empire, see de Ste. Croix (1954).

On the other hand, if Brunt is correct in his assessment, and if Konstan is right to identify a high level of personal attachment even within the friendships/factions of the Late Republic, then it stands to reason that the traditional picture of *amicitia* must be re-evaluated to reflect these criticisms. Brunt, of course, offers a brilliant analysis of what *amicitia* could mean to the people of the Late Republic, and his theories have been supplemented by Konstan's own work; but once again, how much of their reconstruction can we apply to a world that has experienced such a myriad of changes?[19] Also, and perhaps more to the point, it is my opinion that the studies by these respective authors are incomplete in their description of the nature of Roman *amicitia*. While their efforts to shift attention away from *amicitia* as a thoroughly impersonal relationship of convenience to one imbued with emotional and personal attachment should receive much approval, in doing so, however, the conclusions they offered ended up being somewhat too imprecise. To claim that 'The range of *amicitia* is vast' is a very general statement, and in itself does not help further our understanding of that relationship.[20] So too Konstan's argument, that even when *amicitia* was politically driven we should understand there was still the expectation of intimacy, is not sufficient in describing the nature of *amicitia* and its role in society. In other words, while these scholars have managed to demonstrate that *amicitia* was not just a relationship of convenience, they have not gone far enough in exploring what *amicitia* was. It is therefore the intention of the present thesis to discover the function of *amicitia* in Roman society.

[19] It may be that chronological considerations and changing political contexts may prove to be of little consequence in this particular case, as the ideals of emotional and personal attachment could conceivably persist through the ages. Without more detailed analysis, however, to come to such a conclusion is probably premature.
[20] Brunt (1988b), 381.

Amicitia and patronage

Another popular interpretation of *amicitia* in Roman society, an interpretation which has dominated scholarship for the past few decades, is to view it as a synonym for patronage. The understanding behind this is that, in a society as stratified as the one experienced by the Romans, true *amicitia*, as expressed by such philosophers as Cicero and Seneca,[21] was only possible between people of equal status and rank. When individuals from different levels of the hierarchical order established a relationship, even though the relationship itself would more often than not be articulated through the vocabulary of friendship, we should nonetheless recognize and study it as a form of patronage. Richard Saller, one of the pioneers of this position, explains: because the language of patronage was imbued with social stigma, explicit terms such as *patronus* and *cliens* were rarely ever employed by ancient authors to describe any kind of association.[22] There was a deep sense of 'social inferiority and degradation implied by the words.'[23] On the other hand, 'the language of *amicitiae* did not carry any inherent notions of differential social status, since the word *amicus* was sufficiently ambiguous to encompass both social equals and unequals. This ambiguity was exploited and there was a tendency to call men *amici* rather than the demeaning clients as a mark of consideration'.[24] Therefore, Saller concludes, 'Where the term *amicus* occurs with respect to a friendship between men known to be of unequal status, we can assume a patronage relationship'.[25]

[21] See p.172-174.
[22] The exception to this is in epigraphy. That is, inscriptions contain abundantly the vocabulary of patronage. See Saller (1989), 54-56.
[23] Saller (1989), 9.
[24] Saller (1989), 11.
[25] Saller (1989), 15.

Saller's interpretation of *amicitia* is based heavily on his three qualifications of patronage, described in a passage which deserves to be quoted in full:

> First, it involves the reciprocal exchange of goods and services. Secondly, to distinguish it from a commercial transaction in the marketplace, the relationship must be a personal one of some duration. Thirdly, it must be asymmetrical, in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status and offer different kinds of goods and services in the exchange – a quality which sets patronage off from friendship between equals.[26]

It is, of course, this third condition which is of interest to us. And admittedly, there is nothing intrinsically problematic with the idea that patronage needs to be located in relationships of unequal status; but to reverse the claim and state that any such asymmetrical relationship should come under the rubric of patronage is highly suspect. It is, in fact, an approach which imposes modern exchange theories and other models of social interaction onto the Roman world, and tries to force what evidence we have to fit the argument.[27] When we examine the sources as a collective, however, we observe that the Romans did not think in these terms. They thought and interacted in terms of *amicitia*. As stated above, Saller's answer to this was to argue for the ambivalence in the vocabulary of friendship, and that in its usage the harmful effects of social stratification was meant to be curbed and minimized.[28] But this seems to me to be too complicated a solution to the problem, which need not rest on the forceful assimilation of *amicitia* into patronage.[29] Rather, a much more coherent and simple solution can be found, which is that the relationship of *amicitia* was more intricate than Saller had allowed.[30]

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[26] Saller (1989), 1.
[27] Burton has a similar criticism against Badian's reconstruction of Roman international relationships (2003, 339).
[28] See also Bowditch (2001), 22-24.
[29] See Verboven (2002), 50: 'Richard Saller…argued that patronage and *amicitia* should be studied as different forms of what was essentially the same type of relationship'.
[30] An opinion shared by D'Arms (1986).

Even Saller's premise, that Roman authors purposely avoided the degrading vocabulary of patronage and exploited instead the ambiguity in the language of *amicitia*, can be called into question.[31] While it is true, as many scholars have pointed out, that the terms *patronus* and *cliens* hardly ever appear in the major prose literatures of the Empire,[32] there are a few occasions where they do occur, and it is worth exploring what implications they may have. Fronto, for instance, makes use of the word once:

> *A prima aetate sua me curavit Gaius Clarus familiariter non modo iis officiis, quibus senator aetate et loco minor maiorem gradu atque natu senatorem probe colit ac promeretur; sed paulatim amicitia nostra eo processit ut neque illum pigeret nec me puderet ea illum oboedire mihi, quae clientes, quae liberti fideles ac laboriosi obsequuntur: nulla hoc aut mea insolentia aut illius adulatione; sed mutua caritas nostra et amor verus ademit utrique nostrum in officiis moderandis omnem detrectationem.*[33]

Saller takes this passage to mean that their 'mutual affection' allowed Fronto to employ a derogatory term and to describe duties performed that would normally be offensive to someone of similar rank.[34] In a later study, Saller does admit that Fronto did distinguish Clarus from a client, but he nonetheless suggests that it was merely a matter of labeling, and the stress was really on Clarus being in a subordinate position and needing the fostering of a patron.[35]

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[31] Saller (2000), 839: 'The relationships between superior and inferior *amici* often involved dependency…and are not analytically distinct from *patrocinium*. Nor did the Romans make a clear distinction…'
[32] To be distinguished from the issue of poetry and patronage. See p.16-18.
[33] Fronto, *Ad V. Imp*. II.7.2. 'From his earliest years Gavius Clarus devoted himself to me as a personal friend, not only in those good offices with which a senator, lesser in age and rank, rightly honours and deserves well of another senator, higher in rank and older than himself. But gradually our friendship reached such a stage that, without dislike on his part or shame on mine, he could pay me the deference of a client, [and] the respect that is shown by faithful and diligent freedmen: this not from any arrogance on my part or servility on his, but our mutual affection and genuine love did away with any reluctance for either of us in the regulation of our duties'.
[34] Saller (1982), 9-10.
[35] Saller (1989), 59.

What Saller has failed to notice is precisely Fronto's emphasis on the three degrees of association, namely *amici*, *clientes*, and *liberti*. To Fronto, each degree had its proper mode of behaviour: the client had to display deference (*oboedire*); for freedmen, more than just deference, they had to be faithful and diligent (*fideles ac laboriosi*); and the relationship between friends was different from all of these, as it was characterized by mutual affection and genuine love (*mutua caritas nostra et amor verus*). It was improper for friends to behave in the fashion of a client, and this is why Clarus' behaviour needed justification: that Fronto felt obliged to explain their relationship seems to suggest that this was not the norm, and there was a reasonable distinction between friends and clients. To be sure, Saller was correct in his assessment, that '…though Clarus was not labelled a *cliens*, his relationship…was marked by inequality, shows of deference, and even a limited dependence', but we should still be aware that the relationship between Fronto and Clarus was not defined by these qualities.

At this point, some critics may argue that this passage actually supports the idea that clients and friends were not meticulously set apart, since here was a case of a friend acting as a client towards his patron. However, such an argument does not take into account Fronto's description of the progression of their relationship: Clarus began to cultivate Fronto, as a junior senator would his respectable senior, and as their *amicitia* grew, there existed such a familiarity between them that it was only then a deference of a client became acceptable. Previous to this, to have acknowledged a friend, even one lower in station and younger in age as Clarus, as a *cliens* would have been insulting to both parties. And such deference grew out of their *mutua caritas et amor verus*, not out of the perception that Clarus was in fact a client. In Fronto's mind, the two concepts were clearly distinguished.[36]

[36] Otherwise, if we think of Clarus as a client to begin with, and apply that to Fronto's progression of events, the narrative would become this: Clarus started as a client in his cultivation of a senior senator, then the two

Other examples of the terminology of patronage occur in Roman law. Saller's study states that in the entire *Digest* the word *cliens* appears merely five times.[37] Of those five occasions, four references to *cliens* simply describe 'a type of hanger-on who might be in a Roman's household or entourage…in series with other kinds of dependants and friends, without any suggestion of a formally defined category or special legal obligations'.[38] While it may be the case that no formal provisions were made to separate the legal rights and treatment of friends and clients in Roman law, nonetheless, the fact that friends and clients were mentioned independently suggests that Romans regarded the two differently. Furthermore, Brunt brings up a case from the *Digest* that somehow Saller neglected to mention.[39] This law involves the protection of minors: 'If a minor had no *tutor testamentarius* or *legitimus*, his kinsmen or father's friends and freedmen, but not his patron or client, have a right, and in some cases an obligation, to apply to the praetor for the appointment of a tutor'.[40] It is evident from this that even in Roman law there was an understanding that clients and friends were to be viewed differently. This passage also suggests that there was even some sort of legal distinction, though the *Digest* itself offers no further comments on what the criteria might have been. It is also interesting to note that freedmen and friends were placed in the same group, even though they were undoubtedly from different classes of society. This is most likely because they were seen as closer to the family in question, which is perfectly understandable in respect to freedmen, but what does this imply for the *amici* of the family?

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developed a friendship, and only then was it acceptable for Fronto to regard Clarus as a client. This does not make much sense.

[37] Saller (1989), 51, n.1. The passages in question are 7.8.3, 33.9.3.6, 47.2.90 and 49.15. Saller 'focused on *cliens* rather than *patronus*, because the latter had more common meanings than that associated with *cliens*'.

[38] The fifth one has little impact on this thesis.

[39] Brunt (1988b), 419.

[40] Brunt (1988b), 419. This is a summary by Brunt of the entire 26th chapter of the *Digest*, which is too long to quote here in full.

As a matter of fact, the use of the words *amicus* and *cliens* in juxtaposition occurs a few more times in Latin literature. Tacitus writes in the *Histories*, for example, of *prout quis amicus vel cliens*, clearly with the intention of setting one apart from the other.[41] In a letter from Cicero, we find him explaining the importance of properly handling the affairs of the recipient's *amici hospites clientes*.[42] In a similar context, though this time in the realm of poetry, Terence has one of his characters remind another of his social responsibilities: *cliens amicus hospes nemost vobis*?[43] And in the *Panegyricus*, Pliny praises Trajan for including *quaedam familiaritatis notae* in his interaction with his *clientes*, implying that this 'note of familiarity' was what set the *optimus princeps* apart;[44] compare this with Pliny's comment that affection was vital in *amicitiae*, even in friendships with the emperor, and it becomes clear that Pliny regarded appropriate behaviour within these two relationships as distinct.[45]

What all of these instances demonstrate is that Roman authors were fully prepared to employ the language of patronage where appropriate, and to mark it as distinct from *amicitia*. Still, it must be confessed that the position I have offered may sound rather extreme, that just because there are a handful of examples of the word *cliens* set next to *amicus* does not prove that there was an active effort by all Roman authors to distinguish explicitly between the two. What is more, this could even be used to prove the opposite point, that it was because these two words had such similar connotations, that their spheres of meaning overlapped, that they sometimes appear conjointly.[46] And so, in the realm of honorary inscriptions, where the

[41] *Hist*. I.12.
[42] *Ad Fam*. V.8.5.
[43] *Adelphoi* 529. See Brunt (1988b), 415-416 and n.87.
[44] *Pan*. 23.1
[45] *Pan*. 85.4
[46] As in the case of *socius et amicus*.

difference in social status between the dedicator and the dedicatee is especially pronounced, one would sometimes find *patronus*/*cliens* and *amicus* being applied to the same individual.[47]

On the other hand, it does seem obvious to me that there was at least an ideological (and apparently legal), if not practical, separation between the concept of *cliens* and *amicus*; otherwise, such juxtaposition would not make sense. Why justify the deference of a friend if *cliens* and *amicus* could be interchanged so easily? Why separate the two in a legal context if conceptually they were one and the same? Even in terms of the inscriptions, as Konstan has pointed out, the rarity of both *amicus* and *patronus* in referring to the dedicatee, as compared to the many more cases of just *patronus*, suggests that *amicus* denoted something more specific; that is to say, 'if *amicus* was simply a polite way of designating a client, we should expect it to appear with some regularity in such contexts…[and] the exceptional instances in which a dedicator specified a relationship of *amicitia* betokened precisely a more personal tie'.[48] In any case, in light of this argument, it should be recognized that Saller's initial premise and simplistic view of *amicitia* cannot be maintained.

Roman poetry, especially the genre of satire, also contains abundantly the language of friendship and patronage. And it is in this category that we frequently find the vocabulary of the former mixed up with that of the latter. Hence Juvenal 'employs the term *amicus* for both *cliens* and *patronus*', and sometimes, albeit rather less frequently, 'does…*amicus* bear an interpretation of honest camaraderie'.[49] Martial and Statius both depict themselves as clients in their poems, often deploring the morning *salutatio* so rigorously required of them and other clients; yet, on occasion, as White has shown, true affection, one not loaded with sarcasm, can

[47] See Panciera (2001) and Saller (1989), 56.
[48] Konstan (2002). Saller (1989, 56) argues for the exact opposite point, but does not take into consideration the rarity of such occurrences nor the consequences thereof.
[49] LaFleur (1979), 158. See *Satire V*.

also be detected in the poems that relate to people with whom they obviously shared a patron-client relationship. Furthermore, it is also a common occurrence for such poets to utilize the expressions of friendship even with people of whom they were clients.[50] The best example of this is Horace, whose relationship with Maecenas was clearly one based on dependence, but the description of which generally involves *amicitia*. This has contributed to the conclusion that patronage and *amicitia* were one and the same in the Roman perspective. It was simply polite language.[51]

But is this interpretation necessarily correct? In Juvenal's case, such use of language can be attributed to a theme he wished to present, namely, as LaFleur describes, 'corrupted *amicitia* and the general disintegration of personal relationships' – to which I would add corrupted patronage.[52] Juvenal wished to reveal and criticize this selfsame practice of, on the one hand, blending the language of friendship and patronage, and, on the other, having both parties seek nothing but material advantage from each other. This hypocrisy was prevalent: patrons called themselves *amici* while at the same time behaving as greedy overlords; clients pretended to be *amici* just to get free meals from their patrons. These people, Juvenal scornfully states, deserve each other. Seen in this fashion, Juvenal's point was exactly to stress a distinction between the actions appropriate in friendship and the kinds of (un)suitable behaviour inherent in patronage.[53]

It is harder to make the same point for the other poets, as their works are nowhere near as scathing as Juvenal's. It could be suggested that because of their literary positions, patronage for them was of a different flavour from the norm; but, as White successfully

[50] White (1975).
[51] Bowditch (2001), 24; Gold (1987), 8.
[52] LaFleur (1979), 176.
[53] Konstan (1995), 338. Although he tries for the same arguments for Horace's relationship, he is not as convincing.

argues, there was no inherent difference between a literary patronage and a political/social one.[54] Could it be then that these poets were actual *amici* of their patrons? Certainly there is nothing that suggests that friendship could not form between patrons and clients.[55] Indeed, there is some evidence for the contrary. As most scholars agree, legacies and bequests were a token sign of friendship.[56] And the fact that Martial obtained the *ius trium liberorum* suggests that he was expecting a large number of inheritances, most likely from his patron-friends.[57] It is altogether likely that Statius obtained the same right.

Furthermore, if large gifts were also an indication of friendship, then the Sabine farm bestowed on Horace would surely fall under the same category. The fundamental question is, if these clients became *amici* to their patrons, in what light were they regarded? In these situations, it is probably very difficult to separate the ideologies that governed their behaviour, especially when the poets themselves professed to be both *clientes* and *amici* of their patrons;[58] and it is here that we discover just how deeply nuanced *amicitia* could be. But if we accept Saller's model and believe that they defined their association through patronage, we would be dismissing a large aspect of the way they interacted with each other. If, however, we admit the claim of friendship and understand that it is, again, more complicated than Saller's proposal, then we can begin to unravel the intricacies of their social relationships.

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[54] White (1978). See p.19-22, for some comments on the nature of patronage.
[55] Except modern scholarship.
[56] See Champlin (1991) especially ch.7.
[57] White (1978), 90. This is also the reason Pliny offered to Trajan in his petition for the same right for Suetonius (*Epist*. X.94).
[58] Interestingly, Burton (2004, 215-216) writes of characters in the plays of Plautus that 'Status barriers…are regularly *not* transgressed: thus nowhere are slaves constructed as *amici* of their masters and vice-versa; nor does the discursive representation of patrons and their *clientes* ever shade off into the realm of *amicitia*'.

Patronage and Roman society

Although this thesis has thus far seemed rather dismissive of the relationship of patronage, it must be clarified that all of this is not to say patronage was not a significant concept in the Roman world. On the contrary, to claim that Roman society relied heavily on the practice of patronage could even be regarded as an understatement.[59] Indeed, in order to understand the complexities of Roman patronage and its impact on society, scholars have had to come up with many interpretations in their exploration of this multi-faceted relationship. To Johnson and Dandeker, whose conclusion is most universalistic, patronage became an institution. More than just a type of 'social relation', patronage was a 'social system' through which 'economy, polity and society' were organized. They believe that the Roman state was essentially made up of a series of patronal relations, the degrees of which varied from personal interactions, to communal patronage, and eventually to the patronage of an empire.[60]

For Wallace-Hadrill, patronage in Roman society was a means of distributing resources, and, in return, establishing power. The Roman patron had proximity to power, and hence was able to manipulate the supply of 'scarce resources'. Conversely, it was the clients' duty to augment the power and status of the patron, by, if nothing else, sheer numbers. This then compensated for the relatively primitive bureaucratic system the Romans employed.[61] Saller takes a more personal approach and stresses the importance of a network of connections based on reciprocity. Reciprocal exchanges, which involved 'political, legal, social and economic' contributions, became the backbone of a society that had an underdeveloped

[59] Authors in antiquity went to some lengths to fabricate stories about the origins of patronage. See Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, II.9-12. For a discussion of this text, see Brunt, (1988b), 400-405. And for a more detailed description of the importance of patronage in Roman society, see Saller (2000); Konstan (1997a), 135-145; Verboven (2002), 49-62. The collection of articles edited by Wallace-Hadrill (1988a) also contains many helpful insights. For literary patronage, see Gold (1987) and White (1993).
[60] Johnson and Dandeker (1989).
[61] Wallace-Hadrill (1989b).

economy.[62] And this network was the principal method of initiating and perpetuating the exchange.

However, I do wish to reject the notion that the vertical relations in the Roman world were prioritized at the expense of the horizontal ones, an emphasis which all these studies share. They argue that in a society so defined by its own hierarchy, patronage inevitably became the primary *modus operandi*, which by definition encourages the vertical relations over their horizontal counterparts. As Garnsey and Woolf put it, 'the power of patronage is in opposition to that of horizontal associations in society, and…the vertical bondings that it creates undermine the solidarity of individual status groups…'.[63] With this mindset, it is easy to see why scholars are so dismissive of *amicitia*, and why they refuse to acknowledge the value ancient authors place on this type of relationship.[64] For in order to maintain this idea of Roman society being wholly dictated by their hierarchy, they need to minimize the role that horizontal relations played. This also explains why certain scholars are so restrictive as to what should be included and what should be excluded when we speak of Roman friendship: 'If Roman manners distinguished *amici*…from *clientes*, it was not an objective analytical distinction: they applied the same language of friendship, trust and obligation to both

[62] Compared to modern economic models, where exchanges are made not through personal connections but through impersonal and impartial channels. See Verboven (2002), 20-32.
[63] Garnsey and Woolf (1989), 157.
[64] The conclusion Engberg-Pedersen made on the subject of *amicitia* is most interesting in this regard (1996, 76-79). On the one hand, he recognizes the value Plutarch sets on friendship, in relation to patronage: 'With his invocation of trust, sincerity, permanence and truthfulness Plutarch is appealing to a set of values and a way of life which was in constant danger of being done away with in ancient society since it stood in more or less direct contrast to a different set of values…[which was] implicit in the very strong consciousness of social and personal status that is characteristic of ancient society…However, as part of this all-pervasive setting there also was an idea of a sort of counter-existence…That, I suggest, is the idea of friendship…Friendship of this sort was felt to be a sort of breathing space where you could be entirely open in your relationship…without risking any loss of status and hence without needing to be concerned about it'. On the other hand, he writes that 'But we also know that the relationship between patrons and clients was very often designated as being one of friendship…[and] that designation should be seen as a sham. It reflects an attempt to conceal the real ties, which were strongly hierarchical and status-determined'.

indifferently';[65] if friendship did occur, it must have been isolated to between people of the same status and rank, since their dominating vertical structure would rarely allow cross-class relationships to form;[66] and the language of *amicitia* was a façade to hide the hierarchy inherent in society.[67]

As I demonstrate in the chapters to follow, this is too crude an estimation of *amicitia*, and does not take into account how vital this relationship was regarded by our sources. And I am not alone in this sentiment: Brunt cautions repeatedly against the assimilation of *amicitia* to patronage; Konstan maintains that Roman friendship 'was never reduced to that of patron and client'; and Burton argues that *amicitia* was a complicated relationship, which needed constant negotiation between the parties involved, and should not be so easily delimited by the definitions set out in previous scholarship.[68] Of course, it would obviously be erroneous to insist upon a universal definition of friendship to which all Romans adhered and which was objectively differentiated from *clientela*, since, to follow Wallace-Hadrill, there must have been many subjective uses of such terms. Nevertheless, it is the intention of this thesis to show that *amicitia* relationships entailed a much greater degree of services which, although they were very similar to those of patronage, were viewed and responded to differently by the Romans. Bonds of *amicitia* therefore allowed horizontal relationships to cut across vertical ones, linking people through different classes and rank, and as such were as vital as ties of

[65] Wallace-Hadrill (1989b), 77.
[66] Wallace-Hadrill (1989b), 77: 'Of course there is a contrast between the friendship of social equals, and the dependent relationship of unequals.' Also Garnsey and Saller (1987), 154: 'The exchange between friends of comparable social standing and resources had a different character from those described above [patrons and protégés]. Though neither party was in a permanent position of superiority, one or the other might be better placed at a particular time to confer a favour'.
[67] Saller (1982), 11. Johnson and Dandeker argue that it is not important to look for 'asymmetrical friendship' in Rome, but to see to what degree 'clients are 'reconciled' to inequality by virtue of ties of friendship and loyalty and the extent to which status and class solidarities fail to emerge, or play a less significant role in social action' (1989, 229). Does this suggest that asymmetrical friendship did exist, but only in the context of patron-client relationships? In other words, were the terms of friendship and endearment employed to "reconcile" these social differences?
[68] Brunt (1988b), 415 and *passim*; Konstan (1995), 341; Burton, (2003) and (2004), *passim*.

patronage in Roman society. In short, this thesis will argue for the dominance of friendship ties in the functioning of the Roman world.

Some words on the sociology of friendship

Before proceeding further, it may be worthwhile at this point to come to a better understanding of what the concept of friendship means to the modern world. It is probably not too implausible to claim that everyone has some general notions of what friendship is and what it entails, whether these notions are derived from personal experience or commonly shared wisdom. However, because of the diversity of these experiences and contradictory nature of this wisdom there is no definitive and universal concept of what friendship truly is. Still, sociologists and anthropologists have done much to identify the ideals to which modern society aspires when we think of friendship, as well as some of the more practical aspects of this relationship that we take for granted.[69] To begin, all accounts of friendship describe it as a voluntary bond, a type of association which individuals have the freedom to choose to cultivate, as opposed to an ascribed relationship, under which heading kinship is included.[70] Moreover, friendship is also generally agreed to be a dyadic relationship, which must in some sense be private and personal. This is not to say that friendship does not have a public dimension; on the contrary, there are many ritualized aspects of friendship, performed to (re)affirm the relationship both to the participants and to the public at large.[71] Rather, private and personal here means that the experience we have with a particular friend ought to be

[69] Although even amongst these scholars there are conflicting accounts of friendship.
[70] Thomas (1987), 217-219; Wolf (1966), 10; Bell (1981), 10-11; Wiseman (1986), *passim*.
[71] Bell (1981), 13.

different from our experience with another, and needs to be methodically differentiated from a group relationship.[72]

Because of this privacy entitled to and encouraged in friendship, participants in the relationship can then fully express their 'true' or 'inner' selves. Indeed, it is also recognized as a feature of modern friendship that friends exercise reciprocally a certain amount of 'self-disclosure', for it is only by being yourself, as it were, that you enable a friend truly to evaluate your worth in the relationship.[73] This is facilitated through, and works in conjunction with, the fostering of intimacy, emotional attachment and trust.[74] In addition, friends are meant to come to appreciate one another as individuals, each one unique in what he/she brings to their association.[75] This allows them to transcend the social roles and conditions under which they might have met, such as co-workers, flat mates, doctor/patient, mere acquaintances at the pub, even siblings or parent/child, to form meaningful and lasting relationships.[76]

Overall, however, despite these ideals and expectations, friendship remains in essence an 'uninstitutionalized' institution.[77] In other words, patterns of behaviour and propriety in friendship are enforced not by legal channels or strict 'rules of relevancy'; rather, they are dictated, if at all, by social norms or by the context of a particular relationship,[78] and requires

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[72] Paine (1969), 512-514; Allan (1979), 38-39. Against this, Lewis argues that friendship is 'the least jealous of the loves', and actually welcomes the inclusion of additional members, other 'kindred spirits' (1960, 58).
[73] Thomas (1987), 223-226; Suttles (1970), 100-107, 129-132; Duck, (1983), 67-79.
[74] Silver (1989), 274-277.
[75] Suttles (1970), 100.
[76] A main conclusion drawn from Allan's study (1979, ch.5 and 6) is that friendship can only truly be achieved when the participants break out of their normal patterns to interact at different social settings. So, for example, unless co-workers purposely engage with each other outside of the workplace, they remain just co-workers; or if drinking-buddies do not interact outside of their pub crawling, they cannot be understood as friends.
[77] Friendship, as Wiseman describes it, involves an 'unwritten contract', because it is fraught with unexpressed expectations, which very often leads to tensions within the relationship (1986, 203-205).
[78] Suttles (1970); Burton (2003), 355; Pahl (2000), 62-63. 'Rules of relevancy' in Paine (1969), 510-511. Against this, Pahl (2000, 131-132) mentions that in urban areas, contact between friends is limited to specific settings and people know each other in specific contexts, both of which make it easier to maintain and supervise the interaction. Similarly, Allan (1998). Bell (1981, 10) prioritizes the particular relationship over social constraints: '[friendship is] based on private negotiations and is not imposed through cultural values or norms'.

of the parties involved a constant process of negotiation. At the same time, any specific friendship will by nature avoid a strict definition of itself, because as soon as the parties involved begin to deconstruct their friendship, it will necessarily collapse; to define is to delimit and restrict, but friendship will grow and wane of its own accord.[79]

Another notion commonly shared by scholars when they speak of friendship in modern society, and more pertinent to the present thesis, is the need for egalitarianism and equivalency. The idea of egalitarianism in friendship can be taken many ways. Some scholars see this in terms of class, and maintain that it is unlikely for friendship to cross such boundaries as those set by status and rank.[80] And so people from working classes rarely befriend those from the middle class, though this is partly to be explained by proximity, as in people from these different classes do not have many chances to interact with each other, nor would they share many common interests on which to base a relationship.[81] Thomas defines egalitarianism as a power struggle, and argues that when one party has excessive authority or influence over the other, then a friendship cannot be sustained.[82]

Suttles regards the difficulties in an asymmetrical friendship in terms of exploitation which could undermine the established social order: 'Across status barriers, invitations to friendship arouse suspicions because they may denote either a conflict of interests or ulterior motives', and 'friendship between subordinate and superordinate suggests corruption and

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[79] Wiseman (1986), 210. Goodrich (2003) believes that only when a friend has passed away can one truly look back and evaluate the friendship. Since friendship is by nature a very organic relationship, one can never know whether someone has been, or will be, a good friend until that friendship has been ended by the death of a participant.

[80] Garrett (1989), 132-136. Bell (1981, 10) calls this 'social equity'. Pahl's comments on this (2000, 162) are most interesting: 'Truly friendly society would…be a classless society', as highly stratified societies avoided friendships between unequals, which 'would serve to undermine arguments based on the immutability of given class structures'.

[81] Bell (1981), 19; Allan (1979), 44. See also Feld and Carter (1998).

[82] (1987), 221-223. See also Bell (1981), 85.

threatens the status of both parties. Friendship is possible, but it is a high risk venture'.[83] Despite these variations, however, as a whole, these scholars agree that equality is a salient feature in friendship, driven mainly by the modern belief that all human beings are in some senses 'equal' and should be respected as individuals.[84]

As for equivalency, it is related to the debate about altruism and utilitarian tendencies inherent in friendship. Friendship, it is often believed, in its ideal form is wholly altruistic, and when friends perform services for one another, the motivation is to be found in the desire to help, to assist, to wish and to do well, without consideration of the potential rewards. Because friendship ought to be based on deep emotions and personal attachment and not profitability, material benefits that arise out of the relationship are considered to be inspired by the good-will of the participants.[85] This construction has led Wolf to differentiate sharply between two types of friendship: 'expressive or emotional friendship' and 'instrumental friendship'.[86] Many scholars, however, disagree, and regard Wolf's conclusion as too simplistic. As Paine points out, all friendships are in some ways instrumental; 'And will there not be an expressive or emotional element in a…friendship though labelled as 'instrumental friendship'?'[87]

Allan agrees that instrumentality is very much a part of friendship, though he says this with a disclaimer: 'provided that it is clear that they are being used because they are friends and not friends because they are useful'.[88] In later studies, Allan would argue that it is only in modern times, with the development of impersonal market economies, and in western cultures

[83] (1970), 120, 126.
[84] See Oliker (1998), 20-21.
[85] Allan (1979), 43; Suttles (1970), 99; Bell (1981), 13.
[86] Wolf (1966), 10.
[87] Paine (1969), 506.
[88] Allan (1979), 43.

heavily dependent on this form of economy, that friendship came to be regarded as a wholly emotional concept: '…far from having historical precedence, friendships based on principles of non-instrumental solidarity arose as a direct result of the transformation in social relations which a market economy fostered'.[89] Indeed, even in Wolf's description of emotional friendship, it is easy to detect the instrumental nature of the relationship: 'emotional friendship involves a relation…in which each *satisfies* some emotional *need* in his opposite number' (italics mine).[90]

What is important, these studies contend, is not to separate instrumentality from friendship, but to look for the so-called balance of exchange – and here we return to the issue of equivalency and egalitarianism. Since all friendships are in one way or another utilitarian, reciprocity is necessary in order to maintain the ideal image given to this association. As Allan explains, if an 'equivalence of exchange' is upheld, it helps to dismiss the notion of the friendship operating on purely instrumental purposes. In other words, so long as strict reciprocity is practised, the relationship can be regarded as non-exploitative.[91] This has the added consequence of preserving the equilibrium of power and authority in the relationship, effectively maintaining a sense of equality between the participants.[92] If this equality is

[89] Allan (1998), 72. Adams and Allan (1998a), 9: 'in economies of scarcity, friendships become important as instrumental relationships'. See also Silver (1990). Pahl (2000, 153-157) gives some examples of how friendship was used in communist Russia and China, in which, he mentions, friendship revolved around five elements: 'instrumentalism, personal relationship, trust, reciprocity and longevity'.
[90] Wolf (1966), 10.
[91] (1979), 43-44. Strict not as in time-frame or material value; rather, the time in which one can reciprocate is often left open-ended, and the equivalency generally applies to the symbolic value of the exchange. In fact, according to Bordieu (1990, 86), the delaying of the reciprocation is also a way to disguise the utilitarianism of friendship. See also Burton (2003), 338-339.
[92] Allan (1998), 77-78: 'The key issue…is that being able to reciprocate and sustain a balance of material and symbolic exchange is normally seen as central to the management of non-kin sociable ties of a friendship type'. A way to facilitate this management, Allan goes on to argue, is to restrict the areas of sociability to locations where class and status have little bearing on the way the participants interact, as in a specifically designated bar or pub, where expenditure can be easily controlled. In this way, even people of different backgrounds can become friends (76-80).

breached, then the relationship is most likely to break down.[93] All of this serves to support the idea that friendship needs to be underlined by equality: not only should the participants of the friendship be of similar status to begin with, since this helps to reduce potential sources of tension, but also must be observant to the dynamics of their relationship so that the equality of their respective positions will not be compromised.

But even this view, the need for equality in friendship, has come under attack. Strict reciprocation, or even altruism, Pahl argues, is detrimental to friendship: 'Once the idea of equivalence enters a friendship, it will surely start to die'.[94] The sentiment is followed by Burton, who suggests that if friends did achieve a perfect state of 'equilibrium', of 'strictly equal reciprocation', then they would have no need of each other; 'the needs the friendship fulfills (self-validation and self-sufficiency) would be otherwise perfectly met, so its participants would have no further need to associate, and the cycle of reciprocity would stop'.[95] The nature of friendship, which, according to Burton, has its foundations in the practice of exchange, is a constant negotiation for power and authority, with the giver coming out on top at the expense of the receiver.[96] Although there are 'equalizing strategies', such as the balancing of accounts, due to the informality of the entire process, there can be no strict equivalency – after all, friendship is not a business transaction. Furthermore, because there is

[93] Duck (1983), 108; Bell (1981), 23. It should also be observed that much of this balancing of the accounts, so to speak, happens at a very informal level, such that when questioned, most people will deny participating in such practices; though, when actually pressed for an answer, the majority will agree that exchanges occurred on an equal basis (Wiseman [1986], 205).

[94] (2000), 92-93. I am curious as to why Pahl would later put so much emphasis on the value of equality, and claim that 'Friendship has to be egalitarian and democratic: it has no place in hierarchies or authoritarian structures' (166). Maybe Pahl has failed to recognize the link between exchange and equality?

[95] (2003), 339. Notice how reciprocity is not defined here only by material exchanges, but by emotional needs as well ('self-validation').

[96] (2003), 338. In this sense, complete altruism is not only detrimental to friendship, it practically destroys the relationship. If the giver has no need to be needed, but only constantly bestows, then it creates too large a gulf in status between him and the receiver, under which circumstances friendship cannot be said to exist.

generally a lapse in time before reciprocation can occur,[97] during this period the friendship will necessarily exist in a state of asymmetry. Total equality in friendship, just like emotional friendship without any instrumental qualities, in Burton's opinion, is an ideal.[98]

And it is here that we arrive at the crux of the matter. For I suspect that many of the studies on *amicitia* have been mislead into thinking equality was a necessary prerequisite precisely because the idea of equality in friendship is so prevalent in the modern era.[99] But this attitude has two major pitfalls. Firstly, it is entirely anachronistic to assume that *amicitia* adhered to the same principle of equality as modern friendship without proper analysis.[100] Furthermore, to believe, as Pahl does, that friendship cannot exist in a highly stratified society because of the inherent lack of equality, despite evidence to the contrary in, for instance, communist Russia or China,[101] is to impose ideas of how friendship ought to be instead of trying to understand what friendship actually meant to the society in question. Secondly, the idea of equality in friendship itself is very much a social construct, a notion we would like to believe in, just as we like to think of gift-giving as altruistic or of how we do not make 'use' of our friends. But, as has been shown, none of these concepts are fully attainable, and motivations for friendly association are always much more complicated than, say, simple altruism. As such, to distinguish between *amicitia* and *clientela* based solely on the lack of

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[97] See p.26 n.91.
[98] Silver agrees, and states that in unequal relationships such friends could afford to provide different services to each other and strive for different goals, without arousing the sense of jealousy and rivalry which could arise in friendships between equals (1989, 281).
[99] This sense of equality is not necessarily restricted to status, class and/or wealth. Age is very much a determining factor as well, since, for instance, the difference between a junior senator and a senior senator is characterized not merely by their respective positions, but also by their age gap; so the example of Fronto and Clarus mentioned above. In addition, the underlying reasons for the difficulty in achieving friendship between those of disparate ages are said to be similar to those which impede friendships of unequal status, as defined by such other factors as wealth and status – i.e., the lack of common interests, potential for exploitation, disproportion in the level of authority, etc. See Bell (1981), 19; Thomas (1987), 222-223.
[100] See p.31-34.
[101] Two examples Pahl himself mentions! See p.26 n.89.

equality in status is an approach that must be called into question. As Burton says, 'inequality is as characteristic of friendship as it is of *clientela*'.[102]

Friendship and *amicitia*

In some ways, it may be hazardous for us to define *amicitia* as friendship, because in English this word does bring to mind many of these preconceptions, previously entrenched ideas of the relationship which could be all too easily transferred over to the ancient world. Saller's warning, that to translate *amicitia* between junior and senior senators as friendship is deceptive due to the 'egalitarian overtones…in modern English' can be aptly applied here,[103] not because he was correct to identify the impossibility of 'friendship' between people of different ranks, but because he himself demonstrates just how dangerous this is by accepting that *amicitia* needed to have the same egalitarian overtones as friendship. On the other hand, it should also be noted that there are indeed echoes of these thoughts on friendship in certain texts of the ancient world. The fundamentality of trust, intimacy and affection, common interests and shared activities in both φιλία and *amicitia* can be readily detected in the writings of Aristotle and Cicero.[104] Some ancient philosophers even regard friends as 'other selves', a mentality which is commonly shared by modern theorists.[105] The importance of reciprocity and exchange in such a relationship receives much attention in Seneca's long treatise, *De Beneficiis*, itself drawing on the insights set out in Cicero's *De Officiis*. And many of these authors, Plutarch to be included amongst their ranks,[106] also tried to work out the

[102] (2003), 339. See also Dixon (1993), 455-456.
[103] (1989), 57.
[104] *Nicomachean Ethics* books 8 and 9, *Eudemian Ethics* book 7; *De Amicitia*.
[105] See Pahl (2000), 78-81; Bell (1981), 19. Interestingly, Goodrich states that this ideal 'not only betrays a radical narcissism but it also implies for that friendship is in fact a relationship with oneself, that it is an autoerotic state' (2003), 45.
[106] 'How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend' and 'On Having Many Friends'.

apparent paradox between this noticeably utilitarian association and what was acknowledged as the true kind of friendship, one that denied the inherent instrumentality.[107]

In fact, all these issues had been raised by Plato in the *Lysis*, where he went about placing preconceived notions of friendship under examination.[108] Significantly, he concluded that all these notions were to an extent erroneous, though he could offer nothing in their place: φιλία was too complicated to be properly defined. The same conclusion can probably be reached for modern society, which, as Powell suggests, may point to some underlying universality to this bond we call friendship.[109] In this sense, even though there is no need to assume that friendship is a concept common to all of humanity, there should at least be no difficulties in translating *amicitia* as friendship, so long as we take care to understand that notions of friendship under different historical and social contexts are necessarily different, and to avoid the danger of applying the specifics of friendship from one setting to another.[110]

Although this thesis has made mention of friendship in ancient authors, I do not actually intend to explore and expound the topic here. While I am aware that the subject of friendship has experienced a long tradition with ancient philosophers – from Plato to Cicero, Sophists to Stoics to Epicureans, even down to the early Christian fathers – and that my own research must necessarily be located within this rich tradition; while I acknowledge the importance of such philosophical contexts of friendship in the ancient world, discussing those contexts is not what the present thesis is about. There are many studies dedicated, some in

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[107] Saller (1982), 14.
[108] Or, according to Sedley (1989), Plato was attempting to understand the concept of friendly relations and friendly interaction instead of strict friendship.
[109] (1995), 45.
[110] This sentiment is shared by many sociologists. See Silver (1989), 280-281; Adams and Allan (1998), *passim*. Pahl (2000), 166: 'We see that it [friendship] is heavily determined by the social structural circumstances of the time. By thinking about friendships we can understand something important about the nature of the society in which it is embedded'. This is also why Paine cautions against '[imposing] upon an analysis of friendship ideas from economic anthropology about reciprocity. This is because the equivalency may be unique in each instance' (1969, 512).

their entirety, to this purpose, which undoubtedly do a much better job than I could in the short space available.[111] Rather, the approach I adopt in this thesis deals more with the practicalities of *amicitia*, and by analyzing the workings of friendship through the experiences of our epistlers, through perceiving how Pliny and Fronto presented and represented their friendships, I believe we can develop a fuller picture of what *amicitia* meant to Roman society, in complement to the philosophical tradition. As far as I am aware, this is a unique take on the topic of *amicitia*, one that does not inherently rely on such philosophical background. Still, the ideas presented by these philosophers will receive mention where they are of direct relevance. In addition, I will offer some comments later in the thesis, namely towards the end of chapter two, to relate the philosophical tradition to my own conclusions drawn from the epistles, and to see the implications and impact the one had on the other.

Amicitia and equality of status

Having said this, there is one particular issue raised by certain ancient philosophers regarding friendship I would like to explore in slightly more detail, namely, the issue of equality. Because I have already dealt with this topic at some length in relation to theories of modern friendship, it may be worthwhile to see how the ancients viewed this matter. There are two sources which are of especial interest: Aristotle and Cicero. Aristotle states in *Eudemian Ethics* that equality is the foundation of friendship, as the labeling of friendship itself implies a kind of egalitarianism.[112] In the *Nicomachean Ethics* equality in friendship is

[111] See Powell (1995), Konstan (1997a); Price (1997); Stern-Gillet (1995); the collection of essays in Fitzgerald (1997) is highly informative; the introduction in Kilpatrick (1986), is also useful; so too Verboven (2002). Long and Sedley (1987) contains information interspersed throughout. Burton (2003), 336-337, has some words to relate Cicero's *De Amicitia* to modern sociology on friendship. I include in my bibliography of primary sources the relevant ancient texts.
[112] *E.E.* 1238b15.

specifically described as being derived from exchanges, of goods, services or purpose of interaction.[113] In both texts, it is mentioned that there can be no friendship between those of vastly different statuses.[114]

This is not to say that friendship between superiors and inferiors, whether defined by excellence, wealth, status and/or age, is impossible – and indeed the understanding of 'vastly different' is qualified by such relationships as between god and man, parent and child, or the virtuous and the scoundrel.[115] Rather, each participant in the friendship must provide love according to his merit; in other words, the inferior party in the relationship is expected to offer more love than the superior party, because in doing so, the inferior raises his worth by virtue of loving more. This, according to Aristotle, and in the words of Burton, is an 'equalizing strategy' which compensates for the lack of equality.[116] And in order to be φίλοι, such equality must be achieved.[117]

When the idea of equality in friendship arises in Cicero's treatise, *De Amicitia*, he too lingers on the importance of being *pares*.[118] But lack of equality, Cicero explains, should not impede the formation of friendships. Quite to the contrary, Scipio, Cicero's model for all *amicitia* related affairs, has made many friends with those of noticeably lower ranks, and never once did he lord his superior station over his *amici inferioris ordinis*. Sometimes, as in the case of Scipio's brother, Quintus Maximus, Scipio even showed him more respect because of his seniority, despite his much lower status. And so we see that Cicero has already made provisions for friendship reaching beyond the hierarchical boundaries of his society. The

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[113] Note that Aristotle does not say the equivalency of exchange: *N.E.* 1158b1.
[114] *N.E.* 1158b12-1159a12; *E.E.* 1238b17-1239b6.
[115] It also seems to be marking a difference between friendship and love, the more general meaning of φιλία. See Konstan (1997a), 69.
[116] *N.E.* 1159a13-1159b3. See also Konstan (1995), 332.
[117] As opposed to being in a state of φιλία (*E.E.* 1239a4-5). See n.112.
[118] *De Amicitia*, xix.69: *Sed maximum est in amicitia superiorem parem esse inferiori.*

question is, in such a stratified world, how is equality to be realized? Certainly, it is not through an equivalence of exchange, with services, goods or feelings; to do so, according to Cicero, is nothing but 'petty accounting'.[119]

In a way, Cicero is advocating egalitarianism through means other than the structured hierarchy, as in the case with Quintus Maximus, respect for whom is derived from his age. Another method, Cicero suggests, is to raise *amici* to one's own level, by bestowing on them whatever resources are available. This is not confined to material benefits, but should include both *virtus* and *ingenium* as well.[120] Still, Cicero recognizes that such a feat cannot be practiced for everyone, but he maintains that one should strive as much as possible to increase the worth of one's friends.[121] Ultimately, what is fundamental is that *amici* of lower station are treated as equals so they do not feel discriminated against.[122] Equality in *amicitia* is based in equality of attitude and behaviour.[123]

And so we observe that, although egalitarianism is an important feature even in ancient discussions of friendship, friendship itself is not limited by inequality. Both Aristotle and Cicero agree that this type of relationship can be formed with people outside of one's social rank, between inferiors and superiors, provided that equalizing strategies are practised. For Aristotle, it is in controlling the degrees of emotional investment; Cicero believes that proper attitude and behaviour, supplemented by supportive action, is the key to alleviating class tensions within *amicitia*. Similarly, Allan's study makes the same point, that so long as issues of status differences can be controlled and checked (possibly not entirely eliminated),

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[119] xiv.58: *Hoc quidem est nimis exigue et exiliter ad calculos vocare amicitiam…*
[120] xix.70.
[121] xix.73. Also to as much as the *amici* can bear according to their own limitations.
[122] xix.71.
[123] This position is reminiscent of what Juvenal's reproach of patronage and *amicitia* in his day. See p.17-18.

friendships that reaches beyond these boundaries are very much possible.[124] Thus, while social hierarchy can be said to have an impact on how friendship is carried out, the idea that it prevents friendship from forming, in either modern or ancient society, cannot be maintained.

Outline

To bring this introduction to a close, I offer a synoptic breakdown of the subsequent chapters. This thesis is divided into two sections. The first deals with *amicitia* within the aristocracy, and is itself further divided into two chapters: one on Pliny the Younger and one on Fronto. The approach I adopt in these chapters is as follows. I begin by offering some introductory remarks on these authors and their respective historical backgrounds, as well some caveats on their works as sources. I then proceed to analyze the vocabulary employed in these letters to describe a friend or a friendly relationship, and to consider this information in conjunction with prosopographical data of the individuals involved. This analysis revolves around three specific terms and their derivatives: *contubernalis*, *familiaris* and *amicus*. Certainly, the Latin language contains other vocabulary and other turns of phrases to suggest an affective relationship, but since these three terms are the most fundamental in defining what a friend is, they will be the focus of the research.[125] In effect, I discuss how Pliny and Fronto utilize this vocabulary and the contexts in which the terms are employed to draw conclusions

[124] (1998) 76. See p.26 n.92. The same, I believe, can be applied to different aspects of equality, such as wealth or age. So long as equalizing strategies are in place, there is no reason why this cannot be achieved. Aristotle has already acknowledged it in speaking about the many types of disparities. When Cicero says that Scipio respected his brother because of his age and despite his status, he is implying that neither should prevent the formation of *amicitia*.

[125] In the case of Pliny, these three words are precisely what he uses to denote friend; other common vocabulary for friendship, such as *sodalis* and *hospes* rarely make an appearance. There are some variations in Fronto, but the general formula holds true. See Sherwin-White (1969), 85; and below, p.51-57.

about the nature of *amicitia*.[126] Nevertheless, where appropriate, other factors that may indicate friendship are taken into consideration, such as nicknames or the content of the letters themselves.

Towards the end of each chapter, such observations about the nature of Roman friendship, derived from the analysis of the vocabulary, are placed amongst wider issues of networking and patronage. In doing so, we can come to understand how the Romans themselves perceived and appreciated the association of *amicitia*, and how it related to other means of social interaction. By way of concluding this section, I include the aforementioned discussion about friendship in the philosophical context versus friendship as described by Pliny and Fronto.[127] I believe this will help to resolve the paradox between philosophical ideals and the utilitarian tendencies in friendship.[128]

The second section is about *amicitia* and the Roman emperor. I use this topic as an extreme test case for the conclusions drawn in the first section regarding status, rank and patronage, and their effect on friendship. The intention is to see whether *amicitia* as a social phenomenon can dictate even the behaviour of one as uniquely powerful as the emperor. This then offers an indication of the value of friendship in Roman society. The section itself is also divided into two chapters. The first chapter of this section, also the third chapter in the thesis, begins with a review of the secondary literature on *amicitia* with the emperor, in order to establish how previous scholarship has approached the topic and to evaluate the conclusions drawn therein. It then proceeds to examine Pliny's *Panegyricus*, adopting a more theoretical approach to explore what the Romans themselves thought when confronted with the idea of a

[126] The basis for this approach lies in the idea that language necessarily reflects attitude and mentality. Dismissing the vocabulary of *amicitia* as simply polite language is surely a flawed assumption. See Burton (2003), 342 n.57.
[127] See p.31.
[128] See p.29-30.

personal relationship with the emperor.[129] This chapter ends with an examination of the relationship between Pliny and Trajan, as detailed in their correspondence.

The fourth and last chapter returns to Fronto, and is an in-depth look at how he represented his relationship with the Antonine emperors.[130] The idea of a relationship with the emperor is explored through the way Pliny and Fronto addressed the emperors, and where possible, how the emperors addressed them in return. In addition, I investigate the subtleties of their correspondence, to discover the intricacies which might have underlain their relationship. The majority of this chapter deals with Fronto and Marcus Aurelius, since this is where we have the most information; nonetheless, different modes of interaction between various relationships, Pliny and Trajan, Fronto and Antoninus Pius, Fronto and his two imperial pupils, make for interesting comparisons. Effectively, this chapter reassesses and reevaluates the role of the emperor in Roman society in terms of *amicitia*, and offers an interpretation different from established scholarship. It does not intend to supplant previously accepted views on this topic, but to supplement the image with an alternative methodology. In doing so, we can come to a better understanding both of the impact of *amicitia* and of perceptions of the Roman emperor.

Caveats and technical issues

Two further caveats need to be expressed. Throughout the thesis, I take the position that people from the equestrian class were considered to be of a lower station than the

[129] It is worth pointing out that very few panegyrics in both the Hellenistic and Roman traditions deal with the theme of friendship. It may well be as Konstan suggests, that this reflects an effort to minimize criticism against favouritism, where the ruler would distribute power and authority to his 'friends' rather than to those more capable and deserving. See Konstan (1997b).

[130] Including some remarks on Richlin's views on the undercurrent of homoeroticism in the exchanges between Marcus Aurelius and Fronto. See p.248 n.33.

senators. While it is undeniable that the senators and equestrians were in certain respects very homogenous, sharing similarity of taste, political and social attitudes, and ideologies toward many aspects of life;[131] and it is also true that some equestrians must have made a deliberate choice to remain equestrians, although they very well could have qualified for senatorial status if so desired;[132] in addition, select members of the equestrian class were in such positions of authority that they effectively wielded more power than many leading senators, especially the praetorian prefect.[133]

But still, at least in principle, the equestrians as a class were thought to be of a lower status. In a very visible way, equestrians were meticulously distinguished from their social betters: in the theatres, for example, they were relegated to the upper seats, and in the streets, they were entitled to wear only the narrow purple stripe.[134] The *cursus honorum* and the official positions reserved for equestrians were markedly different from those of the senators.[135] Furthermore, if they were actually regarded as belonging to the same class, then the gift of senatorial status, bestowed by the emperor on rare occasions, would be meaningless. This, however, was definitely not the case, as attested by inscriptions which mark this out as the highlight of their careers.[136]

Besides, those equestrians who were able to attain such a high level in society so as to blur the boundaries between them and the senators must have been the exceptions, and it is erroneous to generalize our conception of the equestrians as a class from these unique

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[131] Including, as I argue in the following chapters, their ideas on *amicitia*, which is why friendship was able to operate as a force for social cohesion. See Alexander and Danowski (1990), 328.
[132] For a myriad of reasons, the least of which was to avoid the hassles and dangers of political life. See Syme (1939), 13-14. An example can be found in Pliny's *Letters*, *Epist*. VII.25.
[133] To have an equestrian in a higher position of authority was also a matter of aversion for the senators. See Saller (2000), 830-831. Against this, see Brunt (1983), 65.
[134] Saller (2000), 820-821.
[135] See Pflaum (1960).
[136] Pflaum (1960) 42, 56, 84, 106, 141, 156, 178. Saller (1982), 50-51. See also Pliny's request on behalf of his *contubernalis*, Voconius Romanus (*Epist*. X.4).

examples. Even with these specialized cases, a separation was to be made: Marcius Turbo and Erucius Clarus, the former a praetorian prefect and the latter twice consul, though both were described as *egregii viri* and from the *ordo primarius*, Fronto nonetheless thought it necessary to specify that one was from the equestrian class and the other from the senatorial. Fronto's point here is that his friend, Censorius Niger, was highly regarded by people from both classes.[137] Furthermore, although Garnsey maintains that '…the social gap between the two orders was certainly narrow', he later admits there were still differences in the legal privileges of senators and 'top equestrians',[138] which suggests that there was at least a notional separation for the two classes. In any case, this thesis is responding very much to Saller's arguments regarding *amicitia*, which states that in any relationship of unequal status friendship cannot be said to exist. For someone who believed that there was enough difference between junior and senior senators to warrant the labeling of patron/protégé instead of *amicus*,[139] surely Saller should have argued for the relationship between senators such as Pliny and Fronto and their equestrian correspondents to be regarded as patronage instead of friendship.

The other caveat is that this thesis is not overtly concerned with the emotional aspects of *amicitia*. It does not intend to demonstrate, as Konstan, and in some ways Brunt, tries to do, that friendship in the Roman world must have contained an affective element. The reason for my caution is that in the epistles of Pliny the Younger and Fronto, although the concept of love for friends is well represented, sincerity and depth of feeling always present an issue. And so, for the most part, my study concentrates on the practical side of *amicitia*, on how through its utility and implementation Roman society was able to function. There are instances where such vocabulary as 'intimate relationship' is employed, but it should be

[137] *Ad Pium* 3.3. See p.148 for the importance of this letter.
[138] (1970), 237-242.
[139] Saller (1989).

clarified that it is meant to denote a sense of familiarity and close association, not necessarily implying the characteristics of affection. None of this, however, is to say that emotion did not exist within *amicitia*, only that I do not take it for granted that it did – the existence of emotions is always open to interpretation.

Some issues of housekeeping need to be stated. First and foremost, all translations are taken from the Loeb edition of the texts, unless otherwise stated. Secondly, the passages from Fronto included in this thesis are taken from Haines' Loeb edition as well, even though I am aware that it has been somewhat superseded by Van den Hout's Teubner text. My justification is that Haines' Loeb volumes are more readily available and accessible than the Teubner, which makes it easier for the reader to consult, and to a very high degree still accurate. Nonetheless, where the Teubner differs from the Loeb, these instances are indicated by square brackets, in the following format: [page.line:text]. I also attach an appendix to relate the different numbering system between the Loeb and the Teubner.

Section I:

Amicitia within the Aristocracy

Chapter 1
Amicitia in the *Letters* of Pliny the Younger

The letters of Pliny the Younger have often been described as an invaluable document for the study of Roman imperial history, not simply because so little literary evidence survives from the period in which Pliny was active,[1] but also because in no other source is preserved such a comprehensive account of behaviour, experiences and sentiments of life in Rome. The *Letters* deal with a variety of issues, many of which, as is generally agreed, pertained to the welfare of an aristocrat living in the Roman Empire of the first century AD.[2] From seemingly mundane topics, such as invitation to dinner and attendance at poetry recitals, to matters of more consequence, as in the management of estates and legal affairs, Pliny's epistles document the concerns and anxieties of one of the highest ranked aristocrats of the time. They show exactly how ideals, maintained by the Romans themselves, were actualized and exercised.[3]

It is because of this, because of the intrinsic value of Pliny as a source for Roman history, that scholarship based around the *Letters* is long and extensive. Book X of this collection, for instance, has been studied at length for the insights it offers into provincial administration, the power and limits of imperial authority in the provinces, even official guidelines for behaviour towards Christians.[4] The missives dealing with Pliny's villas are also of great interest to archaeologists and historians alike, for the information they provide regarding the management of aristocratic estates, the descriptions of the buildings and surrounding areas, as well as the type of lifestyle to be experienced at these resorts.[5] The epistles between Pliny and Tacitus are also useful as they are employed to develop a fuller

[1] Syme (1968,) 135.
[2] Parker (1988), 6; Griffin (2003), 103; Jones (1968), 11.
[3] See Griffin (2007).
[4] Eck (2002) and Millar (1992) both rely heavily on Pliny. See also Alföldy (1999).
[5] See Riggsby (2003).

picture of the otherwise elusive historian.[6] In the area of social history, in particular, these epistles have proven invaluable for their contribution to our understanding of life under the High Empire.[7]

As extensive as the scholarship may be,[8] the one topic many scholars take for granted is that of *amicitia*. One the one hand, scholars recognize the importance of friendship in the course of these epistles and make such statements as 'Friendship occupies a special place in the first nine books of Pliny's Letters and is quite important in the tenth book too', or acknowledge that 'Pliny's letters are above all an ideal record of friendship', or deduce that the vocabulary of friendship in Pliny occurs 'at least three times as often as any other complex of terms'.[9] And yet, there has been no systematic attempt at exploring what the nature of this *amicitia* might have been, or why it was given such a special place in the corpus of Pliny's letters. To be fair, there are publications which make mention of friendship in Pliny, but the very topic of *amicitia* has never been the focus of these studies. Hoffer, for example, deals with *amicitia* only in conjunction with Pliny's many other 'anxieties', and never as an anxiety in itself; so too de Blois' article, which examines in what ways Pliny's friendships can be understood as politically charged, but not what the character of *amicitia* actually was.[10] This, I believe, is to miss a vital aspect of the *Letters*. This chapter, then, aims to comprehend what *amicitia* meant to Pliny, and in doing so to demonstrate that friendship, and the proper exercise thereof, was truly a matter of concern for our author, in whose estimation the very relationship of *amicitia* formed the foundation of his society. The importance of friendship to Pliny and his world is not to be underestimated.

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[6] Griffin (1999).
[7] Sherwin-White (1966), Hoffer (1999), Radice (1975), and many of Syme's articles included in my bibliography.
[8] Aubrion (1989) contains comprehensive bibliographies of studies based on Pliny's *Letters*.
[9] de Blois (2001), 129; Hoffer (1999), 10; White (1978), 80-81.
[10] Hoffer (1999), de Blois (2001).

Problems and Caveats

Publication

There are, however, some significant caveats about against accepting at face value the world as depicted in these epistles, the majority of which stem from the fact that the first nine books of this collection were published by the author himself. This raises the question of the authenticity of these epistles as actual letters, of the historicity of the world portrayed by the missives, and of how Pliny's motivations for publication might have affected our perception of his society. It is important to identify these problems because the approach adopted in this thesis relies heavily on Pliny's description of the world in which he operated, and on the role of *amicitia* in a society based on that description. If the picture has been distorted to fit Pliny's purpose, then we must wonder whether an account of *amicitia* derived from his *Letters* is indeed representative of his contemporary culture, or just a product of Pliny's construction. But let us tackle each of these caveats in turn, beginning with a quick review of the literature on Pliny, which should prove helpful in clarifying some of the issues.

Early scholarship on the nature of Pliny's *Letters* is centred around the debate of whether the epistles were real letters, sent as authentic missives as a form of communication, which were later collected and then published by Pliny; or whether they were literary compositions in the first instance, written with the express aim of publication, in much the same vein as Horace's *Epistles* or Seneca's *Letters to Lucilius*. Supporters of the latter view stress the high level of artistic achievement of the corpus, and contend that the missives themselves do not relate to their addressees in a personal way as though they were genuine.[11] The correspondents, according to one theory, were really receiving

[11] See Gamberini (1983), 124-128; Zelzer (1964), 144-145.

dedications in epistolary form instead of actual letters.[12] Advocates for the authenticity of the *Letters* argue for the amount of detail contained within the missives, which, as Sherwin-White believes, would have been too troublesome for Pliny to invent simply for the sake of literary exercises; rather, they, along with the range of topics dealing with realistic concerns of the time, are indicative of their genuineness.[13] Furthermore, the stylization of the missives is the direct result of Pliny's rhetorical education, which is combined with his own literary pursuits and the interests of those within his circle to produce letters that were carefully and artfully composed anyway.[14] Pliny's *Letters*, therefore, were genuine letters published in literary form.

A corollary of the position favouring the authenticity of the *Letters* is the need to consider how much editing and revising the epistles saw before their publication. If the *Letters* were comprised of missives sent as actual exchanges, and as such communicated with their addressees about private and delicate matters, then Pliny could very conceivably have removed information which might have caused embarrassment and/or shame to either himself or his correspondents.[15] He had to be sensitive to the actors in his publication. Perhaps more significantly, as Bell suggests, Pliny must also have edited out sections of the text which were at odds with the ideologies of the current regime.[16] Furthermore, it was important for Pliny to minimize his role and successful career achieved under the emperor Domitian,[17] whose constant portrayal as a hateful tyrant, in both the *Letters* and the *Panegyricus*, meant that any positive association between the two had to be curtailed.

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[12] See Zelzer (1964), 144.
[13] Sherwin-White (1966), 11-13; Lilja (1969), 78.
[14] In Pliny's own words, *litterae curiosius scriptae* (*Epist*. IX.28). Lilja (1969); Sherwin-White (1966), 16-18; Bell (1989), 464; Gamberini (1983), 130-136; Zelzer (1964); Aubrion (1975), 90-130.
[15] Parker (1988, 6) relates the story of how disillusioned Petrarch was at reading Cicero's private letters to discover the man behind the philosophical and rhetorical texts.
[16] Bell (1989), 460.
[17] Radice (*Loeb*), xiv-xv. See p.47-48.

Pliny could not be seen as having received Domitian's favour, even though his audience and the members of his circle must have known otherwise.[18]

The order in which the letters appear in their published form also causes some unease. Despite Pliny's claim that they were collected *ut quaequae in manus venerat*, it has been argued that a careful process of selection was employed by the author. For the most part, this process follows a chronological sequence, in that the events described in Book I generally predate those in Book II, those in Book II predate the happenings of Book III, and so forth.[19] In several places, however, Pliny has opted to sacrifice this sequence for, as Sherwin-White argues, a proper distribution of themes and material. Especially in Books I and II, where Pliny had a wealth of epistles to choose from, he was more interested in the variety of themes than strict chronology; and in Book IX, Sherwin-White maintains, when Pliny's stock of letters has run low, he resorted to early exchanges to fill the gaps.[20] Murgia has since criticized Sherwin-White for his deprecating remarks, contending that he has failed to recognize the internal referencing of earlier books in Book IX. Instead, Murgia believes that all nine books of the *Letters* were meant to be read as a single unit, with the ninth one acting as a conclusion to the entire collection.[21] Therefore, the ordering of the missives, although it should be seen as largely chronological, is nonetheless flexible and dependent on Pliny's objectives: 'The arrangement of letters within the nine books represents an artful choice influenced by many, sometimes conflicting, factors: sequential order of related events, variety, distribution of certain types among books, formal balance, all complicated by a desire to maintain a pretence of carelessness about order'.[22]

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[18] Sherwin-White (1969), 84-85.
[19] *Epist* I.1. Sherwin-White (1966), 20-41, though only in so far as these letters can be accurately dated.
[20] (1966), 42-52.
[21] Murgia (1985), 198-201. Hoffer (1999) takes a similar approach and argue that Book I served as an introduction to the topics Pliny wanted to pursue in his publication.
[22] Murgia (1985), 200-201.

A question of persona

In more recent scholarship, the focus of study on the *Letters* has shifted away from the debate of authenticity. Indeed, when the topic has reached the point where it is suggested that Pliny wrote certain letters, though genuine and sent to their addressees, but with the express purpose of publishing them later,[23] authenticity as actual exchanges is no longer at issue. Furthermore, as de Pretis points out, the separation between the 'real' and the 'fictitious' epistle is itself artificial, because all epistles involve a certain degree of self-construction on the part of their author.[24] A letter is 'half of a dialogue', and consideration for the recipient, as well as how the recipient would conceive of the author in turn, necessarily influence the way the letter is composed.[25] To put it another way, letters are always written with the audience in mind, whether that audience is the addressee or the wider public. In this sense, even if the exchanges in the *Letters* were authentic, Pliny had already created a version of his society and his role within it through their original composition.[26] Hence, it is more worthwhile, in the opinion of many modern scholars, to investigate instead the persona of Pliny that emerges from the *Letters*, the way this is achieved through what is termed Pliny's 'self-fashioning',[27] and what the ultimate purpose was to the entire endeavour.

The literature on this aspect of the *Letters* is extensive and varied in scope, and there is no need in the present thesis to explore each in detail; a few examples should suffice. Leach discusses Pliny's self-fashioning in terms of Roman portraiture, and concludes that it was a means of juxtaposing the private individual and the public figure,

[23] Shelton (1987, 137): 'if any elements…were missing, that is, had not appeared in previously-written letters, Pliny had the chance to compose a letter on that specific topic and place it in the collection'.
[24] de Pretis (2003), 127-134.
[25] de Pretis (2003), 142.
[26] Henderson (2003), 117.
[27] Leach (1990), 15.

which in turn allowed Pliny to expose his private life to the public.[28] In a similar fashion, Henderson also considers the *Letters* with Roman art in mind, and argues that the publication of the collection was Pliny's attempt at self-monumentalizing.[29] Both Shelton and Radice read the *Letters* as a sort of autobiography, with the former believing that Pliny's aim was to leave as flattering a portrait of himself as possible, and the latter contending that it was to publicize and conform to practices of his contemporary society.[30] Ash regards the collection as Pliny's way of playing the historian, carried out in a style which did not require engagement with the formal aspects of the genre.[31] Riggsby believes that Pliny, as the protagonist of the *Letters*, is an extension of Pliny the public figure and Pliny the orator, one which respects the community over the self and the public above the private; this was an ethos which Pliny felt needed to be advertised, and it is therefore in the publication of the letters that they receive their true value.[32]

In general, despite these variations and different approaches to Pliny's self-fashioning, the picture we receive of Pliny from his *Letters* is rather consistent. He is seen as a 'hard-working statesman, a respected literary figure, a valuable patron, a loving husband and a generous friend'.[33] Pliny is amiable, sincere and completely devoted to the values of his class, including the desire for fame and immortality. Furthermore, as Hoffer describes, Pliny is confident, and displays no anxieties about issues that surely would have plagued him,[34] issues such as his own childlessness, his personal relationship with the emperors, his own political and literary ambitions, and so forth. In fact, Pliny made an effort never to show signs of weakness, and even when he did,[35] the letters were written in

[28] Leach (1990).
[29] Henderson (2002).
[30] Shelton (1987), Radicke (1997). See also Andrews (1939).
[31] Ash (2003).
[32] Riggsby (1998).
[33] Shelton (1987), 136-137.
[34] Hoffer (1999), 1.
[35] Such as at the death of his mentor, Corellius Rufus (*Epist*. I.12).

a way so as to incite sympathy from the readers, not judgement for conduct inappropriate to men of his station.[36] Pliny, the protagonist of the *Letters*, emerges as an exemplary orator, landowner, senator, legal consultant, mentor, patron to communities, etc.; in sum, a highly idealized figure which embodies all the positive aspects of life under the High Roman Empire. The *Letters*, then, were not only a method for Pliny to secure his place in history, but also to ensure that history has preserved a proper image.

To relate this discussion back to *amicitia*, there are several occasions in the *Letters* where we find Pliny manipulating the theme of friendship in order to enhance his personal image. For instance, Pliny was keen to emphasize his friendship with 'the Seven', Senecio, Rusticus, Helvidius, Mauricus, Gratilla, Arria and Fannia, all of whom underwent hardship under Domitian.[37] However, as Shelton points out, Pliny never actually jeopardized himself or his career to help these individuals, and therefore could not boast of his bravery. Instead, Pliny was left to stress the next best thing: his moral support for them during their prosecution, his generosity towards those that returned from exile, and kindness for the family members of the deceased.[38] Hoffer believes Pliny's underlying concern was to dissociate himself from the successful career he enjoyed under the tyrant, and friendship with political exiles of that period had great 'symbolic value'.[39] Conceivably, the reason for this emphasis could also be that an accurate depiction of the events would convey an unfavourable image of Pliny, of his inaction and compliance in time of need, an image which did not agree with Pliny's general formula. Hence, Pliny anxiously employed all the rhetoric skills at his disposal to reconstruct perceptions to these events, and to make his association with the victims appear much more enduring and intimate than it might otherwise have been.

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[36] For Hoffer (1999), this avoidance of weakness was Pliny's way of praising the current regime.
[37] *Epist*. III.11
[38] Shelton, (1987), 132-133. A husband for the daughter of Mauricus' brother (I.14); finding a tutor for the children of Mauricus' brother II.18); legal aid for Helvidius' son (IX.13).
[39] Hoffer (1999), 8.

The friendship Pliny enjoyed with the exiled philosopher Artemidorus is also employed in a similar fashion.[40] It is noteworthy that Pliny endeavoured to create a close link with Artemidorus, who was banished during the infamous expulsion of philosophers from Rome in 93,[41] as an effort to demonstrate his courage under the great threat of Domitian. Even in this letter Pliny wanted to remind his audience of his personal attachment to the Seven, and how their persecution led Pliny to his actions.[42] Still, it is difficult to believe all the dangers Pliny claims to have incurred during his visit to his friend, and one is seriously tempted to think that Pliny's declaration, that he 'stood amidst the flames of thunderbolts dropping all around', is very much an exaggeration.[43] It is also no coincidence that Pliny stressed the physical and financial support he offered Artemidorus during his exile, something which he could not perform for the Seven. Even here Pliny could not stop preaching about how risky the venture was.[44]

But more than just *self*-fashioning, Pliny was as much responsible for fashioning a version of society in his *Letters* as he was for imagining his place within it. That is to say, in order for this idealized rendering of Pliny to function, the world in which he inhabited, along with the other characters of this story, needed be fashioned and idealized as well.[45] Thus there is no hint of the tension amongst the senators at the succession of the new emperors, nor is there any mention of the deep-seated social divide inherent in Roman society. Even the downfall of Regulus, the epitome of the bad senator, is representative of the prosperity of the current regime.[46] Another fundamental way through which Pliny achieved this image of the perfect society was by idealizing his social relationships, by

[40] *Epist*. III.11. See Shelton (1989).
[41] Sherwin-White (1966), 240.
[42] See Brunt (1975b) and Griffin (2000a), 171-177.
[43] *Epist*. III.11: *tot circa me iactis fulminibus*.
[44] Visiting Artemidorus while Pliny was a praetor attracted attention; and offering him money, explicitly mentioned as without incurring interest, was something not even his rich and powerful friends dared to do (III.11.2).
[45] Hoffer (1999) is one of the few scholars to engage with this aspect of the *Letters*.
[46] Hoffer (1999), 5; 53-56.

emphasizing the many friendships he shared and the way these friendships contributed to his vision. In his attempts at self- and world-fashioning, *amicitia* became one aspect that helped to round out the entire scheme. According to this vision, perfect congeniality was shared by all members of his circle. This is the type of community where lines of social distinctions were blurred, patronage became friendship, and relationships were characterized by morals, benefits, reciprocity and mutual praise; what Hoffer calls the 'virtuous circle' of friends.[47] There is no indication of the envy and tense competition that must have permeated through the Roman 'zero-sum system', where limited resources required constant vigilance and where success for one meant disappointment for another.[48] And Pliny stood at the centre of it all, as the exemplary friend responsible for drawing together this virtuous circle.

We therefore must acknowledge Pliny's willingness to employ the theme of *amicitia* to his own advantage, sometimes at the expense of historic accuracy. Whether it is in retellings of specific events or individual relationships, Pliny readily inserted affirmations of friendship as a means of self-fashioning, in order to improve his image to his audience, and to posterity. Likewise, an idealized picture of *amicitia* was presented by Pliny so as to complement and achieve his reflection of the virtuous society, his society, in which he, a virtuous individual, lived and associated with others of a similar mentality. In light of this, it appears that to determine the nature of friendship in Roman society based on Pliny's epistles may prove difficult, especially since the representation of *amicitia* was so easily manipulated. How are we to investigate *amicitia* from the *Letters* if we cannot trust the accounts thereof?

[47] Hoffer (1999), 10.
[48] Hoffer (1999), 10.

Resolution

On the other hand, it should still be remembered that the people with whom Pliny associated were actual, historic individuals. And as Syme and Champlin have successfully demonstrated, the relationships Pliny experienced with these figures as described in the *Letters* were, if not free of idealization, at least plausible. Certain members of this circle, in so far as we are aware, had so little impact on the history of the period that there was no reason for Pliny to exaggerate his connection with them, if what he wanted to achieve was a claim to immortality.[49] Furthermore, not only were these individuals the correspondents of the *Letters*, they were also the primary actors of the publication, who most likely made up the intended audience. Therefore, their views and ideas must have been taken into account as part of Pliny's self- and world-fashioning. Pliny surely would have aroused criticism if the type of society he portrayed deviated substantially from the version shared amongst his audience, and the representation of *amicitia* is no exception. In this sense, the study of friendship from the *Letters* would not prove problematic because the relationship described therein should still be representative of Pliny's society.

What is more, even should certain accounts of *amicitia* be fabricated or altered to fit Pliny's programme, even should *amicitia* in the *Letters* itself be highly idealized, these were nonetheless ideals which Pliny openly advertised and to which Pliny's society were believed to have adhered. It would surely be imprudent for us to dismiss Pliny's description of *amicitia* based on the premise that such idealizations had no reflection on reality, since, as Griffin rightly points out, the ideals of a society necessarily reveal the 'social code and approved practice' of that society.[50] By examining these ideals, we can come to a better understanding of exactly those social codes and approved practices, and

[49] Syme (1985a) for Pliny and Comum, his home town; Champlin (2001) for Pliny and Tifernum, where he owned a villa. These individuals include Voconius Romanus, Passennus Paulus, Atilius Crescens, Calvisius Rufus, Caninius Rufus.
[50] Griffin (2003), 104.

thus develop a satisfying account of *amicitia*. In addition, we cannot fail to notice the importance Pliny placed on this social relationship of *amicitia*. Although it must be admitted that the epistolary genre naturally lends itself to an emphasis on friendship, the role of *amicitia* in Pliny's *Letters* certainly goes beyond the limits defined by the genre. We should appreciate that there was no need for Pliny to have idealized friendships to such an extent if he did not mean for it to play a major part in his vision of his society. Rather, *amicitia* was a key component to the life Pliny wished his audience to think he led, and his constant use of it to mould his image speaks volumes of what *amicitia* meant to the Romans.[51]

Methodology

The vocabulary of friendship

Sherwin-White in his commentary on Pliny casually describes what he regards as indicative of friendship in the *Letters*: 'Pliny's term for friend is *familiaris* or *amicus familiaris*…as distinguished from an acquaintance, *amicus*. For intimates he often uses *contubernalis*…or *sodalis'*.[52] Certainly, these particular terms, *amicus*, *familiaris*, *contubernalis* and *sodalis*, are often given the translation of 'friend' in English renditions of Latin texts, the historical dates for which range from as early as the second century BC to late Antiquity. This definition is also confirmed by a search through the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* and the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. These terms, then, mark the starting point of this thesis, in that the examination of the vocabulary of friendship in the *Letters* revolves around the proper understanding of how Pliny utilized these words. Whether they conform to Sherwin-White's gradation of intimacy as described above has yet to be seen, though the conclusions derived from the research conducted here suggest the situation is more

[51] *Epist*. VII.18 reflects Pliny's attitude towards friendship.
[52] Sherwin-White (1966), 152.

complicated than Sherwin-White has anticipated.[53] It also needs to be pointed out that the term *sodalis* figures so little in the *Letters*, and its usages are so generalized, that one wonders how Sherwin-White managed to deduce its significance.[54] Therefore, this thesis will concentrate on the three other terms offered, namely *amicus*, *familiaris* and *contubernalis*.

It must first be admitted that this approach necessarily places emphasis on people explicitly described by Pliny above those with whom Pliny only had direct correspondence. This is because Pliny never addresses the recipient of a letter with any of these words.[55] Sometimes, direct recipients of missives were also given descriptions in the *Letters* themselves, in which case both will be utilized to establish how Pliny wanted to portray his relationship with them. At other times, we must rely on the content and the tone of their exchanges to determine the level of intimacy. However, in some cases there is simply not enough information for a detailed analysis, and this is why Pliny's association with certain otherwise important figures, such as Tacitus, will receive little attention in the course of this thesis.

Other terminologies

Mention should also be made of other ways to designate *amicitia* in Pliny's *Letters*, and justification given as to why they are not included as the focus of the present research. For example, the possessive adjectives, *noster* and *meus*, when employed in conjunction with reference to specific individuals, have often been taken to indicate friendship, a practice which is reflected in Radice's English translation of the text in both the Loeb and Penguin editions. And so, in *Epistle* II.9.1, the phrase *Anxium me et inquietum habet*

[53] See p.92-96.
[54] *Epist*. II.13.6; IV.7.6; VII.4.7; VIII.21.5. The exception to this is perhaps in II.13, with reference to Voconius Romanus, who, as will be pointed out below, is very much an exception anyway.
[55] See p.228 n.121.

petitio Sexti Eruci mei is rendered as 'My friend Sextus Erucius is standing for office, and this is worrying me very much'. Similarly, *volumina Tranquilli mei* from V.10.3 is translated as 'my friend's books'. Cremutius Ruso, the subject of VI.23.3 and the recipient of IX.19, is also described as *Ruso meus*, which Radice renders into 'My friend Ruso' and *Meus Varenus* in VI.13.1 likewise becomes 'my friend Varenus'. As for *noster*, in *Epistle* I.16, *hunc dico nostrum* is specifically rendered as 'I mean that friend of ours',[56] and the *Homullus noster* of VI.18.3 is given the translation of 'My friend Homullus'.

Certainly, in some of these situations a friendship-type of association was meant by Pliny. Suetonius Tranquillius is elsewhere described very emphatically as a *contubernalis*, and the context of *Epistle* II.9 specifies the connections Pliny shared with Sextus Erucius and his family.[57] But this is precisely the point, that for these two individuals we have other points of reference in the *Letters* to reveal how Pliny wanted the audience to regard their relationship. Without these contexts, however, it would undoubtedly be hasty to conclude that they were *amici* simply with the use of this possessive adjective. Cremutius Ruso is a prime example: although *Epistle* VI.23 acts as a kind of recommendation for the young man, nowhere does Pliny express a friendship with him. Instead, he portrays himself as a patron, or in his own words, a *commendator*, who sees it as his social and civic responsibility to lead promising young men, *boni iuvenes*, in their first trials. Even should Ruso be the direct recipient of IX.19, we do not find in this epistle any vocabulary of *amicitia* which characterizes Pliny's other correspondence with *amici*. There is no sense of Pliny wanting to portray their relationship explicitly as a friendship.

Varenus Rufus, the protagonist of several extortion trial letters, is also once mentioned with the possessive *meus*.[58] The circumstance under which Pliny associated with this particular individual is complicated, and will be discussed at greater length later

[56] Even Sherwin-White subscribes to this, as *nostrum* here is taken to mean 'our mutual friend' (1966, 122).
[57] For further discussion of these two individuals and their correspondence with Pliny, see p.65-66 and p.78.
[58] The letter in question is Epist. VI.13.1. Other references to him are in V.20, VI.5, 13, 29.11, VII.6 and 10.

in the chapter; suffice it to say here that Pliny remains ambivalent about his relationship with Varenus throughout these missives. That is to say, while his description of the events in the trial and of Varenus himself is positive, which is explicable by Pliny's role as the defence to Varenus and by his desire to advertise his successes, there is no hint of a personal connection between the two. It is true that Pliny did write once that he behaved *tantum ut amicus* to Varenus in the trial. This instance, as will be explained below, is not an indication of shared *amicitia*.[59] Indeed, Pliny's regard for the man can be perfectly summed up by his letter to Ummidius Quadratus, in which he states that taking up the case for Varenus was simply at the direction of the senate, and that *in posterum opto ut ea potissimum iubear, quae me deceat vel sponte fecisse*;[60] an opinion very unlike the one he expressed earlier in the same letter, that one should take up without hesitation the *causae amicorum*.

Similar doubts can be raised about the uncritical interpretation of *noster* as indicative of *amicitia*.[61] Again, in some circumstances there is evidence to demonstrate that this term was employed by Pliny to express a shared friendship between himself, the correspondent and a third party. *Epistle* VII.31.4, in which Pliny mentions *Corellius noster* to Cornutus Tertullus, both of whom along with Pliny were referred to by Corellius as *amici* in IV.17.9, is a case in point. So too is C. Calvisius, who is related by Pliny as *noster* to Sosius Senecio.[62] However, we cannot fail to notice that earlier in the same letter Pliny explicitly states to the correspondent that Calvisius was Pliny's *contubernalis* and an *amicus* to Senecio. Their relationship is clearly spelled out.

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[59] *Epist*. VII.6.3.
[60] *Epist*. VI.29.11: 'As for the future, I hope I shall be required to take up cases only when I might suitably have done so unbidden'.
[61] It is, of course, altogether possible that some of the instances of *noster* noted below just mean 'my' and not 'our', though it is not clear why Pliny would sometimes employ *meus* and at other times *noster*.
[62] *Epist*. IV.4.2.

With other occurrences the situation is not so clear. Artemidorus, the exiled philosopher of *Epistle* III.11, is described as *noster* to Julius Genitor, but we have neither external nor internal evidence to suggest that Genitor and Artemidorus were acquainted. We know from the *Letters* that Genitor was an educated man, who was recommended by Pliny to be the tutor of Corellius Rufus' grandson,[63] and perhaps this inclination for erudition provided the common link. But this argument is tangential at best. Aefulanus Marcellinus, the recipient of V.16, is said to have known Minicius Fundanus, the suffect consul of 107, by Pliny's use of *noster*. Their acquaintanceship is confirmed by Pliny's proposal towards the end of the missive, that Macellinus may consider writing a consolatory letter to Fundanus on the death of the latter's daughter. But the detailed description of the said girl, lengthy enough to make this one of the longer epistles in the collection, seriously suggests that Macellinus did not know Fundanus all that well, at least not well enough to be familiar with the character of his daughter or indeed even the love Fundanus bore for her.

The familiar theme of loss is once again the topic of *Epistle* VIII.5, in which Pliny relates the death of the wife of *noster Macrinus* to Rosianus Geminus. Here, there is even less indication that the recipient knew the protagonist of the missive, given the detailed description of the woman in question and of their marriage, albeit much shorter than the one Pliny offered to Macellinus, and the lack of mention for Geminus to console Macrinus himself. Even the basic relationship Pliny shared with another individual referred to by *noster* is questionable.[64] Homullus, who makes a couple of minor appearances in the course of the *Letters* as a character in the extortion trials, was the suffect consul of 102 and later the legate of Cappadocia, and as such was a figure of some influence.[65] And yet, the role he is given by Pliny in the *Letters* is miniscule at best. Not only did he not receive any

[63] *Epist*. III.3.5.
[64] *Epist*. VI.19.3.
[65] *Epist*. IV.9.15, V.20.6. Sherwin-White (1966), 277-278.

direct missives, but he never even warranted a friendly word except this *noster*. Would this alone be sufficient in describing their relationship as *amicitia*?

Epistles VII.7 and VII.8, which concern the introduction of two friends of Pliny to each other, Priscus and Pompeius Saturninus, both employ the *noster* construction, and are most revealing in this regard.[66] Even though a sense of mutual familiarity is undoubtedly implied by Pliny in these letters, since these two have only been recently acquainted, a fact which Pliny repeatedly emphasizes, it does seem out of place to regard the two were friends *per se*.[67] It may be that Pliny was deliberately employing the *noster* here to reaffirm the friendship the three mutually shared, but we can only come to this possibility from the details Pliny himself provides. Without them, the word *noster* by itself is not strong enough to determine whether *amicitia* existed. A final example of this can be seen in the letter to M. Erucius Clarus about the same individual, Pompeius Saturnius.[68] Although Pliny opens his letter with *hunc dico nostrum*, thus implying a familiarity between the recipient and Saturninus, the tone of the letter, nonetheless, reveals that there was little affinity between Clarus and Saturninus. Indeed, Pliny went to lengths to describe the types of compositions in which Saturninus excelled, ranging from speeches to poetry. If Clarus had enjoyed an *amicitia* with Saturninus, he would surely have known about this aspect of his friend. Instead, we discover that Clarus had not even read any of Saturninus's material, as is revealed by Pliny's eager plea for the recipient to do so. In a circle so preoccupied with literary pursuits and achievements, it is difficult to think that a supposed friend would be unfamiliar with the writings of another. It may well be that Clarus had been acquainted with Saturninus, but it did not go as far as *amicitia*.

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[66] VII.7: *Et proxime Prisco nostro et rursus…gratias egi*; VII.8: *…quod Saturninus noster summas tibi apud me gratias…*
[67] *Perge ut coepisti* reveals that their friendship has just begun (VII.8.2).
[68] *Epist*. I.16.

It is because of this ambiguity in the terms *meus* and *noster* that they will not be employed in this thesis as indicators of *amicitia*. To be sure, there are instances where the meaning is explicit enough, but this is due mainly to the internal references within Pliny's *Letters* themselves. There are also cases where Pliny does make clear the situation: *Atilius Scaurus amicus meus* of *Epistle* VI.25.1 and *amicus tuus, immo noster* of VII.12.1. As such, these occurrences will be treated accordingly, under the appropriate *amicus*, *familiaris* and *contubernalis* sections. Without these references, however, the relationship Pliny had with individuals introduced solely as *meus* or *noster* must necessarily remain uncertain. Still, it is entirely possible that ambiguity was precisely what Pliny had in mind. It is arguable that Pliny was aware of the reaction he would incur if he portrayed a close association with individuals with whom he was not particularly well acquainted, and yet for whatever reason he wanted to be seen as relating with said persons. Luckily for Pliny, the possessive adjectives *meus* and *noster* both imply acquaintance, but as for the exact level of intimacy Pliny deliberately left for the audience to determine.

The case of Atilius Crescens

Pliny's relationship with Atilius Crescens is worth further exploration in the present context. It is not that Pliny was ambiguous about how much he cared for Atilius that makes this character interesting, for Pliny actually relates in quite some detail about the proximity of their respective hometowns, the way they came to love each other as boys, which was reaffirmed once they reached adulthood, and how any wrong done to Atilius he would take as a personal insult.[69] Rather, the curious feature about this individual is that, despite Pliny's emphatic claim that they shared an *amicitia*, not only does Atilius not receive any direct correspondence, but every reference to him in the *Letters* is done

[69] *Epist*. VI.8. Atilius is apparently from Milan (Sherwin-White [1966], 364).

through the possessive adjective. And so, *Epistle* VI.8.5 sees *Atilius meus*, and both I.9.8 and II.14.2 has *Atilius noster*. It must be said that this Atilius seems to have been quite distinguished, famous not for his birth or rank but for his literature and witty remarks.[70] As Pliny points out to the recipient of VI.8, *Quis enim illum spectatior paulo aut non novit aut non amat*? Furthermore, we can perhaps infer that Pliny would have introduced such a literary friend, whom he had known since boyhood, to other members of his circle, which would undoubtedly have included Minicius Fundanus, the addressee of I.9.[71] Hence, it would not be surprising to find that many people were indeed acquainted with Atilius, or at least had come across some of his works, which would justify the use of *noster*.

But why Pliny never thought to describe Atilius as an *amicus*, *familiaris* or *contubernalis* is difficult to explain, especially since others in a similar position do receive such explicit designations.[72] One possible reason may be that Pliny was not that specific with his vocabulary, which warns us to examine carefully the context of the missives, in particular Pliny's many articulations of care and love, in addition to these three terms so as to achieve a fuller picture; and indeed, the suggestion offered later in the chapter, that we should regard all of these appellations and designations as Pliny describing the inclusive nature of *amicitia*, certainly supports this approach.[73] However, it should still be pointed out that Atilius presents an exception, rather than the rule, and as such the general methodology adopted in this thesis should still be effective.

It is worth mentioning the way Pliny specifies his familiarity with Atilius in relation to that of Atilius and Priscus in *Epistle* VI.8. That is, while Pliny acknowledges that Priscus was acquainted with Atilius (though, as Pliny says, anyone worthwhile should be as well), it is Pliny who loves him ardently, *non ut multi*. This is why Pliny has

[70] Radice believes that he was a member of the equestrian order, though Sherwin-White made no comments on the matter. At least from the context of VI.8, we can tell that Atilius was not well off.
[71] Neither the Maximus of II.14 or the Priscus of VI.6 can be strictly identified.
[72] Voconius Romanus and Romatius Firmus, for example.
[73] See p.95-96.

assumed the defence of Atilius in his time of need, and why he has written to Priscus in the first place. And this construction is paralleled later in the missive, where Pliny asks Priscus to write to *Maximus noster* on behalf of himself and Atilius, because Priscus was more intimate with Maximus than Pliny was: *quem et ipse amo, sed coniunctius tu*. The use of *meus* to describe Atilius here can therefore be attributed to Pliny's artistic inclinations, through which he created a framework to chart the level of intimacy with the individuals involved. Atilius was *meus*, whom Pliny loved more than Priscus did, whereas Maximus was *noster*, to whom Priscus could better relate. For the purposes of this thesis, however, this entire episode is yet another example of the inherent ambiguity of *meus* and *noster*, which is clarified only if Pliny himself wished to do so.

Back to the basics

To return to the three basic terms which mark out *amicitia*, in the wider context of the Latin language, *amicus* is the most typical designation for a friendship association. Primarily an adjective meaning friendly, amicable or dear, it is often employed in the substantive to mean what we would recognize as a friend.[74] *Familiaris* is also very popular for this purpose, second only to *amicus*. In its original sense, it denotes someone belonging to the family unit or household. Metaphorically, *familiaris* can also mean familiar or intimate as an adjective, and a friend or familiar acquaintance as a noun. *Contubernalis* occurs least often of the three, and has military connotations, signifying a tent-companion or comrade. When used outside of the military background, it denotes also a companion. The proportion of Pliny's usages of these three terms in the *Letters* reflects their relative frequency in Latin literature: *amicus* is most often employed by Pliny to mean friend, followed at some distance by *familiaris*, and *contubernalis* occurs least of all.

[74] Which is probably derived from the literal translation, one who is dear.

It is interesting to observe that Pliny utilized three different words, each with its own nuances, to designate the seemingly singular concept of friendship. The question of why this is so immediately springs to mind. Aside from the potentially obvious reason, that Pliny wanted to diversify his vocabulary, Sherwin-White believes that each of these words indicate a different level of association. His statement, quoted at the beginning of this section on methodology, summarily divides Pliny's relationships into three gradations: *amicus* typically means an acquaintance, which is to be differentiated from *familiaris* or *amicus familiaris*, the term for a friend, whereas a true intimate is often specified by *contubernalis*.[75]

There are two objections to this. Firstly, Sherwin-White's interpretation appears to be quite at odds with the particular nuance of each word. Setting *amicus* aside for the time being, since it is applicable really only to friendly conditions, to accept that *contubernalis*, with its military origins, prevails over the familial implications of *familiaris* in terms of intimacy seems counterintuitive. Sherwin-White gives no explanations for this. Secondly, and more importantly, Sherwin-White does not offer any justification for this interpretation, only a couple of examples of each expression in use. This is insufficient grounds for such a definitive conclusion. In fact, his statement about *sodalis* has already been proven to be incorrect. Furthermore, Sherwin-White is not always clear with his reading of the vocabulary, which is a necessity in analyses of this type. See, for instance, his later definition of *contubernalis*, which is described as 'a regular metaphor of literary friendships';[76] is this in addition to his previous conclusion, or does it operate in conjunction with it? Unfortunately, no further insights are offered. In the following section then, this thesis attempts to fill the gaps left by Sherwin-White on this topic, and

[75] Sherwin-White (1966), 152. It is worth remembering that he also includes *sodalis*.
[76] Sherwin-White (1966), 178.

examines the occurrences of each of the three terms in detail to see whether any credence can be given to Sherwin-White's original statement.

Contubernalis

The protagonists

Let us begin with *contubernalis*. The people in this category consist of Calvisius Rufus, Romatius Firmus, Suetonius Tranquillus, and Voconius Romanus.[77] Calvisius Rufus, of the equestrian class, was a decurion of Comum, Pliny's home town. Sherwin-White believes him to be a close friend and consultant of Pliny, because the letters to him concern politics, gossip and business. Interestingly, Pliny records no letters of literary topics with him.[78] Though there is nothing exceptional in the letters themselves to indicate a particularly close level of association between Pliny and Calvisius, the tone Pliny adopts with him remains casual. There are no openly didactic letters, such as the ones he sends to his protégés and juniors, and the attitude of respect found in letters to Pliny's seniors is also absent. Instead, Pliny relates to him stories (*aurea fabula*) of Regulus, the merits of Spurinna, and his disgust of the horse races. He also trusts Calvisius's opinions on matters of business and estate management, and believes that his *contubernalis* will be attentive to his best interests. Such, as Pliny professes, is the virtue of friendship: *quod memineram pro necessitudine amicitiae nostrae…debere te…meis ac tuis partibus fungi*.[79]

Similarly, Romatius Firmus was also a decurion of Comum, and achieved the status of equestrian through the patronage of Pliny.[80] As is revealed by *Epistle* I.19, Romatius,

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[77] Calvisius: *Epist*. I.12.12, IV.4.1; Romatius Firmus: I.19.1; Suetonius: I.24.1; Voconius Romanus II.13.5, X.4.1. There are a couple of other instances of this word, but they do not relate to the present discussion, i.e. *ex contubernalibus nostris* (VI.33.11) and, in reference to Pompeius Falco, *Vivit cum Spurinna, vivit cum Antonino, quorum alteri affinis, utrique contubernalis est* (IV.27.5).
[78] The letters to him are *Epist*. II.20, III.1, III.19, V.7, VIII.2, IX.6. *Epist*. I.12.12, a missive to Calestrius Tiro about the death of Corellius Rufus, has Pliny refer to Calvisius as a *contubernalis*. Same with *Epist*. IV.4.1.
[79] *Epist*. V.7.5.
[80] Letters received are *Epist*. I.19 and IV.29. See Sherwin-White (1966), 129 and Syme (1968), 721.

besides being from the same home town as Pliny, was also a family friend and a fellow-student. Indeed, his father had been close with Pliny's mother and uncle, and even Pliny considers him a *familiaris*. However, in the two letters Pliny sent to this *contubernalis*, who appears to have experienced a long relationship with Pliny, our epistler decided to assume a rather condescending tone. Sherwin-White suggests this is because of the difference in rank between the two persons, especially after Pliny's promotion to senatorial status,[81] and the fact that Pliny contributed 300,000 sesterces to sponsor his friend made this disparity even more pronounced. Nevertheless, this is not to say that Pliny adopted a thoroughly patronizing attitude to his fellow townsman. The second letter to Romatius shows Pliny admonishing him for not participating in his duties: even though this letter does sound somewhat condescending, the way the letter is written, with Pliny proclaiming *nihil est quod in dextram aurem fiducia mei dormias*,[82] reflects a playful attitude on Pliny's part, and is suggestive of a close familiarity with the addressee.

Voconius Romanus breaks the routine of *contubernales* that originate from Comum. He was from Saguntum in Spain, where he held a priesthood.[83] Once again an equestrian, Romanus receives a noteworthy seven letters dealing with various topics, most of which involve literary interests, with two additional ones that refer to him.[84] Like Romatius Firmus, he was also a fellow-student of Pliny, though this time it appears to have been for higher education.[85] The missives that are sent to him suggest a warm friendship between the two, and even though Romanus was of a lower station than Pliny, there exists no obviously discernable patronizing attitude within the letters. Take, for instance, *Epistle* VI.15, where Pliny relates the story of how a poet, Paulus, was embarrassed by his

[81] Sherwin-White (1966), 129.
[82] *Epist*. IV.29.1.
[83] See Sherwin-White (1966, 176) for further arguments on his possible magistracies. See also Jones (1968b), 131 and Syme (1960), 478-480.
[84] *Epist*. I.5, III.13, VI.15, VI.33, VIII.8, IX.7, and IX.28. The ones that relate to him are II.13 and X.4.
[85] *Epist*. II.13 refers to Pliny's studies in Rome. Romatius and Pliny probably attended *grammaticus* together, which entailed the study of literature and served as a preparatory step for higher education.

amicissimus, Javolenus Priscus: Pliny must have found this anecdote quite amusing, and did not hesitate to forward it to his friend. Furthermore, it is also in a missive to Romanus that we find our generally serious Pliny make a rather silly joke: in demanding to receive a reply from Romanus, Pliny exclaims, *Proinde prima quaque occasione mitte adpositis quidem usuris, quas ego (num parcius possum?) centesimas computabo*.[86] For Pliny to behave in such a light-hearted manner surely points to the intimacy of their friendship.[87]

Moreover, it is obvious that Pliny was quite concerned with his friend's interests, as can be seen from Pliny's frantic struggles to obtain several benefits on his behalf. *Epistle* II.13 has Pliny trying to secure an official position in the legion from an unidentified Priscus,[88] this after Pliny discloses that he had already acquired for his friend the *ius trium liberorum* from the emperor. And in *Epistle* X.4, an early missive to Trajan, Pliny petitions the emperor to promote Romanus from that of equestrian to senatorial status. Having failed in his first attempt to acquire this from Nerva, which happened not for lack of approval or trying on Pliny's part, of course, but because of unforeseen circumstances, Pliny now hopes that the current emperor would honour his predecessor's generosity. Thus, no effort was spared by Pliny to promote his friend, as is demonstrated by four consecutive petitions to various persons,[89] which surely points to Pliny's affinity with Romanus. As much as all of this can be said to be Pliny's attempts to advertise his connection with the rich and powerful, it does not diminish the fact that Romanus remains one of the most prominent figures of the *Letters*, whose relationship with Pliny is given a most intimate description.

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[86] *Epist*. IX.28.5.
[87] And for Pliny to publish it shows that he was not opposed to advertising it. For a similar argument regarding the relationship between humour and friendship in Cicero's letters, see Hutchinson (1998), 177.
[88] For the identification of this Priscus, see Sherwin-White (1966), 173-174, who prefers either Cornelius Priscus or Novius Priscus to Javolenus or Radice's designation of Neratius. Syme prefers Neratius. See Syme (1985a), 455 and (1981), 141. *PIR* V 60 agrees with Syme.
[89] For Voconius Romanus's later (unsuccessful) career, see Syme (1960), 480.

There is no need to describe at length the life and career of the famous imperial biographer, Suetonius. Enough material (and perhaps controversy) exists. For our purposes, suffice it to say that he probably came from the city of Hippo Regius in Numidia, achieved no higher than equestrian status, and was about ten years younger than Pliny. Therefore, of the four *contubernales*, Suetonius probably had the least reason to be described as such by our author. Yet here he is, he who receives no fewer than four missives, and has three other letters referring to him.[90] It may be that Suetonius does not belong in this category at all, because even though Pliny refers to him as a *contubernalis* in *Epistle* I.24.1, he may have done so in order to place an unwarranted emphasis on his relationship with Suetonius, and with it could more easily persuade Baebius Hispanus to do their bidding.[91] Indeed, Suetonius is often stated by modern scholars to be a protégé of Pliny as opposed to a recognized intimate, and some of the letters to him reflect this. One cannot help but notice the dismissive tone Pliny adopts when he tries to calm his young associate's nerves; the pompous way Pliny praises Suetonius's deferral of the post Pliny obtained for him; and Pliny's words to Trajan, *tantoque magis diligere coepi quanto nunc propius inspexi* suggest that they were not exceptionally close before working together in Pontus-Bithynia.

Having said this, however, the remaining two letters to him seem to reveal a certain closeness of association, and even confidence in his protégé's advice. As rare as it is to see Pliny make a joke, it is even rarer for him to express doubts about his abilities. Pliny does both with Suetonius.[92] As for using the term *contubernalis* for emphasis, if this is to be accepted as a legitimate argument, it must therefore be used more consistently in other letters of petition. As it turns out, this is not the case: *amicus* certainly appears more

[90] *Epist*. I.18, III.8, V.10, IX.34. The ones mentioning him are *Epist*. I.24, X.94 and 95, Trajan's reply.
[91] That is, to convince his friend to sell a piece of property to Suetonius at a discount.
[92] See V.10 for the joke and IX.34 for Pliny's entreaty for advice, even if it concerns only Pliny's incapability to recite poetry.

frequently than *contubernalis*. In addition, the fact that Pliny went out of his way to secure for Suetonius a concession in his land purchase, an official post which Pliny later was glad to defer, and the *ius trium liberorum* from the emperor suggests Pliny was quite close to this protégé.[93] And that this 'sedentary person can perhaps be discovered on Pliny's staff in Bithynia' also shows his trust in Suetonius's abilities and his fondness for the latter's company.[94]

On the nature of *contubernalis* and *amicitia*

After analyzing the list of people whom Pliny called *contubernalis*, there are several common links to be found. First of all, they all appear to be equestrians.[95] Secondly, the somewhat unclear Suetonius notwithstanding, all these people had had long term connections with Pliny, whether it be family relations, Comum relations, student relations, or even a combination of all three. On the other hand, not everyone who shared similar enduring relations with Pliny is labelled as *contubernalis*.[96] Pliny also seems to have been very involved in furthering the interests of each. Romatius Firmus received a substantial sum of money to boost his social standing; both Voconius Romanus and Suetonius were put up for job postings and benefits; and even Calvisius Rufus was not neglected, as Pliny tried to obtain the office of *tribunus laticlavius* for his nephew.[97] But certainly Pliny did not wish to represent these individuals as his clients,[98] as another regular theme with the *contubernales* is Pliny's insistence on their shared affection. Pliny's love for Romanus is paralleled only by Romanus' love for him; Pliny was keen on

[93] It is to be noted that besides Voconius Romanus, no other male associate of Pliny receives as many benefits.
[94] Syme (1960), 482.
[95] However, not all equestrians are *contubernales*. See p.97-98.
[96] Atilius Crescens and Cornutus Tertullus, for example. It should be noted that aside from these figures, we have very little information about the length and duration of Pliny's other associations.
[97] *Epist*. IV.4 For this post see Sherwin-White (1966), 269.
[98] For it must always be kept in mind that we are seeing the picture Pliny painted of both himself and his correspondents.

emphasizing his *amicitiae nostrae diuturnitas* with Romatius Firmus; the bond between Pliny and Suetonius grew with each passing day; and Pliny admits that Calvisius was the first witness of Pliny's grief over the death of his mentor.[99] The level of intimacy is therefore beyond doubt between Pliny and each of these individuals.

The question remains of how this relates to the military connotations of *contubernalis* and why Pliny chose to employ the word to designate this sort of relationship. To address this, it may be worthwhile to look at a related term, used again not very commonly by Pliny: *contubernium*. This word has a specific meaning of a tent in which men and officers dwelled, but, in an abstract sense, cohabitation, or company.[100] There are seven instances of the term in the corpus of the *Letters*. These include *ut tot tantisque dotibus villulae nostrae maxima commendatio ex tuo contubernio accedat*; *Adhuc illum pueritiae ratio intra contubernium tuum tenuit*; *Cupio te quoque sub idem tempus Campania tua remittat, ne quis cum in urbem rediero, contubernio nostro dies pereat*; and *Prisci nostri contubernium iucundum tibi futurum sciebam.*[101] Here, we see as well that *contubernium* has retained little of its original connection with the military, but the sense of companionship is still strongly represented.

Perhaps it is in the idea of cohabitation which defines both *contubernalis* and *contubernium*, even though their militaristic implications have been lost. Indeed, it is not implausible to think that Pliny once lived in the same space as some of his *contubernales*, especially if they were from the same home town and/or students together.[102] And one passage, in which Pliny describes the *contubernalis* of two distinguished figures, is illuminating in this regard: [Pompeius Falco] *Vivit cum Spurinna, vivit cum Antonino,*

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[99] *Epist*. II.14.7; I.19.3; X.94.1; I.12.12.
[100] In a legal sense, *contubernium* means a quasi-marriage between slaves. Thus *contubernalis* is found sometimes in epitaphs to indicate the significant other of a slave.
[101] *Epist*. II.17.29; III.3.3; V.14.9; VII.15.3. The other occurrences are IV.19.6; VII.24.3; X.94.1.
[102] This has larger ramifications for Fronto and his pupils, which is discussed in the next chapter.

quorum alteri adfinis, utrique contubernalis est.[103] But the fact that Falco was specified as their *contubernalis*, despite already mentioned as having lived with both, suggests that the relationship went beyond just cohabitation. *Contubernalis* designated a close companion, with whom both time and affection were shared.[104]

Familiaris

The usage of *familiaris* and its strict meaning in Pliny is not as easily identified as that of *contubernalis*. Unlike the latter, which is predominately a straightforward noun, *familiaris* can be used as an adverb, adjective, or substantive noun. This range of grammatical functions, employed by Pliny in all of its variations, renders it difficult to associate the word with a single person, and, for this reason, to isolate it as a word that denotes friend.[105] Nonetheless, because there is a limited number of occurrences of *familiaris* as a noun, and because its adjectival and adverbial forms both implicitly carry similar connotations to the nounal one, they too will be included in the present study.

As an adjective

Despite its originally adjectival form, it is worth noting that the instances of *familiaris* as an adjective are not many.[106] In *Epistle* VII.11, Pliny describes Corellia, the sister of Corellius Rufus, as very dear to his mother. The term employed here is the superlative form, *familiarissima*. *Epistle* VII.17.11 provides the second occurrence, where Pliny relates the response made by Pomponius Secundus, a tragedian, when a *familiarior amicus* criticized his works. Two other cases can be cited, both of which speak in general

[103] *Epist*. IV.27.5-6.
[104] Aristotle also wrote that spending time together was a requirement in friendships (*N.E.* VIII.6.1158a1-18).
[105] Because the adverbial form is always linked to a verb and not to an individual, a *familiaris*-type association must be assumed from the fact that this word is chosen in the first place. This is not as straightforward as the adjectival or nounal forms.
[106] Besides this use to indicate friendship, *familiaris* also occurs in the letters to denote a habitual or common situation, typically as *res familiaris*. See *Epist*. I.2.3, III.19.1, IV.1.3, IV.24.7, IX.28.4.

terms of Pliny's *familiares amici*: *Epistle* IX.34.1 sees Pliny wanting to give a reading to his 'personal friends', and in IX.37.1 Pliny understands that Valerius Paulinus would not want to inconvenience his 'personal friends' and hence feels excused from attending his inauguration into the consulship. Lastly, the designated consul, against whom Pliny would appear in his defence of Corellia, shares with Pliny a bond of *non plane familiaris sed tamen amicitia* in IV.17.2.[107] Since neither the *familiarior amicus* of Pomponius Secundus nor Pliny's literary *familiaribus amicis* are identified, nor does *familiaris amicitia* provide any indication of the individuals involved,[108] the relationship in only two of the five instances can be established: between that of Corellia and Pliny's mother, and between Pliny and Valerius Paulinus.

As the sister of Corellius Rufus, who was one of the most important senior supporters of Pliny in his early career, and whom both Syme and Sherwin-White place in the 'Pliny Country', it is no surprise that Corellia was an important figure to Pliny and his family.[109] What is not so clear, however, is whether the interest Corellius had in Pliny was a result of connections between Pliny's mother and their family, or vice-versa. Nevertheless, that there was a long history of association between the two families is beyond doubt,[110] and consequently, in light of the familial character of the term in question, it seems appropriate for Corellia to be described as *familiarissma* to Pliny's mother.

On the other hand, familial associations do not seem to be Pliny's basis of friendship with Valerius Paulinus. This man, the recipient of five missives, originates from

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[107] The *familiaris* here is taken to modify *amicitia*.
[108] The significance of this phrase will be considered later, where the discussion will focus on how *familiaris* fits into the bigger scheme of *amicitia* in Pliny's *Letters*. See p.93-94.
[109] Syme (1968), 714; Sherwin-White (1966), 111-112. For the relationship between Pliny and Corellius Rufus, see p.81-83. In addition to this letter, she also receives *Epist*. VII.14, which, like VII.11, deals with the discounted sale of land by Lake Como to her.
[110] It will also be noted that the daughter of Corellius Rufus, Corellia Hispulla, receives some attention in the *Letters*, namely, Pliny recommends a tutor for her son (III.3) and ventures to defend her in court (IV.7). Sherwin-White (1966, 415) believes that the friendship between Corellia, the sister, and Pliny's mother could be derived from the latter's association with Hispulla, the wife of Corellius. Although his argument for this is tentative at best, it does point to further connections between the two families.

Forum Julii in Narbonensis.[111] In terms of station, he is known from Pliny himself as a praetorian senator, and was later elected as suffect consul in 107.[112] In other words, a man close to Pliny in rank, but not as accomplished. Although the correspondence with Paulinus involves a variety of topics, it can generally be categorized as dealing with the concerns of Pliny's generation and class. In *Epistle* IV.16 we see Pliny declaring joyfully to Paulinus the respect oratory still holds and how crucial it is not to be discouraged by a poor audience; Pliny's indulgent treatment of his slaves take up V.19; IX.3 explains the hazards of laziness and conversely praises immortality as the ultimate reward for hard work; and in IX.37 Pliny speaks of possible ways to motivate his tenant farmers. Even though the didactic and sermonizing tone in these letters can make it seem as if the relationship between Pliny and Paulinus was formal at best, it should not be used as the sole indication of their friendship. Perhaps it is not that Pliny adopted this moralizing attitude with Paulinus because they were not on friendly terms, but rather that he believed Paulinus would benefit from his own experiences, since such were the very concerns of this class. Hence, Pliny considered it a duty to inform Paulinus of his behaviour and actions in these situations, and a sermonizing manner was assumed, as was appropriate to the occasion.

In any case, there are several indications of Pliny's familiarity with Paulinus. In *Epistle* II.2, the only letter in which Pliny does not take up the didactic tone, our author scolds Paulinus for not writing to him: it has been so long since Pliny last heard from Paulinus that he cannot help but worry and be angry – *illud enim nec di sinant, ut 'infirmior*'. The melodramatic way in which Pliny presents himself is a clear sign of how he wished his audience to perceive their relationship. Moreover, when Pliny wanted to

[111] The letters to him are II.2, IV.16, V.19, IX.3, and IX.37. See Sherwin-White (1966, 146) for his general background.
[112] In *Epist*. IV.9.20 Paulinus could not be speaking as a consul because he was only promoted to that position in IX.37 (Sherwin-White [1966], 279).

send his freedman to stay at Paulinus's estates in Forum Julii, the missive he sent was not a request for permission from Paulinus, but for him to write to his managers *ut illi* [the freedman] *villa, ut domus pateat, offerant etiam sumptibus eius, si quid opus erit*.[113] There is no talk of repayment, nor of obligations, and the only concession Pliny offers is that Paulinus would not have to look after the expenses of the journey. Presumably, since they were close enough to each other that Pliny knew his friend would assent, they could forego such formalities.

Eventually, Pliny did have a chance to reciprocate, when, upon Paulinus's death, he was named an heir and was given the responsibility over his friend's freedmen. Pliny then acted quickly to secure Roman citizenship from Trajan for three of the freedmen, with the intention of obtaining the same rights for the rest later. That Pliny was left an heir in the first place was probably because Paulinus knew Pliny could, and would, accomplish exactly that, honouring his friend's memory through patronage of his freedmen, which helps to explain why this task was not delegated to his son.[114]

Adverbial usages

Variations of the adverbial form *familiariter* receive slightly more use in the *Letters*. The eight instances are as follows: *Epistle* I.14.3 describes how Minicius Acilianus *me* [Pliny] *ut iuvenis iuvenem…familiarissime diligit*; Pliny claims that he loves Voconius Romanus *arte familiariterque* in II.13.5; VI.8.2 sees Pliny relating his affinity with Atilius Crescens, as anyone *qui alterutrum nostrum familiarius intuentur* could confirm; in VII.8.2 Pliny urges Priscus to [Saturninum] *quam familiarissime dilige*; *Calestrium Tironem*

[113] *Epist*. V.19.8.
[114] *Epist*. X.104 relates his death, which Sherwin-White dates to around 110 (1966, 760), as well as the request to Trajan. This was easily granted by the emperor in the following letter, who also promises to give the same to the rest. See also his notes on these two letters (714-715). Note Champlin's observation: 'the childless entrusted their memory to their friends' (1991, 144). Of course, in this case, Paulinus did have a child, but the task of keeping his memory alive was still assigned to a friend.

familiarissime diligo, explains Pliny to his wife's grandfather in VII.16.1; VII.24.2 shows Quadratus, the grandson of Ummidia Quadratilla, loved *familiarissime* by his mentor Pliny; in IX.19.5 Pliny boasts of how he was *familiariter…dilectus probatusque* by his own mentor, Verginius Rufus; and Pliny declares to Trajan that he loves Nymphidius Lupus *familiariter* in X.87.1.

The relationship Pliny had with Voconius Romanus has already been discussed, and it was concluded that the two shared a close association. Priscus and Saturninus had only been recently acquainted with each other, thanks to Pliny's efforts, and so the relationship between the two could not have been intimate. In any case, this occurrence of *familiarissime* here is an appeal by Pliny, and so is not indicative of the matter at hand. There is not much information to be obtained for Nymphidius Lupus, except what Pliny himself supplies: this man served as *praefectus* in a cohort while Pliny was tribune, and it was from this military association that their relationship began, which was only to grow into *amicitia* through the years. In fact, Lupus and Pliny became so close that the former was willing to give up retirement to accompany Pliny to his province. Notice that even in this letter of recommendation to Trajan, despite the obvious militaristic connotations, Lupus was not styled a *contubernalis*; also noteworthy is the fact that Pliny also comments Lupus acted *amicissime* towards him in coming out of retirement.

Minicius Acilianus receives only two mentions in the *Letters*, one recommending him as a potential husband to the daughter of Arulenus Rusticus, and the other relating to his untimely death.[115] In the first missive, Pliny speaks well of this praetorian senator from Brixia, who was only slightly younger than Pliny himself.[116] He comes from a respectable family, is quite well off, has already achieved the basic distinctions, and possesses a

[115] *Epist*. I.14.3-8; II.16.1.
[116] Sherwin-White (1966), 117, 752. He also puts him at about 35 years old at the time of writing, compared to Pliny's 36.

demeanour that befits a senator.[117] Although Pliny explains that the praise of Acilianus has in no way been exaggerated by his love for the young man, one cannot help but compare this impersonal depiction to the warm and affectionate one given to Voconius Romanus. There, Pliny talks about the delightful company of Romanus, who was gifted with a certain *suavitas* in the way he speaks, as well as *in ore ipso vultuque*; with Acilianus, however, there is no discussion about the delights Pliny shares in his company, he who is blessed only with a *facies liberalis, multo sanguine multo rubore suffusa.*[118] Perhaps this points not as much towards friendship as to desirable features of Roman bachelors; or it may be that Pliny was on friendlier terms with Priscus, to whom Pliny was recommending Romanus, than with Junius Mauricus, the recipient of this letter. Indeed, maybe the fact that Acilianus *formari a me* [Pliny] *et institui cupit* does reflect not well on him in the eyes of Mauricus, and that is why Pliny had to excuse his act of *indulsisse amori*.[119] Still, Pliny did receive an inheritance from Acilianus, and though this should point to some affinity between the two, for Acilianus to not have confirmed this in his will seems rather peculiar.[120]

Calestrius Tiro, though, does appear to be quite close to Pliny. Yet another praetorian senator, Tiro seems to have hailed from Picenum. The friendship between the two was derived, in Pliny's own words, from serving in the military together, and later shared the office of *quaestor Augusti*.[121] In addition, they visited each other often, and as a

[117] Sherwin-White suggests that Minicius Acilianus's father, Minicius Macrinus (1966, 118), might have had familial connections with Pliny, but I believe Pliny would have mentioned it himself if this were the case.
[118] *Epist*. II.13.5-6; I.14.8.
[119] *Epist*. I.14.4, 10.
[120] *Epist*. II.16.1. Here, a comparison between Valerius Paulinus and Minicius Acilianus can be made. They were both praetorian senators, and were treated by Pliny in a somewhat patronizing fashion. They both died a premature death, and Pliny was given an inheritance by each. Lastly, it is in describing how they perceived Pliny that the word *familiaris* occurs, not the other way around. That is, Pliny was *familiaris amicus* to Paulinus and loved *familiariter* by Acilianus, not vice-versa. For the concept of *amicus legato honoratus*, see Champlin (1991), 13.
[121] Sherwin-White: 'The emperor normally chose his commendati to be his personal quaestors. Little is known of their duties except that they read out the emperor's speeches or letters to the Senate' (1966, 419). Notice also how Tiro does not receive the *contubernalis* designation, despite their military connections.

result of this long association, Pliny loves Tiro, not just *familiarissime*, but *ut frater*.[122] It is no surprise, then, that we see Pliny asking for consolation from Tiro at the death of Corellius Rufus: it is not often that Pliny portrays himself as seriously distraught, and to have Tiro as the recipient of this important missive is no coincidence, for only a cherished friend can help in situations as these.[123] Tiro also receives a touching letter, depicting an emotional Pliny craving the company of his friend.[124] Similar to the epistle to Valerius Paulinus, this letter is also quite melodramatic in tone, but demonstrates nonetheless the fondness Pliny had for Tiro. And although in the two remaining letters to Tiro Pliny appears once again to have assumed a sermonizing attitude, just as the case with Paulinus, this can perhaps be understood as a sign of concern, which Pliny must have had for his relatively inexperienced friend, whom he regarded as a brother, more so than that of superiority and detachment.[125]

Not much can be found to specify the relationship between Pliny and his protégé, Ummidius Quadratus. Besides the letter already mentioned, an epistle to an unidentified Maximus places Quadratus next to Fuscus Salinator, both of whom regarded Pliny as their *rector* and *magister*.[126] Accordingly, the letters to them have Pliny playing the role of a mentor and relating various teachings and life experiences with the young men.[127] However, unlike Pliny's unconcealed affinity for Suetonius, another presumed protégé, if it

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[122] *Epist*. VII.16.1-2, VII.23.1. For the career of Tiro, see Sherwin-White (1966), 419-420. Also, Jones (1968b), 116 and Syme (1968), 723.
[123] *Epist*. I.12. See Hoffer (1999, 141-159) on an interesting discussion of Pliny's underlying purposes for writing this letter.
[124] *Epist*. VI.1.
[125] The missives are VI.22, about the hazards of trusting people too easily when one is a provincial governor, and IX.5, on the consequences of not preserving the class distinctions within the provinces. By the time of *Epist*. VI.22, Tiro had finally been allotted a proconsular province, Baetica. See also VIII.24, where Pliny offers advice to Maximus (not clearly identified) on how to govern the proud cities of Achaia without offending the citizens there. Pliny's affection compelled him to take up this tone, for which he apologizes later in the missive. It is also worth point out that Tiro was of the same age as Pliny, but for some reason did not manage to achieve the sort of success that Pliny did. It is entirely possible that the sermonizing attitude adopted in these missives is a reflection of Pliny's smugness. See Syme (1958), 82.
[126] *Epist*. VI.11.2.
[127] Missives to Quadratus include VI.29, about why Pliny chose one case over another, and IX.13, Pliny's speech on behalf of Helvidius; to Salinator are VII.9, on what sorts of literature the protégé should study, and IX.36 and IX.40, in which Pliny describes how he spends his days in Tuscany.

were not for the comment in question, there would be no firm indication that Pliny held Quadratus in any sort of friendship. Even as it is, *familiarissime* here does not seem to denote friend exactly, but is probably essentially equivalent to what Pliny says of Salinator in Epistle VI.26.1: *Amo quidem effuse (ita officiis ita reverentia meruit)*. In other words, in as much as they are Pliny's pupils, they are loved by and are dear to him in that capacity. Pliny welcomes their efforts at advancement and takes pride in their achievements, since everything they accomplish is a reflection on Pliny himself.[128] But *reverentia* is key: without due reverence to Pliny, the protégés can expect no such consideration from their mentor.

A similar case can be found with Julius Naso, yet another protégé of Pliny. This young man, even though he was the recipient of only one short and bland letter about Pliny's property at Laurentum, was held in high regard in his circle, with both our author and Tacitus canvassing for his quaestorship.[129] Amidst Pliny's attempt at gathering support, he explains to Minicius Fundanus why he believed Julius Naso was worthy of his vote. Besides having an excellent, though somewhat undistinguished, father, whom Pliny had not the opportunity to befriend due to their difference in age and his early death, Naso also took great pains to cultivate friends (*amici*) on whose support he could rely.[130] Amongst them is Pliny, whom Naso had singled out *ad morem imitationemque*, and this was carried out by accompanying his mentor at court and sharing in his literary pursuits. As a result, Pliny claims Naso has earned his attention through *longa…caritas.*[131] This sort

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[128] Riggsby remarks that this was one of Pliny's strategies of self-praising (1998, 88).
[129] *Epist*. IV.6 is the letter to him. *Epist*. VI.6 sees Pliny canvassing support, while in VI.9 Pliny responds to Tacitus's campaigning for the same protégé. Evidently, Naso was not even a senator at this time, and all this soliciting was to obtain for him the *latus clavus cum quaestura*. See Sherwin-White (1966), 362 and Syme (1968), 148-149.
[130] For the identification of Naso's father as Julius Secundus, the *ab epistulis* of Otho, and his connections with Tacitus, see Jones (1968a). Was Pliny purposely trying to suppress the identity of Naso's father here? Perhaps the fact that Julius Secundus was from Tres Gallia had something to do with it? It is more likely that Pliny was trying to highlight the familial relation he shared with Naso. For that, see p.76.
[131] *Epist* VI.6.5-6; 3. This last passage deserves to be quoted: *Meretur* [Naso] *hanc curam longa mei caritate. Est mihi cum illo non sane paterna amicitia (neque enim esse potuit per meam aetatem); solebat tamen*

of behaviour, most likely assumed by both Salinator and Quadratus as well, can undoubtedly be viewed, as Sherwin-White points out, as 'the technique of the social-political *amicita*', in which the younger generation would adopt a senior figure as patron to advance their careers.[132] In this sense, Saller would be correct to identify the embedding of the language of *amicitia* in a strictly patronage relationship. But is patronage necessarily the image Pliny wanted to convey?

Protégés and familial connotations

It has already been pointed out that Pliny portrays himself as primarily a mentor to his protégés. This, however, does not help in explaining Pliny's use of friendship vocabulary when these figures are referred to. Even though such terminology hints at friendship throughout the *Letters*, it is not entirely evident with each of the three instances that Pliny describes them as friends. What is emphasized, on the other hand, is the quasi-familial nature of Pliny's role in the lives of his protégés. Julius Naso was without a father, and had recently lost his brother,[133] whose influence would surely have helped when he began his venture into politics. Consequently, Pliny depicts himself as taking up the role and duties of this deceased brother, and effectively suggesting a familial connection with Naso. This passage, *nunc solus ante cum fratre, cuius nuper amissi ego suscipere partes, ego vicem debeo implere*, reveals clearly the type of relationship Pliny wants his audience,

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vixdum adulescentulo mihi pater eius cum magna laude monstrari. It is not clear how this warrants the translation given by Radice: 'I owe this to Naso in return for his long-standing regard for me, and *am bound to him by ties of friendship*; and, though difference in age made it impossible for me to a friend of his father, when I was a young man his father was pointed out for me to admire' (italics mine). The translation in Walsh is perhaps more suitable (2006, 136-137): 'Admittedly my friendship with him is not like that of a father, for my youthful age could not make that possible. But when I was barely in my teens, his father was signalled to me as an object of great praise'.

[132] Sherwin-White (1966), 363.

[133] Believed by all commentators to be Julius Avitus, whose death at sea is recorded in V.21.

including Minicius Fundanus, to ascribe to the two: from amongst *amici* Pliny is chosen to replace a brother.[134]

Similarly, Quadratus was most likely fatherless, revealed by the fact that Quadratus and his sister lived with their grandmother. Although Pliny does not expressly say that Quadratus has been figuratively adopted into his household, as was the case with Naso, *Epistle* VII.24, which describes the life and habits of Quadratus and his grandmother, shows Quadratus as someone who thoroughly obeyed the traditional family values. His respect for his grandmother was outstanding, his *pietas defuncta* brought joy to Pliny's heart, and he is eager to start a family himself.[135] This, in turn, aroused 'a sort of family affection among people in no way related to him', which undoubtedly included Pliny.[136]

As for Salinator, the situation becomes even clearer. In addition to congratulating Julius Servianus for selecting this praiseworthy protégé as his son-in-law, Pliny adds his hope that this senior statesman would soon be gifted with grandchildren, whom Pliny believes is also his to claim: *Quam felix tempus illud, quo mihi liberos illius nepotes tuos, ut meos vel liberos vel nepotes, ex vestro sinu sumere et quasi pari iure tenere continget!*[137] Perhaps such a claim can be interpreted as part of this celebratory dialogue, in which Pliny is eager to share the joys of grand-fatherhood with Servianus; but, nonetheless, it is not inconceivable that Pliny was being serious when he wished to view the children of his protégé as his own grandchildren. Instead, I suggest that this passage is an example of just how much a familial nature the mentor-protégé relationship could assume.[138] Indeed, if a

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[134] *Epist*. VI.6.6.
[135] *Epist*. VII.24.5; 8; 3. Quadratus was married at 24, and prayed for children. Admittedly, there is a double meaning in these words. Pliny probably meant to contrast Quadratus' appropriate behaviour with that of his grandmother, who, according to Pliny, indulged in activities not befitting her age and dignity. The point is that despite this, Quadratus still grew up to be a productive member of the citizenry.
[136] This is a difficult passage to translate: *…nec iis tantum, quos sanguine attingit, inter propinquos amandum* (VII.24.2). This is why I have given Radice's English translation, which I believe captures the essence quite well.
[137] *Epist*. VI.26.5.
[138] The recipient of this letter, Julius Servianus, was also on quite intimate terms with Pliny (See Sherwin-White [1966], 250, and Syme [1985c], 525-526). Thus this quote could be meant to show Pliny's close

mentor had taken an active interest in the life, habits and career of his protégés, as Pliny claims to have done, it is fitting that he also occupied a paternal – or if not that, at least a familial – position with the aspiring young men. Thus we see Pliny playing the role of an older brother to Julius Naso, becoming a quasi-father to Salinator, and loving Quadratus as a family member. And whilst the language of friendship is present, such as the use of *familiarissime* in the letter to Quadratus, it is mostly overshadowed by a more emphatic familial overtone.[139]

At this point, it may be worthwhile to digress slightly and give consideration to two of Pliny's other protégés, even though they do not form a part of the *familiaris* discussion. They are Junius Avitus and Sextus Erucius. The death of Avitus is recorded in *Epistle* VIII.23, which also describes his character and achievements. It appears that Avitus was in the early stages of his senatorial career when he passed away.[140] His situation is similar to Pliny's other protégés, in that he was recently married, was supported by Pliny in several elections, and regarded Pliny as *formator morum* and *quasi magister*.[141] He even assumed the senatorial stripe in Pliny's house. Though the missive itself sees Pliny in deep mourning for this young man, whose death has been a major source of *tormenta*, it is peculiar that there exists no special language of friendship or of familial bond with this individual. He is never referred to as an *amicus* nor did they associate *familiariter*. Nor does Pliny talk about sharing in his delightful company, he who is praised primarily for his 'industry and unassuming manner'.[142] In fact, Pliny never represents the death of Avitus as a personal loss, as was the case with his own mentor, Corellius Rufus. It may also be

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relationship with him instead. I do not believe, however, that it is mutually exclusive, but rather that Pliny's intention here was to indicate his intimacy with both men.

[139] A couple of things to note. First, it is unlikely that the *familiarissime* used with Quadratus is meant to reflect this quasi-familial bond, as the word does not appear in relation to the other protégés. See next page for a discussion on the potential consequences of this. Second, some other possible protégés of Pliny have been left out of this argument, mainly due to lack of information.

[140] Sherwin-White dates this to 108 (1966, 475), although Syme (1985b and 1985c) puts it a year later.

[141] VIII.23.2.

[142] VIII.23.5: *Qua industria qua modestia…*

significant that Pliny had not known about Avitus' illness until news of his death reached him. It does not appear that the two had kept in contact.

Sextus Erucius receives no letters, and is mentioned only once in *Epistle* II.9, a letter asking Domitius Apollinaris for support. It was Pliny himself who obtained senatorial rank for this young man, though once again friendship and quasi-familial relations have little impact in the course of the missive. Even when Pliny had considerable connections with his family, seeing that Gaius Septicius Clarus, the uncle of the young man in question, is the person to whom the entire corpus of the *Letters* is dedicated, and his father, Erucius Clarus, is the recipient of I.16, the language of friendship with the candidate himself is lacking. It must be admitted that every member of this family is said to adore Pliny,[143] who is suffering from anxiety *quasi pro me altero*, an expression typically found in philosophical treatises of friendship.[144] However, the appeals of this letter are based on those very anxieties, which are derived from Pliny's previous investment in the career of Sextus. That is to say, if Sextus were not elected as tribune, Pliny is afraid that the emperor would feel he had been tricked by Pliny's earlier recommendations of his protégé. Furthermore, the audience is led to believe that Pliny's actions are due to reciprocal obligations, a return for the love the *familia*, not specifically Sextus, bore him. Compare the grounds of appeal for Julius Naso, which, although it shares this same anxiety towards defeat, is full of familial sentiments.[145]

One possible explanation for this may lie in the age difference of the protégés: Quadratus and Salinator were not yet of age to assume entry into the senate, and Naso had only recently begun this long track, whereas both Avitus and Sextus had already obtained the initial positions. This could separate the two groups by four or five years, which could result in the difference in representation on Pliny's part. This explanation can perhaps also

[143] II.9.5: *Omnes me certatim et tamen aequaliter amant…*
[144] II.9.1. Aristotle, *N.E.* 1166a31-32; Cicero, *De Amicitia*, XXI.80; Plutarch, *On Having Many Friends*, 93e.
[145] *Epist*. VI.6.

be applied to how very differently Suetonius is portrayed. Indeed, of all his protégés, Suetonius appears to have been the closest to Pliny's age. Of course, personal relationship with Pliny must also have played a significant part, since not all of Pliny's protégés are described or treated in the same way.[146]

Mentors and familial connotations

On the other side of the spectrum, we have Pliny as the protégé to statesmen more senior and respected than himself. And it is with Verginius Rufus that another case of *familiariter* occurs. Since this passage is but a passing reference to the relationship Pliny had with his mentor – just to quote it again, *familiariter ab eo* [Verginius] *dilectus probatusque* – we must look towards *Epistle* II.1 to get a better idea. In this letter, Pliny describes in more detail the type of association the two men shared: at first it was that they came from neighbouring towns and whose properties were adjoined, and then Verginius was appointed Pliny's legal guardian at his father's death.[147] As such, Verginius was a firm supporter of Pliny's career, even though this meant coming out of retirement. He even delegated Pliny to appear on his behalf in front of the senate, to excuse him from assuming yet another onerous duty. Maybe it was because he was selected as the guardian of Pliny, and also had no son of his own, that he showed his charge *adfectus parentis*, which fits well with the passage above in establishing a sense of familial connection with Pliny.[148] For Pliny's part, the tone of the letters is respectful and full of admiration, admiration for what Verginius had done on his behalf, what Verginius himself had

[146] Still, more research can and should be done on this topic.
[147] *Epist*. II.1.8. For this man's interesting career, including two potential attempts at emperorship, see Sherwin-White (1966), 142-146.
[148] *Epist*. II.1.8-9.

achieved and what he had given up.[149] Pliny shows no pretence at friendship with this great individual, only gratitude that cannot be sufficiently repaid, and profound respect.[150]

Can this same attitude, however, be found when Pliny speaks of his other mentors? In other words, was the relationship based on respect with familial overtones, which seems to have been the case with Verginius Rufus, or did Pliny include friendship as part of his association with other senior statesmen? The second of Pliny's three political supporters was Corellius Rufus. The first thing one notices when comparing Corellius to Verginius is that the former receives much more attention in the *Letters*, with missives both to and relating to his entire family. The concern for what Hoffer describes as 'reciprocal obligations' for Corellius's patronage is something Pliny makes an effort to establish.[151] This again marks Corellius out from Verginius, who is shown only to have received Pliny's indignation at his unfinished grave, a task which, even though it would have been an appropriate opportunity to display his love and reciprocity for his deceased guardian, Pliny did not seem to have taken over and completed.[152]

Moreover, the terms of association between Pliny and Corellius appears to have been different as well. While a connection between Pliny's family and that of Corellius's has been suggested, it is nonetheless only a suggestion;[153] with Verginius, the familial relationship is undeniable, both from a legal point of view and from Pliny's own depiction. The sort of relationship Pliny had with Corellius, then, aside from the mentor/protégé aspect, is described as one of friendship. Indeed, Pliny takes every available opportunity to

[149] For a more in depth examination, see Syme (1991e).
[150] It is somewhat odd that, despite portraying himself as almost a son to Verginius Rufus, Pliny was not responsible for erecting his guardian's tomb. *Epist*. VI.10 expresses his outrage at how the tomb was left unfinished, nine years after his death. It is in this letter that the phrase *tam rara in amicitiis fides* occurs, the only allusion to friendship when speaking about Rufus, but I do not believe this is in reference to Pliny himself. Rather, it is a criticism of the person who failed to complete Rufus's tomb. Even his later adoption by Pliny the Elder, which delegated legal responsibility of Pliny from Rufus to his uncle, is not a sufficient excuse for Pliny's lack of concern.
[151] Hoffer (1999), 147. See p.69 and n.110 for the reciprocated services.
[152] Perhaps Verginius's appearance in the *Letters* was Pliny's method of showing reciprocity, but even so, this pales in comparison to all that Pliny had done for Corellius and his family.
[153] See p.69.

reaffirm his *amicitia* with his mentor to the audience: when Pliny went to visit him in his sickbed, his servants and wife left the room, *quotiens intrasset fidelior amicus*; his wife believed only Pliny could have dissuaded him from committing passive suicide; despite Pliny's youth Corellius showed to him *reverentia ut aequali*; and upon his death, he felt confident that he had left a friend for his daughter in Pliny.[154] As Hoffer points out, to Pliny, even this sort of mourning is 'a sign of close and loyal friendship'.[155] It may also be significant for Pliny to have specifically related how he did not consult Corellius in the matter of obtaining justice for the family of Helvidius:[156] indeed, the relationship of patronage involves 'the imposition of values' by the patron onto the client, and in breaking out of this mould Pliny was effectively announcing his relative independence and position of equality to the audience.[157]

This, however, should not be taken to mean that protégés were often held in such regard by their mentors. On the contrary, Pliny's close association with Corellius is the exception that proves the rule, because it was only with Corellius that we find Pliny employing this type of language.[158] As discussed above, even when Pliny played the role of mentor himself, his association with his protégés was missing this very atmosphere of *amicitia*. Only Pliny could have achieved this, by virtue of being Pliny. In fact, it seems that Pliny hesitated even to claim this much, as is indicated by *audebo dicere*, an attempt to tone down the shock value.[159] And when declaring that he did not need the advice of Corellius concerning actions on behalf of Helvidius, Pliny made sure to give enough justification for this behaviour, whilst constantly acknowledging the superior abilities of

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[154] *Epist*. I.12.7; 9; IV.17.6; 9.
[155] Hoffer (1999), 149. See *Epist*. IX.9 for Pliny's thoughts on the matter.
[156] *Epist*. IX.13.6.
[157] Paine (1969), 517-518. See also Burton (2003), 347-348.
[158] As for the relationship between Pliny and his third mentor, Julius Frontinus, not much can be established. He is said to have supported Pliny in his bid for a priesthood, and the only other significant reference to him is in a comparison to Verginius Rufus, in which Pliny states that he admired Verginius more (*Epist*. VI.8.3, IX.19).
[159] *Epist*. IV.17.6, right where he said he was given the same respect as an equal by Corellius.

his mentor, so as not to offend his readers. Indeed, it is obvious that Pliny did not lose sight of the fact that he was a protégé: he might have used the *amicus* once to describe Corellius, but the latter was certainly more important to him as *testis rector magistrum*, *suffragator… deductor… comes* and *consiliator.*[160]

Familiaris as a noun

After much groundwork, we come to *familiaris* as a substantive noun. Disappointingly, the cases of this are not many either, and, as with the nature of substantive nouns in general, sometimes they are indistinguishable from proper adjectives. Nonetheless, they still warrant a closer inspection. The cases for these are: in I.19.1, Pliny reveals that the father of Romatius Firmus was a *familiaris* to his family; in II.6.1, the famous letter about proper dinner behaviour, the host of the party is described as *homo minime familiaris*; VI.29.1 sees the famous Thrasea as a *familiaris* of Avidius Quietus; and VI.30.5 speaks of Rufus being the *familiaris* of Pliny's grandfather-in-law's son.

Aside from the father of Romatius Firmus being a long-time associate to Pliny's parents, which has received comment earlier, no relationship that is described by Pliny as *familiaris* in the form of a substantive noun can be determined. The references are either too obscure, or the association between these people and Pliny is not represented. This, however, does speak against connecting *familiaris* with the familial sense of the word. Even though we have no way of knowing whether Rufus was in any way related to his

[160] *Epist*. I.12.10; IV.17.6. It is interesting to see the drastic difference in the portrayal of Pliny's relationship with his two mentors. Could age have something to do with it? Verginius Rufus was slightly older than Corellius, and perhaps that greater gap in age meant friendship could not be achieved, a factor which many modern sociologists point out (see p.28 n.99). It could also have to do with the political agenda inherent in Pliny's *Letters* themselves (an idea spawned from Hoffer's thesis). Certainly, Verginius was a senior and well respected politician, but the height of his fame was before and during Vespasian's reign. Corellius was famous for his virtue and steadfastness during the reign of Domitian, and thus earned himself a place in Nerva's circle. For Pliny's political purposes, Corelllius would have been a better choice with whom to depict a close and intimate association.

grandfather-in-law's son, or similarly with Thrasea and Avidius Quietus, the fact that Pliny did not elaborate on them suggests this was not so.

Familiaris and *amicitia*

After this exhaustive survey of *familiaris* and its grammatical variations in Pliny, it seems hard to state, as definitively as Sherwin-White does, that it meant a close friend, to be distinguished from a mere *amicus*. Linguistically and logically speaking, if it is used in the form of *familiaris amicus*, it should therefore indicate a closer type of association. But since this occurs so rarely in Pliny, and in only one instance that can be determined with any accuracy, even when modifying *amicus*, *familiaris* as an adjective remains obscure.[161] As an adverb, it is also quite inconclusive. Although modern sociologists speak of the adverbial term 'friendly' as indicative of a friendly relationship, to be distinguished from the actual state of friendship, in Pliny's depiction of his association with certain figures, i.e. Calestrius Tiro and Voconius Romanus, *familiariter* does denote something quite intimate.[162] Still, a close relationship with Minicius Acilianus is more doubtful. Lastly, as a noun, *familiaris* itself cannot be used to establish the degree of relations.

The noun *familiaritas* also receives some attention in the *Letters*. On the whole, it appears to be a synonym of *amicitia*. For example: *Idem Cornelium Tacitum - scis quem virum - arta familiaritate complexus est* (IV.15.1); *quae societas amicitiarum artissima nos familiaritate coniunxit* (V.14.4); *Nam cum familiaritatem nostram, ut soles praedicare, ad praesidium ornamentumque tibi sumpseris* (VI.18.2); *hoc enim et arcana familiaritas et querendi de eo, quem sic amasset, necessitas indicabatur* (VI.22.3). The *arta familiaritas* is probably equivalent to the *arte familiariterque* found above,[163] only in a different grammatical usage. For the other cases, the possibility exists that they are meant to denote

[161] It should also be noted that *familiaris* (*amicitia*) occurs only once as well.
[162] See Kurth (1970).
[163] *Epist*. II.13.5.

something more intimate than *amicitia*, but the lack of evidence denies us a positive account.

In this context, it may also prove profitable to examine Pliny's relationship with his colleague, Cornutus Tertullus. This figure, who shared in Pliny's post at the treasury and consulship, and who later succeeded Pliny as the legate of Bithynia-Pontis, is mentioned several times in the course of the *Letters* and is the recipient of two direct missives.[164] In addition to their long standing association, Pliny says that they both shared a core group of friends, what he calls a *societas amicorum*,[165] amongst whom the most significant was probably Corellius Rufus.[166] Because of this, he is joined to Tertullus by *artissima familiaritas*, and could not be more pleased to hear about this man's promotion as the *curator Viae Aemiliae*.[167]

The close affinity between Pliny and Tertullus is even more pronounced when we consider *Epistle* VII.21, Pliny's reply to an original sent by Tertullus enquiring after his health. There are several things of interest in this missive, interesting since they occur so rarely in the entire collection: firstly, Tertullus receives a direct address, as *collega carissime*;[168] secondly, Pliny actually makes mention of a personal health issue; and thirdly, Pliny is seen as the recipient of a gift from Tertullus, a plump pullet. But more than just an intimate associate, Pliny also regarded Tertullus as a *magister* and *parens*, to whom was owed respect and reverence not only because his seniority but also because of his wisdom and experience.[169] In Tertullus, then, we discover someone who crosses the boundary between a mentor and a friend. Once again, age may have had an impact on how Pliny

[164] He receives mention in *Epist*. II.11.19, II.12.2; IV.17.8; V.14; IX.13.15, and the letters to him are VII.21 and VII.31. See Jones (1968), 118.
[165] *Epist*. V.14.4.
[166] *Epist*. IV.17.9.
[167] Especially since Pliny had attained a similar promotion before his colleague. Pliny is noticeably smug about this (*Epist*. V.14).
[168] Only twice: once here, and once in *Epist*. III.10.1, to Spurrina (Jones [1991], 151).
[169] V.14.5.

viewed their relationship: Tertullus was senior enough to earn Pliny's deference, but not too old to share in a friendship.

Otherwise, the use of *familiaris* to reflect its familial roots also seems somewhat coincidental. Whether Pliny meant deliberately to express familial relations with Quadratus, Corellia and Verginius Rufus in the way I have suggested by using this word is uncertain. The argument, however, may be against it, since the *familiaris* terminology sees no occurrence in reference to his other protégés. On the other hand, the *familiarissime* used to describe Calestrius Tiro must in some way reflect the later *ut frater*. So too the *artissima familiaritas* recalls Pliny's statement that Cornutus Tertullus was as a *magister* and *parens* to him. One aspect not yet explored is the comparative and superlative forms of *familiaris*. Once again, logic and language use dictate that they should differ somewhat from just *familiaris*, and thus represent a closer association, but the lack of evidence prevents a definitive conclusion. This then really brings into question the validity of Sherwin-White's statement, and the grounds for his argument.

Amicus

A search on the instances of *amicus* and its grammatical variations in Pliny turns up no fewer than 112 cases. The majority of these employ the word to refer to 'friends' in a general capacity. Statements such as *Erant sane plerique amici*, *Hortaris ut orationem amicis pluribus recitem*, *iunctaque ei cotidiana amicorumque cenatio* and *ac primum amicis tum mihi scriberem*, in which it is impossible to identify the exact people involved, occur frequently.[170] Certainly, from this perspective it is easy to understand why Sherwin-White would have made the claim that *amicus* meant simply an acquaintance, since with such general usage it is hard to find the personal nuance needed to differentiate between an

[170] *Epist*. I.13.5; II.19.1; V.6.21; VIII.21.3.

acquaintance and a friend. Still, this is not to say that there are no instances of *amicus* being used to designate a personal friend. In fact, as will be demonstrated, *amicus*, in a similar fashion to that of *familiaris*, is employed to indicate associations of various levels.

The spectrum of intimacy

Firstly, and appearing for the third time in the course of this discussion on vocabulary, we have Voconius Romanus. Looking back to *Epistle* II.13.6, we observe that Romanus is the standard by which Pliny measured all his friends: *Quid enim illo aut fidelius amico aut sodale iucundius*, Pliny asks. This could, yet again, be nothing more than literary convention, part of the tradition of commendation letters in which the person in question is shown to be as intimate as possible with the *commendator* – the one truly important criterion. But, it is striking that no one else is given this much esteem. If all that mattered to Pliny was to present a close relationship in a letter of recommendation, with no concern for his actual sentiments, then we should expect similar accounts, ones loaded with the vocabulary of friendship, in other missives of this type. This, of course, is not the case. Romanus conspicuously stands out as the only person to have received such an affectionate account.[171] At any rate, Romanus had all the basic necessities to qualify him for office, descent from a line of equestrians and experience from a local magistracy,

[171] As far as I am aware, no other recipients of the *Letters* are described with more than one word for friend. For instance, Suetonius is called *contubernalis* in *Epist*. I.24.1, and has been taken into Pliny's *contubernium* in X.94.1. The translation may be different, but the root word remains the same. I take the expression *familiaris amicus* as a single unit of description, not that the individual concerned was both a *familiaris* and an *amicus*, and so it does not pertain to the present discussion. Two exceptions may be argued for. The first is Romatius Firmus, who is told to be mindful of the *beneficium amici* (*Epist*. I.19.4), though this can be seen as a general reference to the generosity of a friend, not specifically the generosity of your friend, Pliny. The second is Lupus, whom Pliny loved *familiariter* and who joined Pliny's entourage *amicissime* in Bithynia-Pontus (*Epist*. X.87.1-2), but since these occur in the same letter, it is possible Pliny just wanted to vary his vocabulary.

which Pliny could well have emphasized instead of the intimate association they shared.[172] This simply reiterates Pliny's regard for Romanus, as a cherished friend.[173]

Of the other instances of *amici* that can be properly identified are Titius Aristo, Maturus Arrianus, the philosopher Artemidorus, Julius Servianus, the poet Martial, Trebonius Rufinus, Vibius Severus, Minicius Fundanus, Atilius Scaurus, Varenus Rufus, Pompeius Saturninus, Priscus, Cornelius Minicianus, Minicius Macrinus, Passennus Paulus and Nymphidius Lupus.[174] There is no need to go through in detail what types of association each had with Pliny, but we can note how some of these characters figure on the spectrum of intimacy. Even though they are all termed *amici*, some obviously had closer relations than others with our author.[175]

Towards the less intimate side of the spectrum can probably be placed individuals such as Passennus Paulus and Varenus Rufus. The first of these receives no letters at all, but appears as the protagonist in two missives, one of which deals with his abilities as a poet and his unsuccessful reception at a reading, the other with his illness and the anxiety caused to Pliny on his behalf.[176] Although Pliny portrays himself as genuinely concerned for the health of this poet from the equestrian class,[177] the tension that was supposed to have been built up by Pliny's anxiety is quickly dissipated when the audience finds out that Passennus has actually recovered at the time of writing. Then, upon closer inspection of the letter itself, one gets the impression that Pliny is more worried about the loss of a literary talent than a friend: he ends this letter with *Gratulare mihi, gratulare etim litteris*

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[172] *Epist*. II.13.4
[173] See also X.4.1 and X.4.6, where *contubernalis* and *amicus* are used respectively in reference to Romanus.
[174] *Epist*. I.22.9; III.2.1; III.11; III.17.3; III.21.6; IV.22.1; IV.28.2; V.16.3; VI.25.1; VII.6.3; VII.7.1; VII.22.1; VIII.5.3; IX.22.3; X.87.2. For the political purposes of Pliny's alleged friendship with Artemidorus and the famous seven victims of Domitian, see Shelton, (1987). Also, White (1975) and (1978) provide insight into the relationship between Pliny and Martial. For Lupus, see p.72 and 87 n.171.
[175] Instead of categorizing this section into the three grammatical forms of *amicus*, I have grouped them all together because of the relatively infrequent use of the adjectival and adverbial forms. Furthermore, I take it that when Pliny chose to use these variations, he intended to conjure up to his audience its root word and meaning.
[176] *Epist*. VI.15; IX.22.
[177] Sherwin-White (1966), 754.

ipsis, quae ex periculo eius tantum discrimen adierunt, quantum ex salute gloriae consequentur.[178]

This is certainly not the attitude, nor indeed the same Pliny, found in *Epistle* I.22, where he describes the sickness of Titius Aristo, yet another *amicus*. The detailed account of how Pliny accompanied his friend at his sickbed and of the latter's courageous decision to take his life should he not recover makes a much more heartfelt story than one in which the protagonist has already recovered. Nor does it compare well to *Epistle* VIII.16, in which Pliny seeks consolation for his sick slaves. Granted, the circumstances of two letters differ greatly, but the letter that apparently describes Passennus' illness seems to lack the sincerity that Pliny usually displays.[179] Consider also the earlier missive involving Passennus, in which Pliny relates how Passennus was humiliated by his *amicissimus* at his own poetry reading. Even if Pliny did try to moralize the situation, the fact remains that this was a *mirifica res*, a humorous event that he did not hesitate in forwarding to Romanus and later publish. One is left to wonder in what regard Pliny truly held this *amicus*.

Like Passennus, Varenus Rufus had no direct correspondence with Pliny. Instead, he is known, through Pliny's letters, as the man who was requested by the Bithynians to prosecute Julius Bassus on the charge of extortion, a task which, for some reason, he turned down, then was selected as the proconsul of Bithynia, and finally was brought before the court to be charged with the same crime by the same people.[180] Pliny acted as his defence, and, since there has been no mention of him before, nor did Pliny offer any hint of friendship upon his introduction into the *Letters*,[181] presumably this was where his

[178] It is possible to take Pliny's remarks here as a compliment on the abilities of his literary friend, but the impersonal attitude between the description here and those presented in other similar letters (see paragraphs to follow) is nonetheless evident.
[179] This can perhaps be attributed to the inferior quality of Book IX, in which the usual standard, both thematic and temporal, are lacking. Sherwin-White suggests that Book IX may have contained the letters rejected in earlier publications (1966, 49-50). Against this, see Murgia (1985).
[180] See *Epist*. V.20, VI.5, VI.13, VII.6 and VII.10 for the proceedings of the trial.
[181] Note how Trebonius Rufinus is described in his first and only appearance: *vir egregius nobisque amicus*.

association with Varenus began.[182] The missives sent by Pliny documenting the course of the proceedings remain on a professional level, with him recording the speeches given by both sides and the reactions of the court. It is therefore all the more surprising to see Pliny referring to himself as *amicus* to this man, even more so because Varenus himself figures little in these letters, turning up here and there to receive sympathy for the abuse he was receiving, sympathy that was based primarily on Pliny's role as a concerned defence attorney. Indeed, Pliny did not even take up this case for purposes of friendship, but was delegated the position by the senate.[183]

Yet, when one takes into account the context in which *amicus* is used, that is, Pliny acted *tantum ut amicus* at this point of the trial instead of the lawyer because this would demonstrate that his client should not actually be on trial at all, the situation becomes clear. As a friend, Pliny was able to remain silent, whereas if he had acted as the defence council, he would be obliged to give advice and respond to accusations. There was no other word to better demonstrate the contrast between someone he was defending and someone who should not need defending. Thus *amicus* in this case does not mean a friend *per se*, but rather a convenient term in a peculiar situation.

But another interpretation is available to us, one which is based on the turn of phrase employed by Pliny. *Adsistebam Vareno iam tantum ut amicus et tacere decreveram* is the passage in question. It is entirely possible that the *amicus* here is not meant to be a specific reference to their friendship, but rather a description of how Pliny chose to behave. That is, he stood by Varenus 'only as a friend would' and kept silent, instead of 'only in the capacity of a friend and not a lawyer'. The *tantum ut* here is ambiguous. Again, the lack of friendship terminology and of proper description of his relationship with this man both suggest that Pliny did not engage in direct *amicitia* with him. The only other

[182] Though they must have been somewhat acquainted, through contact in the senate.
[183] *Epist*. VII.6.3. See p.54-55.

indicator of their supposed friendship is in Pliny's use of *meus* in an earlier letter, but that has already been dismissed.[184] Still, maybe the ambiguity in both references was intentional, meaning that Pliny himself did not want the audience to realize the exact nature of their relationship. Both *tantum ut amicus* and *meus* can denote many things.

On the other hand, Minicius Fundanus most certainly was a close intimate of Pliny's. Four missives, two of which are letters of recommendation, to this Transpadane senator, the suffect consul of 107 and a legionary legate, are included in Pliny's collection.[185] In addition, a letter to their mutual acquaintance records the death of his daughter and an urgent plea for proper consolation.[186] Even though nowhere does Pliny elaborate on the details of their relationship, i.e. perhaps that they shared a post together or that they came from similar regions, which they might have done,[187] it is quite evident that Fundanus was an important figure in Pliny's circle. As a political ally, a source from which Pliny could draw support and favours, Fundanus was invaluable. For example, when Fundanus was the candidate for the consulship, Pliny enthusiastically proposed Asinius Bassus, a promising young man with a noteworthy lineage,[188] as his *quaestor*. And when the other letter of recommendation, that for Julius Naso, is put under examination, we can see what an unreasonable request Pliny makes of his *amicus*: *Abrumpe si qua te retinent*, come aid my cause, support the same candidate as I and exert your influence so that your friends do the same, Pliny implores.[189]

This does not mean, however, that the association between them was purely political. The concern for Fundanus' well-being and an anxious desire to share in his grief

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[184] See p.54-55.
[185] Sherwin-White (1966), 752; Syme (1985a), 449. The letters are I.9, IV.15, VI.6 and VII.12, though on the last of this series Sherwin-White expresses some doubts about the identity of the recipient. He suggests the possibility of Cornelius Minicianus (1966, 416), an equestrian who was also an *amicus* of Pliny (see VII.22.1). This is rejected by Syme, who maintains the validity of the manuscript (1991c, 605). Jones agrees (1968, 117). See also Syme's article for a prosopographical approach to the career of Fundanus.
[186] *Epist*. V.16. See p.55-56.
[187] Sherwin-White (1966), 752.
[188] Even Tacitus could vouch for his father's excellence, Pliny claims (IV.15.1).
[189] *Epist*. VI.6.9.

upon the death of his daughter, as well as the emotional eulogy that makes up this letter, all point to a genuinely intimate relationship. Moreover, the light-hearted manner with which Pliny phrased *Epistle* VII.12 and the confession therein of sharing everything in common also adds to the picture of familiarity.[190] Thus Pliny knew that in both requests Fundanus would oblige, because such were not beyond the limits of friendship. Indeed, in addition to a recommendation letter, *Epistle* IV.15 also serves as a congratulatory note, in which Pliny expresses his pleasure at potentially having the interests of the two people dear to him advanced. Furthermore, the pressing and anxious tone of the letter concerning Julius Naso also demonstrates in what confidence Pliny held his friend.

A Case for *Amicitia*

So far, the treatment of Pliny's many friendships has been based on Sherwin-White's somewhat offhand statement, which succinctly imposed a type of relation onto each of the words Pliny used to designate friend. But, after a detailed examination, this does not seem to hold true. Certainly, Pliny appears to have been close with all of his *contubernales*, and they in turn can be understood as intimates in the full sense of the word. But the levels of association with the people described as *familiaris* and *amicus* are harder to pinpoint. Some *familiares*, like Valerius Paulus, Calestrius Tiro, and even Corellia, are given accounts so as to indicate a close affinity with the author. Under the same category, we have the likes of Minicius Acilianus, Pliny's relationship with whom seems to be lacking that degree of intimacy found elsewhere. It is also clear that friendship is the last thing on Pliny's mind when he speaks of his respected mentor, Verginius Rufus, even if Pliny was *familiariter ab eo dilectus probatusque*.

[190] The theme of friends sharing everything is commonly found in classical literature, from Aristotle to Cicero. This is the only occurrence of it in Pliny, however. And with Pliny being the conscientious writer that he was, to see this statement here and nowhere else is equally striking.

A similar situation presents itself in the cases of *amici*. While we have Passennus Paulus and Varenus Rufus to support Sherwin-White's claim that they were mere acquaintances, Minicius Fundanus is there to contradict. Although it can be argued that Fundanus is an exception, the lack of information we have on the others in this category prevents a definitive conclusion. Still, the personal relationship Pliny claims to have shared with Artemidorus and Martial, regardless of its validity, indicates exactly the way in which Pliny did not wish his audience to understand his use of *amicus* as just acquaintances. On the contrary, if we believe that the inclusion of these two figures in the *Letters* formed an integral part of Pliny's overall programme, then the *amicitia* expressed in these very missives must have contributed to the image Pliny was trying to paint. At any rate, there is no indication in the *Letters* themselves that shows *familiaris* denoted a more intimate association than *amicus*. We have no way of gauging whether Fundanus was in reality closer to Pliny than Tiro, or vice-versa. What we can say is that there are more cases of *familiaris* being employed to refer to specific individuals, whereas *amicus* is commonly found in the plural to designate a group of unidentified friends.[191] Though this does suggest that the term *amicus* serves a more general purpose in the *Letters*, it is not confirmation enough to justify Sherwin-White's assertion.

I agree, however, with Sherwin-White in his belief that Pliny regarded his friends in different capacities. The statement made by Pliny himself, *est…mihi cum isto…non plane familiaris sed tamen amicitia*, is proof that Pliny divided his friendships into those that were intimate and those that were not, and acted accordingly to each.[192] Thus, when placed in the context of this letter, we see that the designated consul, Gaius Caecilius, ranked below Corellia, the daughter of Corellius, on this scale. Pliny's four *contubernales* most likely figured highly as well. This is further evidenced by Pliny's description of

[191] Only two occurrences of general *familiares amici*: *Epist*. IX.34.1 and IX.37.1.
[192] *Epist*. IV.17.2.

Calvisius Rufus, who was Pliny's *contubernalis*, but only an *amicus* to Sosius Senecio.[193] The difficulty arises again when we compare *amici* to *familiares*. Just because the expression *familiaris* (with *amicitia* understood) is used here by Pliny should not indicate that *familiares* were indeed more intimate than *amici*, as Sherwin-White suggests. If another reference is considered, *homo minime familiaris*, we note that the same expression is used, but what Pliny wishes to reveal with this is that he was barely acquainted with the man in question.[194] Is he saying that this man, even though he was *minime familiaris*, was still an *amicus*? Highly improbable. Perhaps the difference lies in that of *non plane* and *minime*: could it be that someone who shared with Pliny *non plane familiaris* (*amicitia*) was an *amicus*, while a *minime familiaris* was not? If this really were the case, then why did Pliny not describe Caecilius as an *amicus*, instead of taking this indirect way to say the same thing? Besides, it would certainly be erroneous to consider Artemidorus and Minicius Fundanus as people Pliny did not include in his *familiaris amicitia*.

Furthermore, what are we to do about Voconius Romanus, who was described by all three expressions?[195] Definitely an exception, but it is absurd to think that Pliny would want to convey extra-intimacy by heaping terms of friendship on top of each other, especially if *amicus* and *familiaris* had their own gradations. And the relative consistency of the terms used to describe and to relate to the various characters of the *Letters*, or, from another perspective, the lack of intermixing of the vocabulary, implies that Pliny wanted to be specific with his definitions.[196] Once again, Voconius Romanus presents an exception to this uniformity. I suggest we regard this as a case of reiterating, not strengthening, their friendship: Voconius Romanus was simply that intimate with Pliny.

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[193] *Epist*. IV.3.1.
[194] *Epist*. II.6.1. The man in question is the host who divided his guests according to rank.
[195] Or four, if we wish to include *sodalis* (*Epist*. II.13.6).
[196] To reiterate, I take *familiaris amicus* as a single unit of description.

Maybe a different approach is needed. Rather than looking at this separation and categorization of friends in Pliny's *Letters*, perhaps we should consider instead the inclusive nature of *amicitia*. The line quoted above, *non plane familiaris sed tamen amicitia*, is indicative not only of Pliny's gradation of friends, but also that all these gradations were part of his relationship of *amicitia*. Although this chapter has concentrated on the three words that specifically meant friend, other vocabulary of friendship permeates throughout this corpus. Active verbs that were designed to conjure up images of affectionate interactions, words such as *diligo* and *amo*, pertain to most of the letters examined thus far. The language of debt and gratitude, which are invaluable in Roman friendship, can also be found in reference to people of all three categories.[197] In this sense, all of his *amici*, *familiares* and *contubernales* were embraced by Pliny as friends.

Regardless of Pliny's sincerity, of how he actually felt towards these individuals, of how these individuals felt towards him, and of how he apparently divided them according to intimacy, the fact is that Pliny wanted his audience to regard them as all playing a part in his world of friendship. Furthermore, there are also individuals who have remained hitherto unmentioned because they did not appear alongside these three words used to designate friend, but nevertheless seem to have shared close relations with Pliny. Individuals such as Domitius Apollinaris and Atilius Crescens are of this type.[198] Why Pliny neglected to use one of the three precise words in reference to these people, especially in the case of Crescens, whom Pliny had loved since youth and the intimacy

[197] For the importance of obligations and *gratia* in Roman friendship and society, one only needs to consider Seneca's long treatise, *De Beneficiis*.

[198] Domitius Apollinaris, a consular senator and patron of Martial, whom Sherwin-White identifies as a warm friend, is the recipient of only two letters (1966, 157). The first is a request for his support in getting Erucius Clarus elected, which betrays a similar tone of anxiety as that found with Minicius Fundanus, and the other is a letter describing Pliny's villa in Tuscany, which was written in response to Domitius' initial concern towards Pliny's health (*Epist*. II.9; V.6). See also Syme (1991b). Surprisingly, Atilius Crescens receives no letters, but is only known, through several references, as a poor yet witty scholar from the Transpadane region, who was also acquainted with Fundanus and one of the several unidentified Maximi (*Epist*. I.9.8; II.14.2; VI.8.1, and Sherwin-White [1966], 740).

with whom anyone they knew could confirm, is difficult to tell.[199] But it is undeniable that the language used in the exchanges with, or involving these figures, is also filled with that of friendship, and as such should not be dismissed.

A Case for Patronage?

At this point, it should be admitted that the usage of these terminologies by Pliny does in some respects reflect the hierarchical stratification of Roman society. For instance, it is an undeniable fact that all of the *contubernales* were equestrians, each of whom received forms of patronage from Pliny, whereas most of the *familiares* appear to be junior senators. The *amici* as a group are harder to pinpoint, but certainly with figures such as Minicius Fundanus, Julius Servianus and perhaps the unidentified Priscus, a case can be made for the term *amicus* to mean the politically powerful.[200] Corellius, Pliny's cherished patron, was similarly labelled, and even some of the *amici* who were not consulars had their own share of political influence.[201] Conversely, Atilius Crescens, who was not even an equestrian, was not described with any of these terms, although it is obvious that they were in a state of *amicitia*. From this, can it be argued that Pliny's designations of *amicitia* actually exposed patronage relationships, instead of friendship? That is to say, was Pliny the patron to the lowly equestrian *contubernales*, the patron/mentor of his *familiares*, and did he recognize only the *amici* as his equals?

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[199] *Epist*. VI.8.2. See p.58-60.

[200] Julius Servianus was an elderly senator who obtained for Pliny the *ius trium liberorum* and was also the father-in-law of Pliny's protégé, Salinator (*Epist*. X.2.1; VI.26. Sherwin-White [1966], 386). A powerful supporter of Trajan, he later married the sister of Hadrian (Syme [1985c], 525, noted above; also Naso [1968], 121). All three of the possible Prisci were prominent consular senators, and so exact identification is not required for the present treatment.

[201] See Minicius Macrinus, the elderly equestrian who was offered senatorial status by Vespasian (*Epist*. I.14.5; Sherwin-White [1966], 118-119). That is, if the letter in which the term occurs, *Epist*. VIII.5, was actually addressed to this person; Sherwin-White has some reservations (1966, 452).

Contubernales and equestrian status

While it is true that all of these arguments are in some senses valid, if we look at the bigger picture, however, we can see that they do not hold up to scrutiny. Certainly, Pliny's four *contubernales* were equestrians, but what about the others of the same rank found in the *Letters*? Maturus Arrianus, a literary friend from Altinum and the subject of a recommendation letter to Vibius Maximus, was an equestrian who figures in the *Letters* as an *amicus*.[202] Pompeius Saturnius, an advocate of the equestrian order, is described along with Priscus as Pliny's *amicissimi*.[203] Cornelius Minicianus, a wealthy equestrian from Bergamum, is the *amicus fidelissimus* of *Epistle* VII.12.[204] The influential Titinius Capito, who served as an imperial secretary to Domitian, Nerva and Trajan, and who later became *praefectus vigilum*, was also an equestrian, though no hint of friendship can be found between him and Pliny.[205]

As the list goes on, it becomes increasingly obvious that *contubernalis* does not simply denote people of the equestrian order. Furthermore, some equestrians are *amici*, some are described by the encompassing words of *amo*, *diligere* and *amicitia*, and some are not even that.[206] Moreover, if *contubernalis* was meant to denote the equestrians that received some form of patronage from Pliny, we observe once again the case of Maturus Arrianus, the *amicus* commended to Priscus. Therefore, the only reasonable explanation for distinguishing his *contubernales* is, as has been reiterated throughout this chapter, to emphasize the intimacy of the relationship between them and Pliny. And unless one were to argue that Pliny used this word to define specifically not just his close friends, but close

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[202] *Epist*. III.2. In the letter addressed to him there are no special indications for a particularly close relationship, but in the letter of reference Pliny explains at length his fondness for Arrianus. There may be more issues involved, however. Syme claims that Arrianus was fairly old, and preferred to remain an equestrian (1985d, 436-437), although this is somewhat contradicted by Pliny's description of how he felt it was his duty to secure for Arrianus an advancement. See also Jones (1968), 113.
[203] *Epist*. VII.7.1
[204] Sherwin-White (1966), 238.
[205] Syme (1985a), 469. Their relationship seems to have been purely on a professional/literary level. See *Epist*. I.17 and V.8, the latter of which is the only letter addressed to him.
[206] It is noteworthy that no equestrians are marked out by *familiaris*.

equestrian friends, there is absolutely no evidence to justify identifying *contubernalis* as a term for patronage. In any case, this is too convoluted an argument of linguistic use.

Class issues within the *familiares*

As for Pliny's *familiares*, it is true that the three people most easily identified were praetorian senators, which means they were all slightly lower in status than Pliny.[207] But one must wonder why it was necessary for him to designate a special term so as to classify people who were essentially only one rank below him. And the single obvious act of patronage occurs just with Minicius Acilianus, whose familiarity with Pliny has already been called into question. Pliny's behaviour with the rest remains friendly, albeit somewhat didactic, though not without reason. This notwithstanding, other figures in this category should also be considered, figures such as Ummidius Quadratus and Verginius Rufus.

Perhaps the term *familiaris* represented people of the same class, that is, senators, but of different prestige. Thus, as Pliny was loved *familiariter* by his senior, Verginius, he too loves Quadratus, his protégé, *familiarissime*. But as we demonstrated earlier, there was no need for Pliny to hide his relationship with his protégés under the guise of friendship,[208] since the emphasis of their association is portrayed on more of a familial basis rather than that of *amicitia*. The term *familiaris* does not even appear in relation to any other protégés, but the idea that Pliny was their mentor is constantly stressed. The same happened in the reverse direction: Verginius Rufus is seen as the guardian figure instead of a *superior amicus*. The one exception is perhaps Corellius Rufus, a possible explanation for which can be found in Pliny's political programme. Still, even if Pliny did try to depict a relationship of *amicitia* with Corellius, it is effectively balanced, if not overshadowed, by

[207] Valerius Paulinus, Minicius Acilianus and Calestrius Tiro.
[208] Saller: 'It must be admitted, however, that the typical word for a junior aristocratic associate and others further down the social ladder was *amicus*' (1989, 57).

his role as Pliny's political supporter. In any case, it is absurd to think that Pliny had hierarchical purposes in mind when he describes Corellia as *familiarissima* to his mother.

Amici as equals?

There is no doubt that some *amici* of Pliny were influential figures of the time. The prominent status of Minicius Fundanus, Julius Servianus, Minicius Macrinus, Varenus Rufus and each of the three Prisci has already received comment. So too can Titius Aristo be added to this list, who, even though he was not a senator, stood very close to the proximity of power as the legal consultant of Trajan.[209] On the other hand, not all of Pliny's *amici* were leading citizens. Passennus Paulus, the equestrian poet, and Artemidorus, the virtuous philosopher, both had no political authority to speak of. Nor, as it seems, did Pompeius Saturninus. And Nymphidius Lupus, the former *primipilaris* who came out of retirement to join Pliny in Pontus-Bithynia, probably had even less *auctoritas* to his credit. Yet all of these were Pliny's *amici*.

And if Pliny did want to mark out the rich and the powerful with the term *amicus*, why did he neglect to do so with some of the leading figures of the time? Domitius Apollinaris, whose role in both the senate and Pliny's *Letters* was comparable to that of Minicius Fundanus, is not graced with the title. Neither is Cornutus Tertullus, who was also a close acquaintance of Corellius Rufus, a colleague of Pliny in his post at the Treasury and joined to Pliny by *artissima familiaritas.*[210] The prefect of Egypt, Vibius Maximus, to whom Pliny recommended Maturus Arrianus, is also left out.[211] Lastly, the famous historian Tacitus is conspicuously missing as well. Thus, upon closer inspection, it

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[209] Sherwin-White (1966), 759-760. He is the recipient of two letters (*Epist*. V.3 and VIII.14), in the first of which Pliny defends his pursuit of poetry, and in the second we find Pliny consulting him on matters of legal procedure. Pliny's concern over his sickness is also found in *Epist*. I.22.

[210] See p.85-86.

[211] *Epist*. III.2. Maximus is only said to love Pliny as Arrianus did. Refer to White (1973), who argues against identifying the Vibius Maximus of Pliny's letters with the ones found in Martial and Statius Compare Sherwin-White (1966, 761) and Syme (1985a, 444).

appears that the term *amicus* cannot denote the influential exclusively. In fact, the evidence suggests otherwise, in that many of the prominent citizens are often not even included in this category, and some of those who are were not prominent at all.

Amicitia and Patronage

Therefore, in light of the discussion so far, the traditional view of Roman friendship, namely, that it can only be found and understood as such between people of the same status, whereas the *amicitia* between those of unequal rank was meant to disguise the inherent hierarchy, cannot be maintained.[212] If we accept that it is the *contubernales*, all of whom were of much lower social status than Pliny, who are the ones described as the most intimate, such a statement clearly cannot be valid. Of course, it can be argued that this was an attempt on Pliny's part to obscure the disparity in their respective social ranks, but even this is ignoring much of the evidence. The fact is, Pliny never tries to hide his acts of patronage. Rather, he delights in reporting his good deeds to the audience. Part of this, as per Saller, has to do with Pliny showing 'the pride which [he] took in securing imperial *beneficia*'.[213] But if Roman society was so conscious of their social hierarchy and was constantly trying to relieve the tension caused thereby with the language of friendship, why did there exist this contrast in mentality of a patron boasting about his *beneficia*?

Furthermore, it is not as if Pliny really did obscure the status of his *contubernales*: the audience, his correspondents, the contemporary readers of his work and students of Roman history were and are all well aware – indeed, made aware – that Voconius

[212] Saller again: '[patronage] must be asymmetrical, in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status…a quality which sets patronage off from friendship between equals' (1982, 1), and 'Where the term *amicus* occurs with respect to a friendship between men known to be of unequal status, we can assume a patronage relationship' (15). See also Verboven (2002, 62), in which he argues that 'What ultimately determined whether one qualified as a client was the inability to return favours of equal importance as the ones received'. Even though he does admit that 'Roman patronage can and should be described as a lop-sided *amicitia*', I still maintain that in the Roman perspective the strict understanding of the patron/client relationship is sharply differentiated from *amicitia*.

[213] Saller (1982), 76. Arguably, not just imperial *beneficia*, but *beneficia* in general. Saller finishes this sentence with "for protégés," but since I do not believe this is the case, I did not include it.

Romanus and Romatius Firmus were equestrians. In the case of Firmus, we are even told that it was Pliny who allowed him to become an equestrian in the first place. Was Pliny not sensitive to this convention, or did he not care about preserving the dignity of this, dare we say, client? Both scenarios are difficult to accept. Is it really so implausible to believe that genuine friendship could, and did, exist between people of different ranks? Must it always be a patron/client relationship that characterizes the association between these people? Pliny must have believed otherwise. These *contubernales* of his, despite their lower stations, were nonetheless intimate friends.

The situation with his *familiares* and *amici* is similar. More often than not, we are informed as to the rank of the person in question by Pliny himself. Valerius Paulus and Minicius Acilianus, the two praetorian senators, are cases in point. The sermonizing tone Pliny adopts with Valerius Paulus and Calestrius Tiro betrays not only the concern for his inexperienced friends, but also his dedication to the social order. Pliny's protégés are protégés, and his mentors are, for the most part, mentors. Pliny does not mistake them for friends, not unless he wants to portray their association otherwise, as is exemplified by Suetonius. Maturus Arrianus is explained as an equestrian *amicus* who could not achieve advancement, and that Nymphidius Lupus was not even an equestrian is duly noted. Trebonius Rufinus, a magistrate of Vienna, remains just that,[214] and Artemidorus the philosopher and Atilius Crescens the poor scholar are given no higher statuses. Thus Pliny was attentive to the hierarchies of his world, and made no effort to obscure the social positions of his correspondents. If anything, he adhered to it almost out of principle. The advice he gives to Tiro is especially telling: *quod eum modum tenes ut discrimina ordinum*

[214] *Epist*. IV.22.1, the only mention of him.

dignitatumque custodias; quae si confusa turbata permixta sunt, nihil est ipsa aequalitate inaequalius.[215]

An objection can be raised here: perhaps the issue is not that Pliny did not indicate the status of his friends, but that he represented them as friends regardless. Even though we are conscious of how every correspondent in Pliny fits into the social hierarchy at Rome of the time, largely through his own efforts, the point is that Pliny tried to create a sense of equality with his vocabulary of *amicitia*. Because words such as *amicitia*, *amo* and *diligo* infuse the entire corpus of the *Letters*, and, as has been argued in this very chapter, should be considered as representing holistically this relationship of friendship, this in itself confirms how diffused *amicitia* actually was. It is inconceivable that Pliny loved everyone equally, despite the question of rank, as his letters have him claim.

And yet, according to the reference quoted above, Pliny argues for the exact opposite: it is sheer folly to mask inequality with a superficial equality. A keenness for maintaining class and rank is what inspires admiration and love, while this pretence of *aequalitas* results in *sinisteritatis atque etiam malignitatis fama*.[216] Furthermore, in the famous letters in which Pliny refers to the *amicitiae superiores* and *minores*,[217] he is inherently acknowledging that rank, status and wealth all mattered. But it should be remembered this is simply an acknowledgement, that this individual had friends across the spectrum, not condoning the act of separating friends according to the social hierarchy.[218] Indeed, that the host of the dinner party in II.6 had friends in gradation (*nam gradatim amicos habet*) is deserving of serious criticism. The point here is that while consideration for class and status is important, it should not affect the treatment of associates on a

[215] *Epist*. IX.5.3: '…when I meant to congratulate you on the way in which you preserve the distinctions of class and rank: once these are thrown into confusion and destroyed, nothing is more unequal than the resultant "equality"'.
[216] *Epist*. IX.5.2.
[217] *Epist*. II.6, VII.3.
[218] Against Saller (1982, 12), who reads this as Pliny accepting 'the hierarchical classification of friends'.

personal level.[219] When guests are invited as equals, they should be treated as equals, even people as far down the ladder as freedmen: *convictores enim tunc, non libertos puto*.[220] So when Pliny engaged in *amicitia*, his friends are thought of as friends first and foremost, even if they were lower down the social order.

In any case, it is not as if Pliny did treat and care for everyone uniformly. We have seen the hierarchy of intimacy that forms his relationships.[221] We have also seen how his friendships embraced people of all ranks, guided by that selfsame scale of intimacy. When considered together, the evidence suggests that *amicitia* in Pliny's *Letters* should be recognized not as a mask by which he obscured the realities of patronage, but as an encompassing relationship which was capable of transcending the strict social hierarchy of the Roman world.

The Value of *Amicitia*

Once this line of argument has been accepted, it is time we revisited some of the so-called acts of patronage in Pliny's *Letters* and understood them instead as exercises in friendship. For instance, we can reinterpret Pliny's intervention on behalf of Suetonius in the latter's desire to purchase land as more than simply patronage.[222] As Hoffer contends, it is entirely possible that Pliny's involvement was not even required in this instance. Indeed, nowhere is it stated that Suetonius had not enough money to buy the land himself, nor is it ever made clear whether Suetonius approached Pliny for help. Furthermore, '[if] the estate is endowed with so many features, the fair price may be the price he would get

[219] This is very much in line with Cicero's attitude (see p.32-33).
[220] *Epist*. II.6.4.
[221] A sense of gradation can be noted with *amo* and *diligo* as well: *Quis enim illum* [Crescens] *spectatior paulo aut non novit aut non amat? Hunc ego non ut multi, sed artissime diligo* (*Epist*. VI.8.1). Also with an unspecified Maximus, who makes his appearance later in the same letter (VI.8.4): *Maximus noster, quem et ipse amo, sed coniunctius tu.* Notice how Pliny qualifies the *amo* and *diligo* to indicate this.
[222] *Epist*. I.24.

without Pliny's intervention'.[223] But Pliny did intervene, asking the correspondent of this letter to discuss the matter with the current owner of the property, his *amicus*, so that Suetonius could make the purchase without feeling cheated. The question is why Pliny involved himself. Was it for him to boast of his own influence? Perhaps it was so that he could '[buy] Suetonius' indebtedness at the cost of a debt to Hispanus, [which] reinforces his superiority over Suetonius'.[224] In order words, patronage of Suetonius played a major part in Pliny's involvement,[225] and the publication of this letter serves to display the difference in status of the two people.

But can we not see this event through the prism of friendship instead? With Pliny's mediation, he has effectively created a series of links between the four people involved: Suetonius is indebted to Pliny, Pliny to Baebius Hispanus, and Baebius to his *amicus*.[226] This link, of course, is not entirely linear, in that Suetonius is ultimately networked to both Baebius Hispanus and the latter's *amicus*; this would connect Pliny to the *amicus* of Baebius as well. Thus, especially if this intervention was unsolicited and unnecessary in the first place, what was originally a straightforward economic transaction has become a situation in which all parties concerned now have a larger pool of people with whom they are acquainted and to whom they are indebted. This results in more people from whom to draw support and favours and more people on whom to bestow benefits. The beginnings of a reciprocal relation, which may or may not develop later into friendship, have been established. Thus, Pliny saw his intervention neither as an act of patronage nor as simple concern for his friend, but as a way of enlarging Suetonius' group of contacts, his network

[223] Hoffer (1999), 224.
[224] Hoffer (1999), 223.
[225] '…helping a lesser protégé become established in the cardinal activities of aristocratic life' (Hoffer [1999], 224).
[226] See *Epist*. III.8.1, where Suetonius has transferred the position of military tribune to his relative. Pliny describes clearly the link in action: *…petis ut tribunatum, quem a Neratio Marcello clarissimo viro impetravi tibi, in Caesennium Silvanum propinquum tuum transferam*. It must be noted, however, that a slight sense of annoyance can be detected in this letter.

which he could later call upon for his own purposes.[227] In this sense, Pliny has indeed introduced his friend into the 'cardinal activities of aristocratic life'.

This is further demonstrated by several of the commendation letters Pliny wrote on behalf of his friends, the focus that runs through all of which is an interest in expanding network relations. When Pliny asks of Priscus to delegate a position for Voconius Romanus, the important thing, he says, is not the post itself, but for Priscus to extend his *amicitia* to Romanus. The whole of this letter, Pliny continues, was to show 'that he is worthy of it and even of your closest intimacy'.[228] If we accept that this is more than Pliny just utilizing idioms common to recommendation letters,[229] we can see that Pliny's aim was to create a bond between the two individuals, a relationship of friendship that would be much more beneficial for both parties in the long run than just an official post.[230]

A similar situation can be found when Pliny presented Claudius Pollio to his associate, Cornutus Tertullus.[231] There is no need to describe again Pliny's standing with Tertullus, but a few words should be said in respect to Pollio. This equestrian officer served with Pliny in Syria, where Pliny found his diligent approach to administrative conduct refreshing, and later was an assistant to Corellius Rufus. He has since then retired, but nonetheless remains active with his literary pursuits, among which includes writing a tribute to a senatorial friend, Annius Bassus.[232] Why Pollio was actively seeking the friendship of Tertullus is unknown, and the fact that there was nothing specific requested

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[227] 'The importance of *amicitia* goes beyond the level of dyadic relations. Each tie between two *amici*…receives its full significance only within the larger social network of personal relations surrounding both *amici*. Thus it is not necessarily any particular *amicitia* that determines a person's creditworthiness, but the entire network of friends, family and relatives that looms behind him' (Verboven [2002], 346).
[228] *Epist*. II.13.10: *cuius esse eum usque ad intimam familiaritatem capacem quo magis scires*.
[229] It must be admitted that on several occasions Pliny urges his correspondents to give affection to the people he put forward. Hence *Epist*. IV.15.12 to Minicius Fundanus, *tu dilige illum ut quaestorem*. Also IV.27.5 to Pompeius Falco about a young poet, Sentius Augurinus, *ama iuvenem.*
[230] See Verboven (2002), 319-322.
[231] *Epist*. VII.31.
[232] See Sherwin-White (1966), 443. Also *ILS* 1418.

of any of the three parties involved is also puzzling.[233] What we do know, and Sherwin-White agrees, is that Pollio wanted to be admitted into Tertullus' circle of friends as an *amicus familiarior*,[234] and Pliny once more acted as the mediator. Could Pliny have been a patron to this equestrian? And was this a case of Pollio enquiring after yet another patron? Although Saller has argued for the very probable phenomenon of having more than a single patron at one time,[235] it is unlikely that even he would condone this sort of behaviour, of having one patron presenting his client to another.[236] What could not be achieved in terms of patronage, however, was possible through friendship. Pliny could very legitimately introduce this one friend to another, in the understanding that material benefits and reciprocity were involved.[237]

The case with Pompeius Saturninus, Priscus and Pliny is almost identical, except that the account we are given is one after the fact. In other words, the introductions had occurred, and some form of reciprocation also seems to have taken place.[238] This network of friends has been extended, and Pliny himself is satisfied with the outcome. Once again, the difference in rank between Pompeius Saturninus and Priscus was not an issue, because it was a matter of *amicitia*, not patronage. And lastly, in a letter recommending Maturus Arrianus, Pliny makes an interesting comment to Vibius Maximus: not only did Maturus not ask for Pliny to petition on his behalf, he did not even know about the request, and might not even want the position should he get it.[239] Such a remark must surely be unfavourable towards achieving a positive result – so why did Pliny do it? Again, because

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[233] Although as Cotton has remarked, this is conventional practice (1981, 5-6). However, see *Epist*. IV.15, in which Pliny asks Minicius Fundanus to give Asinius Bassus a quaestorship, and VII.12, where Pliny specifies a military tribunate from Pompeius Falco.
[234] Sherwin-White (1966), 441.
[235] Saller (1989), 53-57.
[236] Verboven remarks that vocabulary which imply 'handing over', *tradere* or *de manu…in manum*, suggest patronage (2002, 291-292). None of these missives in Pliny utilizes such vocabulary.
[237] *…ac sic ama tamquam gratiam referas. Neque enim obligandus sed remunerandus est in amoris officio, qui prior coepit* (*Epist*. VII.31.7).
[238] *Epist*. VII.7, VII.8, VII.15. See Saller (1982), 25.
[239] *Epist*. III.2.5: *Itaque magni aestimo dignitati eius aliquid adstruere inopinantis nescientis, immo etiam fortasse nolentis*.

the original appeal might have been unsolicited, we can perhaps regard this as Pliny wanting to increase the network capabilities of an *amicus* by introducing him to an influential individual, as part of the bid to increase Maturus' social position. Knowing the right people was important in Pliny's society, and he wanted to ensure that his friends had the proper connections as well.

This is not to say, however, that instances of patronage are not to be found in Pliny. On the contrary, when Pliny obtains for Voconius Romanus and Suetonius their *ius trium liberorum*, it cannot be anything but patronage, an exchange in what is typically termed 'symbolic capital'.[240] In these cases, it is clear that Pliny wanted to express his close relationship with the emperor through mediating resources and power to his friends,[241] and it is also clear that Pliny had no intentions of creating any direct bonds between them and the emperor. Such an act could jeopardize Pliny's privileged position, which was something he would never risk.

But, even though they were instances of patronage, there is no reason to believe that Pliny saw himself as a patron to these *contubernales* and his *contubernales* as anything less than friends. It is much more consistent to accept that such actions could and did occur within *amicitia*, but this in itself did not define patronage relationships. In other words, although acts of patronage formed an integral part of Roman friendship, the understanding of *amicitia* went beyond patronage itself. Friendship involved a personal element, which is characterized by common interests, shared time and company, and language imbued with affection. Alternatively, if we turn our attention to *Epistle* VI.32, a letter addressed to an otherwise unknown Quintilianus, in which Pliny offers 50,000 sesterces to help with his daughter's wedding, there is nothing that suggests *amicitia*

[240] Hoffer describes this concept as such: '…the intangible benefits in gratitude and prestige that are gained by donating one's wealth or labour…Symbolic capital is the glue that holds the patronage system together, that makes it more than worthwhile for the patron to give 'generously' to the client' (1999, 11).
[241] Saller (1982), 77. See also Wadrill-Hadrill (1989b), *passim*.

existed between the two men.[242] Although Pliny describes himself as *parens alter* and confers the gift to *puella nostra*, we are reminded of the familial type of relationship Pliny shared with his protégés. There, the position of Pliny as a patron is made plain, even if a degree of intimacy is implied. The same case can be made here, and it is probably no coincidence that in this epistle where patronage can be readily detected Pliny neglected to incorporate concepts of friendship.

Final Comments

Thus, even when we examined with a critical mind and keen eye for instances of patronage hidden within the vocabulary of friendship, as Saller invites us to do, we come away not with the satisfaction of having ripped through Pliny's generous and egalitarian façade to find what no Roman author wanted us to find, namely, the realities of their social construct. Instead, we discover that Pliny's *Letters* are full of the exercise of *amicitia*. Pliny's patronage of his friends undoubtedly did occur, but they are presented as part of this process which is recognized and appreciated as friendship. If we were to understand every occurrence of patronage in Pliny's *Letters* as indicative of that same relationship, regardless of the obvious emphasis on *amicitia* placed thereupon, then the Roman world which we might have reconstructed would surely not be the one described in Pliny's works.[243] On the other hand, once we acknowledge that Pliny was very aware of his personal connection to his correspondents, and presented them accordingly in his corpus of letters, the many issues surrounding Roman friendship can be resolved. *Amicitia* comes to

[242] *Epist*. VI.32.
[243] Take *Epist*. VII.25 as an example. In this missive, Pliny relates how rewarding it was to visit an equestrian acquaintance of his, as he was genuinely surprised at the level of learning this *rusticus* had attained. Scholars have often discussed the morning *salutatio* by clients to their rich patrons as an important feature of patronage (Saller [1982], 11). How would they regard this situation, in which a patron (or simply someone of a higher status like Pliny) paid a visit to a client (or an equestrian acquaintance)?

the fore, a type of friendship that functioned within the framework of Roman social hierarchy, and yet remained unhindered by it.

The question we should consider now is what benefit would there have been for Pliny to emphasize his friendship with, for example, junior senators, four seemingly unimportant equestrians, or people who were not even ranked. How do we explain the presence of letters that apparently had no intrinsic substance, but functioned merely as 'epistolary greeting card[s]'?[244] And, in general, how does friendship fit in with the overall programme of Pliny's publications? Of course, since there is no single solution to the problem of Pliny's self-fashioning and of the purpose the *Letters* were trying to achieve, there can also be no single answer to the role of *amicitia* therein. This does not mean, though, that friendship cannot be incorporated into the debate.

For instance, if Pliny was trying to establish an autobiography of sorts, one in which he would depict himself in the best light possible, it is easy to see how essential a part *amicitia* played in his self-presentation. In this sense, his success as a public and private figure is due in large part to having such virtuous friends as he did.[245] Similarly, if the *Letters* were part of the attempt at self-monumentalization, the proper exercise of friendship is acknowledged throughout as fundamental to the entire process. If Pliny's goal was to seek approval from his peers through the publication of his works, then his affirmative attitude towards friendship must have contributed substantially to a positive reception.[246] Or, if Pliny intended for his *Letters* to serve as a guidebook of proper behaviour,[247] the lesson to be learned here is that friendship figured as the most valuable relationship to the people of his class and beyond. In all these scenarios, it is evident that *amicitia* was an important concept to Pliny's mentality and overall purpose. And, the only

[244] Sherwin-White (1966), 111. Letters such as *Epist*. I.11, II.2, III.17, VIII.2, etc.
[245] *Epist*. IV.24.5: *profuerunt nobis bonorum amicitiae, bonorum obfuerunt iterumque prosunt*.
[246] See p.46-48.
[247] Veyne (1990), 9; Griffin (1999), 151; Griffin (2003), 103.

reasonable explanation for Pliny's many 'epistolary greeting cards', in the context of the programme of his *Letters*, is that they served to advertise the affection and concern Pliny had for his friends.

Ultimately, what is the point to all this? Why was it so important for Pliny to place value on the relationship of *amicitia* and to give it the sort of depiction as argued for in the course of this chapter? Part of the answer, I suggest, is to be found in the practical nature of friendship in Roman society. To be sure, the majority of ancient philosophers defend the idea that friendship ought to be a purely affective experience, and that the practical side of it should only be a consequence of the association.[248] Pliny, however, was not a philosopher. He has long recognized that *amicitia* was useful as a relationship because it encouraged friendly interaction between people who would otherwise be unacquainted, which in turn opened up channels of opportunity for everyone involved.[249] The importance of networking in the Roman world cannot be overstated, and *amicitia* was the primary mechanism through which this was achieved. Seen in this fashion, *amicitia* provided the bond which held Pliny's society together, something which Pliny was all too eager to perpetuate. Furthermore, the concept of *amicitia* also came with an established set of rules and conventions, which Pliny endeavoured both to observe, to set an example for his audience, and to establish, for the benefit of his audience. This made the process of networking much easier to accomplish, since there were already procedures in place to facilitate and encourage the formation of friendships.

But more than just networking capabilities, *amicitia* was important because it meant that the participants of the relationship were acknowledged as 'friends'. And friends looked out for each other's interests, however that is defined. The idea is neatly summed

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[248] See p.172.

[249] *Epist*. VI.18.2: *Nam cum familiaritatem nostram, ut soles praedicare, ad praesidium ornamentumque tibi sumpseris, nihil est quod negare debeam, praesertim pro patria petenti. Quid enim precibus aut honestius piis aut efficacius amantis?*

up by an exclamation to Maturus Arrianus: *et alioqui quid praestant sodales, si convenient voluptatis suae causa? Delicatus ac similis ignoto est, qui amici librum bonum mavult audire quam facere*.[250] Friends will help each other unto greatness,[251] Pliny implies, and that is the true value of *amicitia*.

[250] *Epist*. VIII.21.5: 'Besides, what is the good of having friends if they meet only for their own amusement? It is the dilettante and indifferent listener who would rather listen to a good book by his friend instead of helping to make it so'.
[251] For Aristotle, greatness means a virtuous life (see Stern-Gillet [1995]), whereas for Pliny, greatness equates to immortality. This idea is also well represented in Cicero's *De Amicitia*.

Chapter 2
Amicitia in the *Correspondence* of Marcus Cornelius Fronto

Approximately two generations have passed since Pliny the Younger wrote and published his collection of letters. In the interim years between the death of Pliny and the letters left by the protagonist of this chapter, Marcus Cornelius Fronto, much has occurred to change the face of society at the imperial court. Politically speaking, these past thirty years saw the reign of the scholar-emperor, Hadrian. Often hailed as an intellectual, with a strong inclination towards literature, art and Greek culture in general, and whose extensive travels brought him all over his empire, Hadrian proved himself to be a capable and efficient ruler.[1] His many building programmes in Greece and Asia Minor are well documented by Pausanias; the 80-mile wall erected across northern Britain remains a popular attraction;[2] and his Pantheon in Rome still stands as a reflection of his vision of the glory of the Roman people.

Despite his passionate approach to the governance of the Empire, however, Hadrian was not uniformly popular: the suspicious circumstances under which he assumed power placed his authority in question from the very beginning of his reign;[3] his subsequent travels meant that he was often away from Rome, the capital of the Empire proper, and, perhaps more importantly, the seat of the senate;[4] there was much talk of scandalous behaviour in Hadrian's private life;[5] and the conspiracies which surrounded his own succession, conspiracies that led to the death of senators and other prominent figures of the time, proved to be the final memories Hadrian gave to his people.[6]

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[1] See Danziger and Purcell (2005); Birley (1966), 10-17.
[2] See Birley (1997), 123-141.
[3] Birley (1966), 9; (1997), 75-80.
[4] For an account of Hadrian's extensive travels and building programmes, see Birley (1997).
[5] Danziger and Purcell (2005), 216-217; Birley (1997), 247-249.
[6] Fronto himself talks about how he not so much loved Hadrian as respected him, in comparison to the profound love he shared with Pius (*Ad M. Caes.*, II.1). See Champlin (1980), 94-96; Birley (1997), 281.

Culturally speaking, this was about the time when the Second Sophistic started to influence the tastes of Roman society. Of course, it would be impossible to expound in this short space available the ideals and practices that drove the Second Sophistic. Nonetheless, it is worth commenting that, as Champlin remarks, Fronto certainly was not above the effects of this movement.[7] Fronto's 'obsession' with eloquence, for the absolute need to decorate any piece of writing with the choicest of words and to phrase those words as effectively as possible, was the fundamental basis of his education, of his educational methods, and of the way he approached oratory.[8] In turn, this very same obsession made Fronto the authority on Latin language: the only other extensive source we have on Fronto, Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, not only depicts the former's unending quest to search out and utilize archaic, pure, vocabulary, but also places him in the centre of many learned discussions on Latin terminologies.[9]

Even though Swain does not like to think that Fronto actively partook of the Second Sophistic, as he does not see an 'obvious link in the western Empire between a thriving civic culture and a distinctive form of language and literature, as there is in the Greek East',[10] surely Fronto's attempts at archaizing were perfectly in accord with the spirit of the movement. Furthermore, Champlin rightly argues that it was almost impossible for Fronto to have avoided the consequences thereof: his many contacts in Greece and his own knowledge of Greek and its culture, not to say anything of a man whose 'sole purpose was the pursuit of learning', ensured that he was well acquainted with the erudition of the time – 'Whether inspired to imitate or to repel, Fronto could not have escaped the Greek literary world'.[11]

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[7] Champlin (1980), 57-59.
[8] See Champlin (1980), ch.3. Bowman (1982) agrees.
[9] See also *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.4.2. Fronto is also mentioned in Galen, but not in detail.
[10] Swain (2004), 11-12.
[11] Champlin (1980), 58-59.

Therefore, it was during this time and in this political/cultural environment that Fronto made his mark amongst the elites of Rome, where he rose to prominence through the practice of advocacy.[12] And this, when coupled with his reputation for literary excellence, undoubtedly brought him to the attention of the emperor and his court. What remains for us to ask now is how all of this affected the experience of friendship in Fronto's society. Did the concept of *amicitia*, the virtue of friendship that was so important in the *Letters* of Pliny the Younger, maintain the same role it had two generations ago? Do patronage and hierarchical issues in a new political and cultural setting distort the portrayal of *amicitia* found in the previous chapter? In short, what is friendship to Fronto and how was it exercised in his circle? But before that examination can begin, a few more words need to be said about the nature of Fronto's work and the caution that must be exercised in its use.

Problems and Caveats

Lack of secondary literature

The first matter that needs to be addressed is why Fronto was chosen for this study. An easy answer would be that there is a definite lack of secondary material concerning our tutor to the emperors.[13] Much of the modern scholarship on Fronto concentrates on his role as the leading orator of his age, and hence is interested primarily in the state of the rhetorical process found in his letters.[14] Consequently, the value of these epistles left by Fronto as sources for social history, as observations on life in the Antonine era, gets neglected.[15] One of the most recent study to be published is Van den Hout's *A*

[12] An anecdote (Dio 69.18.3-4), which Champlin dates to the 120's, has Fronto greeting the praetorian prefect of Hadrian. This suggests that Fronto had already achieved "supremacy at the bar" by that time (Champlin [1980], 138).
[13] Haines (1920) gives a very basic introduction to the life of Fronto.
[14] Some more recent examples: Soverini (1994), Ronnick (1997) and Wesolowska (2000).
[15] Champlin (1980), 2-3.

Commentary on the Letters of Marcus Cornelus Fronto – truly a tour-de-force in terms of academic achievement, and indispensable to any student of the subject, with its collections of all previous commentary and useful prosopographical data on people involved, it nonetheless remains just that, a commentary.[16]

The one true exception can be found in Champlin's excellent *Fronto and Antonine Rome*. Champlin understands the potential these letters have to offer, and employs them effectively to locate their author within his historical and social background. Thus, Champlin presents a comprehensive picture of the society in which Fronto lived by drawing from the missives themselves. Though much of this was done successfully, Champlin's study is not without its problems. To be fair, details such as chronology and identification can easily be corrected and updated through subsequent work,[17] and this poses only a minor inconvenience; the major issue with Champlin's study can arguably be found in his persistent 'defensive tone and special pleading on behalf of his book's ostensible protagonist'.[18] That is, perhaps Champlin was trying too hard to make Fronto appear more important than he actually was, and this incentive on his part might easily have distorted the picture Champlin was trying to paint.

In addition, for the purposes of this thesis, Champlin seems to have neglected an important aspect of Roman society: the theme of *amicitia* receives but a few brief mentions in the course of his work, and the majority of these are absorbed into the realm of patronage and *clientela* without due consideration of what they entailed.[19] Granted, such consideration is not what Champlin was after; he was more interested in proving that Fronto's friendships were confined almost exclusively to literary circles, as well as making

[16] Van den Hout (1999).
[17] Of which Van den Hout (1999) does a good job.
[18] Although I agree with Mellor on this point (1982, 461), I cannot accept his statement of 'We are not terribly interested in him [Fronto] or his (non-rhetorical) ideas; we care about him as a source'.
[19] That Fronto's many friendships were based around literary interests forms the basis of Champlin's discussion (1980, 29-44).

sense of his 'friendship' with the imperial family.[20] Nevertheless, I believe that much information can be found in Fronto's *Correspondence* to elucidate this issue of *amicitia*. Through a more detailed examination, the way friendship was conducted in Fronto's circle, as well as how it was viewed in relation to other types of associations, i.e. patronage, can hopefully be brought to light. Thus, while the easy answer is that not much work has been done by scholars on Fronto and that there is a noticeable gap in academia on this topic, the truer response is that scholars have overlooked the fact that Fronto's letters provide a rich source for the understanding of society under the Antonines.

Pliny and Fronto

If viewed in this fashion, then the letters of Fronto are remarkably similar to the ones by Pliny the Younger. Both collections present us with the opportunity to glimpse the inner workings of their world, to understand the values and ethics with which these men led their lives. Furthermore, the protagonists behind these letters are worth comparing simply because they were so alike in terms of background, social and political circumstances. For instance, both were admitted into the senate as new men; both were leading figures of their time, wielding much renown in the fields of advocacy and literature; both shared a similar mentality about their *patria*; and both were highly concerned with the pursuit of learning. We see all of these reflected in the correspondence they kept: the obvious pride of being important figures in the senate, even though they lacked the background of some of the established families; their sense of patriotism blatantly displayed through patronage of their hometowns and their aspiring members; and the significance they placed on erudition is impossible to avoid.

[20] See ch.4.

On the other hand, in spite of such similarities between the two figures, there also exist noteworthy and highly consequential differences. Even after just a quick reading of both texts, the audience is quickly attuned to the fact that Pliny, unlike Fronto, was actually quite far from the centre of power. Though the correspondence between Trajan and Pliny sounds friendly enough, with perhaps hints of affection, it remains on a professional level. In other words, the letters resemble very much official documents between a ruler and his loyal subject.[21] With Fronto and Marcus Aurelius, however (and possibly even with Lucius), the situation is quite different. Being a tutor for the emperors since they were mere teenagers, Fronto was a part of their lives from quite early on. This relationship provided Fronto with a unique position from which to exercise influence. Although it is quite probable that in matters of state Fronto was still far from the loop,[22] as it were, nevertheless the two emperors always respected their tutor and his opinions; they were deeply indebted to him, despite the fact that *they* were the emperors.[23] Indeed, even towards the end of Fronto's life, when Marcus and Lucius were grown men and had accepted full power over the Empire, we see the three assuming their old roles of tutor and pupils.[24] This necessarily gave Fronto much authority in the imperial court,[25] authority which Pliny never obtained.

Another point of deviation is that Fronto was not a very politically involved man, whereas Pliny was intensely proud of his *cursus honorum*. Although Fronto was suffect consul of 147, Van den Hout suggests that the placement was only offered him by Pius to appease the defeat he received from Herodes in court, his point being that it was otherwise inconceivable for Fronto to have been elected as a consul without fulfilling the prerequisite

[21] See ch.3.
[22] Champlin (1980), 116-117; Van den Hout (1999), 249. Though Crook (1955, 68-69) believes Fronto was actually very close to Pius.
[23] Book I of the *Meditations* speaks at length about the teachings and wisdom he acquired from his tutors.
[24] See ch.4.
[25] And aroused much jealousy (Champlin [1980], 116-117).

positions.[26] The *cursus honorum* of Pliny, in sharp contrast to this, is a prime example of how one moved up the social ladder. This implies that the priorities of these two men differed widely, and again, such a distinction is reflected in their respective letters. While the epistles of Pliny are filled with advice for the budding statesman, drawn more often than not from his personal experience, Fronto's letters show him dealing primarly with literary and legal issues. Even when matters concerning Fronto's experience as a statesman do arise, he remains curiously silent about the details.[27] It can then be argued that, for Pliny, the ideal senator is one who combined education, culture and an ambitious pursuit for political advancement; for Fronto, however, interest in the same political advancement is secondary to that of his literary activities and participation in the courts.

Lastly, and perhaps the most crucial distinction to take into account, is the fact that Pliny's letters were composed with a view to publication, whereas it does not appear that this was Fronto's aim.[28] As a result, although the society we observe from these letters is unavoidably filtered through the eyes of their composers, the readers of Pliny, unlike those of Fronto, are handed a representation of what Pliny himself wanted to put forward. In other words, the image we are given of life in Rome during Pliny's time is an appealing cross-section of the broader reality, a section that was approved of and selected by Pliny for that very purpose.[29] When dealing with Fronto and his letters, this was not the case. To give an example: in comparing the portrayal of life at court given by Pliny, which is almost picturesque, with very little mentioned in terms of the conflict, the inevitable power

[26] (1999, vii). See also Champlin: 'Fronto's career offers the clearest possible indication that a man's importance in the state is not necessarily measured by his official *cursus honorum*. His was the bare minimum, with no military experience and virtually no provincial service' (1980, 82).
[27] Champlin (1980, 82) suggests that Marcus Aurelius did not need to be further informed about activities in the senate. But it does not explain why there was so little discussion about political affairs in the first place.
[28] This important point will be developed later. See 118-120.
[29] That is to say, I do not believe the letters in themselves were fabricated. They were carefully composed, chosen and edited for a specific reason, but this does not detract from the fact that they were authentic letters.

struggles and the bitter disappointments that ensued, we are shocked by Fronto's realistic depiction of the insincere existence of a courtier.[30]

Therefore, without this in mind, an unsuspecting reader may wrongly assume that it was the world in which these two men lived that differed, that somehow the quaint and virtually perfect society of Pliny degenerated into the rather harsher one of Fronto. This, of course, was not the case. The world of Pliny was every bit as unforgiving and demanding as that of Fronto; the former simply did not want it to be remembered as such, while the latter probably had no idea that his letters would be used in this fashion. It was not a matter of change, but one of intent and purpose: Pliny had his, and Fronto did not.[31]

At this point, criticisms can be raised about the validity of using Fronto as a comparative source to Pliny. Although their social background is similar, in that they shared similar political status and the same type of epistolary compositions, these two figures are also characterized by fundamental differences, the decisive one being the ultimate outcome they each wanted to derive from their experiences at court. This also means that the things they held important, the values which were vital for the survival of their lifestyle, might also have been dissimilar. Friendship, as was argued in the previous chapter, was one of the most important virtues of Pliny's society, and to express its significance was a major theme of his corpus. But is this true of Fronto? Did he hold friendship in such a high regard?

Of course, even should Fronto not deem *amicitia* as an essential bond through which his society is connected or give it the same sort of consideration that Pliny did, it does not mean that he has nothing to say on the subject. After all, patronage and *amicitia* were themes that affected the whole spectrum of society and were the sort of values that, as mentioned earlier, ensured the survival of their lifestyle. In fact, this chapter aims to

[30] See Hoffer (1999), 5-10; *De Nepote Amisso* 2.8.
[31] See p.120-122.

demonstrate that these issues were just as sensitive a matter to Fronto as it was to Pliny.[32] At the very least, an interest in *amicitia* and its workings was important to Fronto because it was important to the members of his class, and this, in effect, is all that is needed for a comparative study with the *amicitia* of Pliny.

Publication

Another matter that requires attention is that of publication. One of the major issues acknowledged with Pliny's *Letters* is that the first nine books of the collection had been carefully composed, or as a minimum edited, prior to publication. Despite this, it was argued that even though this was the case, with due consideration and a critical eye Pliny's corpus of epistles was still to a very high extent reliable as a source. For Fronto's letters, it is not entirely clear whether publication had been his original intent.

Scholarship on this issue has remained relatively silent, and Fronto's letters have not yet seen such detailed analysis as had been dedicated to Pliny's corpus.[33] For the most part, when the topic does arise, scholars tend to agree that Fronto had not been responsible for the collection's publication. For instance, Haines writes that the disarray in which the letters were organized, with very little thematic or chronological unity, means Fronto himself was probably not involved.[34] Likewise, Van den Hout believes that it was unthinkable for Fronto to have edited and published his letters, since they, unlike Pliny's idealizations, exposed very personal aspects of their author, and who would want to reveal to the public all the pain and pleasures, sufferings and foolishness, successes and failures

[32] Perhaps even more so, in terms of his relationship with the imperial family.
[33] Scholars seem much more interested in the date of Fronto's death. See Mommsen (1874), Bowersock (1969), Birley (1972), Champlin (1974), Whitehorn (1977) and (1979).
[34] (*Loeb*), xviii-xxi. Haines suggests instead Fronto's son-in-law, Aufidius Victorinus, as a candidate, but it seems unlikely that someone so learned and so involved in Fronto's circle would also have made such a mess of the organization.

of one's life?[35] Richlin suggests that it might have been Fronto's descendants who, wishing to publicize their connection to the glorious past,[36] ultimately collected and published his letters.[37]

But the seeming consensus is misleading. Van den Hout himself, on a point Whitehorn made concerning the date of Fronto's death and consequences of publishing certain precarious letters,[38] comments, 'Whitehorn…justly remarks that Fronto, had he lived until 176 or later, certainly would have removed this letter from his collection; at any rate, he would not have published it'.[39] Furthermore, while Champlin emphatically states that 'There is no hint that Fronto himself ever contemplated any collection of his correspondence, and various signs suggest that the present accumulation represents the efforts of different editors at different times working for different purposes', he does not provide any evidence for this reasoning.[40] Even Mommen early on suggested the possibility of Fronto being responsible for the publication of this corpus, though unfortunately no further research has come of it.[41]

Thus, the lack of a definitive study in this area cautions us in our approach. Whether we need to be out the lookout for a similar type of self- and world-fashioning as in Pliny has yet to be determined. And whether the theme of *amicitia* has been manipulated to fit this self-image also has consequences for the present thesis. However, it is worth remembering that at the most basic level every epistler is guilty of this practice, and that there are elements of self- and world-fashioning in every letter.[42] Regardless of the intention for publication, an epistle is composed with an audience in mind, and the

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[35] (*Teubner*), LX. In Van den Hout's own words, Fronto was not a *stultus*.
[36] *M. Aufidio Frontini pronepoti M. Corneli Frontinis oratoris, consulis, magistri imperatorum Luci et Antonini, nepotism Aufidi Victorini praefecti urbis bis consulis, Fronto consul filio dulcissimo* (*ILS* 1129).
[37] (2006), 22. See also Champlin (1974), 156-157.
[38] Whitehorne (1979), 478.
[39] (1999), 408.
[40] (1980), 3.
[41] (1874), 201.
[42] See p.46.

epistler is always projecting a self-image to that audience. What matters to us is not the original size of that audience, but how *amicitia* is presented by Fronto and the function it had in the world he wanted to portray. In other words, even if friendship in Fronto's letters is highly idealized, and even if the theme was manipulate for his purposes, an examination along these lines will still prove to be highly informative of the role, status and position of *amicitia* in the Roman Empire.

Manuscript and preservation

Another major problem that must be recognized when working with Fronto is the poor state of the manuscript. The text as we have it survives only in one copy, whose pages were divided up and reused to record the acts of the First Council of Chalcedon. By lucky coincidence, parts of the manuscript were discovered by Mai, though 'much of the original is lost, the ordering of the leaves which do survive is often insecure, and the palimpsest constantly verges on the illegible, often forcing the reader to consult corrections and marginal annotations of varying reliability'.[43] Furthermore, the successive editors of the manuscript were either careless with their treatment of the text, or were unsympathetic with their treatment of the author.[44] Unfortunately, the modern editors who produced the texts with which we work, editors such as Haines and Van den Hout, all confess to never having seen the original manuscript. Champlin's warning for the historian, then, that 'where lacunae occur, where readings are dubious, all arguments are provisional at best', cannot be overestimated.[45]

[43] Champlin, (1980), 3. The text itself was from the second half of the fifth century, and the annotations were done by a certain Caecilius (Zetzel [1980], 50). See also Haines (*Loeb*), xi-xvi; and Reynolds (1983), 173-174.
[44] The former being Cardinal Mai, who first discovered the manuscript; Niebuhr and Naber belong in the latter category (Champlin [1980], 3). A fourth attempt was made by Hauler, but was never completed.
[45] (1980), 3.

This difficulty of restoration and reading of the text itself notwithstanding, the fact that much of the original is lost should prove to be yet another concern for this thesis. Haines estimates that only about four-sevenths of Fronto's entire corpus has survived, and this figure already includes the many lacunae and damaged sections.[46] Even if we improve on this with the additional fragments that Van den Hout has further identified and restored for his edition, if we accept Haines' calculation, then we still possess a little more than half of the published text. What could those parts contain? More letters, to be sure, but given that the letters we have now are categorized into themes,[47] we can infer that the ones lost were classified similarly. In which case, can we expect more than just two books worth of letters to his *amici*? Perhaps there is even a book or two with their replies. As it stands, there are approximately 30 missives to his *amici* that are usable,[48] which is meagre when compared to the nine books of epistles by Pliny. There are fewer letters, fewer individuals, and fewer choices. As such, the conclusions drawn from the examination of Fronto must necessarily reflect this, and will inevitably remain on more general terms, relying on arguments of the previous chapter to establish points of comparison and contrast. Certainly, it is disappointing that one cannot determine *amicitia* in Fronto as substantially as in Pliny, but unless more of Fronto is discovered, this may be the best method of approaching the topic.

[46] Haines (*Loeb*), xiv. Richlin believes about 43% is still missing (2006, 3).
[47] The books we have now are *Ad M. Caesar* I, II, III, IV, V, though all of varying lengths; *Ad Anton. Imp*. I, II; *Ad Pium*; *Ad Verum Imp*. I, II; *Ad Amicos* I and II. The letters in *Ad Amicos* I are all letters of recommendation.
[48] This chapter will focus mainly on the exchanges with his *amici*, instead of those with the emperors, although evidence will be drawn from the latter where it is appropriate.

Some words on letters of recommendation

On a similar note, the matter of recommendation letters becomes more important also.[49] As was mentioned, unlike with Pliny, whose epistles with his friends varied in their purpose and content, the ones in Fronto are almost exclusively letters of commendation.[50] Thus, it may be worthwhile to digress slightly and consider the nature of these letters and their role in the wider context of *amicitia*. In spite of the highly bureaucratic nature of the Roman administration, as Hannah Cotton has rightly observed, the desire and need for personal contact still existed.[51] Furthermore, as an avenue for the distribution of patronage, friendship and *gratia*, which figured so prominently in Roman society, the very act of commending is invaluable. Letters of recommendation were one way in which such needs were fulfilled, and unlike in modern times, where proper qualifications and experience in a candidate are paramount, for the Romans it was the relationship between the individuals concerned that mattered. Of course, suitable experience still counted, and this is reflected in the commendation letters we have already encountered.[52] Nonetheless, it is obvious that the primary purpose of these letters is to affirm to the recipient the type of association shared between the author and the person commended.

As to be expected, such letters contain a wealth of information about the treatment and exercise of *amicitia* in Roman society; on the other hand, because of the very nature of these letters, because the aim was precisely to portray as close a relationship as possible, the friendship that is depicted can easily be criticised as overly exaggerated. Moreover, the 'crystallized formulae and set phrases', which are to be found in almost every letter of

[49] For aspects regarding letters of recommendation not discussed by this thesis, see Rees (2007).
[50] This is why the topic only received some brief remarks in the previous chapter.
[51] (1977), 25-26.
[52] That is, the credentials and previous positions were usually listed in detail, generally along with a brief family history.

recommendation that we possess,[53] can make the entire enterprise seem insincere and artificial. In other words, the sense of intimacy that such letters produce can often be called into question. Are these types of epistles still reliable sources on friendship? Is it possible to determine true intimacy behind all the layers of convention? Was there even true intimacy in the first place?

However, Cotton believes that, in spite of the seemingly embellished familiarity and the typical formulae that run through commendation letters in general, friendship was still a vital part of this procedure. She emphasizes the value of 'decorum' in a system whereby candidates were entrusted with important duties or neglected altogether by virtue of knowing, or not as the case may be, the right intermediaries. And it is these intermediaries who were under scrutiny, not the candidates themselves: it is the trustworthiness of the recommender that counts the most.[54] The rules of decorum then dictate that a recommender would not offer an unsuitable candidate to the correspondent because not only would this bring disgrace to the recommender himself, but would in effect destroy the entire basis of the system. *Amicitia*, or in some cases, potential *amicitia*,[55] with the correspondent ensures that the relationship described between the recommender and the nominee is never too exaggerated and is always founded on a notion of friendship.

On the other side of the issue, *amicitia* was also responsible as the driving force for the recommendation itself.[56] We have already encountered the seriousness with which Pliny views his obligations towards his friends, this all-important *officia amicorum*, and to ensure the advancement of someone was a convenient way of fulfilling that obligation. Cotton adds that 'The rules of *decorum*, or, more simply, sheer good manners make it

[53] Cotton (1981), 7. She argues throughout this work that there exist many similarities between literary and documentary commendation letters.
[54] Cotton (1977), 50-51.
[55] See p.176.
[56] Cotton (1977), 44.

imperative that the writer demonstrate that he is not prodigal of the recipient's readiness to comply with his wishes and that he does not hold the latter's favours cheap, squandering them on all and sundry, but rather is acting out of a sense of obligation towards a friend, a relative, a man introduced to him by other friends etc'.[57] In view of all this, it appears that even though we should most likely allow for a degree of embellishment and fictionalization on the part of the recommender, the role of *amicitia* in these types of letters cannot be overlooked: this method of election to office is centred fundamentally around networks of friendship, with the recommender acting as the nexus, drawing together different groups of people with his *amicitia*. In this fashion, the self-professed friendship and intimacy found in the letters of recommendation should not be dismissed so simply as pure exaggeration or sheer convention.[58]

Indeed, we can draw on Fronto's experience itself to help prove this point. Normally, when Fronto makes a commendation for a friend, he gives a detailed description of the character and achievements of the individual involved. He also states quite clearly the type of relationship he shared with the commended, whether it is his *familiarissimus*, or the father of his pupils, or the son of a friend.[59] Compare these then to the occasions when the commendations were evidently not for a personal friend. Such a case occurs in *Ad Amicos* I.7, where Fronto asks for a specific post for Antonius Aquila from his son-in-law, Aufidius Victorinus. Aquila, Fronto explains, is a learned and eloquent man, introduced to him by various friends who can vouch for his excellence. Still, Fronto has to admit that he has not even met Aquila in person, nor has he ever heard him speak in public!

In much the same vein, Fronto introduced Volumnius Serenus to Arrius Antoninus in *Ad Amicos* II.6 and tried to intercede on this decurion's behalf, once more with

[57] (1981), 19. For instance, see Fronto's letter to his own son-in-law, Aufidius Victorinus (*Ad Amicos* I.7), in which he still was required to remark why Antoninus Aquila was worthy of his attention.
[58] Admittedly, the convention did exist – after all, the writing of commendation letters itself was a convention – but it certainly does not mean that content of these epistles was insincere or hypocritical.
[59] *Ad Amicos* I.1, I.19, I.5.

Antoninus, in *Ad Amicos* II.7. Again, Fronto explicitly states that it was due to the request of various friends that he brought Volumnius to the attention of Antoninus, not because he had known him personally.[60] And lastly, yet again with Arrius Antoninus, Fronto was approached by *cari…viri* to negotiate on the behalf of a certain Baburiana, although it is fairly obvious that Fronto had not previously been acquainted with the woman.[61]

What these missives show is that Fronto distinguishes clearly between acting for the best interests of a friend and acting on the request of friends. He makes recipients of the recommendations aware that he has relied on the guarantees of his friends and that, should something be amiss, the responsibility ought to not rest with him. Of course, Fronto cannot avoid the liability altogether, for such is the nature of the process of commendations, but the fault would not entirely be his. From this, we can deduce that when Fronto does profess his friendship with the person commended and gives details about their relationship, it is possible to accept accounts as genuine rather than just relying on the conventions of commendation letters. He is personally vouching for their abilities, and is more personally involved.

Contubernalis

Boarding school

With these considerations in mind, let us proceed to an examination of *amicitia* as depicted by Fronto, beginning with a look at the vocabulary used to denote a friend. The first is *contubernalis*. We have already seen that this word was used by Pliny to indicate someone with whom Pliny shared a particularly close relationship. More so than the two other primary words that were identified, namely *amicus* and *familiaris*, when Pliny

[60] Though the intercession in the legal case did seem to require personal interrogation on Fronto's part. This is only to be expected, since Fronto would want to understand the situation for himself and not subvert the legal proceedings.
[61] *Ad Amicos* II.8.

employed *contubernalis*, it meant that much time had been spent cultivating their association. Appropriately, *contubernalis* occurred least often of the three words, suggesting that such a relationship was not chanced upon frequently or easily. This same word can be found amidst Fronto's epistles collected in the two books of *Ad Amicos*, as well as a single occurrence in *Ad Pium*, but, even though the denotation of the word is as precise as the usages found in Pliny, the meaning appears completely different. That is, although the sense of prolonged association is every bit as strong as it was in Pliny, Fronto's *contubernales* seem to refer not just to people with whom he shared an intimate relationship, but specifically to younger associates whom he tutored in his residence. As Van den Hout explains, 'Fronto's palazzo on the Esquiline…was a sort of boarding-house for young men of the upper class…His students received a higher education in the field of literature, history and politics', and the use of *contubernalis*, as well as its nounal counterpart, *contubernium*, indicates this sort of relationship.[62]

Certainly, this appears to be valid in most cases. In *Ad Amicos* I.9, where Fronto was commending a Sardius Saturninus, our author remarks that the latter's sons were *doctissimos iuvenes, quos in contubernio mecum adsiduos habeo*. Likewise, when Fronto recommended Sardius Lupus, the son of Saturninus, Fronto claims that the young man was *de mea domo meoque contubernio in forum deductum*.[63] As for the other son of Saturninus, at whose death Fronto lamented immensely, since he too was part of the *contubernium* of Fronto along with his brother, it is only appropriate that Fronto viewed him as an *iucundissimus contubernalis*.[64] One further example comes from *Ad Amicos* I.25, in which Fronto anxiously awaited the news of a pupil who was pleading in court for the first time; Fronto writes to his father, Squilla Gallicanus, that he was lucky to have

[62] (1999), 404. See also Champlin (1980), 45-47.
[63] *Ad Amicos*, I.10.
[64] *Ad Amicos*, I.20.

been present at the hearing, whereas Fronto had to hear the result *ab omnibus contubernalibus*.

From this, both Champlin and Van den Hout conclude that where other instances of *contubernalis* and *contubernium* occur, it was to designate this mentor/pupil relationship, as well as to illustrate an atmosphere of learning and erudition. They also understand that the reverse was true, that wherever Fronto mentions he had studied or lived together with someone, that someone must necessarily be a *contubernalis*, and that he was part of Fronto's *contubernium*. Amongst the examples given are Aemilius Pius, M. Postumius Festus, Sextus Calpurnius Iulianus, Licinius Montanus, Ulpius, and even the historian Appian.

In the cases of Aemilius Pius and M. Postumius Festus,[65] however, it is difficult to tell that they were ever engaged in scholarly pursuits with Fronto, or that they were ever regarded by him as *contubernales*.[66] Their correspondence does not discuss this aspect of their relationship, if it in fact did exist. Aemilius Pius is described as *studiorum elegantia tum morum eximia probitate mihi carus est*, not a *contubernalis*, nor that he had ever studied with Fronto. Postumius Festus was only mentioned as a possible candidate for the patron of Fronto's home town, Cirta, and was a man of morals and eloquence. If it had not been for his brief appearance in Aulus Gellius' *Attic Nights*, in which he was engaged in learned discussion with Fronto and another companion, we would not have known that Festus concerned himself with such interests.[67] Even so, this is scant evidence to place him in Fronto's *contubernium* or to designate him as a *contubernalis* of Fronto.

Similarly, neither Ulpius nor Appian received from Fronto the designation of *contubernalis*, nor were they explicitly referred to as belonging in his *contubernium*. They

[65] *Ad Amicos* I.8 and II.11, respectively.
[66] Van den Hout remarks of the former, 'He seems to have been a *contubernalis* of Fronto' (1999, 413), and of the latter, 'Apparently Fronto and Postumius were kindred spirits and Postumius may have been Fronto's *contubernalis*' (458). For Aemilius see *PIR* I^2 393; Festus see *ILS* 2929 and *PIR* III^1 660.
[67] *Attic Nights*, xix.13. They were debating the nature of the word, *nanos*.

were, though, highly active in the field of literature, and were intimate with Fronto through that connection.[68] Does this automatically make them *contubernales* and so part of the *contubernium*, as Champlin and Van den Hout think?[69] Two possible criticisms arise. First, Appian was a contemporary of Fronto (the Ulpius is left unidentified). If the *contubernium* was meant as a school for prominent young men, and the uses noted thus far of *contubernalis* were restricted to young men, could someone who was Fronto's age still be included in this group?[70] Second, Appian is specifically named an *amicus meus*, never a *contubernalis*. Admittedly, it may be that Fronto is not as careful as Pliny was, whose use of strict vocabulary denoted hierarchy of intimacy, and hence there is no need to assume that the two designations are mutually exclusive of each other. Still, this overlap of terms is hardly to be encountered elsewhere in Fronto, if, that is, Appian should be referred to as a *contubernalis* as well as an *amicus*.

The cases of Sextus Calpurnius Iulianus and Licinius Montanus bring even more confusion to this topic. To begin with, the epistles which involve these two figures are worthy of note because they contain the three remaining occurrences of *contubernalis* and *contubernium*. With Sextus Calpurnius Iulianus, the reference is explicit: Fronto expressly states that Calpurnius is *Equitis Romani unius contubernalis mei*.[71] Interestingly enough, this happens in the beginning of a letter commending Appian to the emperor, where Fronto first thanks Antoninus Pius for the favour he had already shown to his companion,[72] and hopes that he would do the same for Appian, the *amicus*. Once again, there is no

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[68] In regards to Ulpius, *Ad Amicos* I.24: *Neque enim cum alio ullo tanta mihi familiaritas est aut tantus usus studiorum bonarumque atrium communicandi* [no *mihi*]. For Appian, *Ad Pium* 9: *…pro Appiano amico meo, cum quo mihi et vetus consuetudo et studiorum usus prope cotidianus intercedit*. See also the highly rhetorically charged debate between Fronto and Appian concerning the propriety in receiving/declining gifts, in *Epist. Graec*. 4 and 5. Notice, too, the similarity in these two expressions.

[69] To be fair, Van den Hout is a little more cautious (1999, 404).

[70] Champlin sees no problems in categorizing older men in Fronto's *contubernium*. He simply regards them as 'fellow students' instead of 'master and pupil' (1980, 46).

[71] *Ad Pium* 9.

[72] Haines translates the *contubernalis* as 'who lived with me,' and notes that 'Fronto had pupils who lived with him, such as the two sons of Sardius Saturninius…'

indication of Calpurnius ever having studied under Fronto. Van den Hout believes that 'our Calpurnius must have been a generation younger than Fronto', while Champlin puts him in the same category of older men as Appian. In any case, Calpurnius remains unidentified. Is it perhaps somewhat misleading to classify this Calpurnius as a student of Fronto simply based on the fact that he was called a *contubernalis*, with no external sources to back up the claim? Must *contubernalis*, and maybe even *contubernium*, always mean this sort of relationship?

This concern is further evidenced by the letter recommending Licinius Montanus, where both *contubernium* and *contubernalis* can be found. *Ad Amicos* I.3 sees Fronto wishing to advance the position of this man, whom he describes as so dear that *Quotienscumque Romam venit, in meo contubernio fuit, meis aedibus usus est; una nobis mensa semper: postremo omnium paene rerum consiliorumque communicatio et societas fuit*. It is clear from this quotation that Montanus did not live with Fronto on a prolonged basis, but only stayed with him when he was in town. Without a doubt, Fronto wants to convey the message that the two were close, but there is no impression that Montanus came to Rome simply to attend Fronto's school. And even if he was a man of *doctrina et facundia…eleganti*, it is inconceivable for this native of Cirta to have been a pupil of Fronto, for Montanus was joined to Fronto because of their native city and interest in eloquence, not because he was an aspiring student.[73] Thus the sense of *contubernium* here should imply company, albeit in an intellectual setting, but not necessarily a school of some sort.

Moreover, the *contubernalis* employed in this letter is not referring to how Fronto regarded his companion, but to how Lollianus Avitus,[74] the recipient of this epistle, should:

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[73] *Etsi sentio me meo artificio nimium favere quod ipse nihil studio eloquentiae antetulerit…Apud me antiquissimum locum laudis eloquentia possidet…* (*Ad Amicos* I.3). Champlin convincingly argues that Fronto's associations are based around their literary pursuits. See p.115 n.19.

[74] Consul in 144 (Van den Hout [1999], 403).

Huic tantum honorem haberi a te velim quantum tuo hospiti contubernali consilario tributum ab altero postulares. And so, unless we are to understand that Fronto wants Avitus to take Montanus under his wing and accept him as a student, it may be best to consider that the use of *contubernalis* and *contubernium* is not as definitive as Champlin and Van den Hout suggest.

Ad Amicos I.3 is a somewhat problematic letter, because Van den Hout has managed to read a second name in the middle of this epistle: Terentius Vanus. He proposes that this letter was meant to recommend two friends, and that much of the later section in which the health and condition of Montanus is described should refer to Vanus instead. It is also in this section that another instance of *contubernium* can be found. Unfortunately, it is unclear to whom this *contubernium* referred, for this part of the letter is too fragmentary to read properly. What we can tell is that the individual was from Cirta, whose departure from Fronto's *contubernium* saddened him greatly. This person was one whom Fronto loved dearly, and he wished the recipient of this letter, Lollianus Avitus, to look after him and offer him 'friendly counsel'. If this individual should be identified as Montanus, then the arguments against liberally equating *contubernalis* and *contubernium* as student and school house still stand. Indeed, this argument is supported even should the person be Terentius Vanus instead, for it appears that he was probably of a similar age to Fronto himself.[75]

The idea of a 'boarding-house' school run by Fronto to educate the future leaders of Rome, his *contubernium*, is definitely an attractive one.[76] It follows from this that those who were trained in this fashion came to be his *contubernales*. What is more, the

[75] *Terentius Vanus olim mihi familiaris et inter paucissimos carus est; longa virtus et nostrum vita plurimas occasiones officiorum nobis dedit plurimasque causas adtulit…* Van den Hout reads the references to 'us' as between Fronto and the recipient of the epistle (1999, 405). It seems to me, however, that it makes more sense if they referred to Fronto and Terentius Vanus.

[76] Van den Hout even suggests that 'This Frontonian school was one of the reasons for Pius to apprentice Marcus Fronto' (1999, 404).

significance Champlin places on this *contubernium* is certainly not ill-founded. The very foundation of Fronto's circle of friends, as Champlin sees it, was centred on Fronto's *contubernium* and on a mutual interest in culture, rhetoric and learning. Again, it also made anyone participating in Fronto's *contubernium* a *contubernalis*. It may be these two components, two attractive and slightly romanticized ideas, that had Champlin and Van den Hout believing every instance of the two words denoted such a relationship, and that every description of such a relationship meant that these two words were intended. But as we have seen, this is not always the case. A *contubernalis* does not always mean a pupil or a fellow student; a *contubernium* may just signify sharing of someone's company; and without external evidence, it is hasty to regard anyone who partook in Fronto's knowledge as a *contubernalis* or to have been part of the *contubernium*.

Contubernalis and intimacy

So what do the two words denote? The way Pliny used the term is highly suggestive of an extensive and intimate relationship, but is this true for Fronto? The instances of *contubernalis* do seem to support this reading. That is to say, whenever *contubernalis* does occur, it is to designate people with whom Fronto had a vested interest and prolonged association, whether or not these individuals were his pupils. As for *contubernium*, did it mean 'in my company', 'shared my house', or 'in my school'? In two of the cases, at least, all three senses are possible; the instance with Montanus does not appear as though it would support the translation of 'in my school'. Therefore, to render *contubernium* as part of Fronto's boarding school for rhetoric is probably too ascriptive; instead, it most likely was meant to reflect the same sense of close intimacy as *contubernalis*. Again, in the reference to Montanus, Fronto was declaring his deep

familiarity with the man from his *contubernium*, in whom Fronto also wanted his recipient to find a close acquaintance, a *contubernalis*.

It is possible that Fronto was just not as consistent in his employment of this word as Pliny was. On the other hand, that Fronto called Calpurnius a *contubernalis* and Appian an *amicus* could suggest that Fronto was actually very precise in his language choice. If the letter was meant to recommend Appian, since Calpurnius already had his share, would Fronto not have wanted to give Appian an equally close association? Unless, of course, it is argued that Appian was not a student while Calpurnius was, but this seems farfetched. It makes more sense to belive that *contubernalis* denoted something more specific than *amicus*. Whether this should necessarily be interpreted as the master/pupil or fellow-student relationship is unlikely, but the lack of evidence prevents us from a definitive conclusion. All we can say is that aside from the sense of intimacy, anything else would need to depend on context.

Status and rank of the *contubernales*

Another matter that deserves attention in regards to Fronto's *contubernales* is their respective social positions. The fact that all four of Pliny's *contubernales* were equestrians and the consequences thereof have been explored in the previous chapter, and it may be useful to see whether the conclusions found there apply to Fronto as well. First of all, the only clear instance of a *contubernalis* in Fronto being an equestrian happens with Sextus Calpurnius Iulianus, where Fronto explicitly records in his letter that Calpurnius was an *Eques Romanus*.[77] Unfortunately, the people linked to the other two occurrences of the word remain ambiguous. The *contubernales* of *Ad Amicos* I.25 are too general to invite any sort of identification. And the son of Sardius Saturninus is the only other specific

[77] *Ad Pium* 9.

person to be termed a *contubernalis*;[78] however, the father, along with his two sons, left no further traces in history.[79]

Nonetheless, conjectures can still be made by looking at their familial backgrounds. Consider, then, the protagonist of *Ad Amicos* I.25, the son of M. Gavius Squilla Gallicanus.[80] For him to be making his first appearance in court renders it unlikely for him to be holding any senatorial position.[81] Still, the description given of the younger Gavius by Fronto, *in forum descendit natalibus nobilis, de foro rediit eloquentia quam genere nobilior*, definitely sounds as if he came from a senatorial family. This is confirmed by the identification of the father, Squilla Gallicanus, as the consul of 150 and the proconsul of Asia at around 165.[82]

As for the family of Sardius Saturninus, their background is much harder to establish. There is nothing in the missives themselves to suggest a senatorial lineage, or indeed even an equestrian one, and external sources are yet to be found. The commendation of Sardius Saturninus to a Caelius Optatus in *Ad Amicos* I.9, though, can perhaps shed a little light on the matter. In spite of the fact that nothing specific was requested of Caelius Optatus on Saturninus' behalf,[83] and that the identity of Optatius still remains to be determined,[84] the very act of recommending Saturninus, a man who could not have been much younger than Fronto, if at all, suggests that Saturninus was not of

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[78] *Ad Amicos* I.20.
[79] Three letters involve the Sardius family: *Ad Amicos* I.9, I.10 and I.20.
[80] Even though the son was not explicitly referred to as a *contubernalis*, since Fronto awaited the news of his result *ab ominibus contubernalibus*, it should be understood that he was included in this category.
[81] Champlin also notes (1974, 152): '…both Fronto and Gallicanus have felt 'trepidatio' over the son's endeavour, an unlikely anxiety if he were praetorian rank'.
[82] Van den Hout (1999), 435. The identification of the son himself still needs to be established. Pflaum (1964, 442 n.1080) believes the son referred to here is M. Gavius Cornelius Cethegus, who followed Gallicanus to Asia in 165; Champlin (1974, 153) prefers M. Gavius Orfitus, the consul of 165.
[83] For this as a general practice in commendation letters, see Cotton (1981), 5-6. On the other hand, we have seen how specific Pliny can be in his letters.
[84] A P. Caelius Optatus was active as a *legatus Aug. pro praetore legionis III Augustae* in Numidia in 166/167 (*CIL* VIII 2736; *ILS* 2303). It is unlikely that this is the same figure as the recipient of the letter, as the latter was called *frater*, which would imply a coeval, and not someone a generation younger. The correspondent of the epistle may have been his father (Champlin [1974], 151; Van den Hout [1999], 414). For *frater*, see p.158-161.

senatorial rank. That is, someone in a similar position to Fronto probably would not require such a recommendation in the first place. In addition, when Fronto was commending Sardius Lupus, he opened the epistle with *Sardius Saturninus filium habet Sardium Lupum*, and with it implies that there was at least a hint of familiarity between Saturninus and the recipient.[85] And since the recipient here, Petronius Mamertinus, was probably the prefect of Egypt in 133-137 and the praetorian prefect of 139-143,[86] and as such an equestrian, it can be tentatively proposed that Saturninus himself moved in similar circles.

Perhaps it is worth considering an instance of *contubernium* to add to the picture:[87] the individual indicated is Licinius Montanus, Fronto's learned friend from Cirta and the protagonist of *Ad Amicos* I.3.[88] Champlin believes that Montanus was from a curial family of Fronto's native city, while Van den Hout admits that besides his relationship with Fronto, nothing more is known.[89] Regardless, it is clear from the tone and content of this letter that Montanus could not have been an important figure in Roman politics. If that were true, then such a man, cultured and influential, would conceivably have been included by Fronto in his list of suitable candidates for the patron of his native city.[90] Furthermore,

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[85] *Ad Amicos* I.10. Contrast this to the opening of the previous letter, the introduction of Sardius Saturninus to Caelius Optatus, *Sardius Saturninus artissima mihi familiaritate coniunctus est per filios suos doctissimos iuvenes, quos in contubernio mecum adsiduos habeo* (*Ad Amicos* I.9), which betrays their lack of acquaintance.

[86] This is preferred by Van den Hout (1999), 414. Two additional identifications are possible: his nephew, the suffect consul of 150, and his son, the consul of 182 and a son-in-law of Marcus Aurelius (Champlin [1974], 151).

[87] There is one further instance of *contubernium*, in *Ad Pium* 7, the context of which will be given in detail later. The actual meaning of the word in the letter, however, is impossible to determine because the fragmentary nature of the section.

[88] The recipient of this commendation, Lollius Avitus, is also a senator. I deliberately choose not to include the people whom Van den Hout and Champlin consider as being part of Fronto's *contubernium* though not specifically referred to by Fronto as such.

[89] Champlin (1980), 15-16; Van den Hout (1999), 403-404.

[90] *Ad Amicos* II.11. It appears that this, in fact, was a complicated matter. Champlin thinks that there was some sort of scandal involving Montanus in Cirta, and the true purpose of *Ad Amicos* I.3 was to find some refuge for Fronto's friend (1974, 154). This is dismissed by Van den Hout as melodrama (1999, 405). Still, a line of *Ad Amicos* II.11, missing in Hanes' edition but supplied by Van den Hout, does hint at some difficulties between the Licinii and the people of Cirta: *Tres facite ut e meis cognoscitis quasi qui familiares essent Liciniae familiae et adesse adversus rem noluerint* (Champlin [1974], 154; [*Teubner*], 199.12-14). Champlin adds: 'It may be deduced that the interests of Cirta and those of the Licinii, if not quite opposed, at

as with the situation with Saturninus, it is highly unlikely that Fronto would commend a senator and probably his peer to the recipient of the letter, Lollius Avitus, the proconsul of Africa in 157.[91] This does not rule out the possibility for Montanus to be of the equestrian class, however, and whether this could have been the case is indeterminable from the epistle itself.

Therefore, it appears that the *contubernales* and the people explicitly included in Fronto's *contubernium* did not originate from a single class. The family of Gavius was undoubtedly senatorial, and, if Champlin's identification is correct, at least one of his sons, perhaps the very pupil of Fronto, followed in his father's footsteps and achieved a high position in the Empire. Alternatively, Sextus Calpurnius Iulianus was without question of the equestrian rank. It is doubtful that the lineage of Sardius Saturninus was so distinguished as to be senatorial, but a case can be made for it to be equestrian. The status of Licinius Montanus remains a mystery: definitely not a senator, perhaps an equestrian, perhaps just a civic magistrate, perhaps not even that. It is clear from this that the *contubernales* found in Fronto were not limited to one class. Moreover, if we are to include the boarding-school and/or intellectual symposium aspects of *contubernalis*/*contubernium*, ideas advocated by Van den Hout and Champlin respectively, and consider the many individuals the two scholars believe should belong to this category, then the point that Fronto's *contubernales* spanned all classes would be made even more obvious.[92]

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least did not coincide, and further that the advocates suggested by Fronto were acquainted with the Licinii but not to be rejected on that account. Also, one may surmise that despite his protestation of age and ill-health, the uncomfortable Fronto's real reason for declining the task was the same embarrassing familiarity with the Licinii.' Van den Hout refrains from commenting. Indeed, without the proper context, Champlin's interpretation of the situation does sound quite melodramatic.

[91] Van den Hout (1999), 403.

[92] Aufidius Victorinus, Fronto's son-in-law, and Postumius Festus, as examples.

Familiaris

Having established the sense of *contubernalis* in Fronto, it is time to examine whether the term *familiaris* and its counterparts play as significant a role here as it did in Pliny.[93] As was the case in Pliny, the variants of *familiaris* are the second most frequent designation of friend, the least being *contubernalis*, while the most are forms of *amicus*.[94] There are also general uses which prove to be inconsequential to this study, such as in *Ad Amicos* II.6, *Demonstratus est mihi a doctis et multum mihi familiaribus viris...* and in *Ad Pium* 3, *Si evenire posset, Imp., ut amici ac familiares nostri nostris moribus cuncta agerent…* On the other hand, unlike in Pliny, where *familiaris* was normally used only in the context of friendship,[95] in Fronto we find the term sometimes being employed to designate a variety of ideas. Three examples should suffice: *De Nepote Amisso* 2 sees a heartbroken Fronto reflecting on his life after the death of his grandson, and him claiming that he has always preferred attaining knowledge to wealth (*Studia doctrinae rei familiari meae praetuli*); in *Ad Pium* 5, Fronto apologizes to Pius for not being able to attend his birthday celebrations, but has instead *apud Lares Penates deosque familiares meos et reddidi et suscepi vota*; and when Fronto pleads to Arrius Antoninus on behalf of Volumnus Serenus, he brings up the topic of the latter's old age and asks that Antoninus *Subleva misericordia aetatem familiarem tibi et patritam.*[96] And so, it should immediately be recognized that Fronto is much more liberal with his usage of *familiaris* than was Pliny,

[93] For this chapter, I am only taking into account the uses of *familiaris* that pertain to individuals outside the imperial household. In other words, when the forms of *familiaris* are employed in relation to the emperors and their family, I shall dismiss them for now. The same applies for *amicus*.
[94] This figure is based on the fragmentary text, and so does not mean it is wholly accurate. For instance, there may be a missing book of *Ad Amicos* in which the term *familiaris* could appear more regularly. Nevertheless, because the figure is derived from a percentage of the occurrences, and so should be representative of the work as a whole, there is no need to assume that it would be any different if we did have a complete version of Fronto's letters.
[95] One exception being *res familiaris*, which occurs in five out of the twenty-five counts of *familiaris*.
[96] *Ad Amicos* II.7: 'Relieve by your compassion an age which you know so well in your home and in your father'.

and that in Fronto's epistles, *familiaris* was not restricted to the sense of *amicitia*, but had the potential of taking up a full body of meaning.

Adverbial form

Otherwise, we see many of the same usages of *familiaris* in Fronto as in Pliny. Firstly, the adverbial form of the word turns up twice. *Ad Amicos* I.8, in which Fronto asks the recipient of the letter, Passienus Rufus, to behave *familiarius* with Aemilius Pius, provides us with an instance; however, since this is an appeal by the author and not an indication of the relationship shared between him and Pius, and since we have no futher information of either Rufus or Pius, it is unhelpful to the study at hand. The other occurrence is found in *Ad Verum* II.7,[97] where Fronto is trying to commend to Lucius one Gavius Clarus, a poor man of senatorial status, who *A prima aetate sua me* [Fronto] *curavit…familiariter*…, even feeding him by hand when our writer was too sick to lift the food. Indeed, Clarus, also referred to by the term *alumnus*, was so intimate with Fronto that he was chosen to care for the latter's body should his brother or son-in-law not be present. It seems therefore that the *familiariter* was carefully selected in this epistle to complement the sense of a familial bond denoted by *alumnus*. It is also no accident that Fronto started the letter with *Quanta et quam vetus familiaritas mihi intercedebat cum Gavio Claro*…, a phrase well-known to us from Pliny.[98]

[97] This is the epistle quoted in the introduction. See p.12.

[98] A similar expression can be found twice. The first is in the short letter of recommendation to Junius Maximus, on behalf of Ulpius: *Neque enim cum alio ullo tanta mihi familiaritas* (*Ad Amicos* I.24). The second is the letter commending Sardius Saturninus: *artissima mihi familiaritate coniunctus est* (*Ad Amicos* I.9). It is interesting to note that *artissima familiaritas* was the type of relationship shared between Saturninus and Fronto, whereas his sons were regarded by Fronto as *contubernales*. In this situation, I do not believe that *contubernalis* was meant to imply a closer relationship than *artissima familiaritas*. Rather, Fronto was specifying that while he was close to Saturninius, it was actually his sons who physically shared a living space with Fronto.

Van den Hout suggests that Gavius Clarus was probably a *contubernalis* of Fronto, being in his thirties since he had just reached the praetorship.[99] Whether this was the case or not is not the issue here; even should it be true, that Clarus was Fronto's *contubernalis*, this aspect of their relationship was obviously relegated to the background, while the familial nature of their association was the one emphasized to Lucius. Perhaps being a *contubernalis* was not enough. Could the sense of *familiariter* have more impact than *contubernalis*? Further investigation of the term will help answer this question, but I believe that *alumnus* is perhaps the more significant word here, since, as we have already seen, the forms of *familiaris* were used frequently by Fronto to designate a variety of ideas, whereas Clarus is the only person given this kind of address.[100]

Familiaris as a noun

There are several cases of *familiaris* being employed in its nounal form. We have already encountered one example when dealing with Licinius Montanus: *Tres facite ut e meis cognoscitis quasi qui familiares essent Liciniae familiae et adesse adversus rem noluerint*.[101] Again, this is a complicated passage, not to mention missing the context in which it should be read, and as such the sense of *familiares* here is difficult to interpret: 'known to the family of the Licinii' seems a little too weak; 'friends' is perhaps too general; 'supporters' in the suggested civic intrigue maybe? Another instance is to be found in *Ad Amicos* II.4, a letter which thanks the recipient, Cornelius Repentus, for defending a certain Fabianus, Fronto's *familiaris*. Unfortunately, Fabianus remains unidentified, and so the relationship between him and Fronto cannot be determined from

[99] (1999), 271-273. Fronto says the following of Clarus' situation: *Ceterum parsimonia et officiis et frugalitate onera quaestoria et aedilicia et praetoria perfunctus est*.
[100] *Alumnus* turns up once more, in *Ad Amicos* I.14, where Fronto describes how Matidia left some inheritances to her *Variani alumni*.
[101] *Ad Amicos* I.3. See p.130-132, p.136 n.90. Note also the juxtaposition of *familiares* and *familiae*; could this have affected Fronto's word choice?

external evidence. All we know is that he is a solicitor who accompanied Fronto in the Forum.[102]

A third instance occurs in a fascinating letter to Marcus Aurelius, in which Fronto explores the many ways he loved the future emperor, though he also explains that he has sometimes spoken ill of his pupil among his *paucissimi et familiarissimi*.[103] The reason for this is that he disapproved of his imperial pupil's attitude in public, where he often seemed haughty and unapproachable. The fact that he felt comfortable enough with Marcus Aurelius to make this sort of statement aside,[104] the superlative forms of *paucus* and *familiaris* are obviously designed to reassure the current Caesar that this happened only in the company of the *very* few and *very* intimate. It is noteworthy that he did not use *contubernalis* here, most likely because it did have a specific range of meanings. That he did not use *amicus* is also rather telling, but it is probably erroneous to take this as evidence for *familiaris* denoting a closer relationship than *amicus*, for, as we will see below, several *amici* were clearly on very intimate terms with Fronto.

The most significant feature to be remarked on in this passage then is not the choice of words, but the superlative forms. More often than not, it was difficult to notice the subtle differences between the positive, comparative and superlative versions of such vocabulary in Pliny's epistles, but here the superlative form makes sense. Lastly, *familiaris* as a noun occurs once more in the course of Fronto's epistles, but its significance shall be discussed in the next section, in relation to the term *amicus*.

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[102] Van den Hout denies that this can be the same Fabianus as the Masticius Fabianus of *Vita Severi*, supported by Mai, or the M. Servilius Fabianus, proposed by Birley (1999, 439). He argues that at the time this letter was written, Servilius Fabianus, at least, was holding 'several high offices in the provinces'. Besides, from the tone of the epistle, it does not sound as though Fabianus was regarded as an important figure of the time.
[103] *Ad M. Caes*. IV.12.3.
[104] See ch.4.

As an adjective

As an adjective, *familiaris* appears only a couple of times. One of these is in *Ad Amicos* I.3, in describing Terentius Vanus. Since the context of this letter has already been explored, little more needs to be explained about his situation. Suffice it to say that he seems to have been from Fronto's hometown, and was 'dear amongst very few people'.[105] And if the latter sections of this fragmentary letter do refer to him, Fronto's concern over his well-being is quite evident. Otherwise, Terentius Vanus' connection to Fronto remains unspecified.

The second instance of *familiaris* in its adjectival form occurs in *Ad Amicos* I.1, and in its superlative form at that: *Ne me existimasses parum considerasse gravitatem auctoritatemque tuum commendando Corneliano Sulpicio familiarssimo meo*. The context of this epistle is as follows: Fronto's friend, Sulpicius, the *familiarissimus*, is being brought to court, and the presiding judge is the recipient of the letter, Claudius Severus.[106] Fronto writes this letter in the hopes that Severus would give Sulpicius a favourable hearing; not that he is trying to sway the implementation of justice through friendship, but, as Cotton explains, the fact that Fronto is claiming his friend's innocence should be proof enough that Sulpicius was not guilty.[107]

In any case, this Sulpicius is believed to be the same as the man to whom Phrynichus dedicated his Eclogue, an Atticist, a barrister and an *ab epistulis Graecis* for the emperors.[108] Fronto had already heard of this man's good repute before he verified it with his own experience: *Habitavimus una, studuimus una, iocum seriumque*

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[105] *inter paucissimos carus est*.
[106] Possibly Cn. Claudius Severus Arabianus (see Van den Hout [1999], 399-400; *PIR* II^2 1027).
[107] (1981), 6-7. Interesting enough, if the identification is correct and the correspondent of this letter is Cn. Claudius Severus Arabianus (Van den Hout [1999], 399-400), then this highly respected teacher of Marcus Aurelius is described by the emperor as a man who had a 'readiness to do others a kindness, and eager generosity, and optimism, and confidence in the love of friends' (*Meditations*, I.14). How appropriate, indeed.
[108] Although he later arose to great prominence, at this point in time, Sulpicius was still just a barrister. Otherwise, Fronto would not have been required to write such a letter in the first place (*Ad Amicos* I.1). See also Van den Hout (1999), 401; and *PIR* III^1 716 and II^2 1303.

participavimus, fidei consiliique periculum fecimus.[109] Van den Hout reads from this that Sulpicius was a generation younger and a *contubernalis* of Fronto, but, as I have argued, this cannot always be taken for granted; that he was already an established man before their encounter speaks against the interpretation that he was a 'pupil' of Fronto's, like the son of Squilla Gallicanus. This notwithstanding, the familiarity that Fronto shared with this man, likely an equestrian if the identification is correct, is in no doubt.[110]

What is most interesting about this letter, however, is not the obvious association between Sulpicius and Fronto, but the fact that Sulpicius is termed not only *familiarissmus*, but *necessarius* and *amicus* as well.[111] Was Fronto merely trying to vary his vocabulary use? Voconius Romanus was also given three expressions of friendship by Pliny, but the proposal there was that it was a case of reiterating their *amicitia*, not an attempt at somehow displaying special intimacy by stacking words of familiarity together. I argue that it is the same situation here. Although Fronto was undoubtedly keen on giving Claudius Severus the impression that he and Sulpicius were closely associated, there is no reason to believe this could be achieved through multiple word use.

Grammatically speaking, the superlative form of *familiarissimus* should be enough to convey the idea. And, as with the situation with Appian, if Fronto was only interested in representing strong intimacy, then surely the term *contubernalis* would have made an appearance. The absence of the term in this series of words denoting affection does imply, once again, that *contubernalis* was held in particular regard for Fronto, and had a precise meaning. Despite the fact that the two friends lived and studied together (perhaps the

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[109] *Ad Amicos* I.1.4.

[110] The basis of the friendship between Fronto and Sulpicius, namely, the latter's excellent character and their mutual interest in culture/oratory, is recalled once more in *Ad Amicos* I.2, where Fronto asks Appius Apollonides to be on the lookout for this ἀγαθῷ ἀνδρὶ κἀμοὶ φίλῳ. It also appears that Sulpicius' disdain for philosophy may have had an impact on Fronto. Appius Apollonides is otherwise an obscure figure in history, though Champlin tentatively suggests the identification with the surgeon found in Artemidorus 245.20 (Van den Hout [1999], 403; Champlin [1980], 152).

[111] *Sed, ut dixi, veteris institute exemplo necessarium meum laudare apud te ausus sum* and *Sollicitudo amici me a … multis eum verbis commendare*. The Teubner gives *animi* instead [171.9], but that suggestion was already dismissed by Haines in the Loeb edition (I.286, n.4).

studuimus una is better translated here as 'pursued the same interests together'), for Fronto to not have used *contubernalis* in describing Sulpicius is telling.

To return to the original issue, perhaps the mysterious appearance of *necessarius*, unprecedented thus far in this thesis, can help provide the missing link. Of course, the word was often seen in Cicero to denote a close friend or family member,[112] but such substantive use of *necessarius* was notoriously missing in Pliny and passed by almost undetected in Fronto. Indeed, this instance appears to be the only one in the extent of the missives left to us, and, in this isolated case it is very difficult to come to a firm conclusion. In other words, even should it be at all possible to distinguish between *necessarius* and *amicus/familiaris*, provided that differences exist in the first place, the *Correspondence* of Fronto would be unhelpful in this regard. If, however, we consider this *necessarius* in the same light as we have with the unique appearance of *alumnus*, we can perhaps venture to guess that there may have been special significance with the use of this word.

A final occurrence

The starting point of the analysis on *familiaris* in the previous chapter was Sherwin-White's remark that the term signified a relationship that was more intimate than one designated by *amicus*. One of Sherwin-White's most convincing points for this argument was Pliny's use of *familiaris amicus*, and, logically speaking, this should indicate a relationship that is closer than just *amicus*. But, it became apparent that his contention cannot be wholly substantiated by the evidence; there is no reason to believe that *familiaris* by itself meant a close friend and *amicus* simply denoted an acquaintance. The difference between the two terms in Pliny was left unexplained. Can anything be added to this query

[112] For instance, *Ad Fam.* I.9.25, III.11.3, V.4.1, etc.

from an examination of Fronto? The first thing to remark is that the expression *familiaris amicus* does not occur at all in the Fronto that is left to us. The instance found in *Ad Amicos* I.1 is unhelpful in this regard, nor do the *amici ac familiares nostri* of *Ad Pium* 3 give any further indication.[113] The one last occurrence of *familiaris*, however, is noteworthy and the passage deserves to be quoted in its fuller context:

> *Post illa quaecumque ad instruendam provinciam adtinerent, quo facilius a me tanta negotia per* ***amicorum*** *copias obirentur, sedulo praeparavi.* ***Propinquos*** *et* ***amicos*** *meos, quorum fidem et integritatem cognoveram, domo accivi. Alexandriam ad* ***familiares*** *meos scripsi ut Athenas festinarent, ibique me opperirentur, iisque Graecarum epistularum curam doctissimis viris detuli. Ex Cilicia etiam spendidos viros, quod magna mihi in ea provincia* ***amicorum*** *copia est, quom publice privatimque semper negotia Cilicum apud te defenderim, ut venirent hortatus sum. Ex Mauretania quoque virum* ***amantissimum*** *mihique mutuo carum, Iulium Senem, ad me vocavi, cuius non modo fide et diligentia, sed etiam militari industria circa quaerendos et continendos latrones adiuvarer* (emphases mine).[114]

Such was the cohort that Fronto recruited for the trip to his province, which he had to renounce due to his ill-health. But as we can see, the passage is loaded with references to friends and relations. What is of interest here is the diverse mix of *amicus* and *familiaris* amongst other words of friendship. Can the argument that this was merely a variation in vocabulary still be made, given the fact that forms of *amicus* appear three times already? It is also unlikely for *familiares* to refer to Fronto's family members in this situation, as we do not know of any such relations located there. What connections, then, can we say

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[113] In the context of this letter, that is, Fronto is complaining that some of his *amici* and *familiares* would not listen to his advice regarding their wills, the *familiares* could just as well mean a family member as an intimate friend.

[114] *Ad Pium* 8.1: 'Then I took active steps to enlist the help of my friends in all that concerned the ordering of the province. Relations and friends of mine, of whose loyalty and integrity I was assured, I called from home to assist me. I wrote to my intimates at Alexandria to repair with all speed to Athens and await me their, and I deputed the management of my Greek correspondence to those most learned men. From Cilicia too I called upon eminent citizens to join me, for, owing to my always having advocated the public and private interests of Cilicians before you, I had hosts of friends in that province. From Mauretania also I summoned to my side Julius Senex, a man whose love for me was no less than mine for him, that I might avail myself not only of his loyalty and diligence, but also of his military activity in the hunting down and suppressing of brigands'.

Fronto had in Alexandria? Appian was one, but it was already noted that he was called an *amicus* in *Ad Pium* 9, though, as we have seen, such terms are in no way mutually exclusive.[115] Another possibility is Athenodotus, the teacher of Fronto. He was based in Alexandria, but taught in Rome, where Fronto most likely received his education.[116] Athenodotus could very well have returned to Alexandria at some point and introduced people to Fronto from there. And if Fronto did regard his teacher as a parental figure,[117] then to find the term *familiaris* used here is in no way surprising.

We also note that the *propinquii* and *amici* upon whose services Fronto called were from his *domus*, which commentators agree referred to Cirta.[118] In this sense, we can understand that these were the men from Fronto's hometown, whom Fronto would have known for a long time and whose loyalty and integrity Fronto had come to acknowledge. It is therefore not unexpected to find that Fronto had placed them first in his list of potential supporters. The use of *propinquus*, like *alumnus* and *necessarius*, makes a sudden appearance, though this can perhaps be explained as an attempt to offset the *familiares* that would come in the next sentence. Even should we naturally expect *familiares*, with the meaning of family members, to have emerged from Fronto's hometown, maybe since Fronto was aware that the term *familiaris* could take on such a wide assortment of connotations, he deliberately chose another word to designate specifically kin or someone related to himself.

As for the *viri splendidi* of Cilicia, modern commentators have yet to shed light on the matter.[119] It is nonetheless clear from the passage itself that Fronto was a patron of sorts to some people in the province, with him having represented their affairs before the

[115] As in the case of Cornelius Sulpicius.
[116] Van den Hout (1999), 43-44, 395. Champlin (1980), 20. Others (Haines [Loeb], 43; Farquharson [1951], 38) believe that Fronto first studied in Alexandria before coming to Rome, and while this would make interpretation of the passage much easier, there is unfortunately no evidence to support this idea.
[117] See p.163-164.
[118] Haines (*Loeb*), 236; Van den Hout (1999), 395.
[119] Champlin has little to say about Fronto's involvement in Cilicia (1980, 66), and Van den Hout notes the *negotia Cilicum* as unknown (1999, 395).

emperor on several occasions. Should this great force of friends from Cilicia be considered clients of Fronto? Judging from the evidence, it is probably unwise to think otherwise. Then again, as I have argued in the previous chapter, acts of patronage performed on someone's behalf do not automatically limit him or her to the status of a client. Pliny very readily intervened in the affairs of his most intimate friends and did not consider them as anything less than *amici*. Of course, this has yet to be demonstrated in Fronto, but the precedent is there.[120] What we can assume is that not only were these men *splendidus*, but they must also possess the qualities of trustworthiness and integrity, two qualifications set out earlier. Unfortunately for us, this is all that can be deduced about Fronto's association with Cilicia and its excellent men, since they do not appear elsewhere in the extant of the letters.[121]

Last is the enigmatic figure of Julius Senex, whose relationship to Fronto is completely unknown. Van den Hout points out that the experience of hunting down robbers in Mauretania was what Fronto would have needed in Asia,[122] but why this man was *amantissimus* to Fronto remains a mystery. The word *amantissimus* should not strike us as unexpected, since it must be close in meaning to *carissimus*,[123] the latter of which we see much more often; the superlative form is a nice touch, though.

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[120] One thing that must be mentioned is the poor translation by Haines of this section, uncritically accepted by Champlin: '…owing to my always having advocated the public and private interests of Cilicians before you'. Rather, this phrase actually says, 'since I have always advocated the interests of Cilicians publicly and privately before you'. This more accurate rendition puts a slightly different spin on the situation.

[121] It is curious as to why Fronto would specifically pick the people of this province to accompany him on his duties. It cannot only have been because Fronto was the patron of the people there, since, surely, Fronto was the patron of many communities – several in Africa come to mind. Nor is it realistic to assume that the only other *splendidi viri* Fronto knew were of that region. The only plausible explanation I can think of is the proximity of Cilicia to the province of Asia, which meant that Fronto could rely on the expertise of these local men, as it were.

[122] (1999), 395.

[123] See p.228.

Amicus

Finally, we come to examine the use of *amicus*. Naturally, we would expect this word to be the most often employed amongst the many terms to denote friendship, and this is indeed the case. It must be admitted, however, that out of the almost hundred instances of *amicus* and its variants, the majority are either used by Fronto himself or by the emperor(s) to indicate the affection they had for each other, as, for example, in *Ad M. Caes*. III.18 from Marcus Aurelius to Fronto, *Vale, mi magister suavissime, amice amicissime…* or in *Ad M. Caes*. III.3 from Fronto to his imperial pupil, *Merito ego me devovi tibi, merito fructus vitae meae omnes in te ac tuo parento constitui. Quid fieri amicius, quid iucundius, quid verius potest?* Since I will be dealing with the personal relationships and professed friendships with emperors in the following chapters, these occurrences are omitted for the time being. There are also instances where the term is used in such a general sense as to be unhelpful, such as the *communium amicorum* of *Ad Amicum* I.8 and the *Si evenire posset, Imp., ut amici ac familiares nostri nostris moribus cuncta agerent…* of *Ad Pium* 3, but these are not common. Further, it appears that not much more can be said about the *amici* from *Ad Pium* 8, whose exact identities elude us. The remaining cases can then generally be attached to specific persons and hence the relationship they shared with Fronto can be analyzed in more detail.

Censorius Niger

Let us begin with the figure of Censorius Niger, the protagonist of *Ad Pium* 3, 4 and 7. A man of equestrian origins, Niger had once served as the *procurator Augusti* in various provinces, including Noricum and perhaps Mauretania Tingitana.[124] In his lifetime, he seems to have achieved some status and fame, but had subsequently fallen out

[124] *CIL* III 5174, 5181; XVI 176.

of favour with Antoninus Pius and offended his praetorian prefect, Gavius Maximus, whom Niger might have known previously.[125] Upon his death, Niger bestowed a sizeable inheritance on Fronto in his will, along with some severe words about Gavius.[126] It is in this situation that Fronto found himself, and he decided that it would be *immemor amicitiae, nisi saltem deprecando sublevem*.[127]

Of course, Fronto was prudent enough not to condone the fact that Niger was *impos et minus consideratus*, something that obviously had caused Antoninus Pius much displeasure, but he also felt that it was his duty to defend this *amicus*.[128] He points out that Niger was, despite this last desperate act of defiance against Gavius, an excellent man with plenty of achievements. He won the approval and friendship of such notable men as Marcius Turbo, the praetorian prefect under Hadrian, as well as Erucius Clarus, twice consul and *praefectus urbi*.[129] He begs Pius to remember the favours he himself had once granted him, and to forgive the transgression of this man who 'is to be pitied rather than hated'.[130]

What is important about this set of letters is that Fronto chose to maintain his *amicitia* with someone in this sort of predicament. As Fronto himself has realized, it was almost expected that he would abandon his friendship with Niger as soon as the emperor

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[125] Fronto says in *Ad Pium* 7, the letter directed to Gavius Maximus, *Iam dicendum sit, deos testor me saepe vidisse Nigrum Censorium ubertim flentem desiderio tui atque huius descidii dolore*. Whether this is polite language on Fronto's part, or Niger seriously regretted having insulted Gavius, or whether it is an indication of previous association is unclear. I do not dare to fabricate an entire back story, as Van den Hout has done: 'Once Niger and Gavius had been on good terms…but Gavius' successful career may have provoked Niger's jealousy. Moreover, Gavius had also been *procurator Augusti* and, being a *vir severissimus* (*Vita Pii* 8.7), he may have criticized with Pius the way his colleague Niger worked, because Niger, who had been in favour with Pius at first…later incurred his displeasure…and Pius was not the man to make allowances for irregularities of his staff…' (1999, 386). Champlin also gives a detailed interpretation of the situation, whereby he expounds the scenario with a mind towards the political implications this had for our author (1980, 100-102).
[126] Niger left five-twelfths of his estate to Fronto (*Ad Pium* 4).
[127] *Ad Pium* 3.
[128] *Et tamen amici atque heredis officium, ut par erat, retinere cupiebam* (*Ad Pium* 4).
[129] Erucius Clarus was also a protégé of Pliny. See Pliny *Epist*. II.9 (Van den Hout [1999], 387)
[130] Champlin (1980), 101.

showed any signs of disapproval.[131] It could be politically disastrous should he act otherwise.[132] But he did not. Even when faced the possibility of offending the powerful and influential Gavius Maximus, Fronto felt that the friendship he shared with Niger was worth defending. Certainly, Fronto was cautious in his approach with Gavius, explaining to him that his *amicitia* with Niger should not impede on their relationship, and assuring him that he would always have Fronto's loyalty and sincerity.[133] Add to this the unvoiced request for his imperial pupil to intervene with his father and the current praetorian prefect in the matter, it is easy to observe the anxiety Fronto suffered and the possible dangers he foresaw.[134]

Still, Fronto remained firm in his resolve and proclaimed loudly the *amicitia* that existed between him and Niger. How are we to interpret this turn of events? Why would Fronto risk the attacks of *maligni homines* to defend someone who had effectively been a political outcast and was now a liability?[135] Surely it was not for the five-twelfths of the estate Fronto was to inherit. Although Fronto claims that his funds were somewhat wanting, the reality could hardly have been so;[136] this kind of money would definitely have not been worth hazarding political suicide. The other possible explanation is one Fronto himself expressed, that it was done as a duty to a friend. Indeed, it was their *amicitia* that prevailed during the years in which Niger incurred Pius' disapproval, and it is now their

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[131] *Haud sciam an quis dicat debuisse me amicitiam cum eo desinere, postquam cognoveram gratiam eius apud animum tuum imminutam* (*Ad Pium* 3) [162.23: *qui* instead]. Champlin extrapolates from this: 'At the least, the passage illuminates a convention: when the prince abandons a friendship, the loyal courtier should do likewise…' (1980, 101). A similar notion can be read from *Ad Pium* 7: *Postremo neque ego Nigrum propter te amare coeperam, ut propter te eundem amare desinerem, neque tu me a Nigro tibi traditum diligere coepisti*. Does this mean that if the person who made an introduction for someone to a third party had a fallout with that third party, the man introduced is supposed to break off relations as well?
[132] Champlin (1980), 101: 'Fronto might have put his own *amicitia* with the prince into jeopardy…'
[133] Champlin seems to believe that an *amicitia* existed between Fronto and Gavius Maximus (1980, 100), but I am inclined to agree with Van den Hout that the way Fronto described Gavius to Marcus Aurelius sounds 'stiff and impersonal' (1999, 390): *clarissimum et nobis observandum virum* (*Ad Pium* 4). In fact, nowhere in the missive with Gavius itself does Fronto mention anything about their friendship, only the plea that Gavius not remain ill-disposed towards him on account of Niger (*Ad Pium* 7).
[134] *Ad Pium* 4; Champlin (1980), 101-102.
[135] *Ad Pium* 7.
[136] *Ad Verum* II.7. See also Van den Hout (1999, 273) for a brief note on Fronto's assets.

amicitia that compelled Fronto to risk defending a man whose actions even Fronto could not approve of. Our author could easily have renounced his friendship and quite probably have declined the inheritance given to him. This way, he would not have been open to the criticism that must have abounded, the criticism that caused much of his anxiety in the first place. However, he chose not to. He chose to bear that anxiety, all in the name of friendship. These three letters, then, speak volumes about the nature of *amicitia* in Roman society.

A third interpretation of these letters is also possible, that Fronto was attempting to defend the name of his client. Since Censorius Niger was obviously an equestrian, and if we understand Roman social relations in the terms that Saller advocates, then we should view the relationship shared between Fronto and Niger as one based on patronage, and the latter a client of the former. But such a reading completely misunderstands the point of these missives, as well as the point on which Fronto based his entire defence. For one thing, Niger's friendship with Erucius Clarus is mentioned in the same breath as his friendship with Marcius Turbo, and Fronto was clearly trying to convey the effect that Niger had friends from all ranks of Roman society.[137] Secondly, the notion of friendship underlined every argument Fronto had in these three epistles: it was for the sake of his friendship with Niger that he might oppose the will of the emperor, a faithful friendship with 'hidden loyalties' that is to be witnessed by the gods above and below, the *res veras et congruentes simplicitati nostrae amicitiae*.[138] This is not including the various uses of *amare* throughout. Therefore, to overlook such emphases, to dismiss these acclamations as ways with which to obscure patronage relations,[139] seem to me to be quite in error.

[137] Not just friends, but important friends.
[138] *Ego certe deos superos inferosque et fidem arcanam humanae amicitiae testor, me semper auctorem fuisse cuius…*It is impossible to read the rest of this sentence (*Ad Pium* 3).
[139] Saller (1982), 11.

Lastly, would it be plausible to think that Fronto would go to such lengths for a client? Admittedly, the bond between a patron and client is said to have been a sacred one,[140] but considering what is at stake for Fronto and the obvious apprehension displayed by him in his attempt to vindicate his friend, all of this points to a relationship that was deeper than simple patronage. It is hard to imagine a patron risking so much for a client, but it is perfectly acceptable, even advocated, for a friend to behave thus. Therefore, this is further evidence that, in Fronto as well as in Pliny, *amicitia* is a relationship that transcended the strict bonds of social hierarchy.

Fulvianus

The word *amicus* appears a couple of times in a fragmentary letter to a certain Fulvianus.[141] Although the usages of *amicus* in this letter are made in a broad sense, that is, with no reference to particular figures, the content of the letter itself is still relevant to our purposes. As far as can be deciphered from the poor state of this epistle, Fronto is describing the value of writing to friends! He appears to be lamenting how inconsistent he used to be about exchanging letters with friends, going as far as claiming *nec quisquam est hominum…qui rarius quam ego scripserit ad amicos aut rescripserit…* But Fulvianus can avoid that mistake.[142] And this is important, Fronto asserts, because all too often do friendships fall apart through a 'fickleness of character' or through 'the quantity of his new

[140] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, II.9-12.
[141] *Ad Amicos* I.19. This character currently remains unidentified, if we accept Van den Hout and Pflaum's criticism to Mai's original theory, that this was Lucius' secretary during the Parthian War (1999, 432-433), although a Fulvianus does make an appearance in *Ad Verum* II.3. In any case, Fulvianus should be a contemporary of Fronto's, as indicated by the last words of this letter, *aetatis nostrae mediocritas*.
[142] Unfortunately, the text here is too fragmentary to elicit a precise reading, though the few words that remain do shed some light on the matter: *ultro citroque tibi <facul>tas est…te…tamen…amicis et comitibus…*This suggests that Fulvianus had the *facultas* to do otherwise. The *Teubner* is nearly as fragmentary and does not contribute much to the reading, but differs slightly from Haines': *denuntio defletusque ultro citro eodem ea tibi ac si queaxendepricatis nominis eadesba...tas est...tamen pre...res...tevate...tamen sis...amicis et comitibus...hi...possi...* [183.21-22, 184.1].

friends'.[143] In other words, it is surprisingly easy to cease from loving without diligent and persistent reiteration of friendship through communication; for if the individuals involved are too lazy to make the effort or have too many responsibilities with their new acquaintances, old friendships are easily forgotten. And this should not happen to men of our mentality, Fronto advises.[144]

This epistle, I would argue, is informative in that it helps us appreciate the more realistic qualities of Roman *amicitia*. We are told that friends do grow distant, forgotten through the passage of time or replaced by friends of closer proximity. Pliny has talked about his tendency to remind a friend of his previous favours by bestowing further benefits on him;[145] here we see that something as simple as a letter can achieve a similar effect of re-strengthening *amicitia*. But the concern is evident. Not unlike friendship in the modern era, in Roman times *amicitia* too needed effort to maintain, and the effort is especially pronounced when the method of communication was severely lacking. Furthermore, the network of associations for each individual must have been enormous in an age that relied heavily on symbolic capitol.[146] Still, for men like us, Fronto tells Fulvianus, this should not happen. We make the effort to keep up with our friends, because neither are we fickle, nor will new friends ever replace the ones we previously valued. Maybe the lost sections of the letter would have Fronto accusing, 'so why have you not written to me in so long?'[147]

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[143] *Nonne illud quoque evenire solet, ut is, qui diu amaverit quempiam, subito vel levitate morum vel copia novorum amicorum desinat amare*?
[144] *Scis saepenumero hoc satis multis usu venisse, sed non nostrae mensurae hominibus...*[184.5-6: *scis saepenumero hoc perperam multis usuvenire, sed non nostrae mensurae hominibus*].
[145] *Epist*. III.4: *Nam quamlibet saepe obligate, si quid unum neges, hoc solum meminerunt quod negatum est*.
[146] See Verboven (2002), 349-351.
[147] This letter is strangely reminiscent of the so-called postcards we saw in Pliny, which served no real purpose except to keep in touch.

Appian

The last significant instance of *amicus* is Fronto's association with Appian. The circumstances in which he was mentioned in the course of Fronto's letters have been referred to throughout this chapter, but it may be worthwhile to go into slightly more detail.[148] The historian was a contemporary of Fronto, and not only were the two acquainted, but there existed *vetus consuetudo et studiorum usus prope cotidianus* between them.[149] It was on behalf of Appian that Fronto wrote a petition to Antoninus Pius, asking him to bestow an honorary procuratorship on this *amicus* – honorary because, as Fronto assures, Appian wanted only the distinction 'to enhance his dignity in old age', not the salary nor the burdens that accompanied the office.[150] Fronto feels that he ought to be successful with his request, firstly because he had been asking for two years, during which time Pius was apparently well-disposed to the idea, and secondly because the emperor had previously granted, through the instigation of Fronto of course, a similar request to his *contubernalis*, Sextius Calpurnius.[151]

What is of interest here is the possible difference between Fronto's use of *amicus* to refer to Appian, and *contubernalis* to Calpurnius. To be sure, since we have already established that *contubernalis* is the term most often used to designate a close association, if all Fronto wanted to achieve in this epistle is to demonstrate to Pius that very intimacy, then he surely would have used the same word. Instead, he remained consistent about Appian being his *amicus*, employing it yet a second time later in the missive. This then rules out the possibility of varying his vocabulary for the sake of the audience.

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[148] *Ad Pium* 9.
[149] Van den Hout takes this line to indicate that Fronto had been the one responsible for introducing Appian to Roman historiography (1999, 398). This is perhaps a little farfetched.
[150] *Dignitatis enim suae aetate ornandae causa.* Van den Hout seems to believe that Appian wanted the salary as well, though Fronto does make it clear that this was not Appian's intent (1999, 397).
[151] Incidentally, Fronto was eventually successful in his petition.

Other possible explanations can be raised. Maybe Calpurnius was once a student of Fronto's, and the *contubernalis* is used in that regard, whereas Appian was simply a friend with whom Fronto shared literary interests. But this is in no way definite, as it was suggested previously that a *contubernalis* does not always denote a pupil.[152] The conjecture that perhaps *contubernalis* would indicate someone of the younger generation, while an *amicus* would designate a contemporary or peer, can also be dismissed relatively easily. For two *contubernales* of Fronto, this Calpurnius and Montanus of *Ad Amicos* I.3, were probably contemporaries of our author.[153] Is it possible for the two words to denote some difference in their social status? We know that Calpurnius was an equestrian, though the same cannot be said for Appian. So could *contubernalis* designate someone of the equestrian status and *amicus* someone with no status at all? This, however, cannot be substantiated if we consider the other letters and individuals in this collection. For Censorius Niger was an equestrian, a distinguished one at that, and was an *amicus*, and Montanus, the sharer of Fronto's *contubernium*, was probably just a decurion.

A digression can be made here to expand on the relationship between Appian and Fronto, as somehow the ancient editor(s) of the collection managed to include a set of exchanges between the two. *Epist. Graec*. 4 then is a letter from Appian, scolding the orator for refusing a gift of two slaves he had sent. Why is it, Appian wonders, that friends are more willing to accept gifts from their deceased friends than from their living ones, when it is to the living friends that they can actually make a return? He admits that it is possible for the recipient to feel burdened by the gift, but as heavy as it may be there is no better burden than friendship! And why would it even be a burden, if Appian is not

[152] See p.132-133.
[153] See p.130-131.

looking for an equivalent exchange?[154] And so, Appian pleads for Fronto to accept the gift, if nothing else, simply for the benefit of allowing Appian the pleasure of giving.

Fronto's reply is long and pedantic, picking up on some of the minor arguments put forth by Appian as points of contention.[155] But the main case Fronto makes against receiving the gift is done in a light-hearted and humorous tone, betraying the intimacy the two shared. He claims that the two slaves were too expensive, and in taking them Fronto would be guilty of making his friend poorer. How can he enjoy such a present if he was aware it would make Appian suffer?[156] And would Appian really want to receive praise for bestowing the present, if in so doing Fronto would be maligned for robbing Appian blind? Fronto will, however, gladly receive small gifts from Appian, since they will not bankrupt either his friend or himself. Indeed, if he did accept Appian's gift, he would have to return the favour with an even costlier gift, which would be silly. No, Fronto maintains, it is much better to return a gift with a gift of equivalent value, which is essentially what he is doing by sending the gifts back. In fact, Fronto admits as a friend to a very dear friend, Appian is getting the better of the deal, as the slaves will be cheap to maintain.[157]

Amicus and *amicitia*

To return to the topic at hand, as in Pliny, no positive assertions can be made about Fronto's different use of *amicus* and *familiaris*, and sometimes even of *contubernalis*. What we can determine is that Fronto, again like Pliny, remained strangely consistent with the words he chose to describe his relationship with his friends. Appian was called an *amicus* twice, and Niger was likewise given the appellation several times – never did

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[154] 4.2-3: This section is full of references to φιλία, from one φίλος to another.
[155] *Epist. Graec*. 5.
[156] 5.6: οὐδέ γε τὰ τοιαῦτα δῶρα χρή τινα ἐλέσθαι, ἃ τοὺς μὲν πέμποντας πενέστερους ἀποδείξει, τοὺς δὲ λαμβάνοντας πλουσιωτέρους παρασκευάσει.
[157] 5.8: ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν φίλῳ πρὸς τὸν φίλτατον πεπαίχθω. τροφεῖ<α> δὲ <τῶν παίδων> καὶ λογιζομένῳ μείζονα τὸν καρπόν σοι νῦν παρέξει.

Fronto deviate into *familiaris* or *contubernalis* with these two. An exception is to be found in Cornelianus Sulpicius, the man with three titles: *amicus*, *familiarissimus* and *necessarius*. Then again, perhaps this is more the nature of the word *familiaris* than *amicus*, as we see another deviation with Gavius Clarus, both a *familiaris* and an *alumnus*. And needless to say, the consistency reappears in the employment of *contubernalis*.

What this suggests is that all of the words Fronto applied to various individuals have their own nuances and are used accordingly. Unfortunately, it is hard, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, to determine exactly what those nuances are, and whether this showed any signs on Fronto's part of grading his friends. The situation is especially difficult with *familiaris* and *amicus*. Nevertheless, a point from the previous chapter must be reiterated at this time: even though this study has pursued the analysis of *amicitia* through a division of the words used to denote friendship, the fact that we see vocabulary such as *amare*, *fides*, *carus*, and, most importantly, the basic word *amicitia* interspersed throughout these letters indicates that friendship is a relationship that united rather than separated. Even should we not be able to understand the precise difference behind *amicus* and *familiaris*, we should at least acknowledge that they were all ways of expressing *amicitia*.

Highly Ranked Acquaintances

There is an additional issue we should take into account, which is the surprising lack of individuals of similar rank and prestige to Fronto in the discussion so far. Although there has been some mention of senators, specifically Gavius Clarus and the family of Gavius Squilla, Clarus was by no means an equal and the younger Squilla was Fronto's pupil. Why is it that no coeval of Fronto has been referred to by one of these three terms? In Pliny, even if the *contubernales* were confined to equestrian class, there were many

amici who were rich and powerful. Since it cannot be the case that Fronto had no highly ranked friends, we should speculate about this peculiarity. Part of the explanation, I believe, lies in the fragmentary state of our collection. It may simply be that the letters that make references to senators and other highly ranked individuals have not survived.[158] In order to determine Fronto's relationship with his colleagues, then, we must look towards the letters directly addressed to them instead.

Frater

What immediately strikes us is the appearance of yet another expression that was missing in Pliny, namely, *frater*. This occurs on four separate occasions, among which people of senatorial status do come up. *Ad Amicos* I.8 sees Fronto addressing Passienus Rufus, possibly the consul of 149 and a proconsul of 164, with this terminology.[159] The context of this letter tells us that Fronto and Passienus Rufus had not previously been acquainted, though Fronto is using this occasion to correct that mistake.[160] Thus *frater* in this instance betrays the respect with which Fronto wanted to approach the situation, not any sense of intimacy. *Ad Amicos* I.9, another letter of introduction, provides the second example. Again, there is not much to indicate a close relationship between Fronto and the recipient of this letter, Caelius Optatus.[161] The epistle remains very formal, with little discussion about the *amicitia* that may have existed. Once more, we can only conclude that *frater* was used as a sign of deference.

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[158] For instance, *amice* has never once figured in any of these letters, either in Pliny or Fronto. And yet, somehow Fronto's letters to the emperors are full of vocatives. See p.228 n.121.
[159] Van den Hout suggests that Passienus Rufus could be the *tribunus militum* of *CIL* VIII 26580 (1999, 413), but the letter itself suggests that he was a much more important figure in the circle of Roman politics.
[160] See p.176-177.
[161] See p.135-136.

The situation with Squilla Gallicanus is slightly different, not only because Fronto decided to add the modifier *domine* to *frater*,[162] but also because Fronto was the teacher to his son.[163] This then confirms the closer relationship between the two – at least Fronto and Squilla were already acquainted – and allows the term *frater* to assume a nuance of *amicitia*, as well as a tone of respectfulness. The last example comes from *Ad Amicos* II.4, an epistle thanking *frater* Cornelius Repentinus for his kind defence of Fabianus, a *familiaris* of Fronto. Though this would have otherwise been an unremarkable letter addressed to this praetorian prefect,[164] the form of address adopted by Fronto invites remark. That is, instead of just calling Repentius a *frater*, Fronto also used what seems to be the recipient's nickname, Contuccius.[165] Perhaps this was simply the way Contuccius preferred to be addressed and so provides us with no further information about the matter, but it may also be due to Fronto's peculiar association with the individual. Regrettably, there are no more references to Contuccius and the epistle itself remains unhelpful; the situation with Tiberius Claudius Iulianus, though, could prove illuminating.

The recipient of three missives,[166] Iulianus was the consul of 145 and a *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in 160.[167] Although we find no specific terminology used to describe Iulianus, words such as *amicus* or even *frater*, we do notice that Fronto regularly addresses this man with his nickname, Naucellius.[168] The three letters also contain clues as to the close relationship Fronto had with Naucellius. In the first missive, in which Fronto attempts to recommend the young Faustinianus, he affectionately asserts that if he had a

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[162] *Ad Amicos* I.25. Van den Hout comments that the expression *domine frater* occurs in Latin literature for the first time. This precedence is to be followed by Apollinaris Sidonius later (1999, 435).
[163] See p.135.
[164] *PIR* II^2 1428.
[165] Van den Hout (1999), 439.
[166] *Ad Amicos* I.5, I.17 and I.18. Interesting enough, the text of *Ad Amicos* I.17 is not available in the *Teubner*, and only the title was inferred. The latter sections of Haine's I.17 seem also to be part of the *Teubner's Ad Amicos* I.19, though the rest is original. It is unclear where Haines obtained the beginning parts of his I.17.
[167] Van den Hout (1999), 387; *ILS* 2907.
[168] Van den Hout believes that Fronto was the only one to have called Iulianus this, 'Little Boatman'. The reference is due to Iulianus having commanded the fleet in his province (1999, 387).

male child of his own, he would do everything in his power to have him serve under this dear 'Little Boatman'.[169] To be sure, this could be another example of the conventions customarily employed in letters of recommendation, but as Champlin remarks, 'Such patronage of the young was a common favour between friends, but, more specifically, it was often a mark of kinship'.[170]

Whether Fronto was related to Naucellius cannot be proven, but that Fronto and Naucellius are close friends can also be observed in the next two letters. *Ita instituimus amicitiam, ut haec volgata officia neglegeremus vero amare contenti*, Fronto proclaims in *Ad Amicos* I.17.[171] In the last missive, we see Fronto declaring Naucellius as *quoque participem mei corporis et animi*, a notion with philosophical overtones, and wishing that his friend was held in the same favour by the emperors as he was.[172] Moreover, in the last fragmentary section of the letter, Fronto reverts to complaining of his health and relating mundane matters to Naucellius, a likely sign of close intimacy.

The nickname of Iulianus indicates that Fronto did have close friends amongst the senatorial elites. And if we apply this example to the situation presented by Contuccius, we may propose that the praetorian prefect too was a close friend of Fronto. In addition, the function of *frater* in this context is easily explained. The word signifies respectability, an acknowledgement of the other party's standing within Roman society.[173] It is also an indication of age and maturity, for Fronto would never be so insolent as to label his elder a peer, nor would he ever be so indifferent that he might address a younger colleague as

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[169] But since he did not, Faustinianus is the next best thing.
[170] Champlin goes so far as to suggest that Iulianus may have been a kinsman of Fronto's wife (1980, 35).
[171] Champlin interprets the later part of this letter as saying '…Fronto could consider Iulianus to be his only remaining friend' (1980, 34-35). This is supported by the *Teubner*, which reads: *eo pervenit, ut non tantum mi<hi> carissimus sis, sed etia<m> paene solus* [182, 10-11]. Haines' text does not suggest this: *eo pervenit ut esset mihi non tantum carissimus is sed paene solus…* The letter may be fragmentary, but without doubt the *is* and the third person of the verb refers to someone other than the addressee of this epistle. See also Pliny, *Epist*. IX.37.1.
[172] See p.79 n.144.
[173] On the other side of the argument is that it also acknowledges Fronto's position within Roman society, as he stands on the same level as his *fratres*.

such. Indeed, this is not a new occurrence; it has been employed in this fashion since Cicero.[174]

Frater does not, on the other hand, demonstrate how intimate Fronto was with the addressee. Nor does it limit itself to people of one class: Contuccius the praetorian prefect is duly noted, as is the senator Squilla Gallicanus. Nevertheless, all of Fronto's supposed *fratres* appear to hold important positions within the Roman state, even the equestrian Contuccius, and an argument can be made that an equestrian in a position such as Contuccius differed little in terms of class from a senator; but somehow it is still not surprising to discover Fronto recognizing equestrians as a friend. After all, as this thesis has argued time and time again, *amicitia* is a relationship that spans all classes. Fronto's equestrian friends, decurion friends and even friends without status were no more his clients than his senatorial companions.

Hierarchy, Patronage and *Amicitia* in Fronto

After the analysis of the ways in which Fronto articulated his *amicitia*, it is now a good moment to consider in greater depth how the *amicita* in Fronto's letters relate to the issue of the hierarchy inherent in Roman society, that is, with the question of friendship and patronage. The method adopted for this investigation in the previous chapter was through a consideration of how Pliny himself represented the social statuses of his *amici* and whether that in itself affected the portrayal of the friendships in his letters. The conclusion there was that although Pliny did have a hierarchy of relations, that hierarchy was characterized by intimacy and familiarity with the author rather than by the rank and status of the individual. The *contubernales* of Pliny were all equestrians, all of whom seemed to have shared the most intimate association with him; otherwise, his *amici* and

[174] Cicero, *Verrines* II.3.155. See Van den Hout (1999), 413.

familiares all hailed from different backgrounds, and the exact relationship between them and Pliny differed on a person to person basis, regardless of their social positions.

We also discovered that Pliny made no efforts to disguise the ranks of his friends, and in most cases they were made explicit by Pliny himself. This further suggests that rank and status had less to do with friendship, according to Pliny, than factors such as common interests and prolonged association. In other words, it did not matter that his *contubernales* were equestrians and a close *amicus* was just a decurion – they were friends first and foremost.[175] Clients did not receive any mention in the course of Pliny's letters, though it would be quite misguided to imagine they did not exist. And lastly, the reading of protégés in Pliny's epistles posed a slight problem: the description of their relationships with Pliny leaned more towards a familial nature than *amicitia*, but there was not a single standard which Pliny followed. This could imply that Pliny did adopt a semi-paternal attitude towards his protégés, but was closer to some than others. In this view, the standard title of patron/protégé perhaps recalled too much of the patron/client relationship, and a designation of mentor/protégé was offered in its place. Nonetheless, more study was required on this topic, more so than was allowed in the present thesis.

Fronto's protégés and familial connotations

To turn our attention back to Fronto, we note that the closest equivalent to Pliny's protégés in Fronto would be his pupils, some of whom are the *contubernales* mentioned previously. Furthermore, there is some notion of a familial connection between them and Fronto as well. The most explicit evidence of this comes from a letter to Squilla Gallicanus about the debut performance of his son in the forum: *Tibi, domine frater,*

[175] Although, of course, it is only reasonable to assume that the sorts of people with whom Pliny would associate the most must necessarily be limited to those with close proximity to him, and hence more often than not would mean those of the aristocratic class.

commodius evenit qui pro filio nostro praesens trepidaveris…[176] The use of *filius noster* here to designate the pupil in question, a pupil who was also a *contubernalis*, seems to imply that Fronto saw himself as a father figure to this young man. Volumnius Quadratus provides another example. Although not explicitly termed a *contubernalis* or described as a pupil, the three letters Fronto sent to him all deal with Quadratus' request for corrections on his work, which suggests that he was a student of some sort. Hence, the use of *filius* to designate this individual, and an adoption of a paternal stance for Fronto, may not be surprising.[177]

A third example comes from the family of Saturninus. Even though, as Fronto was consoling Sardius Saturninus for the death of his son, Fronto describes the tragic situation as his loss of a delightful *contubernalis*, and the best of brothers for Lupus Saturninus and for Sardius Saturninus the best of sons (perhaps it is bad form to claim a parental relationship at a time like this?),[178] this does not prevent Fronto from claiming a familial overtone with Lupus Saturninus when he attempted to introduce the latter to Petronius Mamertinus. *Oro quaesoque ut merito honore eum prosequaris, et inter cultores familiae nostrae numeres ac diligas*,[179] Fronto implores. Evidently, Fronto wished the recipient of the letter to reflect on the special relationship he shared with his student.[180]

Indeed, a paternal relationship in addition to the one of mentor/pupil appears to have been advocated by Fronto in the description of his own teacher, Athenodotus, a

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[176] *Ad Amicos* I.25.
[177] *Ad Amicos* II.1-3. The word *filius* occurs specifically in *Ad Amicos* II.3. The figure of Volumnius Quadratus remains unidentified. Van den Hout points out the tone of indifference employed by Fronto in these three letters – short and direct, with none of the warmth we see in some of Fronto's other letters to his *contubernales* (1999, 438). Perhaps the reason is exactly that: Quadratus was not a *contubernalis*.
[178] *Ad Amicos* I.20: *quem tibi optimum filium fors iniqua abstulit, mihi iucundissimum contubernalem…tristia tamen inhaeret animo meo magisque in dies augetur maerore Lupi nostri fratrem optimum misere desiderantis*.
[179] *Ad Amicos* I.10. The text is from Van den Hout; the edition by Haines misses this line completely.
[180] The ambiguity of *noster familia* in this passage invites some comments. Maybe the *noster* is more than just the possessive adjective of a formal we, but refers actually to both Fronto and Petronius Mamertinus. In this sense, Fronto is not just saying that he thought of Lupus Saturninus as family, something which Petronius should take into account, but also that Petronius should love the young man as part of his own family as well.

magister et parens.[181] It is possible that Fronto did believe a proper teacher's role included more involvement in his students' life than just educational. A *magister* was responsible not simply for erudition but also for the moral upbringing of the students, very similar to the duties of a father. And especially if the student cohabited with the master, as a *contubernalis* would have done, then the parental function of a *magister* is perhaps even more pronounced.[182]

On the other hand, does this mean that the last instance of *filius*, used to designate Arrius Antoninus, must be understood as indicative of a mentor/pupil association, as Van den Hout proposes?[183] That is, although there is no further evidence to prove this, can the reverse be true, that the idea of a familial connection presupposes a mentor/pupil one? It is difficult to conclude if he was once a pupil of Fronto, but I do believe Arrius Antoninus was a special case, for not only was he called a *filius*, Fronto also claims that Antoninus looked up to him like he would a parent.[184] This, Fronto continues, is something that many recognized, which is why Fronto is constantly approached with petitions directed to Arrius.[185] Thus, even if he was not Fronto's pupil, it may not be too far off the mark to consider the relationship Antoninus shared with Fronto to be one of mentor and protégé.

Therefore, we see that the issue of protégés and pupils and their relationships to their mentors is more explicit in Fronto than it was in Pliny. The implication of a quasi-

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[181] *Ad M. Caes*. IV.12.3.
[182] Two other cases do exist, but since the context in which the familial association was revealed is completely unrelated, they do not pertain to this study. The first is Gavius Clarus, the familial nature of whose association with Fronto, signalled by the term *alumnus*, has already be been mentioned, but since he is neither referred to as a *contubernalis*, nor is it even certain whether he studied under Fronto or not, his case should be dismissed. Furthermore, the situation is completely reversed from what is currently in discussion, namely, Clarus is the one to treat Fronto like a father upon his death, should the designated caretakers of his body not be available, and not Fronto taking up the responsibilities of a father to this pseudo-son (*Ad Verum* II.7). The second is Aufidius Victorinus, who we are certain was once a pupil of Fronto, but as the son-in-law of Fronto, his position was vastly different.
[183] Van den Hout (1999), 443. The word is found in *Ad Amicos* II.7, but there are two further letters to this individual, *Ad Amicos* II.6 and II.8, neither of which contain the same address. Haines suggests that he may have been a relative to the emperor Pius (*Loeb*, II.175, n.2).
[184] *Ad Amicos* II.8: *esse me a te non secus quam parentem observari*.
[185] All three of Fronto's letters to him are letters of recommendation. It is interesting to see that even with someone as close as Arrius seems to be, Fronto needed to follow the conventions.

familial connection is something that Fronto wished to portray to his correspondents, and in some cases it was even publicly acknowledged. What this implies is that the designation of patron/protégé is similarly inadequate in describing the type of association shared between Fronto, his pupils and/or *contubernales*. The language of father and son adopted by Fronto in some of these portrayals indicates that he did not want to be viewed as a patron to these young men, but as someone with the authority and intimacy of a paternal figure – something that the term patron is inadequate in conveying. And if such was the way Fronto wished their association to be perceived, surely it is unfair for us to label it simply as patronage.[186]

In addition, let us not overlook the *contubernales* who were not Fronto's pupils. The relationships Fronto shared with Calpurnius and Montanus, one an equestrian and the other a decurion, were rendered with much affection. Though the account for Calpurnius is lacking, we can easily observe the long connection Fronto had with his fellow townsman, Montanus. In this sense, the use of *contubernalis* to designate a lasting friendship is similar to the one we encountered in Pliny, but it must be admitted that the evidence is not as conclusive. Nor can it be concluded from this that *contubernalis* systematically meant friends of lower classes, since if that were the case, then Fronto would, without doubt, have used a different word to designate his pupils, especially those with senatorial backgrounds.

Familiares **and** ***amici***

The attempt to discover Fronto's many *familiares* did not prove too fruitful, especially since Fronto does not provide the information about their backgrounds in the

[186] Curious enough, in *Ad Amicos* I.3, Fronto seems have addressed the recipient of the letter, Lollianus Avitus as *domine fili*, but this individual, the consul of 144 and proconsul of Africa, was of the same age as Fronto. Van den Hout speculates that *fili* in this case cannot be a vocative for this reason, but offers no further explanation (1999, 403-405).

way that made Pliny so useful. And so, the social status of figures like Fabianus eludes us. What makes matters worse is that the two identifiable characters, Gavius Clarus and Sulpicius Cornelianus are remarkable in that they were also given other titles: Gavius was an *alumnus* as well as a *familiaris*; and Sulpicius an *amicus*, *familiaris* and *necessarius*. Since this uniqueness has already been explored, no more effort will be spent here; but if we neglect the other titles for the time being and concentrate on the *familiaris* aspect, we perceive that Clarus was a praetorian senator and Sulpicius was an equestrian.[187] Thus even with just two identifiable *familiares*, there already exists a difference in their social standing, and from this it is safe to conclude that Fronto's *familiares* hailed from different backgrounds as well.

Of the *amici* of Fronto, only Censorius Niger and Appian were provided with external evidence to make out their social standing. The former was an equestrian, while the latter probably was not even that. If we were to include Sulpicius in the equation, then we would have another equestrian to consider. But the absence of evidence does not necessarily mean the evidence of absence, as the fragmentary state of Fronto's collection does call for caution when attempting such an evaluation. Still, it is curious why senators did not figure whatsoever in this classification. The reason, however, cannot lie in an explanation in favour of patronage, as the strongly passionate and risky intervention Fronto made for Niger's behalf serves to prove. And the persistence with which Fronto pursued honours for Appian, having pestered the emperor for over two years, adds support to the argument that he was acting not so much for a client, but a friend.[188]

A few more words are offered to conclude this section. It appears that Fronto is nowhere as clear as Pliny was on the position he took with each of his friends. The issue of whether he categorized his friendships depending on how intimate he was with each of

[187] See p.139-140 and p.142-143.
[188] The only term used by Fronto to relate to members of the highest ranks is *frater*, but this has little to do with Fronto attempting to obscure patronage relations.

them is not always reflected in the vocabulary he chose. The consistency with which he labelled his friends, with perhaps a couple of exceptions, suggests that this could very well be so, but the evidence is not strong enough to make positive conclusions. We must also bear in mind that this approach to the issue has its own deficiencies, for if we pursued just this course of investigation, then people like Naucellius would never have received mention, Naucellius who was never graced with the titles of *amicus*, *familiaris* or *contubernalis*, but was obviously a close friend to Fronto. *Amicitia*, after all, can be expressed in a number of ways.

What we can say conclusively is that Fronto's many friendships, like that of Pliny, spanned the range of hierarchies that existed within Roman society. In some cases, Fronto took note of the social status of a friend, but made no fuss over it. Critics may continue to say that this was the method through which Roman patronage functioned, to embed itself within the language of *amicitia*. But we must remember that in Fronto, as well as in Pliny, there was little talk of equality. The notion of ignoring the social statuses of the individuals involved in *amicitia* cannot be supported by the evidence. Pliny the consular, Fronto the experienced senator, equestrian friends of varying importance, friends of no political standing – status and rank are easily identified by readers,[189] and there was no attempt to obscure these issues. But *amicitia*, rather than acting as a cloak for the stratification of Roman society, allowed our authors to look past the hierarchy, to recognize it but operate despite it. And it is this aspect of *amicitia* that certainly both Pliny and Fronto could appreciate.

[189] Arguably even more so in antiquity than now.

Amicitia and patronage

Finally, perhaps some words should be said about the function of patronage in the world of Fronto's *amicitia*. As was reiterated throughout the thesis, acts of patronage performed a vital role in Roman friendship, and Fronto is no exception. But this in itself is not evidence that the person performing the patronage judged himself to be the patron and the receiver of the *beneficia* as a client. Consider the instance with Sardius Saturninus. Although Fronto admits that the *familiaritas* between the two existed through his capacity as teacher to Sardius' sons, the emotionally charged missive about the death of Lupus Saturninus demonstrates that their connection was much more complex.[190]

When Fronto commended Sardius to Caelius Optatus, was this an act of patronage for a client, or an action for the interests of a friend? Upon examination, we realize that Fronto has requested nothing in particular from Optatus. Certainly, as Cotton remarked,[191] this was a convention and regularly employed – we see this often even in Fronto, where he implores the recipient of the recommendation to simply offer his friendship or love to the commended. But is it also a convention for Fronto to add *si quid negotii eum ad te adduxerit*? It seems that Fronto is merely asking Optatus to look out for Saturninus, 'if any business should bring him to you'. This does not appear to be a case of attempting to obtain an official position for Saturninus from the imperial legate in Numidia, but rather an appeal for Optatus to be mindful of his friend. Is it then possible to regard this as an effort by Fronto to increase the network relations of Saturninus, and, by doing so, increase his own?[192] This short and simple letter gave Saturninus the opportunity to make his own requests of Optatus, with the understanding that, of course, after the initial exchange was completed, Optatus could then do the same of him. This could be the beginnings of a very fruitful *amicitia*, all of which was initiated by Fronto. The functionality of Roman

[190] *Ad Amicos* I.9 and I.20.
[191] (1981), 5-6.
[192] For a fuller discussion of the networking capabilities of friendship in Fronto's letters, see p.180-182.

friendship is once again displayed, a functionality that helps bind Roman society together, in a way which transcends the limits imposed by a relationship of patronage.

Another fascinating instance occurs in the figure of Sulpicius Cornelianus. In *Ad Amicos* I.1, we have Fronto vehemently defending the interests of this *familiarissimus* to Claudius Severus, giving plenty of reasons why the latter ought to give a fair hearing to the case to which Sulpicius is a party.[193] In the next letter of the collection, Fronto is writing yet another letter of recommendation for Sulpicius, this time for Appian to take an interest in his friend.[194] Now, it must not be forgotten that Fronto also petitioned on Appian's behalf to the emperor for a number of years, and that Appian was much lower in rank than our author. Does this mean Appian was Fronto's client? Was Sulpicius Fronto's client as well? Is this then a case of Fronto commending one client to another client? Somehow, this notion seems implausible.[195] Could we not instead view this incident as Fronto being fully aware that Appian, well versed and eloquent in Greek, could be of much help to the future *ab epistulis* of Marcus Aurelius? Or that they would derive much benefit from each other's friendship, due to their shared interest in literature? If we consider it logically, Sulpicius, as an equestrian and perhaps even *ab epistulis* at the time of writing, should stand higher in social station than Appian – so why would Fronto commend the higher ranked person to the lower ranked one? An argument for patronage simply cannot apply here.

Of course, it would be wholly erroneous to believe that Fronto had no clients. And it is quite peculiar that, in a set of letters that seems to have been randomly collected, there is not even one to an obvious client. The only reference made to *cliens* has proved to be a

[193] *Ad Amicos* I.1.
[194] *Ad Amicos* I.2.
[195] As far as I am aware, there has been little discussion regarding this facet of patronage. Did clients of a single patron know each other? Surely they must be nominally acquainted? The implausibility of this situation is derived from the idea that a patron would have needed to commend one client to another. Although Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984, 53, 62) mention this as an important aspect of the *amicitia* that was embedded in clientage, they do not provide any evidence for this claim. See p.311-312.

false lead.[196] Instead of showing that Gavius Clarus was a client, Fronto's intention was completely the opposite: he wanted to indicate to Lucius that Clarus paid him so much respect that he acted in the fashion of a client, and that their relationship is so close and secure that making this sort of comment would not jeopardize their friendship. But nonetheless, the fact that Fronto made such a comparison is indication that the patron/client relationship did exist elsewhere, and that it was regarded with some taboo. *Amicitia*, however, could overcome this. Instead of avoiding the oft contested issues surrounding patronage, such as those of status, hierarchy and wealth, the relationship of *amicitia* was one that embraced these differences and allowed people to transcend them, to operate in spite of them.

Moreover, it is not enough simply to use the language of friendship, but to think in the same terms. After all, language is a reflection of the thought process, and such a self-deception could only last so long.[197] The description of Roman social relationships by scholars such as Saller sounds to me as if the Romans lived in a sort of paranoia, afraid lest someone somewhere accidently referred to a client as an actual client and not an *amicus*. This, however, was not how friendship was perceived by our sources. To them, *amicitia* had value as a method for regulating social interaction, one which operated within the context of social hierarchy but was sufficiently flexible to accommodate personal relationships. And it is in the combination of these two elements that allowed the Roman way of life to continue to function, and with it served to preserve the status-quo better than strict patronage ever could.

[196] See p.12-13.
[197] See p.35 n.126.

Amicitia: Philosophy and Reality

By way of concluding these two chapters, some remarks are offered about the relationship between the *amicitia* expressed and exercised in Pliny and Fronto, and the philosophical tradition. My goal for embarking on this particular aspect of study is to explore the apparent disparity between the ideal friendship of the philosophers and the supposedly realistic one of the Roman authors. A comparison between the two will show that indeed a disparity exists, but this disparity is not as challenging to our understanding of Roman friendship as some may think, nor should it necessarily result in our interpreting Roman *amicitia* in a negative light, both of which modern scholarship has been guilty of. Bowditch, for instance, in an explanation of the difficulties in researching literary patronage, says, 'Consequently, the more circumspect if possibly misleading terms *amicitia* and *amici*, most straightforwardly translated as 'friendship' and 'friends', were used to describe relations of a frequently utilitarian – if not an economically dependent – nature between those whose status is clearly different…To add to the confusion, the intimacy of shared interests and values that such parity implies did characterize the more philosophical conceptions of *amicitia* in Roman intellectual thought'.[198]

To give another example, Saller speaks of the paradox between the much appreciated utility in friendship and the aspiration for virtuous men to not create friendships based on that same utility; for the not so virtuous, 'the subtleties of purity of motive were easily ignored'.[199] From this, it is not too difficult to see why modern scholars prefer to view *amicitia* as masking patronage relationships: they take for granted that the philosophical tradition was the foundation of Roman friendships, and when the practical experience did not match up to the philosophical, the relationship cannot be said to be true *amicitia*. But if this confusion is cleared up, if the inconsistency between the

[198] Bowditch (2001), 19-20.
[199] Saller (1982), 14.

two traditions is explained, then we would finally be able to approach *amicitia* in the way that the Romans did.

Philosophers

Since Aristotle is typically the philosopher used in descriptions of friendship in the ancient world, it may be prudent to begin with him.[200] For Aristotle, there are three types of friendships:[201] that which is derived from utility, where one enjoys the benefits a friendship can provide, not the person of the friend itself; that which is based on pleasure, where, again, the figure of the friend is relegated to the background, and the focus is on the company the friendship offers; and perfect friendship, which can only originate between people of virtuous character. Aristotle further stipulates that friendships based on the two former of these must necessarily be transitory: once utility and/or pleasure are no longer available from the other party, or once the goals of either member have changed,[202] the friendship will no longer be required. Perfect friendship, on the other hand, since it is founded on the excellence of the parties involved, as well as on the mutual appreciation of that excellence, cannot be easily terminated. Furthermore, even though the reciprocation of goods, services and congenial company, much as in the friendships of utility and pleasure, play important roles in the perfect friendship, this reciprocation is by no means the ends of such a relationship, but the by-products of their association.[203]

For the Roman side, both Cicero and Seneca have much to say on the topic. Cicero, in similar fashion to Aristotle, distinguishes between the friendship found amongst

[200] Plato's *Lysis* is our first recorded treatise on friendship, but the purpose of the work is, in true Socratic fashion, to dispel common preconceptions of friendship. It does not really offer anything in place of those perceptions, however.
[201] *N.E.* VIII.2.1155b15-4.1157b4.
[202] As, for instance, when one entered into a friendship with both parties expecting to derive utility from each other, but somewhere down the line one member decided that pleasure was more important. The terms of association, according to Aristotle, have changed, and therefore is reason enough to break off the friendship (*N.E.* IX.1.1163b32-1164b22).
[203] See also Konstan (1997a), 67-78; Stern-Gillet (1995); Price (1997); Schroeder (1997).

the masses and that found between the virtuous. The former type of friendship, he claims, is based on need and want, and once that has been fulfilled, once the advantage of this association is lost, then the friendship would fall apart – much like the friendship of utility and pleasure from Aristotle's treatise.[204] As for the friendship between virtuous people, the profit and advantage to be derived from that, aside from the fact that associating with moral individuals will necessarily improve one's own moral outlook, is love.[205] *Amicitia*, in Cicero's words, has its origin in *amor*.[206] Of course, utility is also an important feature in Cicero's portrayal of the perfect friendship, but this utility is still a consequence, a demonstration of the *benevolentia* and *amor* that exist amongst virtuous men.[207] The essence of friendship is to be found in virtue; although Cicero does acknowledge that baser forms of friendship are prevalent, only virtue and integrity of character can guarantee the proper relationship between people.[208]

In terms of the utility in *amicitia*, Seneca had a similar opinion to Cicero. That is, any friendship formed for such practical reasons as utility and benefits cannot be considered *amicitia*, for the participants in this kind of association will abandon each other not only in times of need, but also when no further advantage is available.[209] If friendship is up for sale, then it will necessarily go to the highest bidder. When the *sapiens* engages in *amicitia*, on the other hand, he does so because he wants both to partake and to contribute to this noble relationship, not because there are benefits to be derived therein.[210] It is this quality which relates *amor* to *amicitia*, in that a lover loves for the sake of being in love, not for the sake of glory or ambition or material gain.[211] However, Seneca adds in a later passage that *amor* itself is not sufficient to qualify as friendship; rather, *amicitia*

[204] *De Amicitia*, 9.29-9.32.
[205] 14.51.
[206] 8.26.
[207] *Non igitur utilitatem amicitia, sed utilitas amicitiam secuta est* (14.51).
[208] See also Konstan (1997a), 130-131; Powell (1995), 37-38; Brunt (1988b), 352-355; Fiore (1997).
[209] *Epistulae Morales* IX.9. See also Saller (1982), 13.
[210] IX.8, 10.
[211] IX.11.

requires both parties to be of a similarly virtuous disposition. The one who loves but lacks this perfection in character is not yet an *amicus*.[212]

Philosophical Friendship and Pliny

As we have noted in the previous chapter, *amicitia* in Pliny was hardly this complicated. The pleasures of company and the convenience that a friendship provides were never deemed as detrimental to the formation of true friendship. Indeed, as Pliny acknowledges in *Epistle* VI.18, the reason Statius Sabinus approached Pliny for his *familiaritas* was precisely because of the 'help and distinction' our epistler could afford;[213] and yet, not only was Pliny actually glad for the opportunity to benefit both his friend and the latter's home town, Firmum, but he further praises Sabinus as a loyal citizen. Does this make Pliny any less virtuous? Does engaging in a friendship that was seemingly rooted solely in deriving advantage from the other party detract from Pliny's moral values?

If we understand friendship by Pliny's standards, then it certainly does not. For, in spite of the ethical dilemmas philosophers may have had about this ignoble kind of friendship, to regard the *amicitia* that arose from deriving benefits or pleasure from each member of the association as a base form of friendhip is unthinkable to Pliny. Of course, the easiest method of comprehending this is by accepting that Pliny and his circle of friends were paradigms of the virtuous and morally upright, whose friendships would then necessarily be construed as the most excellent of the friendships described. Since pleasure and utility were by-products of the virtuous friendship, we would have no difficulties in interpreting their occurrences in the extent of Pliny's letters. However, although Griffin has done much to reveal Pliny's adherence to philosophical teachings,[214] it is questionable

[212] XXXV.
[213] *Nam cum familiaritatem nostrum, ut soles praedicare, ad praesidium ornamentumque tibi sumpseris, nihil est quod negare debeam, praesertim pro patria petenti* (*Epist*. VI.18.2).
[214] Griffin briefly in (2003, 102-106), and more extensively in (2007).

whether Pliny had as high a standard of himself and of his many friendships as in a philosophical discourse. What is clear is that he did not try to impose these very standards on his readership.[215]

Therefore, we should recognize that, far from being separate strands of *amicitia*, utility, pleasure and virtue were all vital concepts in the operation of friendship and were in fact complementary to each other. For Pliny, *amicitia* without pleasure is no *amicitia* at all. The same can be said of utility and virtue. Certainly, it would be inconceivable for someone as virtuous as Pliny to associate with people of substantially less moral standing than himself.[216] On the other hand, it is hard to imagine that Pliny and his circle would claim that the reciprocation of goods and services was merely a consequence of their association. The vital role of reciprocity in Roman society need not be explained any further than it already has, but its value in Pliny's correspondence cannot be overemphasized. The benefits he conferred on his friends, the money he gave out, the services he rendered and the letters of commendation he wrote, as well as the return he must have received, though the reports of such actions have not come down to us, were ways in which friendships were reaffirmed and strengthened.

In fact, Pliny takes pride in relating such expressions of friendship: we simply have to remember that it was Pliny himself who chose these specific epistles for publication. Moreover, Pliny's desire to share the company of his friends is easily detectable from the numerous complaints he had about being apart. The many times he worried about the health and well-being of someone far away is an articulation of this.[217] For Pliny, this sort

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[215] Griffin (2007), 473, 475; Morello (2007), 173-174.

[216] It would also be inconceivable for Pliny to depict himself as anything less than virtuous.

[217] For example, *…seu quod desiderium absentium nihil perinde ac vicinitas acuit, quoque propius accesseris ad spem fruendi, hoc impatientius careas. Quidquid in causa, eripe me huic tormento. Veni, aut ego illuc unde inconsulte properavi revertar, vel ob hoc solum, ut experiar an mihi, cum sine me Romae coeperis esse, similes his epistulas mittas* – '…or else it is that we never miss our absent friends so keenly as when they are not far away; the nearer you are to enjoying their company, the less you are able to be patient without it. Whatever the cause, do take me out of my misery and come, or I shall return to the place I foolishly left in a hurry, with no other purpose than to see if you will write me letters like this when you find yourself in Rome

of action is a necessary demonstration of friendship. Thus, friendship without the pleasures of association[218] or without the benefits of reciprocity is every bit as unimaginable as friendship without virtue would be. Pleasure and utility of friendship in Pliny are no mere by-products, but every bit as important as the virtuous character of his *amici*. Indeed, it is in pleasurable company and through the services that only friends can provide that a virtuous man like Pliny can lead a virtuous life.

Utility in Fronto

In some ways, the importance of utility in Fronto's exercise of *amicitia* is even more explicit than it was in Pliny. In a letter to Passienus Rufus, Fronto openly declares the purpose of the letter: *Nec ignoro nullum adhuc inter nos mutuo scriptitantium usum fuisse, quamquam ego te optimum virum bonarumque artium sectatorem communium amicorum fama cognossem, et tu fortasse aliquid de me secundi rumoris acceperis. Sed nullum pulchrius amicitiae copulandae <tempus> reciperire potui quam adulescentis optimi conciliandi tibi occasionem.*[219] It is clear here that not only has Fronto never written to Passienus Rufus himself, it does not seem as though they have even met in person. Fronto has heard of Passienus only through their *communes amici*, and can only hope that he knows of Fronto in return. The intention of initiating the association, Fronto explains, is to recommend an excellent young man, in this case Aemilius Pius. If

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without me'. (*Epist*. VI.1), and *Olim mihi nullas epistulas mittis. Nihil est, inquis, quod scribam. At hoc ipsum scribe, nihil esse quod scribas, vel solum illud unde incipere priores solebant: 'Si vales, bene est; ego valeo.' Hoc mihi sufficit; est enim maximum. Ludere me putas? serio peto. Fac sciam quid agas, quod sine sollicitudine summa nescire non possum* – 'I have not heard from you for a long time, and you say you have nothing to write about. Well, you can at least write *that* – or simply the phrase our elders used to start a letter with: "If you are well, well and good; I am well." That will do for me – it is all that matters. Don't think I am joking; I mean it. Let me know how you are; if I don't know I can't help worrying a lot' (*Epist*. I.11).

[218] Even Aristotle admits how important it is for friends to spend time together (*N.E.* VIII.6.1158a1-18).

[219] *Ad Amicos* I.8 [176.26: *nullum pulchrius vinc<u>lum amicitiae copulandae reperire*]: 'I am not unaware that hitherto we have not been on the terms of correspondents, though I have known of you through common friends as an excellent man and a lover of the noble arts, and you perhaps have heard me well spoken of. Yet I could find no fairer prospect of establishing a close friendship with you than the occasion of recommending to your favour an excellent young man'.

Passienus is to accept Aemilius Pius into his circle, then it would mean he has also accepted Fronto's invitation to his friendship,[220] and an understanding that reciprocation for this service rendered to Fronto would naturally follow. Once the initial exchange has been established and a friendship formally entered into, both parties could then freely draw on the benefits they each provide. A deeper meaning of friendship, such as the one advocated by Cicero or Seneca, could potentially arise out of this initial exchange, but there is no doubt that utility was the primary reason Fronto sought out Passienus' 'friendship' in the first place.

Could such an amoral expression of friendship affront the excellent character of Passienus or potentially damage the reputation of Fronto? Fronto may not have the luxury to depict himself as the outstanding and morally upright paradigm of virtue through his correspondence, mainly because he was not responsible for their editing and subsequent publishing like Pliny had done, but he certainly saw himself as an exemplary citizen nonetheless: the appeal to Passienus about Fronto's own *secundus rumor* is proof enough of this. On the contrary, the virtuous character of the correspondents in this epistle has never been in question, and the fact that they were seemingly pursuing a type of *amicitia* described by philosophers as base would not have effected the outcome – a self-professed friendship.

Instead, it is because these two were such virtuous figures, one who is *optimus* and another whose reputation is *secundus*, that makes such a friendship possible in the first place. Neither Fronto nor Passienus could imagine an *amicitia* otherwise. And the utility that inherently began their friendship, rather than being a blemish on their *amicitia*, as perhaps Cicero could argue, would be seen as the positive force which joined the two in virtuous association. In other words, utility and the advantages that could be derived from

[220] *Nam me etiam magis amabis si cum Pio familiarius egeris.*

friendship provided the catalyst that brought the two figures together, both of whom had admired each other's reputation long ago but have not had the pleasure of acquaintance.

It is interesting to note, moreover, that there is only a minimal description of Aemilius Pius in the letter whose sole purpose was to commend him. Aside from being 'endeared to me [Fronto] both by the refinement of his tastes and the absolute integrity of his character', Passienus receives no further information about the young man whom Fronto wanted in his circle.[221] There is no talk of the lineage of the young man, no additional elaboration of his character or taste, and no exposition whatsoever on the youth's abilities and achievements.[222] These are standard fare in letters of commendation,[223] and it is surprising to find them lacking to such an obvious degree. Champlin interprets this as an example of the key role culture plays in the forming of friendships in Fronto's society. He believes that due to their common interest in learning and moral excellence, there was no need for Fronto to go into more detail about the commended: 'Mere reputation is considered sufficient for entering upon an *amicitia* based on culture, and at the same time for taking advantage of the benefits of friendship by commending a client to the new friend'.[224]

This interpretation, however, is problematic. Firstly, because we have no prosopographical information about the person concerned, there is no need to assume that Aemilius Pius was a client any more than he was a *contubernalis*. Secondly, the emphasis of this epistle is most certainly not on a shared cultural background. To be fair, from Fronto's perspective, someone with a good level of education and an interest in *bonae*

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[221] *Aemilius Pius cum studiorum elegantia tum morum eximia probitate mihi carus est.*
[222] This is especially striking, if Van den Hout is correct in assuming Aemilius Pius was a *contubernalis*/pupil of Fronto (1999, 413). Surely the teacher would have more to say about the talents of his student. Still, this is further proof that a relationship of *contubernalis* should not be so readily taken for granted.
[223] A comparison between this instance of commendation and the others found in the collection would immediately show that much was lacking in Fronto's account. Even Antoninus Aquila, a man totally unknown to Fronto himself and who had been placed in Fronto's care only through other friends, was given a more detailed description when he was recommended to Fronto's son-in-law (*Ad Amicos* I.7).
[224] Champlin (1980), 38.

artes would definitely be a suitable candidate for friendship, and there is no question that they could derive much pleasure from each other's company on that basis.[225] Yet, if this was such an important concern to Fronto, if Passienus was a notable figure in the cultural circle of the time, as Champlin perhaps wants to believe, one has to wonder why the two have not been previously acquainted.

Conversely, the emphasis of this letter is surely on the method Fronto utilized to approach Passienus. Perhaps the figure of Aemilius Pius is inconsequential: a client, a *contubernalis*, a family friend, whatever he might have been. The fact is, Fronto needed an excuse, a reason to write to Passienus and initiate the dialogue that could potentially lead to a very beneficial friendship. Again, if Aemilius Pius is accepted by Passienus, then he has also accepted the invitation by Fronto, and they would each be included in the other's circle. This would explain why Aemilius Pius received such an inadequate account from Fronto: because Fronto's main aim was not to recommend him, but to strike up a friendship with the correspondent.

Regardless of Fronto's ultimate purpose in engaging in an *amicitia* with Passienus, whether it was for the material advantages and resources that only Passienus could provide, or for the benefits of his wisdom and education and the pleasures of his company, or simply because Fronto wanted to associate with a virtuous figure, he needed a starting point, and Aemilius Pius and the benefits that would be bestowed on him provided the catalyst. Therefore, even should we accept Champlin's argument, that friendships based on culture formed the backdrop of Fronto's circle of *amici*, the importance of this letter, rather than being an example of how that very same culture facilitated the creation of *amicitia*, is instead a demonstration of how friendship can be initiated. Utility was the focus, and the benefit of each other's friendship was the aim.

[225] See p.186-190.

Networking

This interpretation maybe paints quite a negative picture of the way Fronto exploited his association with Aemilius Pius in order to initiate an *amicitia* with Passienus Rufus.[226] Nonetheless, if we draw on of one of the ideas explored in the previous chapter, we can place this situation into a more positive context. The argument there was that many of the interventions by Pliny on behalf of his various friends should be understood not as an act of patronage on behalf of a lowly client, but as a method through which Pliny could introduce them into the aristocratic way of life, as well as a way of expanding the network connections from which everyone involved were able to draw benefits and resources: the greater the network, the more potential for acquiring goods and services that were not available previously. If we want a more forgiving explanation for Fronto's actions, we can perhaps see what happened in *Ad Amicos* I.8 as an extension of this argument.

While it is true that Fronto wanted to expand his circle of *amici* through the recommendation of Aemilius Pius, the fact still remains that Aemilius Pius would have benefited from this 'transaction'. He would have been matriculated into the circle of Passienus while still retaining his position within Fronto's, and he could draw on the resources of both should he require it. The network was expanded not only for Fronto, but for Aemilius Pius as well; on the other end, Passienus could also draw on the support of both Fronto and Aemilius Pius. In this sense, the middle link which Aemilius Pius represented was just as important as the ends. As Fronto himself explains, the entire tradition of commendation letters is derived from a desire to see friends become intimate with each other.[227] Of course, the situation with Aemilius Pius and Passienus Rufus was slightly different, in that the recipient of this commendation was not an *amicus* at the time

[226] I specifically use association here instead of friendship because we have no way of determining the true nature of their relationship.
[227] *Ad Amicos* I.1.1: *Commendandi mos initio dicitur benivolentia ortus, quom suum quisque amicum alii amico suo demonstratum conciliatumque vellet.*

of writing, but the idea of establishing network relations still pertains. And yet, though Fronto may claim idealistically that it was *benevolentia* which drove the act of commendation, it is without question that Fronto appreciated the benefits that such networking produced.

It is here that we are reminded of Seneca's other treatise, *De Beneficiis*, in which he explored the ramifications of the reciprocal relationship. He believed that it was through the act of bestowing and returning favours that Roman society could function, and not only was this an expression of friendship, but it helped bond society together. Seneca also raised the significance of initiating a friendship through the simple gesture of giving.[228] In other words, when one chose to receive a gift, one also chose to admit friendship. The situations with Pliny and Fronto are slightly different, in that they were requesting a benefit to be conferred on them, but the invitation to their friendship remains the same.

Still, practical though Seneca's advice may be, the treatise was nonetheless highly idealized. Give generously, without thought of a return; receive graciously, without envy towards your benefactor; and reciprocate accordingly, without seeming unappreciative of the initial gift – these are but a few of the moral lessons Seneca stressed. And, if this whole process was not carried out with the most upright of intentions, Seneca claimed, it would be no better than a simple economic transaction. The virtuous character, as was the case in Cicero and Aristotle, must underlie each association. But it is clear that our two authors did not think in these terms. Fronto practically guarantees a worthwhile return for

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[228] *Itaque eligendum est, a quo beneficium accipiam; et quidem diligentius quaerendus beneficii quam pecuniae creditor. Huic enim reddendum est, quantum accepi, et, si reddidi, solutus sum ac liber; at illi et plus solvendum est, et nihilo minus etiam relata gratia cohaeremus; debeo enim, cum reddidi, rursus incipere, manetque amicitia; et ut in amicitiam non reciperem indignum, sic ne in beneficiorum quidem sacratissimum ius, ex quo amicitia oritur* – 'And so it is necessary for me to choose the person from whom I wish to receive a benefit; and, in truth, I must be far more careful in selecting my creditor for a benefit than a creditor for a loan. For to the latter I shall have to return the same amount that I have received, and, when I have returned it, I have paid all my debt and am free; but to the other I must make an additional payment, and, even, after I have paid my debt of gratitude, the bond between us still holds; for, just when I have finished paying it, I am obliged to begin again, and friendship endures; and, as I would not admit an unworthy man to my friendship, so neither would I permit one who is unworthy to the most sacred privilege of benefits, from which friendship springs' (*De Beneficiis*, II.18.5). Also III.12.1. See Griffin (2003).

Passienus should he accept the offer; and Pliny's remarks about the benefit he was to confer on Baebius is indicative enough of his attitude.[229]

Utility and the declaration of love

But did Fronto always appreciate the type of friendship that was based on utility? After all that has been expounded and argued, could it be that Fronto nonetheless saw an *amicitia* founded on benefits as a base form of association? This concern is evidenced by an expression of his love for Marcus Aurelius:

> *Igitur ut argumentum aliquod prolixiori epistulae reperiam, quod, oro te, ob meritum sic me amas? Quid iste Fronto tantum boni fecit ut eum tanto opere tu diligas? Caput suum pro te aut parentibus tuis devovit? Succidaneum se pro vestris periculis subdidit? Provinciam aliquam fideliter administravit? Exercitum duxit? Nihil eorum…Quid, quod neque adolescit proinde nec corroboratur amicitia meritis parta ut ille amor subitus et repentinus? … Et omnino quantum fortuna rationi, tantum amor fortuitus officioso amori antistat (Ad M. Caes.* I.3.3-6*).*[230]

In Fronto's own words, the love shown by Marcus Aurelius to him is all the greater because it was unwarranted. Not burdened by the concept of merit, and by extension, utility, this sort of *amor* transcends the vulgar and corruptible *amicitia*.[231]

Verboven takes this to describe Fronto's stance on friendship: 'A letter from Fronto to M. Aurelius expressly distinguishes *amor* [from] *amicitia* by saying that the latter exists only through the exchange of *officia*, whereas the former arises rather from impulse than

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[229] *Haec tibi exposui, quo magis scires, quantum esset ille mihi ego tibi debiturus, si praediolum istud, quod commendatur his dotibus, tam salubriter emerit ut paenitentiae locum non relinquat* (*Epist.*, I.24.4).
[230] 'Therefore, to provide some matter for a longer letter, let me ask you for what desert of mine you love me so. What benefit has your Fronto bestowed upon you so great that you should shew him such affection? Has he given up his life for you and your parents? Has he braved perils vicariously in your stead? Has he been the faithful governor of some province? Has he commanded an army? Nothing of the kind…Again, friendship that is won by desert has no such growth or firm texture as the love that is sudden and at first sight…In a word, love spontaneous is as superior to love earned by service as fortune is to reason'.
[231] It is worth mentioning that there is a lot of erotic language in this epistle. For this aspect of the relationship between Marcus and Fronto, see p. 247-248 and n.33.

calculation'.[232] This then harks back to the ideals advocated by the philosophers, especially Cicero, due to the emphasis on *amor*. Van den Hout also believes that 'Fronto's exposition of friendship reflects Stoic ideas', though he is unwilling to accept that Fronto based his stance on Cicero directly.[233] Should we, however, accept this at face value? Surely, regardless of what Fronto may have declared to Marcus Aurelius, he could not have denied the fact that many instances of his friendships involved the exercise of reciprocity, exemplified by the seven letters of commendation we have in his collection, and such friendships certainly were not depicted as insincere.

And what are we to think of the claim that he had never benefited his pupil and therefore did not deserve his love? An absurd exaggeration, no doubt: could Fronto really have achieved his position and status without services to the imperial family and the state? This letter, therefore, cannot be taken to represent Fronto's attitude towards true friendship, even if we should allow for it to be highly idealistic and following on philosophical ideas. Even in this respect, the type of *amicitia* advocated by Fronto, one that is spontaneous and unwarranted, would not meet the approval of philosophers; they maintain the exact opposite position, that friendships should not arise spontaneously, but only after a careful assessment of the target's character.[234] Indeed, if the perfect *amicitia* is the one based on virtue, an awareness of the other party's worthiness is a must. This, again, is incompatible with the approach Fronto took in his letter to Marcus Aurelius.

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[232] Verboven (2002), 42. Even though Verboven later admits that to all intents and purposes 'affection and utlity coincide in…friendship…in the Greek and Roman world', he speficies that it was important to distinguish between emotional and instrumental friendship 'from a conceptual and motivational point of view' (44). See also Saller (1982), 13: 'In a letter to Marcus Aurelius, Fronto rejoices that their relationship is one of *amor* instead of *amicitia*…' Fronto, of course, does not separate love from friendship: '*Igitur amor cum desiderio auctus est, quod est in amicitia multo optimum*' (*Ad M. Caes*. IV.9).

[233] Van den Hout (1999), 10-11. 'Though [similar vocabulary and terms] are also found in Cicero's Laelius, Fronto's exposition is an independent piece of work which matches with Marcus' inclination towards philosophy'. Richlin, however, seems to suggest that Fronto is deliberately playing against Stoic ideas, 'which upheld reason over passion' (2006, 73); as we observe, Fronto wants to emphasize Marcus' passion without reason.

[234] Cicero, *De Amicitia*, 22.85; Seneca, *Epistles Morales*, III.2; Plutarch, *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*, 49D-E.

Furthermore, on a more practical level, one must wonder whether this is the sort of advice Fronto ought to be giving to a young prince: the *amor* that is without reason is more respectable than the one derived from merit. A similar concern was voiced by Pliny's contemporary, Plutarch, in a treatise entitled *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*; in this work, Plutarch discusses how vital it is for a ruler to discern the true nature of his friends and friendships, and the only way to achieve this is through an understanding of the friends' characters. While it is true that utility can still be a trait of the flatterer, and hence cannot be used as a reliable basis for judgement, the ruler must nonetheless be on guard against 'friends' with false intentions.[235] Therefore, before entrusting oneself to a friend, the ruler must necessarily evaluate the worthiness of the figure. Undoubtedly, Plutarch offers a much more sound and sensible counsel for the budding statesman than Fronto.

I would argue instead that this letter was a rhetorical exercise, devised by Fronto to display to his relatively young pupil[236] his attempt at manipulating the theme of love based around the philosophical traditions.[237] The topic of nature and the botanical images which run through several paragraphs of this missive suggest that this was the case. For instance, *Baiarum ego calidos specus malo quam istas fornaculas balnearum, in quibus ignis cum sumptu atque fumo accenditur brevique extinquitur. At illi ingenui vapores puri perpetuique sunt, grati pariter et gratuiti*; *ut non aeque adolescunt in pomariis hortulisque arbusculae manu cultae rigataeque ut ille in montibus aesculus et abies et alnus et cedrus et piceae, quae sponte natae, sine ratione ac sine ordine sitae, nullis cultorum laboribus neque officiis sed ventis atque imbribus educantur*; *tuus igitur iste amor incultus et sine ratione exortus, spero, cum cedris porro adolescet et aesculis*; *nam neque aggeres manu*

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[235] Plutarch, *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend*, 21-23.
[236] Most commentators give this letter a rather early date, around 140-145 (Van den Hout [1999], 3).
[237] Again, the erotic nature of the vocabulary in this missive is hard to miss. For this aspect of the relationship between Marcus Aurelius and Fronto, and the tradition presented by ἐροτικὸς λόγος, see p.248 n.33. It should still be noted, however, that the letter known as the ἐροτικὸς λόγος is also recognized as a rhetorical exercise.

ac ratione constructos montibus comparabis neque aequaductus amnibus neque receptacula fontibus.[238]

In other words, the love that is completely 'natural' and without reason is better than the love that is built up on purpose and derived from services rendered. Furthermore, if we include into our discussion the previous letter in the collection,[239] to which commentators generally believe this was the reply,[240] we see that Marcus Aurelius initiated the playful dialogue with a highly charged and elaborately written piece of rhetoric. It appears that while Marcus Aurelius was spending time at Baiae,[241] news of Fronto's latest bout of illness was brought to him, and this letter was sent to his *iucundissimus* as a gesture of concern. Fronto, thoroughly touched by the kindness and anxiety shown by his imperial pupil, wrote a similarly charged and witty letter in reply – he would not be outdone. 'Why do I deserve such love,' Fronto exclaims; 'How is it that my Marcus loves me so! Just to be given such love, a love that makes your mother jealous of me, is enough to make me recover!'

The humorous tone and style of the missive makes it quite clear that Fronto was exercising his rhetorical charm to its fullest, and, as such, the opinions expressed by Fronto in this letter should not be understood as his approach to Roman *amicitia*, but as a skilfully composed response to a challenge proposed by his student. Of course, it could well be that Fronto was perfectly sincere about the superior nature of unwarranted friendships, but any authority given to this argument is completely undermined by the tone of the letter itself,

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[238] *Ad M. Caes*. I.3.4 [4.9: *restinguitur* for *extinguitur*]: 'To me the steaming grottoes of Baiae are better than your bath-furnaces, in which the fire is kindled with cost and smoke, and anon goes out'; I.3.5: 'So in orchards and gardens the growth of shrubs, reared and watered by hand, is not like that of the oak and the fir and the alder and the cedar and the pine on their native hills which, springing up self-sown and set without plan and without order, owe nothing to the toil or services of a planter, but are fostered by the wind and the rain'; I.3.6: 'That love of yours, therefore, unplanted and sprung up without reason, will, I trust, grow steadily on with the cedars and the oaks'; I.3.8: 'For neither can you match your pyramids, raised by hand and reason, against the hills, nor your aqueducts against the rivers, nor your cisterns against the fountains'.
[239] *Ad M. Caes*. I.2.
[240] Van den Hout (1999), 3-7.
[241] Note the clever reference made by Fronto in the passage quoted above.

not to mention all the practical difficulties this would entail. One final example should prove the point: *Quam ob rem etiam si qua iusta ratio est amoris erga me tui, quaeso, Caesar, sedulo demus operam ut ignoretur et lateat.*[242]

Pleasure

The idea of an association based on pleasures has been referred to several times in the course of this discussion, but it is worthwhile to explore in more detail the role it plays in the extent of Fronto's letters. It has so far been the suggestion that, in Roman *amicitia*, there is no sense of separating pleasure from friendship, just as there is no sense of separating utility from the friendship.[243] This was quite evident in Pliny. There are several arguments in support of a similar situation in Fronto. The first is the interpretation of the word *contubernalis*. If we accept that, despite its various meanings and usages in Fronto, the basic underlying significance of the term is to describe a relationship which was prolonged and enduring, then the importance of the pleasures to be attained from these relationships becomes obvious.

The instance with Montanus serves as an example: whenever Montanus came to Rome, Fronto would always accommodate him in his own house, share meals together and take counsel together. Fronto is so eager for Montanus' companionship that he prays for his friend's safe return at the beginning of this letter, *ita te reducem complectar*, and further hopes that Lollius Avitus, the recipient of this commendation, would likewise appreciate his company.[244] Should we consider as well the cases of Fronto's pupils as his

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[242] *Ad M. Caes*. I.3.8.

[243] It should be noted here that in Cicero's treatise, the pleasures of association is as much a feature in the base form of *amicitia* as in the virtuous, whether it be a shared appreciation in virtue or in mundane and dishonourable things. The following, then, relates more to Aristotle than to Cicero.

[244] *Ad Amicos* I.3: *Montanum Licinium…sic diligo ut non temere quemquam eorum, quiscum mihi hospitii iura sunt, Montano meo anteponam. Quotienscumque Romam venit, in meo contubernio fuit, meis aedibus usus est; una nobis mensa semper…Huic tantum honorem haberi a te velim quantum tuo hospiti contubernali consiliario tributum ab altero postulares.* 'Licinius Montanus…is one whom I love so dearly that there is no one of those, who have shared my home with me, whom I could easily prefer to my Montanus. As often as

contubernales, we see that they had spent a substantial amount of time together,[245] and although Fronto does not emphasize in these missives the pleasures he had shared with his pupils, it can nonetheless be readily assumed that he enjoyed their company.

Champlin, in his study of Frontonian society, asserts that it was a common interest in literature and learning that provided the foundation of Fronto's networks and friendships.[246] A recurrent theme which runs throughout the correspondence with *amici*, Champlin is undoubtedly correct in identifying erudition and a fascination in culture as the mutual link which joined Fronto to his friends. 'Delight in the character and eloquence of the man first made me love Sulpicius Cornelianus. For he has the greatest aptitude for eloquence; and I will not deny that the friendship which is grounded on culture takes the highest place with me…';[247] 'Antoninus Aquila is a learned man and an eloquent….nor unless they greatly approved of his eloquence, would they make such a point of his being recommended to you, knowing you to be a most serious and competent judge as well of other things as especially of eloquence…';[248] 'I commend to you with all possible cordiality Julius Aquilinus, a man, if you have any faith in my judgment, most learned,

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he came to Rome he was my guest, my house was at his disposal, he always shared my table…Please pay him such attention as you would expect to be shewn by another to your intimate friend, the sharer of your home and your counsels'.

[245] *Sardius Saturninus artissima mihi familiaritate coniunctus est per filios suos doctissimos iuvenes, quos in contubernio mecum adsiduos habeo* (*Ad Amicos* I.9).

[246] Champlin (1999), ch.3.

[247] *Ad Amicos* I.2.1: Κορνηλιανὸν Σουλπίκιον φιλεῖν ἠρξάμην ἡσθεὶς τῷ τε τρόπῳ τἀνδρὸς καὶ τοῖς λόγοις· πέφυκεν γὰρ πρὸς λόγους ἄριστα. οὐκ ἂν δ᾽ἔξαρνος εἴην τὰ πρῶτα παρ᾽ἐμοὶ φέρεσθαι τὴν ἐκ παιδείας φιλίαν συσταθεῖσαν. [171.14: ἄριστος for ἄριστα]. Cornelius Sulpicianus is also the subject of the previous letter, *Ad Amicos* I.1.

[248] *Ad Amicos* I.7: *Antoninus Aquila vir doctus est et facundus…nec nisi facundiam eius magno opera probarent, tibi eum commendare tanto opera postularent, quom te gravissimum et prudentissimum iudicem cum aliarum rerum tum vel praecipue eloquentiae sciant* [176:14-15: *magnopere* for *magno opera*, *tantopere* for *tanto opera*]. The context of the missive is that Fronto has been approached by his friends to recommend a certain Antoninus Aquila to his son-in-law. Although Fronto has never personally met the commendee before, he trusts in his friends' opinion and knows that this emphasis on the commandee's erudition will appeal to his son-in-law.

most eloquent, exceptionally trained by the teachings of philosophy to the noblest accomplishments and by the study of eloquence to a matchless facility of speech'.[249]

These are but a few examples of the prominence in which learning and culture were held in Fronto's circle, and since the stress of these letters of commendation was on the erudition of the commendees, it is certainly the case that the recipients of these letters were graced with similar interests. This then provides the second argument for how deeply ingrained pleasure was in the general outlook of Fronto's friendships, pleasure which was centred around their shared pursuit of intellectual betterment and cultural appreciation.

Indeed, as with Pliny when he attended poetry readings or other forms of rhetorical presentations,[250] Fronto and his circle of friends derived pleasure from each other's company through their admiration of erudition. Aulus Gellius, a younger contemporary of Fronto's, gives us several accounts of such activities in action. In these reports, Fronto is usually depicted as engaging in serious discussion on academic (though sometimes trivial) concerns with other learned men, all of whom are delighting in the conversation. *Ad Frontonem Cornelium visendi gratia pergebam*, Gellius says in one instance, *sermonibusque eius purissimis bonarumque doctrinarum plenis fruebar*.[251] In another, after Fronto had just refuted a ridiculous claim by an unnamed grammarian, Gellius describes the crowd gathered as 'laughing heartily' at the exchange.[252] Pleasure, then, was an essential aspect to Fronto's circle. In fact, Fronto almost certainly guarantees it: in yet another letter of commendation, Fronto says to the recipient, *Quantum ex tua benivolentia*

[249] *Ad Amicos* I.4: *Iulium Aquilinum virum, si quid mihi credis, doctissimum facundissimum, philosophiae disciplinis ad optimas artes, eloquentiae studiis ad egregiam facundiam eximie eruditum, commendo tibi quam possum studiosissime*.
[250] See Morello (2007), 178.
[251] *Attic Nights*, xix.8.1.
[252] xix.10.5: *plerique prolixius riderent.*

Faustinianus [the commended] *ornamenti adsequetur, tantum tu voluptatis ex Faustiniani elegantia capies*.[253]

Of course, when Fronto and his *amici* did engage in these learned discussions, which I classify under pleasures of association, it can just as easily be read as a type of utility in friendship. By taking advantage of each other's knowledge and expertise, the results of such exchanges were beneficial to the individuals rather than strictly pleasurable. Returning to Aulus Gellius, one of the main reasons he recorded his sessions with Fronto was because he thought they were useful teachings to pass on: *Nec umquam factum est, quotiens eum vidimus loquentemque audivimus, quin rediremus cultiores doctioresque*; and another, *Hoc iudicium Frontonis, etiam in parvis minutisque vocabulis, non praetermittendum putavi, ne nos forte fugeret lateretque subtilior huiuscemodi verborum consideratio*.[254]

To be an *amicus* of Fronto meant that one would always walk away more cultured and more learned; but in the larger context, in order to partake in this educated circle of friends one needed to be similarly knowledgeable, not just to appreciate the erudition but to contribute to it. In this fashion, everyone can benefit from the association, including Fronto.[255] As Pliny once remarked, '…besides, what is the good of having friends if they meet only for their own amusement? It is the dilettante and indifferent listener who would rather listen to a good book by his friend instead of helping to make it so'.[256] The point here, though, is not to value the utility inherent, and perhaps even required, in friendship over the pleasures to be derived therein, but to understand that both elements were inseparable in how Romans understood their friendship. There is no reason to think that

[253] *Ad Amicos* I.5.
[254] *Attic Nights*, xix.8.1; xiii.28.
[255] Although the current discussion is primarily based on the culture of eloquence prevalent in Fronto's society, the same argument can be extended towards a more general idea of friendship. To be involved in Roman friendship always meant that one had something to contribute to the wider network.
[256] Pliny, *Epist*., VIII.21.5. See p.111.

the benefits and enjoyment in *amicitia* were mutually exclusive, and indeed, to reiterate once more, friendship without pleasure or utility is no friendship at all. A combination of the two, however, forms the foundation of Roman *amicitia*: *omnibus modis amicitia nostra et voluptati nobis et usui fuit*.[257]

And how involved is the sense of virtue and Roman morality in our discussion of pleasures in *amicitia*? As important as the pleasures themselves, it would appear. As was the case with virtue and utility, the moral excellence of the parties was presupposed in every discussion. Each member of this circle, as well as each member waiting to be introduced into this circle, was of excellent character and deserved recognition.[258] It was as if anyone this cultured, this interested in learning could not be faulted with a moral blemish. Of course, this could be merely a convention for letters of commendation – after all, Fronto would never recommend anyone unworthy of either himself or the recipients of these letters. Still, for Fronto, it is quite evident that virtue and eloquence, and by extension the pleasures that arise from the said eloquence, went hand in hand.

Resolution

After all this, it seems that we have come full circle, back to the type of friendship advocated by the philosophers. One cannot have *amicitia* based solely on utility; one

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[257] *Ad Amicos* I.1.4.

[258] Of Julius Aquilinus (*Ad Amicos* I.4), *Decet a te gravissimo et sapientissimo viro tam doctum tamque elegantem virum non modo protegi sed etiam provehi et illustrari. Est etiam, si quid mihi credis, Aquilinus eiusmodi vir ut in tui ornamentis aeque ac nostri merito numerandus sit…Quom haec ita esse deprehenderis, sicto amplius esse in hominis moribus, tanta probitate est et verecundia* [174.8: *credes* for *credis*] – 'A man so learned and so cultured should naturally find from a man of your serious character and wisdom not only protection but advancement and honour. Aquilinus is also, believe me, a man of such a character that he deserves to be accounted an ornament to yourself no less than to me…When you have realized the truth of this, know that there is still more behind in the man's character, so great are his integrity and his modesty'; of Aemilius Pius (*Ad Amicos* I.8.), *Aemilius Pius cum studiorum elegentia tum morum eximia probitate mihi carus est*; of Sulpicius Cornelianus (*Ad Amicos* I.1.3-4), *Industrius vir est, strenuus, ingenio libero et liberali, patriae amantissimus, innocentia fretus magis quam confidens…Laus ad me de ingenio eius iam pervaserat, quam veram ad aures meas accidisse usu didici multisque documentis expertus sum* – 'The man is hard-working, energetic, of a free and free-hand nature, a true patriot, relying on his innocence rather than presuming on it…I had already heard his character spoken of with praise, and that it was a true report which reached my ears I have learnt by experience and verified with many proofs'.

cannot have *amicitia* based entirely on pleasure; one cannot even have *amicitia* that consists of both elements yet does not contain the virtuous character with which to imbue it. Moreover, it truly does resemble the perfect type of friendship described by Cicero. Yet still, there exists a fundamental difference between the philosophers and both Fronto and Pliny: while the former would maintain that virtue is the basis of friendship and that utility and pleasure[259] (and love, if we take Cicero and Seneca into account) are the consequences of the association, the latter two would contend that all three elements are equally significant. Roman *amicitia* could not exist otherwise. It is nonetheless remarkable to note that despite all that has passed between the time of Pliny and that of Fronto, the nature of friendship and how the aristocratic society, represented by our two authors, viewed and employed that same friendship has remained rather homogenous. The character of *amicitia* described by Pliny would receive full approval from Fronto, and vice-versa. That such *amicitia* disagreed with some teachings of philosophers mattered substantially less.

So what can we conclude from this? That the division of friendship by philosophers into the honourable and the ignoble, into the useful, the pleasurable and the virtuous are somewhat arbitrary? Obviously, Pliny and Fronto did not concern themselves with these issues. They did not stop to ask whether their association with particular individuals fell under which categories. They just associated. Furthermore, if they did confer benefits, or if they requested anything, the promise for return was always there. Reciprocity was openly acknowledged, not internally understood.

On the other hand, we should not dismiss the ideas of the philosophers as utter nonsense with no practical values. For they are inherently social commentaries, attempts at rationalizing, justifying and moralizing the question of friendship. And in doing so, the

[259] Again, if the focus is on Aristotle.

philosophers were simply trying to locate the role of friendship in their idealized worlds, to confirm the value of *amicitia* within the lives of the good men. Pliny and Fronto, arguably, were doing the same thing. They had expectations of what friendship ought to be, how friendship should be carried out, and what being a friend must entail. They may not have had to question the role of friendship in their lives and in their surroundings, for social conventions were clear enough to follow, but their concern over the proper exercise of *amicitia* and the fulfilling of those expectations is telling. In this sense, the Roman 'reality' of friendship, displayed by Fronto and Pliny, was very much an ideal as well.

And herein, I believe, lies the key to our understanding of Roman *amicitia*. Instead of drawing the conclusion that Roman *amicitia* as described in these letters was an insincere relationship because of their departure from the philosophical traditions, because, even though the Romans acknowledged an ideal form of friendship, they made no effort to live up to it,[260] we should recognize that the philosophical *amicitia* was directed at very specific people. It was meant for the good man, the virtuous man and the Stoic wise man. Pliny and Fronto did not pretend to be any of these. To be sure, they were virtuous, but only in the context of their social surroundings, not in the highly measured world of philosophy. Since they lived by different values and they attached importance to different things, it is no wonder that the friendship they practiced would be different from the one propounded by the philosophers. For the philosophers, virtue was of the utmost concern, and everything else flowed from that; Pliny and Fronto thought that while virtue was fundamental, so were the other experiences of friendship.

Therefore, the *amicitia* of our two authors needs to be placed against a background different from that of a philosophical discussion, in a context from which that very *amicitia* was derived. And this context, I would argue, is the idealized form of friendship displayed

[260] Or, in Saller's words, ignored it.

by Pliny and Fronto. For it was this that became the benchmark of proper behaviour, the measure against which the 'reality' of Roman *amicitia* was placed. Certainly, the philosophical teachings may have influenced this, but it was not their standard of evaluation. Pliny and Fronto had their own standard, to which they adhered and encouraged others to do the same. And once this is recognized, we can finally acknowledge that Pliny and Fronto did indeed live up to their ideal, and appreciate, rather than criticize, how the Romans exercised their friendship.

Section II:

Amicitia with the Emperor

Chapter 3
Amicitia Principis: Ideologies, Pliny, and Trajan

The notion of sharing a genuine and sincere *amicitia* with the Roman emperor must seem to some as somewhat of an oxymoron. After all, the concept of patronage and the accompanying sense of flattery, adulation, hypocrisy, etc., themes which have thus far dominated discussions about friendship in the Roman era in general, must have been even more pervasive in a relationship that was defined predominately by the hierarchical gap of its participants. Since the general understanding of Roman *amicitia* states that it is already difficult enough to locate 'true friendship' amongst people of the same class, and close to impossible between people of different classes,[1] what, then, could scholars possibly think about the type of *amicitia* shared between an emperor and his subjects? Nonetheless, as was the contention of the previous chapters, difference in class does not necessitate a patron/client relationship, and, even though aspects of patronage can readily be observed in these friendships, this does not preclude the participants from engaging in *amicitia*. But how does this pertain to *amicitia principis*? To what degree did the arguments set out in the previous chapters regarding friendship apply to the emperor of the Roman world, if indeed they applied at all?

It must be admitted that the emperor was in a vastly different position from the rest of the citizen body, and many of the rules and obligations that dictated behaviour and etiquette amongst his subjects need not have concerned the *princeps* as much. The idea of *primus inter pares* held little weight by the Second Century. The question is, was *amicitia* one of these obligations which the emperor could assume and dismiss at his fancy, or was he too bound by social decorum in the exercise of friendship? Were there circumstances in which such decorum was allowed to be ignored? To what extent did the emperor, despite

[1] See p.10-11.

his unique position, abide, and to what extent was he restricted, by these ideals? Can friendship as a social phenomenon be said to determine the actions even of an emperor? Or was the emperor acknowledged to be above such concerns? The topic of the next two chapters, then, is to discuss and clarify the concept of *amicitia principis*, and to locate its position within the greater network of Roman friendships.

The Focus of Previous Scholarship

Before progressing further, a quick review of previous scholarship on this subject is required, since this is a topic that has received quite some attention by scholars, and it will be useful to see how they have approached the issue. There are two aspects to consider. The first is the idea of *amici principis* and what this entailed; the second is in the different ways an association with the emperor can be represented, and the impact this has on how we in turn should regard the concept of *amicitia principis*. Both of these are important for a proper understanding of a personal relationship with the emperor.

Amici principis

The topic of *amici principis* has indeed been the subject of much research. However, the focus of these studies tends to centre on identification of the individuals who shared in an *amicitia* with the *princeps*,[2] rather than in the relationship of *amicitia principis* itself. That is to say, they were more interested in locating the *amici* in a historical context, adapting a prosopographical approach to the issue, than in exploring the ramifications of such a relationship. The key term employed in these studies is proximity: the proximity that allowed access to the emperor, the proximity that made the people who surrounded the emperor special, worthy of investigation.

[2] See Crook (1955) and Syme (1956).

On a more conceptual level, there have also been discussions about the nature of being an *amicus* to the *princeps*. These deliberate on what is meant by the various terms employed in the sources to describe the connections the emperor shared with his companions, done usually with a heavy eye for the political implications such connections had. And so, the difference between *comites*, *amici* and *cohors amicorum* is meticulously set out, and the concept of *consilium principis* is also thought to warrant attention.[3] In addition, the benefits and dangers that might beset those who were close to the emperor are also described in some detail, in the attempt to understand the full repercussion of 'befriending' the *princeps*.[4]

These approaches are perfectly reasonable, since an *amicitia* with the emperor is generally viewed as a political relationship, the study of which stemmed from an interest in the broader political roles and functions of the *princeps*. It is not the aim of this chapter to discredit these works, but the methodologies they adopt effectively subsume *amicitiae* with the emperor under the title of political relationship, and leave the student of the subject with the impression that there is little else. To be sure, the emperor's unique position in Roman society dictates that politics factored into every aspect of his routine, including his friendships;[5] but this does not mean that political considerations had to have motivated all his *amicitia*. As I demonstrate below, personal relationships with the emperor were not only achievable but wholly advocated, and these personal relationships, these *amicitiae*, were not always governed by political considerations as by the wider subset of rules and regulations concerning behaviour and attitude in Roman friendship. The conclusion to be drawn is that even a friendship with the emperor must necessarily be placed within the

[3] Crook (1995) again, Eck (2000a) and Patterson (2007), 140-144.
[4] Millar (1992).
[5] Perhaps to a limited extent – in as much as they dabble in politics – the same can be said about friendships within the senatorial and even the equestrian classes. The situation with the emperor is just more pronounced.

context of Roman friendships, and, though he may have been unique in his political and social circumstance, the *princeps* was no exception to this.

Representations of imperial relationships

As for the characterization of the relationship between the emperor and his entourage, this has typically been described in modern scholarship not in terms of *amicitia* but of patronage. These works generally leave aside the question of friendship to concentrate instead on imperial benefits and the reciprocation of loyalty.[6] According to this view, Roman emperors strove to create a relationship of dependence, whereby the senatorial and equestrian elite were placed under continued obligation. These groups of people, many of whom formed part of the emperor's entourage and *amici*, were constantly aware that their political success and personal well-being were owed in large part to the patronage of the emperor. They were also aware that loyalty was the method for securing further benefactions, while disloyalty would warrant disaster.

Moreover, even should they feel compelled to reciprocate and relieve themselves of their debt, their return could never match the value of the initial gift. Regardless of what form the reciprocation took, be it dedications, panegyrics or bequests in wills, due to the vast resources of the emperor, those who did receive the munificence were obliged to supplement such returns with loyalty. What is more, repeated acts of generosity on the part of the emperor could easily intensify the situation: the more benefits he conferred, the more obliged they became, hence the more loyal they were supposed to be.[7] The emperor, on his part, was encouraged to propagate these measures. By lavishing gifts and titles on his *amici*, not only did the emperor create a sense of dependence and engendered gratitude and loyalty, he caused them to be 'looked upon by all men as blessed and objects of

[6] Syme (1939), 367-386.
[7] See Pliny, *Pan.* 85.8: *...deinde quia tibi amicos tuos obligandi tanta facultas inest, ut nemo te possit nisi ingratus non magis amare*.

envy'.[8] In turn, this would attract greater support and help to garner a larger host of *amici* on whom he could rely.

Saller provides an interesting take on this scenario. While he agrees that the emperor did succeed in securing loyalty through the bestowing of gifts and offices, and that this was an important feature of the relationship between the emperor and his entourage, he nonetheless believes that the situation was slightly more complicated. That is, instead of a *quid pro quo* exchange of favours and positions for loyalty, Saller argues that the emperor employed the people that surrounded him as 'brokers' through which patronage could be dissipated. In other words, the emperor gave his *amici* the privilege of soliciting patronage on behalf of their own *amici* and clients, which allowed them to sustain their positions of influence.[9] This, Saller maintains, was a *beneficium* in itself, and perhaps helped to generate more gratitude and loyalty than direct patronage. Moreover, it provided the emperor with the opportunity to extend his patronage and influence to a larger section of the populace than if he had to rely on immediate contact. With the act of brokerage, the generosity of the emperor could be experienced throughout the empire; conversely, this means that the emperor could then exact loyalty from the entire empire as well.[10]

A spin on this line of thought is added in recent years by Lendon. In his *Empire of Honour*, he attempts to analyze social and political interaction within the Roman world in terms of honour, and to argue that honour itself was actively employed to dictate the behaviour within those relationships. One of his contentions is that the emperor was not immune to a world full of honour, and that he must both make use of this honour to facilitate the governance of the empire, and at the same time must defend his own honour

[8] Dio Chrysostom, *First Discourse on Kingship*, 30.
[9] Saller (1982), 76: '…but this letter [*Epist*. II.13.8] was sent to a friend and shows with unmistakable clarity the pride which Pliny took in securing imperial *beneficia* for protégés'.
[10] Saller (1982), 73-78.

from constant incursions.[11] While Lendon does not refer specifically to the topic of *amici principis*, it is clear that in his point of view, honour played a significant part in the exchange between the emperor and his friends. The emperor required honour, and to be an *amicus* meant that one had to be prepared to offer it, regardless of the merits of the emperor himself.

Furthermore, the emperor was a vast source of honour, which he parcelled out or recalled at his discretion. To be invited to an imperial dinner, to be given special attention, to be offered a kiss or an arm, to be called an *amicus* were all tokens of honour; whereas to be purposely ignored, turned away at the morning salutations, or given the last seat at meetings or dinners were marks of dishonour, which could easily have disastrous results.[12] Intrigues at court notwithstanding, to establish an appropriate standing with the emperor required much effort in itself, especially given the whimsical nature of certain emperors.

The contribution of Lendon's work for our purposes is in identifying the language employed by the ancient authors in their portrayal of associations with the emperor. Through the vocabulary of honour, both the *princeps* and his *amici* could avoid the potentially dangerous terminologies of patronage. Similarly, just as our sources would rather describe themselves as accepting honours from their imperial benefactor than admitting to patronage, they would also choose to represent the relationship they shared with the emperor as one of *amicitia* instead.[13] The emperor, in his pretence of senatorial republicanism, allowed himself to be identified as an *amicus* in turn.[14] In this fashion, the subject of *amicitia principis* is once again subsumed under the heading of patronage, and

[11] See Lendon, (2001), 107-175.
[12] Even the act of 'renouncing friends' on the part of the emperor can have dire consequences. See Rogers (1959).
[13] See, for instance, the way Epictetus describes the existence of a Καίσαρος φίλος, which is filled with such anxieties as typically attributed to clients, though further exacerbated by the fact that his patron was the emperor (*On Freedom*, IV.16-14, 46-50, 60). The passage in Tacitus describing the dialogue between Nero and Seneca is also most relevant (*Annals*, XIV.53-56).
[14] This touches on the larger issue of senatorial self-delusion, explained at length by Wallace-Hadrill (1982).

any declaration of friendship by either parties should be considered as an attempt to moderate the tensions caused not only by a hierarchical society, but also by the extreme position of the emperor.

In many ways, this interpretation, which involves viewing the relationship between an emperor and his subjects in terms of patronage, must be correct. It also helps to explain why the aristocracy was so critical of the type of people with whom any given emperor chose to surround himself, since it is they who would have access to the power and influence available only in such a privileged position. This is abundantly exemplified in the imperial biographies: by choosing freedmen as companions, Claudius incurred the wrath and ridicule of the senators and equestrians; Gaius, Nero and Domitian, typical in the way of tyrants, did not display enough discretion in the selection of their friends and advisors, and hence were subjected to poor counsel.[15] Indeed, the emperor needed to be selective with his *amici*, and should 'befriend' only those of virtuous and excellent characters. These were to have been born from the finest stock, to be learned in their respective fields, and to have the moral excellence propounded by philosophers – only then could the emperor govern properly.[16] As Brunt explains, resistance or support towards any particular reign depended not so much on the policies as the emperor's treatment of the higher orders, and 'choice of *amici* whom they thought worthy of honour was the positive and correlative criterion'.[17]

On the other hand, as was the premise of the previous chapters, we should not assume that the vocabulary of *amicitia* was employed only as a convenience, and that the relationship between the emperor and his *amici* was devoid of any personal meaning.

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[15] The blame for these emperors' tyrannical behavior was not placed entirely on their friends. The tyrant will always choose unworthy individuals to assist in his rule, but it takes a tyrant to make that mistake. Conversely, a good emperor surrounds himself with virtuous people because he is a good emperor to begin with.

[16] One of Pliny's greatest praises for Trajan is that, unlike certain of his predecessors, he chose his 'friends from the best of [his] subjects' (*Pan*. 45.3).

[17] Brunt (1988a), 44.

Furthermore, in so far as the language of friendship prompted an atmosphere of egalitarianism, and thus was useful for mediating between the realities of the imperial system and the ideals of republicanism,[18] even this proposal cannot be fully substantiated by the evidence. For this, Pliny's *Panegyricus* is most informative.

Friendship in Pliny's *Panegyricus*

Concerns

The core of the *Panegyricus*, composed as a tribute to Trajan and delivered in front of a senatorial audience upon Pliny's assumption of the consulship in 100, has apparently seen many revisions before reaching the form as we have it today.[19] It is unclear just how much editing and expanding Pliny did on the text, though a recitation of its revised form seems to have taken three sessions, each requiring one to two hours to complete.[20] The purpose of the speech, according to Pliny, is to promote proper behaviour from Trajan and his successors, not by offering him advice but by reminding him of the sorts of actions that would elicit praise and the sorts that would receive condemnation.[21] The former is the just reward of a good emperor, while the latter epitomizes the bad.[22]

As a source, the *Panegyricus* is valuable for revealing the many ideologies of Trajan's regime. But the treatise is not without its problems. Its literary faults notwithstanding,[23] Pliny's overwhelming desire to commend Trajan by maligning Domitian comes sometimes at the expense of historical accuracy.[24] There are also details of Trajan's background which are conveniently glossed over to fit this image of the

[18] Wallace-Hadrill (1982), 42. See p.212-217.
[19] There are a couple of references to Pliny working on this project in the course of his *Letters* (*Epist*. III.13 and 18). See Durry (1938), 5-8.
[20] Sherwin-White (1966), 251.
[21] *Epist*. III.18.2; *Pan*. 1.4.
[22] As Hoffer points out, (1999, 7), the distinction between the good and the bad emperor forms the foundation of the entire treatise.
[23] Syme (1958b, 114) is especially critical of its literary merits.
[24] Durry (1938), 18-21.

optimus princeps.[25] In addition, as scholars have pointed out, because grounds for praise between the good and the bad emperor are sometimes remarkably similar, we must rely on Pliny's self-professed sincerity to determine the worth of those acclamations. But this approach in its very nature is problematic, since the level of sincerity behind self-professed sincerities is always questionable.[26] And all of this is not helped by the dense rhetoric of the *Panegyricus*.

Nevertheless, since discussion of *amicitia principis* at this juncture of the thesis is fundamentally a discussion of ideologies, specifically ones Pliny wanted his emperor to adopt, the comments offered in the *Panegyricus* remain helpful. Just as the case with the *Letters*, true historical accuracy is not at issue; what is at issue is the way the concept of *amicitia principis* is presented in the *Panegyricus*, and how it fits with the overall image Pliny wanted to prescribe to his emperor. The fact that Trajan is described repeatedly in the text as an avid follower of the precepts of *amicitia* is something that deserves more attention than it has typically received. An examination along these lines will demonstrate to us in what light *amicitia principis* was regarded during the reign of Trajan.[27]

Trajan, the *amicus*

According to Pliny, the proper cultivation of *amicitia* is one of the hallmarks of a conscientious emperor. The Trajan of Pliny's *Panegyricus* is often praised, in addition to his other fine qualities, for his treatment of his friends. And so, the story of a praetorian prefect, retiring against the wishes of his emperor, is related with much heart-breaking detail: Trajan at the shores, kissing and embracing his departing friend, weeping over the

[25] Radice (1968), 167-168.
[26] Hoffer (1999), 7. Bartsch (1994, 185-187) concludes that Pliny's sincerity seems to be based on the very act of making positive claims about Trajan and his regime, and that the entire treatise was an effort to restore meaning to, or perhaps to 'deny [the] collapse' of, ideologies.
[27] There is evidence to suggest that Trajan himself wanted to promote the relationship of *amicitia*. In Dio's *Discourses on Kingship*, written also for Trajan's benefit, the theme of φιλία is also a recurrent one. See Jones (1978), 118-119.

loss of such a helper in his affairs, such an excellent companion, and praying all the while for a safe journey; the unidentified prefect, though steadfast in his decision to return to private life, nonetheless hesitated over the loss of *ipsum contubernium principis*.[28] Surely the choice of *contubernium* here is important. It must have been meant to invoke a highly intimate relationship, akin to the ones shared between Pliny, Fronto and their respective *contubernales*. Did it matter that one of the participants of this association was an emperor? In one sense, it mattered greatly. The only reason the story is told is because it demonstrated Trajan's attitude to *amicitia*. It was an extraordinary event, as no one expected Trajan to allow his friend to retire in the first place,[29] much less making such a public spectacle out of it. The image of an emperor weeping and waving desperately at a departing ship must have been quite an experience.

On the other hand, it should not matter that one of the participants of such an intimate *amicitia* was the emperor, because such is how it should be. Trajan, by virtue of his honourable character and moral conduct, restored proper friendship to the world at large. *Fides*, one of the most significant requirements of friendship, acknowledged by both philosophers and laymen alike,[30] *Reddita est amicis*![31] People were not afraid to befriend each other or indeed the emperor because Trajan now recognized and appreciated the virtuous, and bestowed onto them his own *amicitia*, unlike previous emperors who identified immorality as the only fitting quality.[32] Appropriately, then, Trajan was generous with his benefits to his *amici*, and, perhaps more surprisingly, was also grateful whenever he himself was done a favour. For Trajan knew the duties required of him as a

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[28] *Pan*. 86. See Durry (1938), 213.
[29] As the text states, *Ita quod fando inauditum, cum princeps et principis amicus diversa velletis, id potius factum est quod amicus volebat* (*Pan*. 86.2).
[30] See Silver (1989).
[31] Though it must be admitted that the context of this statement is that Trajan reestablished the appropriate attitude in social relationships. And so, friends were to demonstrate *fides* to each other, children were expected to exercise *pietas* with their parents, and to slaves were allotted *obsequium* (Radice here has misread the text, understanding *libertis*, freedmen, instead of *liberis*, children). This was distorted under certain, unnamed, emperors (*Pan*. 42.1-3). See also 88.1-3.
[32] *Pan*. 45.1-3.

friend, and it was crucial that he acknowledged his debt and repaid them; as Pliny describes it, *…non tibi magnus princeps sed non ingratus amicus videris*.[33]

The notion of an *ingratus amicus* and its consequences for the social network of friendships is dealt with at length in Seneca's treatise, *De Beneficiis*,[34] but to see it referenced here by Pliny in the context of imperial relationships is an illuminating statement of his attitude towards just how much the emperor should abide by the common perceptions and practices of *amicitia*. Although it is true that such declarations as 'Your generosity leaves me with nothing to ask, save that you will always create these mutual obligations, and so leave your subjects in doubt whether they do better as your debtors or your creditors'[35] must in a sense be an attempt at glorifying the emperor, it is impossible to miss Pliny's overwhelming need to locate these traditional values of friendship in *amicitia principis*. In other words, the ideas prescribed onto *amicitia principis* are no different from the expectations of any other *amicitiae*.

Pliny returns to the theme of the restoration of friendship under his beloved emperor in a later passage, only this time his focus is not on the concept of *fides* or Trajan's virtuous disposition, but on Trajan's own capacity to love and feel affection. Whereas previously there had only existed *adsentatio*, *blanditia* and, worst of all, *amoris simulatio*, true *amicita* is now restored to the people because Trajan knows that affection is the prerequisite of any amicable relationship.[36] The emperor himself subscribes to this

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[33] *Pan.* 60.6.
[34] See p.181.
[35] *Quid isti benignitati precer, nisi ut semper obliges obligeris, incertumque facias, utrum magis expediat civibus tuis debere tibi an praestitisse* (*Pan*. 60.7). The translation of *cives* as subject may have too many implications, but it is difficult to think of a better interpretation.
[36] *Pan*. 85.1. The word 'people' is deliberately chosen here to render Pliny's ambiguous text. It is not too clear whom Pliny wanted to include in his restoration of friendship, for he speaks both of *in privatorum animis* and *in principum domo*. The passage deserves to be quoted: *Iam etiam et in privatorum animis exoleverat priscum mortalium bonum amicitia…Etenim in principum domo nomen tantum amicitiae, inane scilicet inrisumque remanebat*. Does Pliny want to suggest that *amicitia* could once again exist between private individuals and that this would then have consequences in an imperial setting? Certainly, an effort to instil sincerity amongst private citizens would prove beneficial for the emperor, for he could then rely on candid interactions among and with his subjects. If this is correct, Pliny must not mean private citizens in the

condition: *habes amicos quia amicus ipse es*.[37] Pliny further stipulates that to demand love from his subjects is the action of a tyrant, but to inspire love is appropriate for a good *princeps*.[38] Indeed, 'There is nothing more delightful in human affairs than to inspire love, unless it is to feel it, and you can enjoy both, seeing that the warmth of your own affection kindles even more in your friends'.[39] Pliny even pleads with Trajan always to follow this advice and never to forget that it is through love that friendship is formed and maintained, and that it is hatred which demeans.[40]

Affection and *amicitia* in the *Panegyricus*

Affection in *amicitia* has thus far figured little in the course of this thesis, the justification being that affection is an emotion which is almost impossible to prove from our evidence. It can be argued, as I have tried to do, that many of the features we observe in the letters of Pliny and Fronto betray certain degrees of attachment, such as nicknames or epistles which have no specific intention other than to (re)initiate dialogue. On the other hand, critics can just as easily contend that these were merely conventions and are insufficient proof of real sentiment. Although ancient philosophical works do mention affection as imperative in any friendship,[41] and recent scholarship has admitted that even our ancient ancestors were capable of feelings,[42] cynics will still maintain that *amicitia* was a relationship of utility, devoid of any emotional resemblances to what we would identify as friendship. Therefore, it is all the more surprising to find a straightforward discussion

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wider sense, or as the translation has it, 'ordinary citizens', but only those that could affect matters *in principum domo*.

[37] *Pan*. 85.2.

[38] *Pan.* 85.3-7. And interestingly enough, incurring hatred can occur under both circumstances.

[39] *Iucundissimum est in rebus humanis amari, sed non minus amare. Quorum utroque ita frueris ut, cum ipse ardentissime diligas, adhuc tamen ardentius diligaris…* (*Pan*. 85.7-8). Note Seneca *Epist*.IV.6: *Si vis amari ama*; and Martial X.10.10: *Marce, ut ameris ama*. See Durry (1938), 212.

[40] *Placeat tibi semper haec secta, et cum reliquas virtutes tuas tum hanc constantissime teneas, nec umquam tibi persuadeatur humile esse principi nisi odisse* (*Pan.* 85.7).

[41] See Konstan (1997a), 69-70.

[42] See Kaster (2005).

about affection and *amicitia* in an ancient text, and Pliny could not have been more straightforward with this issue: *habes amicos quia amicus ipse es*, *amari nisi ipse amet non potest*, *Diligis ergo cum diligaris*.[43] Love is reciprocal, Pliny states, and cannot be demanded of people – all the *princeps* can do is to inspire love with his own, and wait patiently as his subjects freely offer a return.

Of course, we are operating within a very imperial context,[44] and it does not appear as if Pliny is making generalized statements about *amicitia* and the role of affection therein. Rather, this appeal of emotional attachment is directed solely at the emperor, either to boast of Trajan's past conduct to his senatorial colleagues, or to serve as a reminder to his *princeps* about proper forms of interaction with his subjects. Not only does Trajan have to befriend his entourage, but he has to mean it: *amicitia* in name only is insufficient, as previous rulers have demonstrated.[45]

Yet, even if we accept that this passage was aimed to effect a response from his imperial audience and was not a declaration about *amicitia* as in a philosophical discourse, it is only reasonable to assume that it still must reflect Pliny's attitude about friendship overall. Admittedly, Pliny makes no mention here about friendship outside of the imperial backdrop, but it is difficult to imagine that he would stipulate affection as a requirement in genuine *amicitia* for just the emperor, and at the same time not demand similar behaviour from his wider addressees. For one thing, the only way Pliny's idealized representation of Trajan's relationship with his subjects can function is if affection flowed both ways, and to suggest that that Pliny advocates this form of *amicitia* exclusively in relation to the emperor is an absurd notion. Rather, we should regard this passage as an indication of Pliny's feelings about personal attachment in *amicitia*, but applied to the emperor's situation: all friendships should contain some amount of affection, which must be given

[43] *Pan*. 85.4-5.
[44] See *Pan*. 85.3-4.
[45] *Pan*. 85.1.

and received reciprocally, and just because the *princeps* is in a position to demand this affection does not mean he should.

Furthermore, Pliny understands that friendship and affection are not things to be offered to everyone universally. *Amicitia* is a highly personal relationship, and it is up to the emperor to decide on whom he should bestow his love: *Vos quoque quos parens noster familiariter inspicere dignatur, fovete iudicium eius quod de vobis habet*, and *Princeps enim, cum in uno probavit amare se scire, vacat culpa si alios minus amat*.[46] Pliny does not specify what criteria would be worthy of Trajan's favourable *iudicium*, though many of the qualities he mentioned in previous passages, such as virtuous character and *fides*, come to mind. And certainly, Pliny's point here is not to reiterate the merits of such traits, which he has already done extensively, but to excuse the apparent favouritism shown by the emperor towards certain members of the senatorial order. This is an issue which will be discussed in more detail at a later point, in conjunction with a closer examination of Fronto's relationship with the Antonine emperors.[47] But it is worth noting at this juncture that even in Pliny's picturesque representation of Trajan's court there are such hints of the jealousy and envy which would come to plague many imperial settings. To be sure, Pliny's account is a very subtle reference to the problem, as he does not actually mention preferential treatment, possible dissent, or aroused resentments. Nor does he say that Trajan did not love specific people, but that his love for these individuals was simply not as great as for certain others (*alios minus amat*); he showed affection for everyone, only that there were some who received less of it, some who received more.

However, the key feature of Pliny's description to keep in mind is that it is phrased in terms of friendship. Hence, as far as *amicitia* is concerned, it is perfectly acceptable for Trajan to favour someone over another. Trajan as an emperor has a responsibility to attend

[46] *Pan*. 87.3-4.
[47] See p.304-305.

to everyone, but Trajan as an *amicus* is allowed to do so at his discretion.[48] No one should take offence at this, Pliny states, as this is not an irregular aspect of *amicitia* – something which we have already observed in the course of his own letters. Trajan is to be commended for his observance of the rules of friendship,[49] as being an emperor does not mean he should be above the commonly accepted notion of *leges amandi*. Yet, his wider audience has to remember that these *leges* apply both ways, to limit his actions and to benefit his position. Trajan the *amicus* is both a debtor and a creditor.[50] And lastly, Pliny offers a final incentive to those who have not yet earned Trajan's friendship, which is that Trajan's love is enduring, whether the object of his affection is near or far: out of sight, not out of mind.[51] This, again, is a reflection of Pliny's own practice, specifically those postcard letters which appear to serve no other purpose than to maintain intimacy with his distant friends.

The benefits of *amicitia*

At this point, we can see that the theme of *amicitia principis* performs two functions in the *Panegyricus*. In the first instance, the concept of *amicitia* is used to compliment the emperor, both in terms of his integrity and appropriate conduct in his social relationships. In the second, Pliny employs this very flattery to compel Trajan to adhere even more faithfully to the rules governing friendship. These features are very much in keeping with Pliny's self-expressed purpose for composing the treatise. Still, it should be pointed out that the portrayal of *amicitia principis* is not entirely straightforward, as Pliny does present a tension between the idea that a model emperor is necessarily a good

[48] This does not detract from Pliny's earlier statement that being an *amicus* provided for an essential feature of a good emperor. It only states that Trajan is entitled to befriend those of his own choosing. That Trajan was a good *amicus* to these lucky individuals is the more important point.
[49] *Ipsum quidem quis mediocriter diligat, cum leges amandi non det sed accipiat*? (*Pan*. 87.4).
[50] See p.205 n.35.
[51] *Tenet quisque locum quem semel meruit, faciliusque est ut oculis eius vultus absentis, quam ut animo caritas excidat* (*Pan*. 87.5).

amicus, and that it takes a good *amicus* to make a model emperor.[52] This tension is never fully resolved, though it probably was not Pliny's intention to provide such a resolution. He must have regarded both as valid statements, and both needed to be taken into account.

Despite this, what is most interesting for our purposes is that the friendship Pliny describes of, and imposes on, the emperor resembles to a very high degree the one we have encountered in the previous two chapters. That is to say, the image of friendship derived from the study of Pliny and Fronto correspond to the type of friendship offered to the *princeps*. This is perhaps only to be expected. Even though the emperor was in a unique position of power, because of which allowances were made pertaining to how he was supposed to exercise his *amicitia*, he himself was raised in the same environment as our authors, and was taught to appreciate the same values. His understanding and implementation of *amicitia* could not have differed much from that of the aristocratic classes which made up the majority of his entourage, simply because, if nothing else, he was part of that class and shared similar ideals.

Moreover, since the higher orders of the Roman world chose to interact with their emperor through the language of friendship, Pliny and Fronto being good examples,[53] the emperor had little choice but to follow suit. Anything else would be tyrannical. Still, it is important not to overemphasize this point, as it is more likely the case that emperors generally found it expedient to communicate in terms of friendship as well. If done properly, it would guarantee the cooperation of the upper classes and an enduring positive reputation. Indeed, it is no coincidence that emperors who were noted by our sources to have had an effective tenure of the principate were also the ones who treated their *amici* with dignity and respect.[54] It is also no coincidence that those emperors who were famous

[52] See p.217 n.74.
[53] See also Dio Chrysostom in his *Discourses on Kingship*.
[54] See, for example, Suetonius, *Augustus* 66, *Vespasian* 13, *Titus* 7.2; Tacitus, *Histories* IV.7; Dio, *Roman History* LXV.5-6.

for being tyrants, as in Nero and Domitian, were also infamous in their mal-treatment of their supposed *amici*.[55] Both of these tendencies show how important the ideology of *amicitia* was to the upper classes, and how that ideology was used to shape the image of their emperor.

Another reason for the emperor and his circle to interact in terms of friendship is that it enabled the aristocracy to have a standard by which to measure the success and failure of their emperors. Since there were precise and definable conventions pertaining to the practices of *amicitia*, and since these conventions were part of the social values to which everyone should adhere, it only made sense for friendship to become one of the criteria for determining whether the emperor wanted to engage with his entourage as a colleague or as a tyrant. For in participating in this relationship, the emperor was making a statement, that he regarded himself as a member of this class, not standing above it.

This practice had its benefits for the emperor as well, since it must have been advantageous for the emperor to communicate and operate through *amicitia*, not least because such were the terms with which the aristocracy themselves functioned, but also because it allowed for a more cooperative atmosphere. As Konstan points out, the language of friendship used in political circumstances 'permits the appeal to personal values'.[56] In other words, it adds a personal touch to the sometimes superhuman figure of the emperor. Pliny himself makes much of this when he rejoices in the fact that Trajan did not lord over his guests at dinner but would actually join in on the conversation.[57] Truly it is only human nature to be more helpful and accommodating with a boss who is ready to engage on a more personal level. And let us not forget the fact that a bid for friendship also gave the emperor scope to manoeuvre between his friends, to curb their jealousies and

[55] Suetonius, *Nero* 27.3, *Domitian* 11.1; Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV.53-56; *Histories* IV.8; Dio, *Roman Histories*, LXVII.9.
[56] Konstan (1997a), 116. It must be admitted that Konstan here is describing the exercise of the language of friendship in pacts and treaties. Nonetheless, I believe the argument still applies.
[57] *Pan*. 49.5. See p.213-214.

so forth – while the analogy between a boss and the emperor may work to a certain extent, egalitarian treatment towards his subjects was not advocated in the ancient world, and favouritism and patronage were still the expected norm.

A question of equality: the condescending emperor

This brings us to another question which is worth pursuing in the context of Pliny's *Panegyricus*, and that is to what extent the language of friendship promoted a sense of equality between the emperor and his entourage. Or, perhaps more to the point, was this even a concern for Pliny? On this topic, conventional scholarship maintains that by communicating through *amicitia*, the emperor was fostering this very sense of equality by a deliberate, and yet nominal, lowering of his status to match those of his senatorial colleagues. This process is aptly described by Wallace-Hadrill as 'a ritual of condescension', whereby the Roman emperor purposely refuses to adorn himself with the trappings of an autocrat and behaves like an ordinary citizen. Thus, Trajan's emotional farewell at the shores, Augustus' visiting of a sick friend, the excusing of subjects from *salutatio* and dinner invitations, and subdued *adventus* to the city were all instances of when the emperor wanted to project himself as, again in Wallce-Hadrill's terms, a 'citizen-emperor'.[58]

For the aristocracy, it was also preferred practice to label their emperor as *amicus* due to the ambivalent nature of the vocabulary. They, the proud members of the Roman elites, did not have to acknowledge the fact that the Republic no longer existed,[59] that their own *auctoritas* rested on the whims of a single individual, that the monarchy they so abhorred had once again become a reality. By employing the terminology of friendship,

[58] (1982), 40-41
[59] Republicanism existed only in so far as it necessitated such ritual of condescension in the first place.

with its inherent ambiguity and implication of equality,[60] both parties could then exist in a state of self- and mutual-denial, for the purposes of political and social expedience. Of course, Wallace-Hadrill explains that this was not just a farce: 'It was enacted in all seriousness, because it served to articulate certain deeper truths that…mattered to the society'.[61] That is to say, such self- and mutual-deceptions were important to the functioning of their society because they allowed all parties involved to overlook, and operate in spite of, the inconveniences that the imperial system entailed. In this respect, the role and importance of *amicitia* to Roman society as one of the primary ways to promote and perpetuate this 'sham or charade'[62] should not be underestimated.

To a certain extent, the arguments put forward by Wallace-Hadrill can be substantiated by a further examination of Pliny's *Panegyricus*. For instance, when Pliny mentions the ease of access to Trajan's dwellings on the Palatine, with 'no obstacles, no grades of entry to cause humiliation',[63] not only was his intention to mark the difference between his emperor and that hated tyrant, Domitian, but that very difference is further highlighted by the fact that Trajan's house was akin to that of an average senator. Or rather, Trajan's house was the epitome of what a senator's house should be, so full of 'reverence' and 'moderation' that every aristocrat ought to follow suit.[64] And again, the description of Trajan at banquet, whose temperament was always characterized by *socialitas*, *benigna invitatio et liberales ioci et studiorum honor*, whose table was always open to everyone, and who actively encouraged his guests into conversation and engaged

[60] See Introduction.
[61] (1982), 48.
[62] (1982), 48. Again, Wallace-Hadrill did not intend for this to be taken negatively.
[63] *Pan*. 47.5.
[64] *Tantum ubique silentium, tam altus pudor, ut ad parvos penates et larem angustum ex domo principis modestiae et tranquillitatis exempla referantur* (*Pan*. 47.6).

therewith,[65] paints the picture of a senator dining with his peers, in an almost symposiastic setting.

The object of this passage is to dispel the image of the emperor as a patron to his guests, and replace it with the emperor as just another member of the Roman elite, sharing his table with his friends and conducting himself in a manner fitting to that station. Indeed, inviting one's friends over for dinner was a common practice, and the host's behaviour at these gatherings could elicit much comment and criticism. We are reminded here of the famous letter of Pliny's, in which he displays strong disapproval for the patronizing host who divided his guests into classes and treated them accordingly.[66] Such actions are unworthy of people of our status, Pliny warns his addressee, and we can easily imagine our epistler following up this counsel with the representation of Trajan at dinner as an example to pursue. Once again, Trajan's role as the emperor is understated, in favour of Trajan the perfect aristocrat.

On the other hand, however much Pliny wanted to give to Trajan the image of the exemplary senator, it would be completely mistaken to think that the language of *amicitia* in Pliny's *Panegyricus* was meant to foster a sense of equality with the emperor. For Pliny, the emperor's position and elevated status are never truly in question. Although there are instances, such as the ones mentioned by Wallace-Hadrill and the ones given above, where the 'ritual of condescension' is actively seen to be practiced, credit is always given to Trajan for these actions. The case of the tearful farewell, Trajan's modest palace complex and his personal participation at banquets are mentioned precisely because Trajan was extraordinary in his normality. Where Pliny appreciates the fact that Trajan could be genuinely grateful upon being bestowed a benefit, it is marked out as a commendable trait; but, according to Seneca, this ought not to be commendable, but regularly expected in

[65] *Pan*. 49.4-8.
[66] *Epist*. II.6. See also Peachin (2001b).

amicitia! The occasion of Trajan submitting himself to an oath with which he emphasized his status as a private citizen is taken again by Wallace-Hadrill as another example of the ritual at work; but Pliny's comments here are actually directing our attention to the ritual itself.[67]

Therefore, Pliny's praises for Trajan are not due to his willingness to behave as an average citizen, albeit of the higher orders, but to his participation in the ritual. And by this reasoning, by Pliny's praise of the emperor's exemplary attitude towards the ritual, not only is he acknowledging the very existence of the ritual, but he is also acknowledging the superior status of the emperor.[68] Clearly, the ritual of condescension was an important aspect of Pliny's imperial ideology – it formed the entire basis of his *Panegyricus.* But would it still be accurate to claim that it was a case of self- and mutual-deception when all parties involved understood and acknowledged the situation? That the emperor would lower himself to statuses comparable to his entourage was a wonderful thing, but in order for it to occur he needed to start higher than everyone else. Pliny knows this, and that is why he is drawing attention to it. It is almost as if Pliny is saying, 'Trajan is great because he genuinely feels he ought the play the game, but a game is all this is; he is still in charge, and anyone who thinks otherwise must truly be quite dim-witted'. Indeed, the scepticism Wirszubski displays at Pliny's *libertas reddita* under Trajan, in which he says *Iubes esse liberos: erimus; iubes quae sentimus promere in medium: proferemus* and *Tenebit ergo semper quid suaserit, scietque nos, quotiens libertatem quam dedit experiemur, sibi parare*,[69] is perfectly explicable in this context. These statements were not made

[67] *Pan*. 65.1-2. *Iurat in leges attendentibus dis* (*nam cui magis quam Caesari attendant*?)… True, Caesar swore that he was an average citizen and was not above the law, but this point is completely undercut with the parenthesis that no one else but Caesar could command the attention of the gods. Pliny's attitude is obvious, regardless of his rhetoric.
[68] On the problems of expressing sincerity in the *Panegyricus*, see Bartsch (1994), 148-187.
[69] *Pan*. 66.4 and 67.2.

'inadvertently',[70] as Wirszubski sees it, but purposefully to recognize the debt Pliny thought his circle owed to the emperor, as well as to advertise the fact that Trajan was in actuality the one responsible for everyone's well being.

What does this mean then for our discussion of *amicitia*? If we still accept the argument that the state of Roman political and social discourse existed within a condition of self- and mutual-deception, and that the language of friendship was employed to promote the ritual of condescension, it follows that the vocabulary of *amicitia*, and perhaps even the very relationship itself, was not much more than a tool which concealed deeper realities.[71] Again, this is not to say that *amicitia* was an unimportant relationship, as even under this argument it had its role to play in the functioning of the society. Yet this conclusion is highly unsatisfactory because the assertion that the Romans blinded themselves to their actual situation with these acts of condescension is in its very nature flawed.

While Wallace-Hadrill has rightly observed that *humanitas* and *civilitas* were two vital traits of the new imperial ideology,[72] and his identification of the ambivalent status of the emperor, wavering between citizen and monarch, must also be correct, we should nonetheless keep in mind that they do not necessarily translate into the type of deception his conclusions would have us believe. Simply because Trajan subjected himself to these rituals did not mean Pliny believed he himself was a social or political peer of his emperor, nor did he advocate this opinion. A willingness to participate in these rituals was what mattered, and Trajan was given credit for doing it well. It was another criterion on which the elite based their judgement of their emperors, in the way that *amicitia* also became a

[70] (1950), 168.
[71] We have to keep in mind that this applied only in relation to the emperor, as no Roman aristocrat would advocate purposeful, even if nominal, condescension to appease their lower classed associates.
[72] (1982), 42-43.

measure.[73] A final quote from Pliny's *Panegyricus* brings us back to the discussion of *amicitia* and should help to emphasize this point even more: *tota gloria tua* [Trajan] *est*: *qui superior factus descendis in omnia familiaritatis officia, et in amicum ex imperatore submitteris, immo tunc maxime imperator cum amicum agis*.[74] Pliny could not be clearer about Trajan's superior status, his participation in the ritual of condescension, and how this made Trajan an even better emperor; but make no mistake, the glory was all his.

Amicitia and imperial *indulgentia*

Cotton as well recognizes the conflict between Wallace-Hadrill's picture of the *civilis princeps* and the way Trajan was actually represented by Pliny. In analyzing the appearances and functions of *indulgentia* within Book X of Pliny's epistles, she offers instead an image of Trajan as a paternal figure, a *parens*, whose favour and indulgence were the key objects of appeal for Pliny.[75] Even though *indulgentia* itself does not make much of an appearance in the *Panegyricus*, the fact that both Trajan and Nerva were likened to fathers throughout this work is an indication of how Pliny wanted his audience to perceive and appreciate his emperors.[76] To Pliny and his peers, Cotton contends, this notion helps to explain the discrepancy between their statuses and that of the emperor, and to come to terms with their inferiority.[77] At the same time, as the *pater*, it allows for a

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[73] It can also be argued that *amicitia* formed a part of this ritual, that the emperor's friendly interaction with those of lower statuses was one of the methods with which he condescended. This must be valid with certain emperors, but we should not forget that Pliny also advocates sincerity and a high level of individuality in *amicitia* (see p.205-206), which perhaps give this a deeper meaning than just enactments of condescension. This is not to say, of course, that sincerity was not expected in these performances of said ritual, only that, in Pliny's view, friendship was still meant to be a personal relationship. After all, the ritual of condescension was conducted for the benefit of the entire Roman aristocracy, but friendships were formed for the individual.

[74] *Pan*. 85.5.

[75] Cotton (1984). Griffin (2003, 110-111), however, has pointed out that Pliny employs the verb *indulgere* several times in his *Letters* when making requests; and that even the imperial family, according to the *Senatus Consultum de Piso Patre*, can be subjected to the indulgence of the senate. Still, the image of the emperor as a paternal figure in the *Panegyricus* is hard to dispel.

[76] Cotton (1984), 264.

[77] 'One notices that the request of a man who appeals to the emperor's *indulgentia* easily takes (or deteriorates into) the forms familiar from addresses to gods whom the emperors came to more and more

certain degree of 'the love, affection, care and even indulgence that the parent entertains towards his children' on the part of the emperor.[78]

This interpretation of a paternal relationship between the emperor and his subjects, as was pointed out, is at odds with Wallace-Hadrill's *civilis princeps*, since it is inherently an acknowledgement by the emperor's subjects that they were in fact his subjects.[79] As such, it fits better with the objections this thesis has presented against Wallace-Hadrill's work, but it is perhaps unfortunate that Cotton has failed to take into account the strong presence of the ritual of condescension in Pliny's *Panegyricus*, or to provide a possible resolution between her work and that of Wallace-Hadrill's. That is to say, Cotton does not appear to appreciate Pliny's own appreciation for Trajan's endeavours at playing the part of a citizen.

It is also unfortunate that, in Cotton's view, this type of paternal relationship effectively destroys the claims of friendship, so passionately advocated by Pliny himself. For her, these are nothing but 'Futile empty rhetorical conceits', as everything now depended not on reciprocity but on the *indulgentia* of a father figure.[80] But Cotton's objections arise from the understanding that reciprocity required equality, and that *amicitia* meant an association between equals. In her words, 'The *indulgentia-pietas* bond between the paternal *princeps* and his subjects excludes a relationship of reciprocity: it is the extinction of *amicitia* – in the old sense – between him and his subjects'.[81] It is perhaps this 'in the old sense' that has prompted Cotton to regard *amicitia* in this fashion;[82] it is clear, however, that the friendship Pliny advocates in the *Panegyricus* has already taken

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resemble. Indeed in being a *parens*, the emperor stood nearer to the gods than to his fellow man' (Cotton [1984], 266).

[78] Cotton (1984), 265.

[79] Cotton (1984), 266: 'The likening of the emperor to a father…conflicts with the image of the *princeps civilis*, the *princeps* as a fellow-citizen, a fellow-senator, an equal, a friend-*amicus'*.

[80] Cotton (1984), 266.

[81] Cotton (1984), 266.

[82] In similar vein to Saller, for instance. See p.10-11.

into consideration the emperor's elevated status. To think of Pliny's depiction as an 'over-embellished argument' is,[83] as Wallace-Hadrill has done, a misreading of the Pliny's intentions. The *amicitia* in the latter's work was not meant to disguise the superiority of the emperor; on the contrary, it was meant to illustrate how the emperor should go about exercising his *amicitia*, and the importance of personal attachment in spite of his powerful position. Even as *pater patriae*, Pliny stipulates, the emperor cannot disregard *amicitia*.

If we take all of this into consideration, it becomes clear that Pliny's description of *amicitia* in the *Panegyricus*, noted in several instances, has parallels in his corpus of epistles. Proper conduct in friendship is what defines character, for Trajan or for any member of Pliny's circle – this is a theme readily observed in both the *Letters* and the *Panegyricus*. So too on the issue of equality of status, Trajan's extraordinary position should not, and did not, prevent him from forming *amicitiae* with his subjects, just as Pliny's own high rank did not impede him in his relationships. Of course, Trajan was the emperor, which meant that certain aspects of *amicitia* had to be tailored to fit his needs: *Etenim cum plurimis amicitiis fortuna principum indigeat, praecipuum est principis opus amicos parare*.[84] But then again, *amici* were supposed to look out for each other's interests anyway, and utility in friendships was never a source of contention for Pliny.[85]

Therefore, it is evident that Pliny modelled his expectations of *amicitia principis* on his own experiences. Moreover, it may not be too farfetched to suggest that Pliny's understanding of *amicitia principis* was inspired by the general and accepted notions of friendship. The emperor must endeavour to observe the same set of rules for friendship as his subjects, as this enabled him to become the good *princeps*. Whether *amicitia* as a concept, or even as an ideal, was a powerful enough force to dictate the actions and

[83] Cotton (1984), 266.
[84] *Pan*. 85.6.
[85] See p.174-176.

behaviour of the emperor is difficult to say at this stage,[86] but certainly as a tool to ensure social cohesion and mutual cooperation the aristocracy clung desperately to its perpetuation. In this as well, the emperor was no exception.

Amicitia Principis in Book X

The remainder of this chapter involves a detailed analysis of the expression and exercise of *amicitia* with imperial figures in Pliny's Book X. The next chapter will take up the issue with Fronto's missives. The aim of these two chapters is to determine whether it is possible to substantiate further the conclusions derived from the *Panegyricus* regarding the nature of *amicitia principis*, and also to see it in action, as it were, outside of treatises and discourses. For, as was the premise of the previous chapters, friendship is best evaluated when in actual operation, and the epistolary form is perhaps our best surviving evidence for this. Moreover, it will be interesting to note the similarities and differences in the manner of communication between the emperor and his subjects, and between Pliny, Fronto and their peers. This will help us to understand better exactly how much continuity of *amicitia* there was when faced with such a huge discrepancy in their respective statuses, how effective *amicitia* was in bridging that discrepancy, and what sorts of allowances to their understanding of *amicitia* were made because of the discrepancy.

The textual tradition of Book X

Book X of Pliny's collection of epistles is an oddity. It contains letters both to and from the recipient, it was most likely not originally intended for publication, and as such never saw the type of transformation into works of literature that Books I-IX did. This thesis does not intend, however, to investigate in detail the assertions raised above, nor

[86] Since not all emperors were bound by such scruples. Bad emperors are notorious for their blatant disregard for these concepts and ideals.

many of the other issues that surround this text, issues such as who exactly was responsible for its publication, when was this done, and so forth. Because there is so little external evidence for this aspect of Book X, it would be almost pointless to speculate.[87] In any case, even if Book X were meant for publication, the ideas regarding this facet of Pliny's *Letters* proposed in the first chapter would still apply; if not, then such questions would have little impact on our reading of the text.

In regards to the completeness of the book, whether this published item contained every letter between Trajan and his legate, and how much its current form is due to survivability and how much to the hand of its editor, only brief mention will be made. This thesis will take the line, following the arguments provided by Sherwin-White and Williams, that the Pontus-Bithynian letters survive in their entirety, and the only editing done on this section of the book was likely to have been the removal of dates, headers of the letters and appended documents.[88]

The missives prior to the legate's departure to his province, however, present more of a problem, as there is no plausible explanation for the large chronological gap between the last of this series (X.14) and the Pontus-Bithynian ones (X.15).[89] Given that the missives which describe Pliny's invitation to Trajan's *consilium* ought to fall between the dates set out by X.14 and X.15,[90] unless they relate to events much earlier than the letters themselves, it is unthinkable that Pliny did not correspond with Trajan in the meantime. And if X.14 is to be dated to the end of the First Dacian War in 102,[91] since Trajan was absent from Rome for the duration of the Second Dacian War, any communication with the

[87] See Williams (1990), 4.
[88] See Sherwin-White (1966), 533-535, and Williams (1990), 3-5. Although there are some major points of disagreement between Williams and Sherwin-White, they both still come to the same conclusion. See also Millar (1992, 213-228) to place Pliny's letters in the context of imperial administration in the provinces.
[89] Anywhere between four to eight years, as in 102/106 to 110.
[90] IV.22, VI.22, VI.31. The implication of these to the topic of Pliny's relationship to Trajan is discussed in p.230-231.
[91] Sherwin-White (1966), 580.

emperor would have to take the epistolary form. Were there absolutely no matters of interest from Pliny to the emperor, no other congratulatory notes or petitions of patronage? This is highly unlikely. Therefore, I am inclined to believe that Book X does not contain the complete collection of the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan.

It is unclear whether this is due to the editor, who saw no relevance in the exchanges which fell within these dates, or whether these letters simply did not survive.[92] A third alternative is possible, that these letters may not have been extant even to the editor himself, for, considering the already wide range of selection the editor was willing to include in the collection, as well as the repetitive nature of some of the epistles,[93] there is no motivation for him to exclude these missing ones. The manuscript tradition of Book X, according to Radice, is complicated, but there is no evidence to suggest that there is a substantial section missing between X.14 and X.15;[94] so survivability to the modern era, at least from late antiquity and the Middle Ages, does not appear to be the issue.

But all of this is conjecture. The important thing to keep in mind is that, even if the text is incomplete for whatever reason, the aim of the present study is to examine the type of relationship between Pliny and Trajan, and how this relates to the character of *amicitia principis*. The middle sections of their correspondence may be missing, which may or may not contain information to add to our study, but from the parts we do have we can determine the tenor of their relationship at its beginning and its end. And seeing as they are both substantially documented in the epistles that are left to us, this should be more than sufficient for our purposes.

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[92] Sherwin-White also qualifies his remark that the book is the complete set of letters between Pliny and Trajan with 'so far as these survived'. (1966, 535).
[93] For example, there are already several similar letters of commendation in the corpus, so why include these and take out the others?
[94] Radice (*Loeb*), xxvi-xxvii. Reynolds (1983, 316-320) also makes no mention of a possible lacuna.

The consequences of imperial rescripts

Aside from this, there is one further issue which does require further attention, as it bears direct relevance in the attempt to evaluate the degree of personal attachment from these epistles; namely, who actually composed Trajan's replies to Pliny. Much scholarship has gone into this question, and there is no need to discuss it at length at the present. Suffice it to outline the three schools of contention: first, that the rescripts sent to Pliny were composed wholly by Trajan's *ab epistulis*, a sort of imperial secretary who was responsible for reading the original letters and drafting the replies, because the emperor was far too busy, or far too ignorant, to be concerned with such matters; the second view maintains that though the *ab epistulis* prepared the majority of the rescripts, being responsible especially for legal jargons and matters of administration, the emperor nonetheless added his own opinions and personal touches to his correspondence, to ensure that they give the impression of authentic personal letters; and thirdly, that the emperor himself was to be credited for his letters, and secretaries were only employed for purposes of dictation and for looking up references.[95]

The reason this pertains to the question at hand is that if we assume that the emperor was not personally involved in the composition of his letters, then the entire venture of analysing *amicitia principis* through his correspondence with Pliny becomes potentially misleading. Any hints at familiarity or intimacy could be attributed either to the hand of the scribe or to the basic structure of the imperial epistle.[96] It can be argued that the form of the imperial epistle does reflect an idealization of the interaction between

[95] The first view was put forward by Peter (1901), 123. Williams also believes that Syme (1938) made similar assumptions, though it seems to me that Williams has somewhat misinterpreted Syme, who was really advocating the second opinion. The second view is maintained by Sherwin-White. Both Millar (1967; 1992, 248-249) and Williams argue for the third view. See Sherwin-White (1966, 536-546) and Williams (1990, 16-17) for the relevant discussions.

[96] It is preposterous to even consider that the emperor's *ab epistulis* changed his style of writing to reflect the emperor's relationship with the recipient. Syme proposed that the scribe might have adapted the style of the individual emperors under whom he worked, but even this seems somewhat far-fetched (1938, 223).

the emperor and his subjects, but in the search for personal attachment this is insufficient.[97] The most we could infer is that the undertone of familiarity is part of the 'ritual of condescension'. Still, even this is telling in itself: if it is imperial policy to rely on *ab epistulis* to compose all such letters, then personal interaction between the emperor and his subjects becomes severely limited, which does not bode well for claims of *amicitia*.

The second proposal offers more scope, as the elements of Trajan's individuality could help in detecting the relationship he and Pliny shared. But even if an effort was made, by the emperor or otherwise, to conceal the tone of the official scribe in such epistles, it is uncertain how much of the individuality came from the emperor, and how much from the *ab epistulis*. To be sure, scholars have identified a number of aspects which would attract Trajan's personal attention, such as the interest in building programmes and the concern with attitudes that are appropriate to his *saeculum*,[98] but these play a small part in the larger picture that is Book X. For example, should the references to Trajan's *amicus*, Pompeius Planta, the prefect of Egypt, be taken as a personal choice of words, or that of his scribe being polite?[99]

Therefore, it seems that in order for the following analysis to be carried out, it must be assumed that Trajan's replies in Book X were done on his own initiative, and did not rely in the first instance on compositions drafted by his *ab epistulis*. This assumption, however, is based on some convincing arguments proposed by Millar, whose picture of the 'emperor at work' relies heavily on the basis that the *princeps* personally read and composed his letters.[100] Further, it is also my impression that this is the case. The image of Trajan as a busy man, who was not always careful in his readings of Pliny's epistles and interpretations of Pliny's concerns, who 'pick[ed] up on some marginal element in Pliny's

[97] However, see Jones (1991), 152.
[98] Sherwin-White (1966), 541-543.
[99] *Epist*. X.7 and X.10. The importance of these letters is discussed below, p.232-234.
[100] (1967), and (1992, 213-228). See also Williams (1976).

original letter and belabour[ed] it', is hard to dispel;[101] conceivably, a secretary would not have been so careless, or so bold.

Pliny to Trajan: addressing the emperor

A good place to begin our investigation is in the form of address. In the letters from Pliny to Trajan, we observe that the tendency was for Pliny to employ *domine* as the primary method of addressing his emperor, though towards the beginning of the book Pliny also used *imperator* attached to an adjective, such as *sanctissime* and *optime*.[102] The appearance of *imperator*, Sherwin-White believes, is because Pliny wanted to mark out special occasions, as in Trajan's 'recent salutation' in X.1 and his 'military victories' in X.14.[103] This is plausible, especially since the title of *imperator* has been ascribed to the emperor from an early stage of the principate.[104]

The title of *domine*, however, proves to be more of a problem, in particular the political baggage that came with the concept. It was stated even in the *Panegyricus* itself how much good emperors ought to abhor this identification, since it conjured such images of tyranny as had existed in the reign of Domitian.[105] Furthermore, previous emperors were also quite emphatic about their avoidance of being labelled a *dominus*, suggesting that a sense of taboo had surrounded this word from the beginning of the principate.[106] It is therefore quite surprising to see it used so frequently by someone who ought to be particularly sensitive to this issue and who publicly applauded its disappearance from the current regime.

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[101] Williams (1990), 17.
[102] *Epist*. X.1.1, X.4.1, X.14.
[103] Though a reason could not be found for its use in X.4 (1966, 556).
[104] See Syme (1958a).
[105] *Pan.* 2.3, 45.3 and 55.7 all make reference to this.
[106] Augustus was notorious for this, and Tiberius duly followed his example (see Suetonius, *Aug*. 53.1, *Tib*. 27, and Tacitus *Ann*. 2.87).

Williams offers no explanation for Pliny's seemingly hypocritical gesture.[107] Sherwin-White, on the other hand, proposes a distinction between 'official' use and 'social' use, and that this title can regularly be seen in 'polite address between inferiors and superiors of free birth, not only between masters and slaves' – so between brothers, child to parent, junior to senior senator, and so forth.[108] In other words, the fact that these were private letters between the emperor and his legate meant that naming the former *domine* was perfectly within the latter's prerogative, and that even in so doing it did not necessarily convey the sense of adulation on the part of the speaker, or despotism on the part of the receiver, that one might have expected, only one of respectable deference.[109]

This issue is further explored by Dickey, in her examination of the general forms of address in the Roman world. Her chapter on *Titles* in particular looks closely at the term *domine* and its appearances within Latin literature, and marks the difference between four categories of its uses.[110] The first is that between lovers, which holds little relevance to our current discussion; the second is analogous to Sherwin-White's proposal, that *domine* was employed to refer to members within the family, from junior relatives to senior ones, and implied with it an underlying feeling of flattery; and the third appeared as a very general usage of the term, one which denoted respectability and politeness, though not servility, and could be applied as commonly as to people whose names had been forgotten – *obvios, si nomen non succurrit, 'dominos' salutamus*.[111] In all of this, Dickey wants to emphasize that there is no sense, philologically speaking, of the extreme deference in the appellation

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[107] (1990), 18.
[108] (1966), 557-558. We should recall that there were instances of *domine* even in the addresses by Fronto to his peers. See p.159.
[109] Sherwin-White (1966), 557-558: 'Hence it was a natural term of address from the equestrian procurators to the *Princeps*, and easily adopted by the legates. The intermixture of equestrian and freedmen officials…would encourage the usage'.
[110] Dickey (2002), 77-109.
[111] Dickey (2002), 81-85; 85-88; 88-94. The quote is from Seneca, *Epist*. III.1.

of *domine* that modern scholarship has come to assume.[112] Even in the case of the reverence expected for a *paterfamilias*, where a designation of *domine* used to be construed as an indication of subservience because it was thought to have been adopted from the way slaves addressed their masters, Dickey argues that it was derived instead from the understanding that the father was the *dominus* of the household, and such an address 'simply acknowledges the position of the father as master of the house' and 'need carry no implications [of servility]'.[113]

It is within these contexts and developments that the fourth usage of the word should be seen, Dickey maintains, the one which addressed emperors. Especially under this category, it is important to keep in mind that *domine* appeared commonly in 'sub-literary' genres, as in private letters, graffiti and even every day speech, and that it lacked the servile connotations observable in more prominent literatures.[114] Furthermore, according to Dickey, there is an inherent difference between *domine* in the vocative form and *dominus* as a method of referral. It is uncertain whether this is because of the difference in genre, i.e. *domine* occurs really only in sub-literary works whereas *dominus* is seen in literature proper, or because the negative associations of *dominus* in its referential usage is truly absent in the addressing form of *domine* (Dickey acknowledges both reasons); but the fact remains that the appellation of *domine*, despite official rhetoric and ideologies, was somehow tolerated.[115] Indeed, as Dickey points out, we must not forget that there was 'tacit acceptance' of this appellation from all parties involved:[116] Pliny, with his repeated application of the term; Trajan, because he did not tell Pliny to stop; and the

[112] Dickey (2002), 94. Slaves did not originally refer to their masters as *domine/a*, but rather as *ere/a*. This term may have been replaced by *domine/a* by the early Empire, but there is insufficient evidence for making a positive statement (78-81).
[113] Dickey (2002), 88.
[114] Referenced throughout her chapter. This is a reflection of Sherwin's distinction between the official and social occurrences of the term. See p.226.
[115] Dickey (2002), 95-97.
[116] Dickey (2002), 96.

editor of Book X, who deemed that it was appropriate enough to publish, which effectively elevated these letters from the private sphere, sub-literature, to the public domain.[117] Besides, it is highly questionable just how 'private' Pliny's letters, as documents from a governor to an emperor, were, considering their official nature.

Emperor to subject

For his part, Trajan typically employs Pliny's cognomen in the vocative form, *Secunde*, to address him, this sometimes standing alone or with *mi* and/or *carissime* attached. The use of the cognomen in addresses was a common practice, which, according to Dickey, accounts for 78% of all single-name instances.[118] *Carissime* is also frequently found in private letters, in its superlative form more so than in its positive form.[119] Dickey further reckons that this adjective carried with it a sense of 'mild affection, esp. for friends or acquaintances of equal or lower status',[120] which, the reference to friend perhaps notwithstanding, fits relatively well with the picture so far. As for the *mi*, it should be remarked that while it evoked certain degrees of intimacy, it was never employed by Pliny in his references to Trajan, only vice-versa.[121] Their difference in status may have been a factor, though informality must also have played a part, as *mi* is, once again, generally found in private epistles. In either case, it is probable that Pliny did not want to presume such a close relationship with Trajan without some sort of confirmation.

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[117] The only time when problems did arise was preciously when the two uses were linked, 'resulting in objections to the address usage' (Dickey [2002], 99).
[118] Dickey (2002), 56. The *nomen* takes up 16% and the *praenomen* 6%.
[119] Dickey (2002), 134-135.
[120] Dickey (2002), 315.
[121] In fact, the word *mi* never actually makes an appearance in Pliny's set of correspondence from the previous books. This is most likely a product of Pliny's editing, as such published material ought to avoid these kinds of informal language (Dickey [2002], 214-219). However, it is also true that Pliny very rarely addressed people directly in his letters (twice: III.10.1 and VII.21.1), which would drastically reduce his opportunities for using *mi* in the first place. Could this also be a result of his editing, that he wanted to make his letters sound more like literary compositions by removing any semblances of private exchanges?

That Trajan felt it appropriate to employ *mi* and *carissime* in his addresses to Pliny is an interesting feature.[122] In a similar fashion, when Pliny complained about contracting some fever on his way to Pontus-Bithynia, Trajan in his reply wished that his legate had taken care of his *corpusculum*, little body.[123] It does not appear that Trajan was being condescending with his use of the diminutive here, as the emperor seems genuinely to have been concerned with Pliny's health. So why did he choose this particular word? Williams jokingly writes that Trajan 'may be attempting to unbend a little',[124] and this may not be too far from the truth. It may well be that Trajan was not only trying to be funny, but also to insert a degree of familiarity into his epistles. Even as a busy man we can perhaps observe that Trajan made an effort to interact on a more personal level with his subjects. Can we maybe even regard Trajan's consistent use of *Secunde* as part of this scheme?

Of course, as has already been mentioned, there is nothing peculiar about addressing someone by his cognomen, but would it be too far-fetched to suggest that there was some form of punning involved with Pliny's name? The word *secundus* has a variety of meanings, favourable and pleasant being two of the more common ones, and, though there is no firm evidence to support this, could Trajan be referring to an inside joke with the pun? 'My dearest and most favourite man' or 'My dear and pleasant Pliny' has quite a nice ring to it. Certainly, we can attribute the use of *mi*, *carissime* and the form of address to epistolary conventions rather than an indication of intimacy, and the singular case of *corpusculum* does not have to signify anything of importance. But the idea that the emperor wanted to relate personally with his subjects corresponds well with the description of a good emperor in Pliny's *Panegyricus*. One should expect no less from Trajan, the emperor who restored friendship to the world because he understood and properly practised *amicitia*.

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[122] Jones (1991), 152: as an indication of their respective 'social inequalities'.
[123] Sherwin-White mistakenly read *corporis* instead of *corpusculi* (1966, 585). See Jones (1968), 140.
[124] (1990), 89.

Pliny, on the other hand, was very guarded with his addresses to Trajan. Just as he did not dare to overstep his boundaries by employing *carissime* and *mi*, his use of *domine* was meant to convey respect and deference. There appears to have been no difficulty in accepting this display of deference to Trajan because, as Dickey argues, it was regarded not as a sign of servility for Pliny and tyranny for the emperor, nor as a submissive slave would to a master, but was a reflection of the respect that a son would show to his father. This then provides a resolution for seemingly conflicting attitudes between Pliny's *Panegyricus* and his epistles of Book X. Moreover, it is fairly consistent with the picture painted by Cotton, whose identification of Pliny's own perception of Trajan as a *pater* through *indulgentia* can now be further substantiated by Dickey's research. However, none of this points to a particularly close relationship between the two, at least from Pliny's point of view. The 'voice of the humble official' comes across so strongly in these letters that it has effectively concealed any hints of Pliny's attitude towards *amicitia* between him and his ruler, if any existed at all.[125]

Trajan and Pliny: tone and attitude

But it is difficult to tell which aspect most defined their relationship, whether it was the disparity in their respective statuses, as the humble official to his emperor, which resulted in the officious tone of Pliny's epistles, or was it because the two were never close to begin with? It is quite clear that Pliny's abilities, both in matters of administration and finance, were held in high esteem, as is evidenced by his appointments to the two treasuries, his post as the supervisor of the flood defences and drainage, and his specific responsibilities as the imperial legate in Pontus-Bithynia.[126] It is also true that Pliny

[125] Cotton (1984), 266.
[126] We know that Pliny was elected by Trajan specifically to hold this post in Pontus-Bithynia, but it is not entirely clear whether Pliny received the position because of his abilities (or reputation of his abilities) or due to patronage from some other source. See Saller (1982), 94-111.

received the *ius trium liberorum* from Trajan at an early date, as well as an augurship, both of which probably required recommendations from people within Trajan's immediate circle.[127] In turn, Pliny successfully obtained the same *ius* for his *contubernalis*, Suetonius, something which Trajan conferred only 'sparingly'.[128] Pliny's consulship in 100 probably also required strong backing from the right people.

Still, these do not necessarily mean that Pliny himself was close to Trajan. We are reminded of the many failed recommendations Pliny put forward to his emperor, though this, admittedly, could be attributed in large part to the scarcity of positions available and the character of the zero-sum game which defined ancient patronage.[129] Moreover, just because Pliny might have had the support of people within Trajan's entourage who attained for him the *ius* and augurship,[130] this need not be an indication of Pliny's own standing therein. For instance, Pliny's excitement at being invited to sit on Trajan's *consilium* can easily be observed, which suggests that this was not a normal occurrence.[131] We also should not forget that Pliny obtained the *ius trium liberorum* for another *contubernalis*, Voconius Romanus, from Nerva, and there has been no suggestion so far that Pliny and Nerva were on particularly intimate terms.[132]

Even the vocabulary of friendship figures little in the course of Book X. The expression most characteristic of the relationship shared between Pliny and Trajan seems

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[127] In the sense that Trajan's initial nomination of Pliny to the priesthood probably resulted from those around the emperor putting in a good word for him.
[128] *Epist*. X.95. Williams (1990, 14) takes these two details to argue that Pliny was closer to Trajan than has generally been assumed. Against him, see Syme (1958b, I.83), whose opinions I share.
[129] See Syme (1960).
[130] Julius Servianus was one of Pliny's greatest supporters (*Epist*. X.2). Verginius Rufus was another. Both of these men had access to imperial ears.
[131] The premise of these letters (IV.22, VI.22, VI.31) is to describe the legal proceedings which took place at the *consilium*, and ostensibly to draw lessons which could be imparted to the correspondents. So *Epist*. IV.22 speaks of the plan to abolish the games at Vienna, and how games in Rome had a corrupting influence throughout the empire; and VI.22 describes the case brought by Atticinus against Brutitianus, a former friend whom he betrayed, and the letter concludes with Pliny's warning against mistrust in one's companions. But the tone of these letters betrays Pliny's true intentions: bragging rights. This is especially noticeable in VI.31, which is essentially a report of how Pliny spent his days in the emperor's company, *suavitas simplictasque convictus*.
[132] Though Nerva may not have been as stringent as Trajan in handing these out.

to be, as Cotton has pointed out, *indulgentia*. The conclusion set forth by Cotton, that this concept is not conducive to *amicitia*, is in all likelihood an accurate assumption, not because *amicitia* could only have resulted from equality in status, something which the association of Pliny and Trajan did severely lack,[133] but because Pliny appears to have taken on the role of the humble official. Trajan was certainly willing enough to be polite and communicate in a friendly fashion, and even gave allowances to Pliny that he would otherwise not have sanctioned: for example, the trouble he went through to confer citizenship on Pliny's doctor, Arpocras;[134] bestowing the *ius trium liberorum* to Suetonius; and allowing Pliny's wife to use the imperial transport system – with all of these Trajan was known to have been stingy.

But regardless of what Trajan's attitude was, Pliny did assume this role, did not once overstep the limits of his propriety, and was ostensibly comfortable with it. The routine letters Pliny sent to report how he led the province in the celebration of Trajan's accession and the taking of yearly vows, as well as Trajan's reply of acknowledgement support this reading.[135] When all of this is coupled with the notion that Pliny and Trajan were not on intimate terms to begin with, we get the impression that very little *amicitia* existed between the two.

This is not a surprising conclusion because, even if the concept of *amicitia* did figure so prominently in Pliny's *Panegyricus*, Pliny did not actually mention that he was an *amicus* to Trajan. His praise for the emperor was based on the latter's capacity to love and befriend, not on an assumption that they shared an *amicitia*. One has to wonder into which category Pliny included himself, when he bade senators in the *Panegyricus* to either cherish the love Trajan had bestowed or to not feel jealousy had it not been given.[136]

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[133] In particular the uses of *domine*.
[134] *Epist*. X.5, 6, 7 and 10.
[135] *Epist*. X.35, 36, 52, 53, 100-102.
[136] See p.208.

Maybe this was a quiet reassurance to himself, that even despite his qualifications and devoted service friendship was not something to be forced. Indeed, early on in the correspondence between Trajan and Pliny the emperor qualified Pliny's attitude towards him as *pietas*, which would coincidentally be reflected in a reference in the *Panegyricus* as the restoration in Trajan's reign of the *pietas* children ought to feel for their parents.[137] And the sense of *pietas* in both the *Panegyricus* and in the context of Pliny's request, like *indulgentia*, was not favourable to *amicitia.*[138]

Nonetheless, this does not mean that the relationship between Trajan and Pliny could not have grown more intimate as the years went by. Dickey has suggested that the replacement of *imperator* by *domine* in addresses to Trajan was a sign of an increased familiarity for the humble official towards his emperor.[139] If we consider the sequence of the letters, we notice that the appellation of *imperator* was last used in *Epistle* X.14, well before Pliny's departure to Pontus-Bithynia. We are then faced with a large gap chronologically, at the end of which is the start of the Pontus-Bithynian letters,[140] from which point on *domine* became the standard.

It should also be noted that it was not until Pliny departed for Pontus-Bithynia that Trajan began using *Secunde* as his address. Prior to this Trajan's replies always sounded sharp and formal, even slightly condescending as he complimented Pliny's sense of duty to the senate and his subject's feelings of *pietas* towards him.[141] Could the two have become *familiarior* with each other during this time? The evidence is scarce, but the three letters

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[137] *Epist*. X.9 and *Pan*. 42.2. See p.204 n.31. The context of the letter is that Pliny wanted to place a statue of Trajan in a temple he was to set up, which would also include statues of previous emperors. Trajan granted him permission to do this, because he did not want to impede (*impedisse*) Pliny's *pietas*.
[138] Although it should be noted that both Valerius Maximus (IV.7.4 and IV.7.5) and Quintilian (XII.1.40) seem to have had no problem with the concept of *pietas* in *amicitia.*
[139] (2002), 100.
[140] Sherwin-White dates X.14 to 102 instead of the 106 established by earlier scholarship (1966, 580). See p.221-222.
[141] *Epist*. X.3B, 7 and 9.

that relate Pliny's invitation by Trajan to his *consilium* do fall between these dates,[142] which suggests that the emperor began to take a more active interest in him. But of course, simply being on more familiar terms with Trajan did not equate to sharing an *amicitia* or partaking in Trajan's inner circle, and Pliny's adoption of the role as the humble official within the Pontus-Bithynian letters is indicative enough of their relationship. Though Trajan no longer spoke of Pliny's *pietas*, the latter still constantly sought the former's *indulgentia*.

The fact of the matter was, Trajan was the *princeps* and Pliny his subject. Both of them knew and understood this. Although Trajan might have been promoting friendly interaction (as part of the ritual of condescension, perhaps?) with his legate through informal addresses and such, Pliny was well aware that he was selected by the emperor to perform a task. The hierarchy of power was never in doubt. Trajan, too, did his part to maintain this, for, in spite of the friendly tone of his addresses, the authority of the emperor was blunt and difficult to miss. Or it may have been the other way around, that the authority of the emperor was made even more emphatic by his amicable manner.

In any case, the times when he reprimanded Pliny for forwarding what seemed to him to be silly requests and incidents with obvious solutions, or when he reminded his legate that he should act on his own initiative because that was why he was chosen in the first place are clear instances of the emperor asserting his *auctoritas*.[143] Even when the emperor 'allowed' Pliny's wife to use the imperial transport service on unofficial business, though this was, in all likelihood, only a formality since it happened after the event,[144] even here Trajan's sanction was an assertion of his authority; an act of kindness and a type of *beneficium*, to be sure, but also important because it permitted the emperor to bestow it as a *beneficium*. And Pliny's belated request was his attempt at reassuring Trajan of their

[142] Sherwin-White (1966), 298, 381-382, 391.
[143] *Epist*. X.117. Though sometimes this was because Trajan misunderstood Pliny's original missive.
[144] *Epist*. X.120 and 121. See also Williams (1990), 158.

positions relative to each other; otherwise, he would have been an ingrate to neglect the *indulgentia* of the *princeps*, and it was a slippery slope to take the gifts of the emperor for granted.

Ultimately, this was what characterized the relationship between the two, *princeps* and subject. This interpretation is familiar because it is exactly as Pliny advocated in his *Panegyricus*: Trajan was the *princeps*, and we owed our well-being to his diligence, kindness, patronage. Whether we would have seen a different attitude in their communication had they been *amici* to begin with is difficult to say, but even with *amici*, as Pliny states in the *Panegyricus*, the *princeps* did not cease to be the *princeps*, and the hierarchy of power still ought to be respected.[145] It is unfortunate that Pliny was not so intimate with Trajan so as to allow us to observe this aspect of the *Panegyricus* through Book X. For that, we shall have to look to Fronto's letters with the Antonine emperors.

An aside on Trajan's *amicus*

Before we turn to Fronto, however, there is one further feature worthy of note in Pliny's correspondence with Trajan: the only mention of Trajan's *amicus* throughout the whole of Book X.[146] *Epistle* X.7 sees Trajan writing to Pliny, agreeing to confer Alexandrian citizenship on Pliny's doctor, and promising to relay the confirmation to his *amicus*, Pompeius Planta, the prefect of Egypt. Was this a random remark, or did Trajan use the term deliberately to convey some meaning? On this, Sherwin-White comments that *amicus* here should be interpreted as a 'formal title…early given to equestrian

[145] It is worthwhile to keep in mind that just because Pliny encouraged the observation of hierarchy did not mean he practised subservience, which, if the use of *domine* cannot be taken to denote, and if the concept of *indulgentia* was designed to foster a parental relationship, then there is actually little evidence to suggest this. Instead, the letters to Trajan paint a picture of deference to the emperor, of a Pliny who actively took to the role of the humble official and who appreciated the value of Trajan's reign. See, for example, the many times Pliny bade Trajan to set down legislation (*Epist*. X.65, 68, 112). Of course, as was mentioned, neither *domine* nor *indulgentia* appear to correspond well with *amicitia*.

[146] To clarify, vocabulary of friendship does exist in this book, and so words such as *amicus*, *familiaris* and *contubernalis* all have their place; but these appear in the context of letters of recommendation from Pliny to Trajan, referring specifically to the Pliny's familiars.

officials', and does not have to signify any close relationship with the emperor.[147] Unfortunately, little is known about this man for us to tell from external evidence whether he would have been part of Trajan's immediate entourage,[148] but the prefect of Egypt was a post not normally entrusted to just anyone, not least because it was ranked amongst one of the highest echelons of the equestrian *cursus honorum*.[149] The emperor relied heavily on the prefect of Egypt to ensure the grain supply to Rome, and as such the emperor needed to place much trust in this equestrian official. It is therefore highly possible that Planta was an *amicus* of Trajan to begin with, and that the word was not merely a title.[150]

Furthermore, we do not see other equestrian officials in Book X being labelled an *amicus*: for example, Gavius Bassus, the *praefectus orae Ponticae*, who, judging from the letter sent by Trajan to Pliny, had had direct contact with the emperor;[151] similarly, Sempronius Caelianus, most likely an equestrian officer sent by Trajan to levy troops in the province, was not graced with the title, even though he too was given specific instructions by Trajan to defer a case to Pliny.[152] The singular incident with Planta is obviously unique. What is even more interesting is that in Pliny's letter of thanks for Trajan's generosity in this affair, he as well acknowledges that Planta was Trajan's *amicus*: *Rogo ergo…ut mihi ad Pompeium Plantam praefectum Aegypti amicum tuum, sicut promisisti, epistulam mittas*.[153] Maybe Pliny was simply repeating what Trajan had written in his original letter. Or maybe this has more significance, as in Trajan was reminding

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[147] (1966), 571.
[148] *PIR* VI 637.
[149] Brunt (1975), 124.
[150] The argument can be made that Pliny's special commission also required trust from Trajan, which could also make him an *amicus*. While Trajan did place much faith in Pliny, it is clear from Book X that Pliny was selected for his abilities and familiarity with the region and/or people, not necessarily because of his intimacy with Trajan. The prefects of Egypt, however, are usually described as being close with the emperor to begin with.
[151] *Epist*. X.21 and 22. Gavius Bassus was honoured by an inscription in Ephesus, whose description of his career is the typical *cursus honorum* of an equestrian official, though worthy of note is a decoration by Trajan, presumably during the Dacian Wars. His post at the Pontic shores is the last mentioned by the inscription. See Williams (1990), 91 and *Année Epigraphique* 1972, no. 573.
[152] *Epist*. X.29 and 30. See also Sherwin-White (1966), 599 and Williams (1990), 94-95.
[153] *Epist*. X.10.1.

Pliny of the high esteem with which he regarded Planta, and Pliny in his reply was responding to this.

There did appear to be some bad blood between Pliny and this prefect of Egypt, if we can identify the Planta of *Epistle* IX.1 as the same individual:[154] in this missive, Pliny urges the recipient, an unidentified Maximus, to publish his criticisms against Planta as soon as possible, for the man has recently passed away and to speak ill of the dead was considered bad form as well as a cowardly practice. Perhaps Trajan caught wind of some dissent between their respective circles and wanted to intervene, albeit in quite a subtle way.[155] And indeed, this will not be the last time we find an emperor stepping in to keep the peace, as it were. In any case, Sherwin-White's assumption that the use of *amicus* in these two letters was merely a title for an equestrian official does not hold up to scrutiny, and it does seem that its appearance here has a deeper meaning.

[154] As Sherwin-White (1966, 482) and Radice (*Loeb*), II.81, n.1 both seem to think.
[155] Though if my suggestion is acceptable, then this was actually a rather forceful way to settle the issue.

Chapter 4
Amicitia Principis: Fronto and the Antonine Emperors

The focus of this chapter is on the exchanges between Fronto and the Antonine emperors, with the intention of determining how different his attitude was in their communications, compared to the attitude adopted in Pliny, and how this affects our perception and interpretation of *amicitia principis*. There is no need with this corpus to discuss the matter of editing and publication because, unlike Pliny's Book X, the epistles to and from the emperor were most likely circulated as a single thematic entity with Fronto's letters to his *amici*. That is to say, Fronto's books of letters involving Marcus were all intended to be read along with the other books, *Ad Pium*, *Ad Amicos*, *Ad Verum*, and so forth, as a single collection. Therefore, such caveats as continuity with the rest of the compilation, how complete this compilation was and whether there was a difference in editors are not really concerns – Fronto's correspondence with the Antonine emperors is not an oddity.

Furthermore, the other issues that surround Fronto's work as a whole have already been elucidated at length, the majority of which can be taken to apply here as well. Even with the question of the authorship of the emperor's replies we find an easy solution in Fronto: Marcus himself admits, on several occasions, to the authenticity of his missives, sometimes going so far as apologizing when the letter was not written in his own hand.[1] The one thing we should perhaps be cautious of is that Fronto's corpus involves a number of imperial personages, the relationship with each of whom will necessarily be reflected in the manner of their communication. And so, it will be worthwhile to format the following analysis to reflect

[1] As, for example, *De Nepote Amisso* 1: *Mea manu non scripsi, quia vesperi loto tremebat etiam manus*. See also *Ad M. Caes*. IV.8, where Marcus relates his sudden bout of illness, which explains the 'shakiness of the handwriting' (*precaria manu scribo*). Lastly, in *De Bello Parthico* 10, Fronto apologizes for the letter not being in his own hand, especially since Marcus did write the original letter in his.

the different recipients/authors of Fronto's imperial correspondence. Accordingly, the first part will deal with the letters with Antoninus Pius, which bears the most resemblance to those between Pliny and Trajan; the second part will look at his interaction with his star pupil, Marcus Aurelius, which makes up the majority of the collection; and finally, the third section will examine the missives between Fronto and his other, and lesser known, imperial pupil, Lucius Verus.

Fronto and Antoninus Pius

Fronto's addresses

There are in total seven missives between Fronto and Antoninus Pius, two of which are replies from the emperor.[2] All of these letters are preceded by headers, which adhere to a typical pattern of address: the name and title of the recipient in the dative followed by the author in the nominative. So for the missives sent to the emperor, Fronto usually writes *Antonino Pio Augusto Fronto*, although in the first epistle of the series the additional title of *Imperator* is found. Unfortunately, the date and context of this letter are unclear, because it has come to us in a very fragmentary form, but we can tell that it was describing the thanks Fronto offered to the emperor in the senate.[3] In the few lines of this epistle that do survive, Fronto addresses the emperor by the title of Caesar, something which we did not encounter in

[2] The collection of missives entitled *Ad Pium* actually number nine, but one of these was in reality addressed to Marcus (*Ad Pium* 4) and another to Gavius Maximus (*Ad Pium* 7). The mistake by the editor is understandable, because these two, as well as *Ad Pium* 3, which was addressed to Pius, all deal with the issue of Censorius Niger's will.

[3] Haines suggests that this letter and its reply (*Ad Pium* 2) could refer to the speech given by Fronto upon the bestowal of his consulship, but that nowhere is Fronto called a consul in Pius' reply is peculiar ([*Loeb*] I.127, n.1). Champlin too shares his doubts (1974, 149). Van den Hout, however, believes that the context, Fronto delivering thanks in the senate for his consulship in 143, is fairly clear (1999, 382-382).

the case of Pliny.[4] Towards the end of the same missive, the word *dominus* appears, but not in the vocative form; hence, it is unlikely that it was used to address the emperor.[5]

Elsewhere, in letters that are more complete, Fronto consistently adopts *imperator* as his address to Pius, sometimes with an adjective, sometimes standing alone: *Ad Pium* 3 has three cases of the word by itself, which are all abbreviated to *imp*.; in *Ad Pium* 8.1 we see *sanctissime imperator*; and *Ad Pium* 9.3, Fronto uses *domine imperator*.[6] The adjectives *sanctissimus* and *dominus* probably do not have much significance in themselves;[7] the usage of *dominus* in addresses has already been commented on previously, and the superlative of *sanctus*, which has a sizeable rate of occurrence in letters of the Roman world in general,[8] most likely was meant to reflect the sense of piety for which Pius was renowned.

The constant appearance of *imperator* is more striking, especially since Pius, unlike Trajan, did not have a reputation for military prowess.[9] And Fronto himself served little in the army, so the military aspect of the word must have been lost to both the addresser and addressee.[10] But because the title of *imperator* has long been attached to the figure of the emperor, it may not be as surprising as it seems.[11] And this may simply be the way that Fronto has personally chosen to address his emperor. Indeed, Dickey suggests that the usage

[4] This is somewhat peculiar because the use of Caesar is usually reserved for Marcus, at least in the headers of these letters, as opposed to Augustus for Antoninus Pius.
[5] The Teubner text has no further emendations or additions. If the *dominus* here is an instance of referential usage instead of a form of address, and it was meant to denote the emperor, then what impact does this have on Dickey's arguments (see p.226-228)? Of course, this is still a private correspondence, and so falls under her heading of subliterature, a realm of greater tolerance. But it is difficult to imagine that Pius would suffer such a sign of servility, though this again is a unique occurrence. The fragmentary nature of the text denies us the opportunity to grasp the exact nuance of this word in the context of imperial history.
[6] Interestingly, all the instances of *imperator* in the Teubner text are abbreviated.
[7] See Van den Hout (1999), 393.
[8] See the table in Dickey (2002), 133.
[9] Birley (1966), 151.
[10] For the use of *imperator* with a military connotation, see Dickey (2002), 102.
[11] See Syme (1958a).

of *imperator* by Fronto towards Pius is a sign of their more distant relationship.[12] Still, it may be worth mentioning that in all three cases, Fronto was writing in a somewhat formal capacity. In the first of these, Fronto was desperately trying to defend Censorius Niger after he behaved shamefully by criticizing an acquaintance of Pius in his will;[13] Fronto was excusing himself from his duties as proconsul due to a sudden bout of illness in *Ad Pium* 8; and the third letter has Fronto confronting the emperor about his reluctance at bestowing a nominal title of procurator to the historian Appian.

As we can see, these three missives all contain some sort of request from the emperor, which perhaps necessitated a more formal address. If the reading of the *imperator* in the Teubner text is correct,[14] then *Ad Pium* 5, in which Fronto excuses himself for not attending the accession celebration of Pius, can also be regarded as serving a formal role. Despite this, however, it is clear even from a superficial reading that the tone between Pius and Fronto points to a much lighter and intimate relationship than the one for Trajan and Pliny. This is a feature that will be explored in more detail later, but suffice it to note here this curious phenomenon, that a seemingly closer association was represented by a more formal type of address, while the complete opposite was true for Pliny.

From Pius

In the two replies from Pius to Fronto, the emperor employs the familiar phrase *mi Fronto carissime*.[15] This, again, is reminiscent of the way Trajan addresses Pliny, and so

[12] As opposed to *domine* for Marcus (Dickey [2002], 102). See below for my own discussion on the matter of Fronto's addresses to his pupil.
[13] See ch.2, p. 146-150.
[14] [164.20].
[15] *Ad Pium* 2 and 6. In *Ad Pium* 2 the expression is actually *vale mi Fronto carissime mihi*, but there is not enough difference to justify additional comments.

should be regarded as the emperor's attempt at instilling a deeper sense of openness and informality into their relationship. In the header of *Ad Pium* 2, Pius uses the straightforward *M. Frontoni Antoninus Caesar*. We note here that he himself adopts the title of Caesar, and not Augustus as in Fronto's addresses, even though by this time Marcus was also known by this designation. This practice, however, is not entirely consistent, as in *Ad Pium* 6 the emperor simply opens his letter with *Ab Augusto rescriptum*. The reverting back to Augustus notwithstanding – there is no plausible reason, beyond personal preference, to explain why this is so – the usage of such a bare and simplistic header seems out of place. At first glance, this tart way of replying suggests increased formality, as it contains nothing of the polite salutations we have come to expect. But there are several instances of responses from Marcus which begin with only *Rescriptum*,[16] and the general understanding is that Fronto was rather intimate with his imperial pupil. Maybe this is a manifestation of the busy emperor, who did not even have time to formulate a more elaborate header in his replies. If the headers in the exchanges between Trajan and Pliny were not removed by its editor, can we perhaps expect a similarly terse method of initiating imperial rescripts?

A sense of informality

Even though the addresses in the *Ad Pium* collection raise certain points of interest, the most remarkable feature, however, ought to be the seeming informality in the tone of the communications between Pius and Fronto. This is all the more striking when considering that the relationship the two shared should resemble the one found between Pliny and Trajan. That is to say, the circumstances which defined the association of emperor and tutor to his sons are in all respects ruler and subject, just as it was for Pliny and Trajan, and yet the tenor of their

[16] For example, *Ad. M. Caes*. V.21 and 51.

missives is remarkably different from their earlier counterpart. And so, compare *Ad Pium* 5, where Fronto expresses his deepest regret for not being able to attend in person the celebration of the emperor's accession, to Pliny's impersonal note at how he led the province in taking the vows on a similar occasion. The former speaks of a willingness to sacrifice *vitae meae pars* for the chance to embrace Pius, as well as a prayer for the opportunity to overwhelm his emperor with affectionate kisses; while the latter is a short message, relaying the fact that celebrations and vows had indeed taken place.[17] Even the replies from the respective emperors are noticeably different.[18] Whereas Trajan's is likewise a brief note acknowledging Pliny's successful observation of his duties, Pius takes the time to describe how he imagined Fronto undertaking his vows *potissimum vere religioseque.* Or, to put it another way, Trajan's reply amounts to three lines in the Loeb edition of Pliny's *Epistles*, versus seven lines of Pius' text in the same edition, and this even missing another line or two!

In addition, consider *Ad Pium* 9. This is a letter of petition from Fronto to Pius, asking for the title of procurator to be bestowed on his *amicus*, Appian. The missive in itself is already somewhat peculiar, as it does not follow the standard formula of other letters of recommendation; it is instead a narrative of the entire process, which, according to Fronto, has already taken two years. Based on this, Fronto claims, Appian should receive priority, as there really is no reason for not granting the *beneficium*, even if this may set a precedent and open the floodgates. Furthermore, Fronto understands that there is competition, but he reminds Pius that *quom ille meo exemplo petet, me biennio hoc petisse. Igitur illi quoque, si videbitur, post biennium dato*.[19] *Epistle* X.4 also has Pliny making a petition on behalf of his old friend, Voconius Romanus, which has been fraught with delays and inconveniences, just like

[17] Pliny, *Epist*. X.102.
[18] *Ad Pium* 6 and *Epist*. X.103.
[19] *Ad Pium* 9.3.

Fronto's; but Pliny's letter is much more respectful, detailing how the obstructions to his request have been overcome and referring to the excellent heritage and character of the *contubernalis* in the traditional manner of letters of commendation. One can imagine that nowhere in such a letter would Pliny dare to suggest to Trajan that any other competitor for the emperor's favour should get in line, so to speak, and suffer the same difficulties as his did. True, Fronto probably meant his comment as an offhand joke, but then again, this is revealing in itself; certainly, Pliny was not comfortable enough in his relationship with Trajan to do the same.

Of course, the relationship between Fronto and Pius was still characterized by the fact that Pius was the emperor and Fronto was his subject. The need to explain why he could not attend the celebration for the emperor's accession is testament of such an association. As is *Ad Pium* 3, in which Fronto tries to excuse the outrageous behaviour of his friend Niger Censorius against an acquaintance of Pius, Gavius Maximus.[20] This missive has none of the playful attitude of *Ad Pium* 9, and is full of the deference one would expect in correspondence with the emperor. While it can be said that Fronto holds his ground and the letter sticks to its original intention of defending Niger and their *amicitia*, the desperate necessity for such a letter in the first place speaks volumes of the *auctoritas* of the emperor, the hierarchy of power in Pius's court, and Fronto's role as a courtier in his entourage.[21]

Still, Fronto did not adopt the persona of a humble official, as Pliny did. Maybe this has to do with the personalities of the characters involved, or maybe Fronto and Pius were simply closer to each other than Pliny was with Trajan; both of which remind[171.14: ἄριστος for ἄριστα] us that even when dealing with the emperor, individual preferences

[20] The exact relationship between Pius and Gavius Maximus is not known, but seeing as Gavius was the praetorian prefect they should be fairly close.
[21] See Champlin (1980), ch.7; Patterson (2007) is also helpful.

and personal choice had much to do in relationships, in whether they led to *amicitia* or not.[22] Just because their respective relationships were viewed similarly as subject and ruler did not mean they shared similar relationships. It is useful here also to point out the remarks Fronto made regarding his association with Hadrian, that he held the emperor in respect and reverence, but not love; whereas for Pius he felt nothing but affection, and believed that this love was wholly reciprocated.[23] Admittedly, we can see parallels in the hierarchy of power and the role of imperial patronage, but the circumstances of these associations are clearly different. This dissimilarity is only to be intensified when we turn to Fronto and Marcus Aurelius.

Fronto and Marcus Aurelius

Introduction

Of the surviving corpus of Fronto's collection, the letters to and from Marcus Aurelius outnumber all those involving the other addressees combined. We can probably attribute this to the editor(s), who must have considered the missives written at the height of Fronto's career

[22] As in the *Panegyricus*.

[23] *Ad M. Caes*. II.1.1. It is worth quoting certain parts of this letter: *Divum Hadrianum…propitium et placatum magis volui quam amavi…quia ad amandum fiducia aliqua opus est et familiaritate: quia fiducia mihi defuit, eo quem tanto opera venerabar non sum ausus diligere*. So according to Fronto *fiducia* and *familiaritas* are both requirements for genuine affection, at least in relationships with imperial figures. Can we then apply this to the case of Trajan and Pliny, and assume that they did not share *familiaritas*? Champlin (1980, 94-96) devotes some attention to expounding the possible court intrigues that might have belied this passage, such as Fronto already being an *amicus* of Hadrian, but fell from grace because of the notoriously fickle nature of the emperor. Champlin also refers to the many persecuted intellectuals during this time, and suggests that some were already *familiares* of Fronto. It seems to me that Champlin is making too much of this implied but never openly declared *familiaritas* between Fronto and Hadrian. Fronto states that he was close enough with Hadrian to offer praises in the senate, but this need not mean their relationship was much more intimate than what a praetor would show to his emperor, from whom he received this token of patronage in the first place. And if Fronto did suffer at the hands of Hadrian and bore 'a note of bitterness' towards him (Champlin's words), then one wonders why he bothered to declare his pious feelings towards the emperor, that he revered Hadrian as he would a god. One must also remember that this is meant to provide a point of contrast for his feelings towards Pius, one of sincere love. Perhaps Fronto was under the tutelage of those who were persecuted, which would explain his comments just as well. And perhaps Fronto was simply closer to Pius, who was, after all, responsible for his appointment as the imperial tutor and later his consulship.

the ones worth preserving.[24] And unless there are many books of epistles to friends or other imperial figures yet to be found,[25] the editor(s) must also have believed that the epistles between Fronto and Marcus Aurelius was a most fitting memorial to the epistler's life and career. And it is in these many books of letters that we encounter a truly fascinating aspect of the emperor-subject relationship – and the impact of this is immediate and compelling – namely, the deep sense of affection and warmth that runs through the entire collection.

Of course, this is something that has been hinted at before, but never experienced firsthand. For example, Pliny praises Trajan for the love he shows to his companions, and yet, as we have discussed, Pliny himself was not a direct recipient of this. Things between Fronto and Pius may have been more relaxed than between Trajan and Pliny, though their relationship is still better understood as one of subject and emperor, not one of *amicitia*. Griffin has mentioned the friendship that might have existed between Seneca and Nero, an analogous pair of emperor and tutor for our Fronto and Marcus,[26] but for the former pair we do not have such benefit of the evidence. And so, this is a rare opportunity we have to glimpse at the private life and upbringing of one of the most celebrated emperors of the Roman world; in so doing, we can determine what effect their respective social statuses had on the *amicitia* they shared, and what effect the *amicitia* they shared had on the way they inhabited their social statuses.

That Fronto was an *amicus* of Marcus, that we can qualify their relationship as *amicitia*, that there was genuine affection to be discovered in these letters are not in doubt.[27] Indeed, in the many years of scholarship on Fronto, during which our epistler endured much

[24] All of the letters in this collection, in so far as they can be dated accurately, come after Fronto's appointment as the imperial tutor, even those in the two books of *Ad Amicos*, and it is unlikely that Fronto did not write any letters of import previous to 139.
[25] Though Richlin (2006, 3) suggests that 43% of the corpus is missing.
[26] (1976), 68.
[27] These will become even more obvious in the analysis to follow.

criticism against his rhetorical style and teaching abilities,[28] the love with which he carried out his duties and which he showed to his pupils, imperial or not, has always been one of his saving graces. However, this has also led some scholars to construe the intimacy we readily observe from the correspondence as a relationship beyond that of a tutor-pupil, even beyond that of *amicitia*, but one of homosexual love.[29]

A case of homosexuality?

This thesis has no intention of delving into the huge topic of eroticism and homosexuality in the ancient world, nor of erotic interpretations of ancient writings, especially since the literature on this is vast. Still, this reading of the unconcealed love the two bore for each other does nonetheless deserve some attention, as there are aspects of their correspondence to support this reading. If nothing else, it helps to explain the sheer quantity of the terms of endearment and the incredible dichotomy in attitude and tone of these letters in comparison with any other communication with imperial figures;[30] and it does this better than simply resorting to the argument of rhetorical devices or polite language. Furthermore, an explanation along these lines does provide another perspective from which to approach the timeworn and often stale issue of imperial relationships. But one does have to wonder whether we necessarily have to go so far as to attribute homosexual love to the two in order to explain the tenor of these epistles. Not even Richlin, a firm advocate of this interpretation, is confident that her arguments and presentation of the text will prove to be convincing, and her

[28] Champlin (1980), 1-2; Richlin (2006), 1-2.
[29] Richlin (2006, 6) lists a footnote by John Boswell in his *Christinaity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, and a paper by Robert Boughner given at the APA in 1990.
[30] See especially *Epistulae Graecae* 8 and Marcus' reply, *Epistulae Graecae* 7.

suggestion that these letters were not as explicit as they could have been because the two correspondents wanted 'plausible deniability' seems a little stretched.[31]

Some of Richlin's other justifications for this reading can also be explained in different ways. For example, her brief comments on the marked difference in the way kissing was evoked by Fronto and Marcus compared to his other *amici* does not take into account the one famous letter to Lucius Verus, where Fronto describes in as intimate detail the way he would physically demonstrate his affection for this other imperial pupil.[32] And also, if Marcus did have inclinations of this type, one would expect the gossip-hungry *Historia Augusta* to pick up on such scandalous rumours as these. I do not venture, in any case, to determine outright whether Richlin's thesis is incorrect or not, as her interpretation does have its value, namely to highlight the extraordinary nature of the collection and the difficulty scholars have in finding a proper context for it;[33] but I do believe that an explanation from the viewpoint of *amicitia* is easier to justify and explore. Even if Marcus and Fronto were somehow proven to be lovers, this does not mean that it and friendship were mutually exclusive,[34] and the premise for my study would remain unaffected. It does not hinder our observation of the effects *amicitia* had on the social hierarchy as defined by the imperial order, and vice-versa.

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[31] Richlin (2006), 16-17.
[32] Richlin (2006), 19, and *Ad Ver. Imp*. II.8
[33] Richlin's thesis is also helpful for revealing the erotic language adopted by Marcus and Fronto in their correspondence, arguably in the Greek pederastic tradition. Indeed, some of the forms of address examind below, such as *lux*, *voluptas*, *anima*, etc., certainly contain this erotic overtone. Interestingly, *Epist. Graec*. 8, commonly referred to as ἐρωτικὸς λόγος, has Fronto imitating Lysis' speech in the *Phaedrus*, though Fronto's emphasis here is on non-sexual love and a platonic appreciation for beauty and excellence. Marcus' reply, however, chastises Fronto for denying his affections, and makes specific references to Socrates and Phaedrus (*Epist. Graec*.7); again, interestingly enough, in Marcus' representation, he depicts himself as Socrates, the older man burning with passion for his younger pupil. See Richin (2006), 39-44, 46-47.
[34] Catullus (109) and Ovid (*Ars* I.719, 740) both speak of *amicitia* and love.

Fronto's addresses to Marcus Aurelius: *dominus* revisited

Of the addresses to Marcus, we see a limited selection in the headers of Fronto's missives. And so, Fronto typically employs *Domino meo Fronto* and *Caesari suo Fronto*; sometimes a combination of the two, as in *Domino meo Caesari Fronto*; sometimes without his own name and just *Domino meo* or *Caesari suo* and once *Have Domine*.[35] When Marcus became the emperor, Fronto understandably began using *Antonino Augusto Domino meo* and modifications based on this standard formula. But occasionally, if the dating of such letters is accurate, he reverts back to *Domino meo*.[36]

Just in these headers then we observe several interesting features. The first is that, although there are some variations in Fronto's usage, with these he remains consistent. The reason for this is uncertain, unknowable even, as there appears to be no direct correlation between the headers and the content of the letters; and aside from the obvious substitution of *Caesar suus* by *Antoninus Augustus* due to changing political circumstances, chronological considerations seem to have had little impact on their selection. Secondly, more often than not, these headers, even after Marcus assumed the imperial purple, include a personal possessive adjective: mostly *meus*, occasionally *suus*. This is a curious phenomenon, not only because they are employed almost constantly, but also because it has not yet been encountered in the study thus far. The closest equivalent is perhaps the *mi Secunde* and *mi Fronto carissime* of imperial rescripts, but, the difference between *mi* and *meo* notwithstanding,[37] are the two situations even comparable? It is one thing for the emperor to want to instill this added sense of familiarity and friendliness into his missives, but this is acceptable only as it

[35] Only as examples and not as statistical representations, *Ad M. Caes*. I.3, I.5, III.3, III.4, III.10, III.11, III.16.
[36] Qualified as the note above, *Ad Ant. Imp*. I,2, II.2, *De Fer. Als*. 2, 3; *Ad Ant. Imp*. II.5, II.6.
[37] This is most likely just a grammatical distinction. Even Dickey devotes little attention to the issue (2002, 214-215).

was the emperor's prerogative to do so; it is quite another for the epistler to do the same, unless, of course, their relationship had been openly acknowledged. Therefore, this should be taken as a testament, the first of many, of the intimacy Fronto shared with Marcus, and as an indication of just how different their association was when compared with the other imperial ones we have seen.

A third observation is in the regular use of *dominus* by Fronto as a method of referring to Marcus in these headers. Like the instance of the fragmentary letter to Pius, the appearance of *dominus* in these cases is obviously referential, and as such, inferring from Dickey's arguments, should still carry with it some elements of taboo.[38] Certainly, there are possible explanations for this, such as the fact that these were private letters, belonging to the genre of sub-literature,[39] or it can be that *dominus* was simply more acceptable in the headers of letters than in the letters themselves. Another suggestion, which would lend some credence to Richlin's thesis, though not actually adopted by her, is the sense of amatory passion that we see in Latin love poetry. Indeed, the referential usage of *dominus* and *domina* to indicate the objects of erotic affection is commonly seen in classical poets and remains as one of the most familiar senses of the word.[40] Its regular appearance in Fronto can be argued to be another manifestation of this. Still, this does not help to explain its use in the reference to Pius, nor does it offer a reason for why Fronto continued to employ this term even after their supposed break up, when Marcus had come of age.[41] Also, if such a usage was socially and culturally pervasive, it would then eliminate any chance of plausible deniability.[42]

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[38] As opposed to direct address. See p.227.
[39] Again, see p.227.
[40] See Dickey (2002), 80-82.
[41] Richlin (2006), 18-19. Or perhaps when he shifted his interests to philosophy instead of rhetoric?
[42] See p.248.

The suggestion that difference in usage within the header and the body of the missives might have made the word *dominus* more acceptable must also be dismissed on the grounds that *dominus* was also used in the body of letters to all the Antonine emperors.[43] Similarly, this would be evidence against interpreting the word in this particular situation as conveying a somewhat familial implication, as it might have done with Pliny,[44] since it is ridiculous to believe that Fronto would claim either Lucius or Marcus to be his parent.[45] It appears therefore that a justification from sub-literature is perhaps the most plausible, because unlike Pliny's epistles, most of the ones in Fronto's collection can truly be deemed to be private.

However, if we consider some of the missives in which Marcus makes mention of his co-emperor, Lucius Verus, we observe that the latter is often referred to as *dominus* or *dominus frater*.[46] These are used rather casually, and once again suggest none of the stigma normally associated with the appellation. And though a sense of polite deference was probably implied, it is doubtful that Marcus meant any kind of servility, especially not to someone whose position was his equal only because of his expressed consent. From this, we can probably infer that by the time of Fronto's writing, that is, towards the later parts of the Second Century, the word *dominus* has lost most of the negative connotations present in earlier writings. The dichotomy between the vocabulary of *princeps* and *dominus* from Pliny's *Panegyricus* and Suetonius' anecdote about the angry reaction of Augustus at being

[43] *Ad M. Caes*. I.3.9, *Ad M. Caes*. II.3.1 and 2. *Ad Ant. Imp*. II.8.
[44] And maybe also with Pius. But still, that there is only one occurrence of this may inform us that Pius did not particularly enjoy the appellation.
[45] And the concept of *indulgentia*, so prominent in the communication between Pliny and Trajan, finds no place here. The significance of this will be discussed in more detail below.
[46] *Ad M. Caes*. II.17, *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.4 and II.3.

called a *dominus* by his grandchildren,[47] seem to have had little resonance with practices under the Antonine emperors.[48]

Other addresses

Moving from headers to the body of the missives themselves, in the extent of our text, Fronto curiously never once addresses Marcus as *imperator*. This is perfectly understandable before Marcus became the *princeps*, but there is no reason why the word should be left out even after he adopted the title of *Augustus*. This omission is further highlighted, as will be mentioned below in the section dealing with Verus, when Fronto does use the term as an address to his other imperial pupil.[49] Otherwise, Fronto predominantly employs *domine* in his addresses to Marcus, both before and after assuming the role of emperor.[50]

These almost always adhere to the standard formula of *vale mi domine*, and often accompanied by an adjective, such as *optime*, or more commonly *dulcissime*. This is, as we have already seen, rather conventional in imperial correspondence, and follows the typical way of addressing in replies from the emperor. But, of course, the roles in this particular situation are completely reversed, and it is Fronto, the subject, that we find employing the formula reserved for imperial figures. Naturally, Pliny would never have written thus to

[47] Pliny, *Pan*. 2.3 and Suetonius, *Aug*. 53.1.
[48] I wonder to how far back we can push this concept, to suggest that even in the time of Pliny the word *dominus* did not have much negative significance anymore. Indeed, whatever explanations there may be, the fact remains that it was the typical way Pliny addressed his emperor. Maybe this is an indication that we should reassess our understanding of this term altogether. On the other hand, the time of writing for Tacitus and Suetonius is more or less contemporary with Pliny, and, to a lesser extent, Fronto, and even though their anecdotes (Augustus 53.1, and *Ann*. 2.87) relate to events much earlier in the history of the principate, they must still have had resonance for their audience. Otherwise, the point they were trying to make, i.e. an emperor refusing the title of *dominus* was a good sign, would have been entirely lost. Could the negative associations of the word have been lost or modified in the short time between Trajan and Antoninus Pius?
[49] Haines notes that Marcus did not receive the *imperium* until 147, along with his tribunician powers, and was not given this appellation until 161 (*Loeb*, I.81, n.2). Nonetheless, there are still no instances of this even after this date. For the occasion with Verus, see *Ad Verum Imp*. II.1.
[50] There are too many to list out individually, but most of the letters to Marcus in *Ad M. Caes*. V have this.

Trajan, nor did he, and it is difficult to imagine that Fronto would also have ventured to do the same with Pius, even though their association was arguably more intimate than that between Trajan and Pliny. Should we then understand this as another indication of the special regard with which Fronto and Marcus held each other? Or is this something more conventional, especially considering that the formulation of the address is in itself very typical, even if it is applied somewhat atypically?

Elsewhere, Fronto addresses Marcus as Caesar, mostly unaccompanied by either the possessive vocative or an adjective.[51] And, although Fronto never uses the appellation of *imperator*, even after 161, he continues to employ Caesar in a couple of the later letters of the corpus.[52] Caesar, of course, served both as a proper name and a title, but since the word has been attached to designated heirs since the beginning of the principate, Fronto cannot have failed to notice its political implications. What is harder to establish is why Fronto varied between Caesar and *domine*, at least from the context of the letters themselves. Personal choice was most likely to have been the reason.

Aside from these, there are five instances of Fronto addressing his emperor by his personal name in the vocative form, as *Marce* or *Antonine*, and all five of which can be accurately dated to after 161.[53] Again, this is noted with particular interest, because it is simply not encountered elsewhere. As such, the context of these extraordinary letters deserves to be explored in more detail. The first, *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.2, is a lengthy reply to Marcus, who wrote in the first instance to commemorate Fronto's birthday.[54] For his part, Fronto spends much of the letter dwelling in nostalgia, thinking back on the years he had shared with his

[51] For example, *Ad M. Caes*. I.1, I.3.1, II.1.2, II.7, III.3.
[52] *De Eloquentia* 1.11 and 3.3. Depending, naturally, on the correct dating of these letters.
[53] *Antonine* in *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.2.1, *Marce* in *De Fer. Als*. 3.12, *De Bello Parthico* 9, *De Orationibus* 12, and *De Nepote Amiss*. 2.10.
[54] *Ad Ant. Imp* I.1.

pupil, all the while fostering that natural talent he had seen. He commends the emperor for living up to all of his expectations, blameless and loved by the Roman people. As part of this trip down memory lane, Fronto also reverts back to his former role as imperial tutor and comments on several of the speeches he had heard the emperor make recently, even pointing out some of the mistakes and poor choices of words. It is therefore easy to understand why Fronto would elect to employ a very personal form of address in such a letter as this, full of emotion and remembrance of things past. As to why *Antonine* in particular was selected,[55] this can probably be attributed to a reference in the original letter, in which Marcus ends his own missive with a bid for Fronto not to overwork himself on this his birthday – *hoc Antonino tuo da sollicite et vere pententi*.[56]

The second letter, *De Fer. Als*. 3, is an entertaining piece, meant to evoke the full rhetorical skill of Fronto as he once again pleads an impossible case in front of the emperor: for Marcus to actually get some rest on his vacation! This is another letter of some substance, complete with sarcastic humour,[57] references to ancient texts (Plautus in particular receives much attention), and suggestions on how best to enjoy his time there. Fronto even draws on stories of previous emperors and their 'holiday-making' tendencies to make his point, as opposed to the 'holidays fasting' of his current *princeps*.[58] Finally, the orator resorts to writing a eulogy to Sleep, by his own admission, much in same vein as the one he had written decades ago, drawing on mythological figures to tell the story of the birth of the god,

[55] Once even *Antonine meo cordi dulcissime*.
[56] It should still be pointed out that Fronto does address him by *domine* once in this missive.
[57] The letter opens with *Quid? Ego ignoro ea te mente Alsium isse ut animo morem gereres ibique ludo et ioco et otio libero quatriduum universum operam dares?*
[58] III.5: *Saturatum et feratum dico. E<x o>mn<nibus tu> esuriales ferias celebras?* [230.13-14: *saturatum et feriatum dico eum. n<um tu> esurialis ferias celebras?*]

Somnus.[59] The missive ends with a comical and yet gentle piece of advice: *Igitur, Marce, si quo tibi somnio hinc opus est, censeo libens dormias tantisper dum quod cupis quaque exoptas vigilanti tibi optingat*.

Initially, much of this is lost on the busy emperor, whose reply indicates that he has had to put off reading the epistle because he was flooded with work;[60] once he has, though, he acknowledges Fronto's anxieties, and in turn addresses him as φιλόστοργε ἄνθρωπε. The significance of this address will be investigated below,[61] but once again, both the content and tenor of the missive suggest an intimacy which could only be complemented, as well as complimented, by an informal method of address. The use of *Marce* here fits very well with the persona of a concerned tutor and elderly *amicus*, accustomed to worrying about the diligent habits of an industrious pupil.

Completely opposite in tone from the previous example, *De Bello Parthico* is an extended missive written with the intention of consoling Marcus at the beginning of the Parthian War.[62] The epistle begins with a quick recount of the previous military disasters suffered at enemy hands, some as recently as in the time of that great emperor, Trajan. Fronto then proceeds to explain that those who have experienced adversities, such as the Roman Empire itself, always manage to come out on top; whereas Polycrates, the king of Samos, who did not ever suffer any sort of hardship in his lifetime, came to a horrific end. And so, Marcus should take heart, for history provides many examples of triumphs over difficulty, and of how the Roman Empire is made better for it. Lastly, Fronto defends the emperor for taking some time to relax with reading and writing, for even the distinguished Julius Caesar did the same –

[59] This previous eulogy survives partially in our text, entitled *Laudes Fumi et Pulveris*, which modern commentators date to 139 or thereabouts (Champlin [1980], 36; Haines [*Loeb*], I.39; Van den Hout [1999], 487).
[60] *De Fer. Als*. 4.
[61] See also Van den Hout (1999), 274.
[62] Van den Hout (1999), 499.

Cur igitur, tu, Marce, non minore ingenio praeditus quam C. Caesar…non vincas negotia et invenias tibimet tempora... This usage of *Marce*, again, reminds us of Fronto's role as tutor to the emperor, for the voice of concern over Marcus anxieties and the eager defence of his reading of literature are easily detectable. An informal way of address is also rather appropriate in this situation, since it is suggestive of the comfort that only an *amicus* could provide.

This harkening back to when Fronto was *magister* to Marcus is perhaps best exposed in the epistle entitled *De Orationibus*. This is a heavily mutilated text, with several illegible sections and misarranged pages in the original manuscript.[63] Even so, the point Fronto wants to make is quite clear: *…pauca subnectam fortasse inepta iniqua, nam rursus faxo magistrum me experiare*. In other words, Fronto wants to offer once again some lessons and honest criticism which he believes will improve the emperor's grasp of the language. He thus embarks on several pages worth of discussion on how best to approach eloquence, which culminates in a severe condemnation of the vocabulary employed in one of the emperor's edicts. It is here that Fronto writes, *Quid hoc est, Marce*, deploring some poor choice of words and ambiguous meanings. Revert back to old, traditional terminologies, Fronto exclaims, for they have the force of *antiquitas*, but be certain to make the word your own before using it.[64]

Such harsh criticism reminds us of some of the earlier letters in the collection, in which Fronto took his pupil to task for similar reasons, and which elicited praise for his honesty from the Caesar.[65] Under these circumstances, the use of *Marce* sounds as if Fronto was attempting

[63] See Haines (*Loeb*), II.100, n.1.
[64] Fronto employs a coinage imagery to make his point: old coins contain more precious metal than our current issue, but they are frail and fragile.
[65] *Ad M. Caes*. III.12 and IV.3. See p.278-279.

to draw on the *auctoritas* of his former role, and to remind his emperor that he was more than willing to forego the niceties of a subject in order to educate his pupil. Indeed, this is stated outright, a testament to the frankness and honesty for which he had been admired: *Fateor enim, quod res est, unam solam posse causam incidere, qua causa claudat aliquantum amor erga te meus – si eloquentiam neglegas. Neglegas tamen vero potius censeo quam prave excolas*.

The last of our five missives is particularly heart wrenching, as, in it, Fronto relates the death of his grandson.[66] It is, once again, a long letter, written towards the end of Fronto's life, and numbers as one of the final missives with the emperor.[67] The Fronto we see in this letter is an old and embittered man, weary of the many calamities fate had bestowed on him: the numerous bouts of illness, the loss of several children in infancy, the death of his devoted wife only a couple of years earlier, and now the passing of his grandchild, who, Fronto admits, was to be raised in his own bosom.[68] This final bereavement has led Fronto to reflect on his life, which he professes to have conducted with the utmost integrity. Other than to inform Marcus of the tragedy and to describe to him the fragile state of his emotions,[69] however, there appears to have been no other purpose to this letter. It is almost as if Fronto, in midst of his lamentation, regarded Marcus as the only source of comfort, a final surviving token of his pride and love, and there is no better memorial to his honourable existence than this most outstanding of emperors, in whose upbringing he had a share.[70] With such a reading, the *mi Marce carissime* of this epistle is no longer so surprising. Fronto has lost many relatives,

[66] *De Nepote Amisso* 2.
[67] Van den Hout (1999), 533.
[68] *…quem ipse sinu meo educo…* (6)
[69] *Me autem consolatur aetas mea prope iam edita et morti proxima* (7).
[70] Unfortunately, the section which ends Fronto's account of his life is badly damaged, so we cannot determine the point he was attempting to make.

many of those close to him, and it fell to the emperor, a mere boy when they first met, to offer consolation and to fill the role of an *amicus*, a *familiaris* and perhaps even a *contubernalis*.[71]

Addresses to Fronto: *magister*

If the way Fronto addressed his imperial pupil and future emperor can be considered varied and somewhat unconventional, then the way Marcus addressed his tutor was even more so. It has already been observed that Marcus occasionally employs a simple *rescriptum* in his replies, most probably a sign of the busy emperor (or emperor-to-be), too occupied to even write out a full header.[72] Indeed, many of these letters have only a few lines of text, the most extreme case being *Ad. M. Caes*. V.4, which only contains a single sentence. They are meant to be short notes of acknowledgement, responding quickly to whatever concern Fronto had raised in his original missives. And so V.4 simply states, *Cras me de hoc verbo tibi, si admonueris, defandam*; and both V.21 and V.51 are brief remarks to show concern and consolation for Fronto's health.[73]

Ad M. Caes. V.23, another instance of having only *rescriptum* as the header, contains an interesting scenario. This is a reply to V.22, in which Fronto describes a scandalous consul and his inappropriate behaviour at a certain festival, and as a literary exercise he asks Marcus

[71] This is a good example of how different Fronto's mentality was in comparison with a more philosophically inclined individual. The grief Fronto felt was immediate and consuming. The desire to substitute his aged life for that of his departed grandson, and with it to alleviate the sorrows of his daughter and son-in-law, finds no parallel with philosophical treatises. This is a very human response. Even Fronto admits that, as much comfort as philosophy can claim to provide during times of distress, upon the actual experiencing of tragedy, none of that matters: 'Yet all this, true though it be, makes little difference to us who long for our lost ones, nor does the immortality of souls bring us the slightest consolation, seeing that in this life we are bereft of our best-beloved ones…Be the immortality of the soul ever so established, that will be a theme for the disputations of philosophers, it will never assuage the yearnings of a parent'. I believe this letter and the emotional responses therein can provide us evidence of how Romans dealt with the issue of death, apart from philosophical discussions, and should be read along with the many emotional epigraphs and tombstones left to us.
[72] *Ad M. Caes*. II.17, V.4, 21, 23, 51, etc. Van den Hout (1999), 391.
[73] *Ad M. Caes*. II.17 and V.39 appear to be exceptions to this, as they are quite lengthy missives, certainly no shorter than most of the other ones in the collection. There is no plausible explanation for the abbreviated header.

to develop the case. The young Caesar, in his response, expresses much annoyance at being prescribed such a task, complaining that *in hac materia diutius laborandum est ut factum credatur, quam ut irascatur*. He further indicates that he would prefer such assignments as he had originally asked for.[74] The sentence which ends this missive, *Rescribe statim de tempore*, is ostensibly asking for more details pertaining to the case, but the brevity of the sentence, the imperative structure and the sharp tone of *statim* all combine to give an impression of impatience and irritation.[75] Maybe the *rescriptum* here is a demonstration of some tension between tutor and pupil. Maybe this entire missive is a prelude to Marcus' eventual break with his interests in rhetoric.[76]

To return to the topic of headers, the one which sees the most consistent usage, both before and after the donning of the imperial purple, is the simple and concise *Magistro meo*. This form makes up for more than half of all the headers in the collection, and sometimes is accompanied by *salutem*.[77] Most of the other headers revolve around this basic formula, including *Have mi magister optime*, *Have mi magister dulcissime* or *carissime*, *Magistro suo Caesar suus* and *Marcus Aurelius Caesar salutem dicit Frontoni magistro suo*.[78] In all of these, it is evident that Marcus wanted to stress the tutor/pupil capacity of their relationship, which formed the foundation of their connection. Everything else, the *optime*, *dulcissime*, and even the aspects which highlighted their hierarchical differences, such as the mentioning of Caesar, becomes secondary: they are grafted onto the fundamental fact that Fronto was Marcus' *magister*.

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[74] This may be *Ad M. Caes*. V.28, in which Marcus asks for a *clamosam* ὑπόθεσιν.
[75] Haines' translation of this, 'Let me know the date by return', does not capture the sense of the original sentence.
[76] See also *Ad M. Caes*. IV.13, where Marcus professes that an ethical dilemma prevents him from defending both sides of a case. See Birley (1966), 118-121.
[77] For example, without *salutem*, *Ad M. Caes*. II.13, 14, III.7, V.53, V.55, *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.1, II.7; with *salutem*, *Ad M. Caes*. V.13, 15, 16, *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.4, II.4.
[78] *Ad M. Caes*. III.9, IV.2, V.59, etc; IV.5, 6; III.18; I.6.

However, there are a few cases in which the *magister* is left out of the address and Marcus employs Fronto's proper name in its stead. And so, we see *Mi Fronto consul amplissime*, *Caesar Frontoni*, *Aurelius Caesar Frontoni suo salutem* and *Mi Fronto carissime*.[79] These are notoriously few in number, and as such appear as anomalies rather than the norm. Naturally, the references to Fronto as consul are easily explained by his consulship, and in these instances Marcus must have wanted to emphasize this aspect of Fronto's position, maybe even as a joking quip at the expense of his tutor.[80] There is no plausible justification for the single occurrence of *Caesar Frontoni*, but it is interesting to note the identical form in the header of Fronto's own reply: *Fronto Caesari*. Again, can we interpret this as a reference to the lighthearted attitude of their relationship? For the last two instances of the omitted *magister*, although in themselves they appear perfectly normal and acceptable as forms of address, in headers or otherwise,[81] in the context of the Frontonian corpus they do nonetheless appear out of place. An explanation can perhaps be provided by the content of these missives, which in any case do deserve further comment because of what they reveal concerning the association between Marcus and Fronto – this will be done later.

Within the body of the letters themselves, Marcus employs a wide variety of forms to address his tutor. The most common of these, whether as Caesar or Augustus, are *mi magister iucundissime* and *mi magister dulcissime*, though occasionally there are slight variations, such as not always being preceded by the vocative possessive *mi*, and sometimes the formula is followed by the personal dative *mihi*, as in *mi magister dulcissime mihi*.[82] Such variations

[79] *Ad M. Caes.* II.2, II.11; IV.11; III.2; III.5.
[80] In a similar context, we also have a single case of *M. Aurelius Caesar consuli suo et magistro salutem* (*Ad M. Caes.* II.6).
[81] The *mi Fronto carissime* formula has already received much attention earlier.
[82] Some instances of *iucundissime*: *Ad M. Caes.* V.11, 13, 15, 16, *Ad Ant. Imp.* I.1, 4, II.3, II.4; for *dulcissime* see *Ad M. Caes.* II.3, 14, V.41, *Ad Ant. Imp.* II.7.

notwithstanding, for they do not really detract from or add to the basic sense of the address, the switch from *carissimus* to *iucundissimus* and *dulcissimus* is an interesting feature. That is, if the letters from Trajan and Pius offer any indication, then *carissimus* seems to have been the adjective of choice for imperial epistles. And considering that the word *carissimus* itself ranks among one of the most frequent terms of endearment in forms of address, along with *optimus*, for Marcus to use instead *dulcissimus*, which comes at a distant third, and *iucundissimus*, which trails far behind, this suggests that he wanted to imply something specific with his choice.[83] In other words, Marcus did not fall back on the seemingly conventional *carissimus* in his communication with Fronto because their relationship ran deeper than just emperor and subject.

This is not to say, of course, that Marcus did not ever address his acquaintances by *carissimus*: the last two lines of an inscription to a procurator reads *Vale, mi Marsiane karissime mihi*, and there are even times when Fronto receives this description.[84] But with Fronto the *carissimus* is always accompanied by a plethora of other adjectives,[85] and the absence of this basic standard form is most telling. Furthermore, to employ two different words with very similar meanings, 'very sweet' and 'most delightful', in addressing a single individual surely is an indication of how Marcus regarded his tutor. It was a constant acknowledgement of Fronto's affection, corresponding well with the image of Fronto as a φιλόστοργος ἄνθρωπος which runs throughout the corpus.

[83] Dickey (2002), 132-133.
[84] *Année Epigraphique* 1962, 183.18 and *Ad M. Caes*. IV.2.1. See also *Digest* xlviii.18.1.27, xxix.5.3.
[85] So again in IV.2.4, we see *Vale mi Fronto carissime et supra omnes res dulcissime*. See also IV.5: *Valebis mihi, magister carissime et dulcissime*.

Another common form of address by Marcus is *optime magister*, with or without the *mi*.[86] There are also additions to this: *dulcissimus* and *iucundissimus* once again make their mark, as does *bonus* in a couple of letters, but more fascinating is the appearance of *honestissimus*.[87] Maybe this is related to Fronto's upright character and his love of truth, qualities which Marcus makes much of in some of the descriptions of his tutor;[88] or maybe this has to do with the content of the missive itself, in which the young Caesar (he professes to be 25 at the time) decides that it was unethical to argue both sides of a case.[89] Whatever the reason might have been, *honestissimus* in a form of address is rare, noted by Dickey as having only two occurrences, both of which are in Fronto.[90]

At any rate, the point to take away from this is that, just like in the headers, the emphasis in the way Fronto was addressed by his pupil is precisely as a *magister*. Fronto might have been very sweet and very delightful, very honourable and maybe even the best of tutors in his experience, but their underlying connection, at least from the emperor's perspective, is characterized by the relationship of teacher and pupil. This is further highlighted by the instances of *mi magister* that stand alone, without any qualifiers.[91] This also implies that in the cases where *magister* is omitted from the address and other terms elected in its place, these can be taken to reflect another aspect of their relationship. The need to deviate from the norm, a norm which is not merely conventional but properly defines the

[86] *Ad M. Caes.* V.19, 28, 59, *De. Fer. Als.* 4. An occurrence in *Ad Ant. Imp*. II.1 is read by Van den Hout as *domine magister* [105.10] (1999, 24), but this seems to be a misreading, as it happens only once in the course of their correspondence, and *optime magister* occurs far more often.
[87] *Ad M. Caes* V.8; V.21; II.17, III.12; IV.13.
[88] *Ad M. Caes* III.2.
[89] Haines marks this as 'the parting of the ways, and philosophy and his teacher Rusticus definitely vanquished Fronto and rhetoric' (*Loeb*, I.218, n.1). Champlin, on the other hand, argues that Marcus always had a deep interest in philosophy, and that there was no obvious break between the two disciplines (1980, 121). Still, it seems pretty obvious that this is a letter of some significance, as never before has Marcus openly refused to do a common rhetorical exercise based on philosophical pretexts.
[90] Dickey (2002), 133, 330. The other instance is in *Ad M. Caes.* II.12.
[91] *De Fer. Als*. 1.

attitude of the epistler, must surely signify something of import, and not just as instances of varying vocabulary or rhetorical devices. And certainly, the rarity of these occurrences reinforces both ideas, that *magister* was the norm, and that the deviations must be accounted for.

Deviations from the norm

There are indeed several deviations to make note of, though some are of more value to the present analysis than others. An example of the latter is to be found in *Ad M. Caes*. II.6, where Fronto is addressed as *magister benignissime, consul amplissime*. Again, the adjective *benignissimus* is an oddity, and no plausible explanation can be provided for this; Dickey does not even have an entry for the word in her compendium. The *consul amplissimus* is of some interest, as it points specifically to Fronto's consulship that year. But this has already been covered in section concerning the headers, and fails to make any new revelations regarding their relationship.[92] The *amice optime* from *Ad M. Caes*. III.17, on the other hand, does.[93] In similar vein is the *mi magister suavissime, amice amicissime* of *Ad M. Caesar* III.18.[94] How are we to understand this use of *amicus*? Certainly not as a title given to equestrian officials, as Fronto fits none of those qualifications.[95] Maybe as part of a *consilium*? This does not make sense either, since Fronto was not much involved in the political sphere,[96] nor was there any reference to Fronto being regarded in this capacity.[97]

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[92] See p.260.
[93] The full sentence reads, *Vale mi Fronto – quid dicam nisi – amice optime*.
[94] Note once more the rare adjective, *suavissimus*, with a similar meaning to *dulcissimus* and *iucundissimus*.
[95] As Sherwin-White once claimed. See p.235-236.
[96] Champlin (1980), 106.
[97] Notice the way Marcus reacted when Fronto wrote to help him decide on a case, which involved Matidia, the great-aunt of the emperor and her will to bestow her inheritance on his children (See Haines [*Loeb*], II.94, n.1 for the particulars of the case): *Ergo magister meus iam nobis et patronus erit*? This is, of course, a sarcastic comment, meant to be humorous, but it also reveals just how distant Fronto was to the centre of political

In any case, we should make allowances for the fact that *amicus* here, as the vocative *amice*, was employed as a direct address, and as such it is most unlikely that it would have been part of an official appellation. Dickey notes several literary instances in which *amice* was used in a similar fashion,[98] but as a vocative in the form of direct address it has been conspicuously absent in both Pliny and in the epistles which Fronto himself wrote. Perhaps we should include in this discussion the other kinds of address which have not yet received attention: namely, the *dulcissime anima*, *anima suavissima*, *semper mi vale, animus meus*, *spiritus meus* or even *vale, meum desiderium, mea lux, mea voluptas* that turn up here and there.[99] All of these are classified by Dickey as terms of endearment, and together make for compelling evidence for the affection that Marcus felt towards his tutor.[100] The most remarkable thing about this is that such a conclusion can be derived just from an examination of the addresses he employed! The content of his epistles will reveal even more convincingly to what a great extent such terms of endearment and vocabulary of friendship figured in Marcus' correspondence with Fronto.

The way in which Marcus and Fronto addressed each other then reveals much about how they themselves interpreted their particular relationship. For Fronto, Marcus was the *dominus*, from the Caesar's adolescent years to well after he donned the imperial purple. But he was not just any *dominus*, he was the best *dominus*, the sweetest *dominus*; he was, as Fronto would write, MY *dominus*. Towards the end of Fronto's life, the emperor, for these letters date to post-161, was sometimes known simply as Marcus or Antoninus. That is, these

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activities. Also in the letter, Marcus relates to a group of *amici* with whom he consulted on the issue. Fronto obviously was not invited.

[98] (2002), 310. She lists writers such as Plautus, Terence, Cicero (both in his *epistulae* and published works), Vergil, Horace, etc. There is even some inscriptional evidence, but she does remark that the use of *amice* in these cases is meant to address the reader: *ILS* 6192.

[99] *Ad M. Caes*. III.7 and II.5, IV.2.4, II.13, *Epist. Graec*. 6, *Ad M. Caes*. IV.7. See p.248 n.33.

[100] Some of these terms are also commonly found in love poetry, in addresses to mistresses or lovers. Richlin, however, does not comment on these.

appeals were directed at the human behind the imperial figure, at the man who grew up under the guidance of his tutor. Other people of a similar capacity in Fronto's letters were often acknowledged as *contubernales*, though to address or to describe the emperor as such might have been too disrespectful.

For Marcus, Fronto would always be the *magister*. It was a tutor/pupil relationship that was, nonetheless, thoroughly infused with affection and friendship.[101] Of course, as was mentioned earlier, it was entirely within the emperor's prerogative to engage and correspond in a friendly fashion. And so, with Trajan and Pius the intention was arguably to create an informal atmosphere in which the emperors tried not to assume the voice of an overlord, the overbearing tyrants of historical and literary fame. However, the formulaic *mi Secunde carissime* and *mi Fronto carissime* reveal the hand of an emperor, and betray the underlying hierarchical differences as clearly as if they had signed off their respective exchanges with the appropriate forms of *imperator* or *princeps*. With the missives from Marcus it was strikingly different. The consistent description of Fronto as most sweet or most delightful, instead of the typical *carissime*, adds a very personal touch to their communications. The occasional departures from acknowledging Fronto as a *magister* show that there are certain depths to their association that were vastly unlike any we have encountered: *amice*, *animus*, *lux*, etc. are all indications of informality, intimacy and warmth of affection.

Naturally, Marcus did not forget that he outranked his tutor by a large margin – how could he, since he was reminded almost every time he read a missive from his beloved Fronto. But this is the point of *amicitia*, that rank, status and social hierarchy did not have to figure so prominently as to overshadow the bond between people. Even the emperor was susceptible to

[101] However, see Swain (2004), 19: 'The relationship of pupil and master was always overshadowed by that of the client and the prince'. He also suggests that the language of love is only a code, a rhetorical device and should not be read at its face value.

this facet of friendship. And according to Pliny, the emperor as much as anyone deserved this. A final address from Marcus strikes home the point: *Vale, anima Caesaris tui, amici tui, discipuli tui*.[102] With this, we see that none of the roles in which Marcus regarded himself are mutually exclusive, that a Caesar, as well as a pupil, could just as easily be an *amicus*.[103]

From Marcus: letters of little consequence

If simply the method of address is not convincing enough to illustrate the nature of the relationship between Fronto and Marcus, then a perusal through the letters themselves will help the strengthen the image. Firstly, there is a series of letters from Marcus which do not relate to anything of importance, such as cases, matters of state, or even exercises which his tutor might have set, but merely provide Fronto with trivial information regarding the day's events. A perfect example of this is *Ad M. Caes*. IV.4, in which the young Caesar describes the journey he had had in the carriage to an imperial villa, stopping along the way at a small town with some interesting buildings and inscriptions, asking Fronto whether he had begun the harvest for this year's wine production, stating the type of wine he prefers and why, and concluding with a plea for his tutor to send him vast amounts of letters to cheer him up. A couple of passages in this missive deserve citing:

> *Nunc tu si me desideras atque si me amas, litteras tuas ad me frequenter mittes, quod mihi 'solacium atque fomentum' sit…Vale, mihi homo amicissime, suavissime, disertissime, magister dulcissime. Quom videbis in dolio mustum fervere, in mentem*

[102] *Ad M. Caes*. III.19.
[103] See also *Ad M. Caes*. IV.2.3: *Nam quom te ut amicum vehementissime diligam, tum <me> meminisse oportet, quantum amorem amico, tantum reverentiae magistro praestare debere*.

tibi veniat mihi sic in pectore tuum desiderium scatere et abundare et spumas facere.[104]

Aside from some literary references,[105] this letter contains nothing of consequence. Maybe this in itself is reason enough for a missive: Marcus was displaying to Fronto that he managed to do some reading even on his vacation. On the other hand, maybe we can place this in the context of the postcard letters from Pliny's corpus, in which he berates his friends for not sending him any news while they were away, as part of the duty of *amicitia*.[106] Seen in this fashion, Marcus here is fulfilling that duty, recounting in quite some detail the highlights of his trip, and alleviating the anxieties of an absent friend.

There are several letters that follow a similar pattern. In *Ad M. Caes*. IV.5 Marcus talks about a morning spent hunting, and the afternoon dedicated to reading and writing, though probably because of the excitement of the hunt or of stomping on grapes earlier, the *studium* had not gone so well. The missive continues with concerns that he might have come down with a cold, *quod mane soleatus ambulavi an quod male scripsi, non scio*, and, as always, ends with endearing sentiments describing how much he missed his tutor. *Ad M. Caes*. IV.6 describes the effects this cold had on the Caesar's day, which was nonetheless spent quite productively in grape harvesting. In terms of work, very little was achieved; rather, he chose to debate with his mother about who loved members of Fronto's family the more. Marcus even recorded (or fabricated) the account: *Meus sermo hic erat: Quid existimas modo meum Frontonem facere? Tum illa: Quid autem tu meam Gratiam? Tum ego: Quid*

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[104] 'Well, then, if you do miss me and do love me, you will write to me often to console me and cheer me up…Farewell, to me most affectionate, most delightful, most eloquent of men, master most sweet. When you see the must fermenting in the cask, let it remind you that my longing for you wells up thus and overflows and foams in my breast.' [60.19: *desideres*, *ames* and *frequentes*.]
[105] Haines (*Loeb*, I.177, n. 2) notes that Marcus drew his inspiration here from Cicero (*Tusc*. II. 24, 59).
[106] See p.109-110.

autem passerculam nostrum Gratiam minusculam? Marcus returned shortly after so he could write about the *dies rationem* to his master, as an indication of how much Fronto was being missed. Once again, the missive concludes with many terms of endearment: *Valebis mihi, Fronto, ubiubi es, mellitissime, meus amor, mea voluptas. Quid mihi tecum est? Amo absentem.*[107]

And still, other examples abound. A letter from Naples, dated to 143, is reduced to speaking about the weather, most likely because, as Marcus professes at the beginning of the missive, *Postquam ad te proxime scripsi, postea nihil operae pretium <fuit> quod ad te scriberetur aut quod cognitum ad aliquem modum iuvaret*. There is some mention of listening to Greek panegyrists, which would have been of interest to Fronto, and the description the weather at Naples was artfully done;[108] but ultimately the letter served no purpose, except perhaps to reiterate, thrice over in the letter, how much he missed his tutor. And again, *Ad M. Caes*. II.12 is an epistle describing the (mis)adventures of the young Caesar, who had a run-in with some impertinent shepherds. It seems that he could hardly contain his excitement and was terribly eager to tell Fronto the tale, though the missive had to be cut short due to his impending bath. The completely trivial nature of this letter, along with such ill-concealed enthusiasm reveals much about the type of relationship they shared.

This tendency, however, of lengthy reports concerning inconsequential happenings does subside as the years went by – this relying, as always, on the accurate dating of the letters. Of the missives we can positively place to after 161, namely the ones from *De Feriis*

[107] By all accounts, these three missives should belong in the same sequence, as Haines and the original editor of the collection had arranged. But seeing as the imperial family did spend some time each year away from the capital, it is also possible to place them out of sequence, as Champlin's dating of these letters suggest (1980, 132). Van den Hout places only the first two in consecutive order (1999, 167).
[108] *Ad M. Caes*. II.6. Marcus uses the climate of other locations to help illustrate his description of the weather in Naples.

Alsiensibus, *De Nepote Amisso* and *Ad Antoninum Imperatorem*, we no longer have this type of detailed postcards from the emperor. The opening line from *De Fer. Als*. 1 is most informative: *Ferias apud Alsium quam feriatas egerimus non scribam tibi, ne et ipse angaris et me obiurges, mi magister*. As we have seen, this never seems to have stopped Marcus before. The emperor then proceeds to write about the health of his daughter, of which the detail is lost through a lacuna in the text. The letter ends with a bid that Fronto himself be in good health, and an almost offhanded, *Vale, mi magister*. Can we attribute this to a break in relations between the two some time before Marcus became the emperor? Maybe the youth grew out of his passionate style of writing? Or maybe the youth simply grew out of his passion?

Perhaps the answer is as easy as the emperor no longer has as much free time available for such extended compositions. This last suggestion is illustrated by *Ad Ant. Imp*. II.4, in which Marcus, while away on vacation, complains, *Rusticatio autem nostra* μετὰ πολιτείας *prorsus negotium illud est vitae togatae. Quid quaeris? Hanc ipsam epistulam paululum me pergere non sinunt instantes curae, quarum vacatio noctis demum aliqua parte contingit*.[109] In other words, the emperor was so busy that he could not even find the time to write more than a couple of lines, even though he should be relaxing by the fresh air of the countryside. In any case, it would be incorrect to assume that relations between Fronto and Marcus were strained by the time the latter became the emperor. As was argued, some of the most affectionate letters by Fronto date to this period.[110] In addition, see *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.4, where Marcus once again expounds his love for his *magister*: *Vidi filiolos meos, quom eos*

[109] 'But this country holiday of mine saddled with state business, in fact, your busy city life still. In a word, I cannot go on with this very letter for a line or two owing to pressing duties, from which I enjoy a respite only for a part of the night'. [103.20, 22: *mea* for μετὰ, *porgere* for *pergere*]
[110] See p.253-258.

vidisti; vidi et te, quom litteras tuas legerem. Oro te, mi magister, ama me ut amas; ama me sic etiam quo modo istos parvolos nostros amas: nondum omne dixi quod volo: ama me quo modo amasti.[111]

From Marcus: concerns over health

Another recurring theme which permeates through the collection is the one dealing with health. Indeed, Fronto has often been accused by modern scholars of being a hypochondriac, which is perhaps not an unfair supposition due to his many complaints of random debilitating pains and sudden bouts of illness.[112] This thesis offers no comments either way as to the validity of these claims, both by Fronto and by modern scholars; what concerns us here is the degree to which Marcus was willing to indulge his tutor in these complaints,[113] which in turn often manifests itself in replies brimming with affection. A passage from *Ad M. Caes*. V.59 serves as an excellent example:

> *Egone ut studeam quom tu doleas, praesertim quom mea causa doleas? Non me omnibus inconmodis sponte ipse adflictem? Merito hercule. Quis enim tibi alius dolorem genus, quem scribis nocte proxima auctum, quis alius eum suscitavit, nisi Centumcellae, ne me dicam? Quid igitur faciam, qui nec te video et tanto angore discrucior?*[114]

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[111] This last line, *ama me quo modo amasti*, is fascinating. How should we interpret this? Is it simply a rhetorical device, to balance out the earlier *ama me ut amas*? Or might it actually signal a certain breaking of relations at one point, which was then mended? It is true that in the later letters we do not have the blatantly passionate descriptors of their love that the younger Marcus was wont to employ, but this could be an entirely stylistic preference. Maybe all these reasons played a factor?

[112] Bowersock (1969), 71-75. See Freisenburch (2007), who reads the theme of illness in the collection as an interplay for power within the master/pupil relationship. See also *Ad Pium* 5, 8, *Ad M. Caes*. V.30, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, etc.

[113] See Whitehorn (1977).

[114] 'What, am I to study while you are in pain, above in pain on my account? Shall I not of my own accord punish myself with every kind of penance? It were only right, by heaven. For who else brought on that pain in

Likewise, from *Ad M. Caes*. V.47 we have: *Nunc denique opto, mi magister, iucundiora indices. Nam doluisse te in id tempus, quo mihi scribebas, litterae declarant…Vindemiarum autem gratiam nunc demum integram sentiam, quom tua valetudo placatior esse nobis coeperit*.[115] See also *Ad M. Caes*. V.57: *Iam habeo quod primum et praecipuum desiderabam: desisse febriculam colligo ex litteris tuis. Nunc, mi magister, quod ad fauces adtinet, brevi temperantia aspelletur, et mihi a te levior nuntius veniet*.[116] Even that short letter which had the simple *rescriptum* as its header, *Ad M. Caes*. V.51, is helpful: *Quom haec scribas mihi, mi magister, credo intelligis sollicitissimum me vota facere pro salute tua: cuius dis iuvantibus cito compotes erimus*.

Ad M. Caes. I.2, a missive of considerable length, is devoted entirely to Marcus' anxieties at hearing that his Fronto has taken ill once again. The letter is too long to quote in full, but certain sections do deserve attention.

> *Quid ego <de> ista mea fortuna satis dixerim, vel quomodo istam necessitatem meam durissimam condigne incusavero, quae me istic ita animo anxio tantaque sollicitudine praepedito adligatum adtinet, neque me sinit ad meum Frontonem, ad meam pulcherrimam animam confestim percurrere, praesertim in huiusmodi eius valetudine prope accedere,*[117] *manus tenere, ipsum denique illum pedem, quantum sine incommodo fieri possit, adtrectare sensim, in balneo fovere, ingredienti manum subiecere? Et tu me amicum vocas, qui non abruptis omnibus cursu concito <ad te>*

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the knee, which you write was worse last night, who else if not Centumcellae, not to mention myself? What then shall I do, who cannot see you and am racked with such anxiety?'

[115] 'By this time, at all events, my master, I hope you can send better news, for your letter says that you were in pain up to the time when you wrote…But I shall only feel the full benefit of the vintage season when we find your health beginning to mend'.

[116] 'I now learn what I wished first and foremost to hear. I gather from your letter that the feverishness has gone. Now, my master, as for the sore throat, it will be got rid of by a little abstinence, and we shall soon have better news from you'.

[117] [1.14: *propius videre*].

pervolo.[118] *Ego vero magis sum claudus cum ista mea verecundia, immo pigritia…Cura, miserere, omni temperantia abstinentia omni istam tibi pro tua virtute tolerandam, mihi vero asperrimam nequissimamque, valetudinem depellere...cito, oro, perscribe mihi et mentem in pectus meum repone. Ego interim vel tales tuas litteras mecum gestabo.*[119]

A highly rhetorically charged missive, it must be admitted,[120] for a sentiment that could have been expressed much more succinctly and efficiently. All the letter does is to bemoan the fact that Marcus could not be personally present to see Fronto and help him through this illness,[121] and his show of concern could only be conveyed through this inadequate, however elaborate, missive. But such was Marcus' style, as is evident from some of the other examples cited earlier, and in no way should the rhetoric conceal our view of the affection that must have motivated this letter in the first place. The rules of *amicitia* prescribe that Marcus drop everything and hasten to Fronto's side, a duty which this *amicus* most apologetically could not carry out. Note then the use of *amicus* in this passage, especially in the way that it is employed to describe their relationship: Marcus says in a self-accusing fashion, 'And you call me a friend, a friend who could even not drop everything and hasten at

[118] [2.1-2: *concitato pervolo*].
[119] 'What shall I say, that is adequate, as to my ill-fortune, or how inveigh as it deserves against this most hard necessity which keeps me a prisoner here with a heart so anxious and fettered with such great apprehension and does not let me run at once to my Fronto, to my most beautiful of souls, above all to be with him at a time when he is so unwell, to clasp his hands and in fine, as far as may be without pain, to massage the poor foot itself, foment it in the bath and support him as he steps in? And do you call me a friend, who do not throw aside all hindrances and fly in hot haste to you? I, indeed, am more lame than you with that diffidence or, rather laziness of mine...For mercy's sake endeavour with all self-denial and all abstinence to shake off this attack which you, indeed, can endure with your usual courage, but to me it is the worst and sorest of trials…Write and tell me quickly, I beseech you…and set my mind going in my breast again'.
[120] Richlin points out that the 'foot imagery throughout' is a reference to Fronto's actual illness, gout or arthritis (2006, 69, n.1).
[121] Haines suggests that this missive was written during his trip to Baiae in 143 AD (*Loeb*, 81). Champlin (1980, 133) dates this to either 139 or 161. Van den Hout prefers 144-145 (1999, 3).

once to you?'[122] Thus, it is Marcus who admits to being an *amicus* of Fronto, not the other way around, as has been the case of other references to imperial *amici*.[123]

Admittedly, the nature of our sources does not generally lend itself to this type of admission, but simply consider how inconceivable this would have been for Trajan and Pliny, and for Pius and Fronto. The question is, is Marcus unique in his affections, or are the other aforementioned pairs just not as close and/or did not share in *amicitia*? A reference to *Ad Pium* 6 can perhaps bring us closer to answering this question: after Fronto writes to excuse himself from attending the celebration of the emperor's accession due to crippling pains (*Ad Pium* 5), aside from acknowledging Fronto's sincere feelings, Pius' reply offers no consolatory words on his subject's illness.[124]

From Marcus: Other displays of affection

By now, the rhetoric of Marcus' sentimentality and displays of affection should be quite familiar. This, however, is only a small selection of examples, chosen because they can be divided and presented thematically. On the larger scale, in practically every missive from Marcus, as Caesar or as emperor, there are expressions of his love for Fronto. In *Ad M. Caes.* II.2, a single reply to two epistles from his tutor,[125] the Caesar writes enthusiastically, *Manus do, vicisti: tu plane omnes, qui umquam amatores fuerunt, vicisti amando*…M. Κορνήλιος

[122] My translation, in an attempt to bring out the tone. Richlin translates this as 'And you call me your friend, when I don't drop everything and fly to you on the run?'
[123] Also, as mentioned above, *anima Caesaris tui, amici tui, discipuli tui*. Compare this to the passage from Tacitus, in which Seneca says, *et tu quantum princeps tribuere amico posset, et ego quantum amicus a principe accipere* (*Annals*, XIV.53-56). Admittedly, Tacitus later has Nero explain that by retiring, Seneca would be doing wrong by Nero, his *amicus* (XIV.56.2); but the difference between these passages is that not only does Marcus admit to being an *amicus* of Fronto, but he puts the admission in Fronto's mouth: *Et tu me amicum vocas.*
[124] A line or two is lost at the end of this letter, but even if Pius did make reference to Fronto's illness, it could not have been very substantial.
[125] The letter is addressed to Fronto as consul, so can be dated to 143. One of the original letters is the one in which Fronto remarked that he did not love Hadrian as respect him (*Ad M. Caes.* II.1); it is unclear what the other letter contained.

Φρόντων ὕπατος νικᾷ, στεφανοῦται τὸν ἄγωνα τῶν μεγάλων φιλοτησίων…*Igitur tu quidem me, <mi> magister, magis amabis quam ullus hominum ullum hominem amat; ego vero te, qui minorem vim in amando possideo, magis amabo quam ullus hominum te amat, magis denique, quam tu temet ipsum amas*.[126] He then goes on to claim that he will most likely have to concede to Cratia, Fronto's wife.[127]

Similarly, on Fronto's birthday, Marcus says many prayers, not for Fronto's sake, but for himself: *Scio natali die quoiusque pro eo, quoius is dies natalis est, amicos vota suscipere; ego, tamen, quia te iuxta ac memet ipsum amo, volo hoc die tuo natali mihi bene precari.*[128] Observe how Marcus here describes the special regard in which he holds Fronto, in that even the vows he took on this occasion were more extraordinary than what a normal *amicus* would perform. This is then followed by a long description of the lengths he would go to ensure such vows reached the appropriate ears. In yet another set of wishes for Fronto's birthday, sent some years later,[129] Marcus utters a line which perfectly illustrates a point made earlier in the thesis regarding *contubernales*, that they were formed according to the length of association. And so, the Caesar writes, …*quae mea precatio sollemnis semper auctior fit, quanto magis accedit et mihi firmitas ad diligendum et aetas suavissimae familiaritatis nostrae*.[130] Even the vocabulary used, *familiaritas nostra*, is reminiscent of the exchanges by Pliny and Fronto to their other colleagues.

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[126] 'I give in, you have won: beyond question you have conquered in all loving all lovers that have ever lived. Take the wreath and let the herald, too, proclaim in the ears of all before your tribunal this your victory – *M. Cornelius Fronto, consul, is the winner. He is crowned in the contest of the Great Friendship-Games*…Therefore shall you indeed my master, love me more than anyone of men loves any man, while I, who have less energy in loving, will love you more than anyone else loves you, more, in fact, than you love yourself'. [no <*mi*> *magister*]

[127] Van den Hout (1999, 277) points out that the name of Fronto's wife is Cratia, not Gratia; see also Champlin (1980), 26. This practice is adopted in the thesis, but the name of Gratia will remain unchanged in the Latin citations.

[128] *Ad M. Caes.* III.9.

[129] Champlin (1980, 133) dates this to 148. Van den Hout agrees (1999, 206-207).

[130] *Ad M. Caes.* V.32.

Of course, such sentiments were not restricted only to the period during which Marcus was the Caesar. A third letter offering wishes for Fronto's birthday, *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.1, shows much concern on the emperor's part for the health of his *magister*. The missive begins with a display of love which has come to characterize their exchanges: …*numerato apud te qui te valde diligent: in iis primis hunc tuum discipulum ponito*… The emperor then bids Fronto not to make the journey to Lorium for his daughter's birthday, as it would be too difficult for the old man: *Peto a te – sed impetratum sit – ne te ob diem natalem Cornificiae Lorium vexes…Hoc Antonino tuo da sollicite et vere petenti*. Also in this section should belong *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.4, but since the relevant passage has already been quoted above, I will not go into further detail here.[131]

And lastly, mention should be made concerning *De Nepote Amisso* 1, the letter prompted by the death of Fronto's grandson. In the first instance, it must be admitted that this is a short epistle, with the actual consolation confined to one single paragraph.[132] However, it is also clear that this single paragraph is highly emotionally charged, resorting not at all to the type of philosophical remarks we see in, for example, Fronto's letter to Herodes Atticus, a man whose affinity to Fronto was based solely on their mutual love for Marcus. Thus, in *Epist. Graec*. 3 Fronto talks about how Herodes was still young enough to have children, all hope is not lost, and, if nothing else, our affection for our pupil will lead you through the pain. It all sounds a bit impersonal.[133] Instead, the emperor's letter much more closely resembles *Ad Amicos* I.20, a letter of mutual grievance for the loss of a son (of Sardius Saturninus) and a

[131] See p. 270.
[132] The other paragraph apologizes for not writing the missive in his own hand. How should we interpret this apology? It could be because in such circumstances the personal hand of a friend, instead of a scribe, would have been more appropriate. Or maybe this lapse is an indication that the emperor has hitherto managed to maintain his practice of penning himself the missives to Fronto, despite his busy schedule. Either way, this seemingly inconsequential remark actually says much about the closeness of their relationship.
[133] Van den Hout (1999), 43: 'The letter is almost insulting in its rashness…'

contubernalis, a letter which does not seek to offer consolation but advises moderation, a letter bemoaning the actions of a *fors iniquia*. This, then, is what the emperor had to say to his *magister*:

> *Modo cognovi de casu. Quom autem in singulis articulorum tuorum doloribus torqueri soleam, mi magister, quid opinaris me pati quom animum doles? Nihil conturbato mihi aliud in mentem venit quam rogare te ut conserves mihi dulcissimum magistrum, in quo plura solacia vitae huius habeo <quam> quae tibi tristitiae istius possunt ab ullo contingere*.[134]

From Marcus: letter of Recommendation

One final letter from Marcus deserves our attention, as it is, so far as I am aware, the only example we have of a letter of recommendation from an imperial figure. *Ad M. Caes*. V.36 is an epistle written by Marcus after Fronto had been allotted his province of Asia, but before the latter was forced to turn it down due to ill-health. It recommends a Themistocles, to whom Marcus would like Fronto to extend every welcome if they should meet in his province. Themistocles himself is an acquaintance of Apollonius, a teacher of philosophy to the Caesar, and it is clear that Marcus himself was little acquainted with the man in question, as Themistocles had only come to his attention this past winter. This notwithstanding, Marcus is willing to vouch for the man, asks that Fronto treat him as he would a friend, and to offer him *consilium, comitatem, quaeque amicis sine ullo cuiusquam incommodo propria impertire fides ac religio proconsulis permittit*… He also asks Fronto to do this *libens*.

[134] 'I have just heard your misfortune. Suffering anguish as I do when a single joint of yours aches, my master, what pain do you think I feel when it is your heart that aches? Under the shock of the news I could think of nothing else than to ask you to keep safe for me the sweetest of masters, in whom I find a greater solace for this life than you can find for your sorrow from any source'.

The interesting thing about this missive is how much of this is meant to be a proper letter of commendation, and how much of this carries with it the voice of an imperial authority. Certainly, it resembles to every degree a typical letter of commendation, from establishing the link between commender and commended, to the unspecified *beneficia* requested of the commendee. On the other hand, how was Fronto expected to react? Naturally, as in every instance of patronage and recommendation, there is no guarantee of success; but when the Caesar and heir-elect makes a request, one would imagine that Themistocles' chances, had Fronto not fallen ill, would have been quite good. And when Marcus writes at the very end of the missive, *Rescripto nihil opus est*, it is fairly obvious that it was Marcus the Caesar speaking, not Marcus the *amicus* or Marcus the *discipulus*. Still, we should not overlook the fact that this command, if you will, took the form of a typical letter of commendation. The unspoken rules governing this aspect of *amicitia* and Roman society in general was responsible for such procedures, and even the Caesar must subscribe to this. Or at the very least, the Caesar chose to subscribe to this. The question now is, since it was Marcus who sought an act of patronage from Fronto, would anyone dare to claim that Fronto was Marcus' patron?

From Fronto: the *magister*

When Fronto writes to Marcus, it generally revolves around one of three issues. The first involves Fronto's role as the imperial tutor of rhetoric and as the leading man of oratory. Thus, quite a lot of attention is devoted by Fronto to engaging Marcus in the art of rhetoric: correcting his speeches, criticizing the choice of words, sending him examples of eulogies and discourses, and elaborating on the importance of speaking properly – or as Champlin puts it,

'the utility of eloquence'.[135] The series of letters entitled *De Eloquentia* illustrate this aspect of their relationship well, a relationship which, as was previously stated, was based primarily on this tutor/pupil association. And it is in this area that Fronto has elicited some very interesting responses from his pupil, who sometimes expresses much appreciation for the frankness and honesty of the tutor's criticisms.

For example, when Fronto wrote a lengthy missive to explain why his pupil had erred in some of his writings and to offer some helpful advice, Marcus replies with a bold claim that it was through Fronto that he learned the importance of speaking the truth.[136] In fact, Marcus was ecstatic that Fronto was so blunt and forward with him, showing him 'the way at once without guile and feigned words'.[137] There are two lessons to be drawn from this, the pupil exclaims: 'that you teach me before all to speak the truth at the same time and to hear the truth'.[138] Another instance can be found in *Ad M. Caes*. III.17, where, again, the Caesar writes in reply to some honest criticism sent by Fronto, which has served to remind the pupil just how much Fronto cared for him.[139] Can this appreciation for frankness and truth be interpreted as a comment on the state of affairs in court? Maybe the young Caesar was feeling the effects of the flattery and sycophancy prevalent at any centre of power,[140] and Fronto's candid attitude was just what he needed. It is worthwhile to remember that frankness was a highly valued quality in *amicitia*.[141] Despite all of this, however, as many scholars have pointed out, the memorial to Fronto in the emperor's *Meditations* has little to say about this

[135] (1980), 128.
[136] *Ad M. Caes*. IV.3 and III.12.
[137] Ad M. Caes. III.12: …*confestim ipsam viam ostendunt sine fraude et inventis verbis*.
[138] …*si verum me dicere satius simul et audire vere me doces* (III.12).
[139] …*ut quam vehementer me amares sentirem*.
[140] All three of these missives are dated to early in their association (Van den Hout [1999], 107, 118, 150).
[141] See Konstan (1996a).

love of truth or even his capacity as a rhetorician.[142] On the other hand, what the emperor does say about his tutor fits well with the image of φιλόστοργος ἄνθρωπος.

From Fronto: illness and the imperial court

The second of these three themes are missives dealing with Fronto's illnesses and possibly hypochondriac tendencies. They normally do not contain material of much consequence and often the letters themselves are very brief, outlining in a sentence or two the pains he is experiencing;[143] at other instances, such disabling illness is given as an excuse as to why he was unable to visit Marcus or Pius on a particular occasion.[144] Since this thesis has already explored the type of emotional responses these epistles elicited from Marcus, there is no reason to go into any further detail here.

What does deserve attention is why Fronto wrote these letters in the first place. For this, Champlin posits the very plausible explanation that it is related to Fronto's role and duties as a courtier of the Antonine court.[145] Certainly, when Fronto writes that concerns for his health prevented him from attending such ceremonies and celebrations as birthdays, New Years, days of ascensions, and so forth, we can interpret this as Fronto excusing himself from carrying out what Champlin calls a 'social duty'. That Fronto felt obligated to justify his absence repeatedly at these occasions is surely indicative of the *officium* a subject was expected to perform, as Champlin surmises. Furthermore, despite Fronto's own claims that he

[142] Haines (*Loeb*), I.17, note.1; see also Champlin (1980), 120-121, 128.
[143] See for example *Ad M. Caes*. V.14.
[144] As in *Ad M. Caes*. V.29: *Perendie, Domine, te videbo: sum enim adhuc a cubito et cervice infirmus*. For Pius, see *Ad M. Caes*. V.20, in which Fronto writes to ask whether Marcus could inform Pius of his illness; the Caesar then replies (*Ad M. Caes*. V.21) that Fronto himself should write a missive as well. This might have resulted in *Ad Pium* 5, as according to Haines' edition, though it is by no means certain. *Ad M. Caes*. V.44 has offers a similar scenario.
[145] (1980), 97-98.

was not a courtier, as indicated by two revealing missives,[146] Champlin rightly points out that Fronto was occasionally to be found amongst the crowd seeing off the imperial family as they departed from Rome.[147] Therefore, many of the other missives which describe his illnesses can be understood as serving a similar function, of explaining his absence from perhaps even the daily *salutatio* of a typical courtier.[148]

To place this in the context of the current study, we see that, as close as Fronto was to the members of the Antonine family, in particular to Marcus, with whom his relationship was a mutually professed *amicitia*, the protocols defined by the Roman hierarchal structure were still unavoidable. Being an *amicus* of the Caesar or emperor, or even having the Caesar or emperor as an *amicus*, did not exempt him from these social duties.[149] The difference in *auctoritas* between ruler and ruled was simply too great to be ignored, even in an association characterized by friendship.

And yet, did this preclude them from engaging in friendship? If our interpretation of these reports concerning ill-health is correct, then it must be admitted that various manifestations of the *salutatio* seem to have played a major part in how Fronto and Marcus associated with each other. However, even as we have explored, such reports can often lead to expressions of *amicitia*, demonstrations of the love, affection and care the two shared. And is it necessarily correct to assume that just because there was, in some senses, an obligation to attend imperial festivities and/or *salutationes*, Fronto himself was forced to do this as a

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[146] *Ad M. Caes.* I.3 has *Nam neque domum vestram diluculo ventitat, neque cotidie <te> salutat, neque ubique comitatur, nec semper spectat…* And in *De Nepote Amisso* 2 he confesses that *Potius duxi negligi quam blandiri, tacere quam fingere, infrequens amicus esse quam frequens adsentator.*

[147] *Ad M. Caes.* III.20 and VI.4.

[148] A poorly preserved letter, *Ad M. Caes.* II.15, seems to be hinting at this. Marcus writes, *Nam illa cotidie tua Lorium ventio, illa in serum expectatio…* But of course, the visits could be of an entirely different nature, as they were made to Lorium, not at Rome. See also Patterson (2007), 139.

[149] Claims of ill-health apparently did. After a while, Marcus even gave up expecting his tutor at these events; see *Ad M. Caes.* V.55.

subject, rather than wanted to do this as an *amicus*? After all, Roman birthdays were customarily attended by groups of friends and well-wishers, who, as part of the duties of friendship, gladly undertook vows to preserve the health and welfare of the person concerned, imperial or otherwise.[150] And when Marcus writes that he was glad Fronto did not come to the general celebrations for fear of the crowd, and hopes to see him at the more private ceremony, is this not an indication of the special regard he gave Fronto?

To give another example, Fronto had every reason to be absent at the birthday of Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus – he was consul at the time and could not leave Rome. Nonetheless, he insisted on sending his wife, Cratia, ahead of him, and promised to both Marcus and his mother that he would be there as soon as he laid down office, for *Omnes meae fortunae, mea omnia gaudia Neapoli sunt*.[151] It could be argued that this was the expected thing to do, seeing as Fronto himself describes Cratia as the *clienta* of Domitia Lucilla; but even this admission is revealing, since it was obviously meant to be a joke, placed in the context of how little Cratia eats and how she will assuredly be sustained only on 'your mother's kisses'.[152] Is this, in Champlin's words, 'protocol'? Is it also 'protocol' for Fronto to write that he would relinquish at this very moment his consulship if it meant he could embrace Marcus the sooner? Or for him to bemoan the luck of his brother, who had the chance to see his beloved pupil, while Fronto himself was stuck in Rome?[153]

Of this last example, we have a fascinating parallel from the imperial side, in which Lucius exclaims that both Fronto and his brother did him a great injury by not informing him that Fronto was coming to visit, nor did they call him back when Fronto did show up,

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[150] See Argetsinger (1992).
[151] The series of letters are *Ad M. Caes*. II.8, II.9 and *Epist. Graec*. 2.
[152] *Vel osculis solis matris tuae contenta vixerit*.
[153] *Ad M. Caes*. II.7: *Meum fratrem beatum, qui vos in isto biduo viderit!*

especially since he had only just left.[154] It has been so long since they last conversed, Lucius goes on to claim, and so the least Fronto could do now is to write him a letter! This, Fronto diligently does, and interestingly enough, describes his visiting of the emperors as an *officium*. But we do not have to understand this declaration of 'duty' in the sense of what a subject owed to his emperor. Rather, as Fronto says, he had been away for four months, and the very next day after returning he even wrote to the imperial freedman to enquire when best to visit.[155] The remaining sections to this missive are too damaged to be of use, but Fronto's intention of explaining how he did all that was in his power to see the two emperors is already well established. And yet, somehow Fronto is glad that he managed to avoid Lucius, because his jealousy and anger shows exactly how much the emperor loves him. Thus, we see that the *officium* here is very much associated with the notion that it was Fronto's duty, as a friend to the family and tutor to the princes, as someone who has been away for far too long, to visit.

Still, this does not mean we have to completely disassociate the political implications the word *officium* normally carries in a situation such as this, from the kind of social nicety Fronto seems to suggest in his letter. Instead, I would argue that they are not mutually exclusive, that the *salutatio* and *officium* of paying respects to the emperors, at least to Marcus (possibly to Lucius as well), meant for Fronto an opportunity both to carry out his duties as a subject and to demonstrate his affections as an *amicus*.[156] Understood in this fashion, the imperial hierarchy not so much distorts the values of *amicitia*, as shows just how versatile it could be in integrating different levels of society. And while I generally agree with

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[154] *Ad Verum Imp*. I.3: *Est quod ego tecum graviter conquerar, mi magister…Equidem multum fratrem meum obiurgavi cur me non revocarit…*

[155] This mutilated passage has much to say about arrangements in the imperial household. The freedman, a certain Charilas, seems to have been responsible for access to the emperors, probably very unofficially, of course. It is also interesting that Fronto calls him a κἀμοὶ φίλος (*Ad Verum Imp*. I.4). See Van den Hout (1999), 285.

[156] Again, this is perfectly in line with the approach taken by Pliny in his *Panegyricus*. The emperor and the *amicus* are not separate entities, but function together to make Trajan such an excellent individual.

Champlin's portrayal of Fronto as a courtier of the Antonine court, I cannot approve of his positive comparison of Fronto's letters on such occasions with Pliny's. It is obvious that the missives by Fronto were fundamentally different from those of Pliny's, primarily because their respective underlying relationships were fundamentally different. At the very least, after examining both sets of correspondence, it would be incorrect to assert, as Champlin does, that Fronto's epistles show the same 'bloodless brevity' as Pliny's.[157] It is true that Fronto was a courtier, but this was only one facet of his relationship with the Antonine emperors.

From Fronto: familial connections with the imperial household

Lastly, the third key theme from Fronto's side of the correspondence with Marcus involves the relationship shared between members of Fronto's *familia* and that of the imperial family. The fact that Cratia,[158] Fronto's wife, was closely associated with Domitia Lucilla, the mother of Marcus, has already been mentioned. Fronto himself seems to have been acquainted with Domitia as well, often asking Marcus to greet his mother on his behalf,[159] and addressing her in two dense and lengthy missives, both of which were written in Greek.[160]

This, again, is very revealing as regards the domestic situation of the imperial household, the power and influence the mother of an emperor could command, as well as the level of education a woman in the Imperial period, albeit from an elite background, could receive.[161] Unfortunately, none of these issues pertain to the present thesis;[162] what matters here is how their communication reflected their relationship. *Epist. Graec*. 1, then, is a

[157] (1980), 98.
[158] See p.274 n.127.
[159] She is sometimes referred to as *domina* in these situations.
[160] *Epist. Graec*. 1 and 2.
[161] Before sending off a letter to her (presumably this was *Epist. Graec*. 1), Fronto asked Marcus to check over his Greek for him, so as not to offend her with any of his barbarisms (*Ad M. Caes*. I.8). In *Epist. Graec*. 1 itself, Fronto apologizes if any of his Greek composition should sound non-Attic.
[162] See Champlin (1980), 108-109 for some comments on these topics.

'charming' and 'playful' epistle,[163] composed with the aim to apologize for Fronto's failure of not writing more often. The letter is full of similes and comparisons, a favourite device of Fronto's, though they are often, according to Champlin, 'incongruous'. In all likelihood, though, being incongruous was Fronto's point, as part of the playful attitude he adopts in this missive, which already can be glimpsed in *Ad M. Caes*. I.8, where Fronto asks Marcus to give a kiss to his mother when he hands the letter to her so as to make it even more pleasant. *Epist. Graec*. 2 assumes a more serious tone, taking as its main subject the matter of flatterers and deceitful people who hide malice and ill-intent behind the mask of laughter.[164] Still, the missive begins on a light-hearted note, with Fronto explaining just how enthusiastically he sent Cratia off to celebrate her mistress' birthday, and how all women from all around the world should do likewise.

It is perhaps unwise to conclude firmly from these few cases how intimately Fronto and his *familia* associated with Domitia Lucilla, and in what capacity they each regarded their relationship,[165] especially since there ought to be other difficult questions to be considered first, such as the differences in communications with women, patronage from a female source, etc.[166] But this playful attitude of Fronto's is informative. One would not imagine a similar attitude with Pius, for instance. And if we take this in conjunction with how Marcus approached the issue, as in often ending his own missives with 'my mother greets you' and the occasional story of how Fronto's family comes up in their conversations,[167] we can begin to form an image of the type of association they might have shared: deference from Fronto's

[163] Admits Champlin (1980).
[164] Much of this is lost, however.
[165] For example, should Cratia really be considered a *clienta* of Domitia Lucilla (See p.281)? If so, what does this make Fronto?
[166] Hence anything this thesis offers on this particular topic remains speculative.
[167] Often, though not always, which suggests that it was not just a stock phrase, but actually was used when his mother did send his greetings to Fronto. Interestingly, Marcus also refers to his mother as *domina*.

side, certainly, but also a mutual affinity that was not predefined by their social and political roles.

Also to be included in this current discussion is consideration for how often the children of the respective *familiae* are mentioned in their exchanges. Indeed, many of the letters between tutor and pupil include references to their progeny, Marcus to his children, and Fronto to his daughter and later to his grandchild,[168] as well as concern and love for each other's offspring. One instance of this has already received attention, that is, when Marcus informs Fronto that he spent the day chatting with his mother about Fronto's entire family, including the 'wee little Cratia'.[169] She can also sometimes be found in the company of the imperial household, who apparently took much delight in her presence.[170] And when Marcus wrote to wish Fronto a happy birthday, he made sure to send the younger Cratia a little kiss, to which Fronto responds, *Numquam mihi tam suavis tamque saviata visa est*.[171] This connection between Cratia and his imperial pupil, then, is probably why Fronto included a paragraph about her condition in *De Nepote Amisso* 2, the letter which describes the loss of his grandson. And speaking of Fronto's grandson, it is to be noted that Marcus even extended his greetings to the young child, remarking *Nepotem saluta* in some of the later missives.[172]

To return to Fronto, we have two letters in which he declares his excitement at seeing the children of Marcus. The first missive concerns his daughter,[173] whose resemblance to his pupil and his wife reminds Fronto of their childhood and causes him to love Marcus ten times

[168] Richlin (2006, 18) makes note of how Marcus was more wont to talk about his children towards the later years of their correspondence, but does not remark on Fronto's reactions to this.
[169] See p.267-268.
[170] See *Ad M. Caes*. II.13 and V.5.
[171] *Ad M. Caes*. V.32 and V.33.
[172] *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.4 and II.3.
[173] Haines identifies her as Domitia Faustina, who died in infancy (*Loeb*, I.250, note 1). Van den Hout is uncertain (1999, 219-220).

as much.[174] To this, Marcus makes a curt and unimaginative reply, saying that such feelings aroused in Fronto are perfectly understandable, since Cratia's likeness to her father also causes him to love her more.[175] The second deals with the twins, Commodus and Geminus, and is more or less a parallel of the first in content. That is to say, *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.3 also remarks on how closely the newborn babies resemble their father, to the extent that even when hearing them squeak they seem to carry 'the clear and charming tones of [his] utterance'.[176]

This second missive, however, sounds much more informal and playful than its earlier counterpart, as well as being somewhat longer and containing more material. It even has a couple of humorous elements: Fronto no longer needs to travel to Lorium to see Marcus, but a quick trip to their residence in Rome will satisfy his cravings, twice over; and his imperial pupil really needs to be careful, as if he is not, he will soon find that Fronto's affections will have transferred to his children instead! This is met with a flurry of affectionate responses from the emperor, who bids his tutor to continue to love him as he has always done, and to love him as he loves his children – *Haec ut scriberem, tuarum litterarum mira iucunditas produxit*.[177] It is unclear why the tenor of the letters in these two occasions is markedly different; what is clear is that Fronto made a visible effort to acquaint himself with new members of the imperial family, and that affection was readily available for the children of his pupil.[178]

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[174] *Ad M. Caes*. V.52. Curiously, the phrase *Decem tanta te amo* is repeated twice in this short epistle.
[175] Notice how Marcus has mixed up the object of affection in his reply: Fronto's letter says, 'I love you the more because your daughter resembles you', whereas Marcus' reads, 'I understand what you're saying, for we love Cratia the more because she resembles you'. See Haines (*Loeb*), 251, n.1. This is strangely reminiscent of the mistakes Trajan would occasionally make in his rescripts to Pliny.
[176] *…ut orationis tuae lepidum illum et liquidum sonum…adgnoscerem.*
[177] *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.4.
[178] *Ad M. Caes*. V.42: *Faustinam tuam meis verbis appella et gratulare, et matronas nostras meo nomine exosculare sed, uti ego soleo, cum plantis illis et manibus.*

Perhaps this was only to be expected. As a subject of the Caesar and later the emperor, proclaiming affection to his children and heirs basically amounts to proclaiming loyalty to the imperial family. It is hard to imagine a scenario where someone could withhold such congratulatory remarks. Furthermore, the repeated theme of extraordinary resemblance to their father seems to suggest that Fronto was drawing from an array of stock compliments. Nevertheless, we should still credit Fronto for some very original and frank comments in this regard. The letters in question are *Ad M. Caes*. IV.11 and 12, the former from Marcus, reporting on the sickness of his daughter;[179] the latter from Fronto, a lengthy reply to offer his sympathies. What Marcus does in his original missive is to render it ambiguous as to who was actually unwell, explaining only after the description of the illness that he was talking about his little Faustina. To this, Fronto's response is great relief, because it was not his pupil who had taken ill, but rather his daughter.[180] Fronto then tries to defend himself from a self-imposed charge of hypocrisy, since it was he who also declared his undying affection for the little girl. Could Fronto have been lying about his love for Faustina? In Fronto's mind, did the well-being of Marcus outweigh that of the latter's daughter? Of course, Fronto elaborates: he did truly love this daughter of his pupil, though he could not fully justify why 'the transference of my fear seemed an alleviation of it'.[181]

From this, Fronto develops the rest of the missive into a eulogy of his affections for Marcus, for the shock caused by the initial letter has reminded Fronto just how deeply this was

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[179] Another Faustina, this time identified as Annia Galeria Faustina. See Haines (*Loeb*), I.203, n.1.

[180] *Postquam deinde illud periculum, quod quasi tuum principio litterarum tuarum acceperam, filiae tuae Faustinae fuisse aperuisti, quantum mihi permutatus pavor! Nec permutatus modo, verum etiam nescio quo pacto nonnihil sublevatus*. 'Then, when the danger, which at the beginning of your note I had taken to be yours, was shewn to be your daughter Faustina's, how transformed was my apprehension. Yet not merely transformed, but in some subtle way a little relieved'.

[181] *…cur meus translatus metus levior sit mihi visus*. He resorts to a simile of transferring a weight from one shoulder to another, by which action the carrier of the burden feels a slight respite. But even he admits that the explanation is not a very good one.

felt. It is also in this epistle that Fronto admits he had occasionally spoken ill of his Caesar to his intimate friends, on account of his anti-social habits of reading when he should have been engaging with the public.[182] But Fronto would not tolerate others to do the same, because they did not have the same intimate relationship with Marcus as he; an analogy is provided to help clarify: *ita ut Gratiam meam filiam facilius ipse percusserim quam ab alio percuti viderim*. The missive ends with a desperate, though quite humorous, plea to the Caesar, that he does not turn informer and squeal on Fronto to Faustina, since she will surely be offended and not allow him to kiss her hands and feet anymore, which Fronto promises to do even more eagerly than when he kisses Marcus.

As we can see, the way the respective *familiae* are spoken of in these epistles and the way their members are seen to interact are further indications of the intimacy shared between Fronto and Marcus. It is one thing to congratulate the Caesar or the emperor on the births and birthdays of his children, and to enquire after their health when news of their illness was spread around the court, both of which, certainly, were expected behaviour for a subject and a courtier, and Fronto must have done his fair share; it is another when he writes specifically to inform Fronto on the condition of the members of his *familia*, of which, again, we have ample examples.[183] Moreover, the imperial family also seems to have taken an active interest in Fronto's household, from Fronto's wife to his grandchildren. To this list we should add Aufidius Victorinus, the son-in-law of Fronto, who also studied alongside the Caesar, and who too can be found in the company of the imperial family.[184] Even the brother of Fronto, a very elusive figure in the corpus of the letters, seems to have mixed with imperial company.[185]

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[182] *Tum igitur ego te durum et intempestivum hominum, odiosum etiam nonnumquam ira percitus appellabam*.
[183] *Ad M. Caes*. V.19, V.24, *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.1.
[184] See *Ad M. Caes*. I.8, where Fronto mentions that he is sending some writing to Marcus via Victorinus; in V.10, we discover that it was Victorinus who first informed Fronto that Marcus' *domina* had taken ill; and

Of course, the idea that *amici* should extend their affection and care to each other's families, as well as to look out for their interests, is not novel, and in fact, there are already some possible instances of this in our two collections of letters. From Pliny, the son of Nymphidius Lupus was given a recommendation to the emperor himself on the strength of the long-standing *mutua amicitia* that he and his father shared. So too can we observe this in Pliny's actions for the female relatives of his own patron, Corellius Rufus: recommending a teacher and mentor for his grandson, defending his daughter in court, and selling a piece of land at below market value to his sister.[186] For Fronto, we have the recommendation of Sardius Saturninius, whose connection with Fronto was derived from being the teacher of his sons.

Viewed from this perspective, then, that members of Fronto's immediate family were closely associated with those of Marcus' is perfectly in keeping with the practices of *amicitia*. It can be said that the imperial status of one of the families involved did shape how this was carried out, and maybe the offhand remark that Cratia was Domitia Lucilla's *clienta* was not made entirely in jest; nonetheless, it is apparent that this discrepancy in their statuses did not diminish the love they bore each other, and that *amicitia* was maintained in spite of their hierarchical differences.[187]

Marcus jests in IV.13 that Victorinus was boasting to him about how good a judge he was, and was being insufferably smug about it! Though it should be admitted that Victorinus' situation is slightly different, having come into the acquaintance of Marcus in his own right, his later introduction into Fronto's family by marriage must surely have amalgamated their interests into a conjoined effort; in which case, any favour shown to members of the *familia* would mean patronage for the entire household.

[185] See, for example, *Ad M. Caes*. IV.8, in which Marcus commends Fronto's brother for bringing news of his arrival. And II.7, where Fronto expresses his jealousy that his brother has managed to visit Marcus.

[186] *Epist*. III.3; IV.17; VII.11 and VII.14.

[187] As Marcus himself admits, *Salvos esto nobis, salva sit tibi domus tua, salva nostra; quae, si animum nostrum spectes, una est domus* (*Ad M. Caes*. V.43).

Abundant affection

Even though this thesis, for the sake of organization and convenience, has divided the letters sent by Fronto into three general categories, we should still recognize that, embedded in all of these, there contain many instances of the language and terminology of friendship. These instances are especially noteworthy because one would never have expected such language to be employed in reference to an imperial figure. Take *Ad M. Caes*. IV.9, as an example: here, Fronto is replying to an accusation by Marcus, that he had not written in so long; to which Fronto answers, it is this very absence that reminds us of our affection for each other, *Nam desiderium ex amore est. Igitur amor cum desiderio auctus est, quod est in amicitia multo optimum*. See also III.13, in which Fronto entreats Marcus not to write him so many letters in a day, lest the effort alone takes up too much energy and time: *Nam me carere omni fructu amoris tui malim, quam te ne minimum quidem incommodi voluptatis meae gratia subire*. In V.40, after a particularly perilous bout of illness, Fronto admits that he will only fully recover when he meets with his pupil – *Tum vixero quom te videro*.

Fronto concludes a drawn out missive regarding orators and speeches with an extended farewell, nicely encapsulating his feelings for the then young Caesar: *Vale meum gaudium, mea securitas hilaritas gloria. Vale et me, obsecro, omni modo ames qua ioco qua serio*.[188] A few nights before Marcus was due to give a speech to the senate, Fronto, with much concern for his pupil, writes, *Si quicquam nos amas, dormi per istas noctes, ut forti colore in senatum venias et vehementi latere legas*, to which the imperial recipient affectionately replies, *Ego te numquam satis amabo: dormiam*.[189] Lastly, Fronto rhetorically asks in *Ad M. Caes*. I.7, after

[188] *Ad M. Caes*. I.8. In this missive Fronto reveals that Marcus was 22 years old.
[189] *Ad M. Caes*. V.1 and V.2.

Marcus had read out parts of Fronto's speech to Pius himself,[190] why his Caesar does not love Fronto all at once, but rather chose to increase his love for Fronto day by day? This just shows that Marcus was still holding back his love!

Ultimately, all of this is to expose the many aspects of how extraordinarily different the communications between Fronto and Marcus are, when compared to other imperial correspondence. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how, for instance, Pliny and Trajan could have had similar experiences, and, in many respects, the same holds true for Fronto and Pius. We should attribute this difference to the *amicitia* that existed between the tutor and pupil, something which they themselves have often proclaimed. For, if the premise of friendship is accepted, then such features as the extension of their care to each other's *familia*, the highly affectionate language which permeates throughout their communication, the occasional intensity of Fronto's bluntness, and so forth – in effect, the remarkable nature of this entire collection – become easier to explain.

Furthermore, unlike the relationship between Pliny and Trajan, the one between Fronto and Marcus is not characterized by the concept of *indulgentia*.[191] In fact, the term occurs only twice in the Frontonian corpus, neither of which relate to how Fronto associated with his pupil.[192] We might speculate that *indulgentia* could have featured more prominently between Antoninus Pius and Fronto, as it did with Trajan and Pliny, but the limited evidence prevents a definitive conclusion. Would it be correct say that *indulgentia* as a political/social force no longer existed by this date? This does not seem to be the case, as the way that Marcus employs this term suggests that the idea still had its place in imperial discourses. Can we then

[190] This is enacted in *Ad M. Caes*. I.6.
[191] See p. 217-219, especially n.75.
[192] *Ad M. Caes*. V.35, in which Marcus describes the generosity of his father, and *Laudes Neglegentiae* 1, where it is used as a general reference. See Van den Hout (1999), 210.

place what we have discovered so far in context of the criticism made previously against Cotton's theory of *indulgentia*,[193] which states that Pliny's promotion of *amicitia principis* was nothing but a rhetorical conceit? It must be admitted that for Pliny, very little *amicitia* existed between him and Trajan, but then again, he never professed to such, in his letters or in the *Panegyricus*. For Fronto and Marcus, on the other hand, it was *amicitia*, together with their tutor/pupil association, that defined their relationship, not *indulgentia*, despite their noticeable difference in hierarchical statuses.

Amicitia Principis and Imperial Authority

Despite this claim to friendship, however, sometimes, the will of the emperor is simply too powerful to be laid aside. The incident concerning the will of Censorius Niger has already been explored in much detail, so there is no need to go into the particulars here. Still, it is worthwhile to remind ourselves that the situation caused Fronto much anxiety and forced him to proceed carefully with Antoninus Pius, even though Fronto by that point must already have established a close connection with the imperial family.[194] Indeed, it is probably this very connection that brought the case to a peaceful resolution, which is further indicative of Fronto's (lack of) relationship with Pius, and his reliance on the *amicitia* with his pupil.[195] The letter of recommendation which Marcus wrote for Themistocles is most likely another instance of the imperial *auctoritas* at work. As stated previously, Fronto doubtlessly had little say in whether he actually wanted to advance Themistocles' position or not, for it was a request put forth by the Caesar, which meant that it could not, and should not, be turned down.

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[193] See p.218-219.
[194] Haines dates this series of letters to late 150's, Champlin to late 140's or mid 150's, and Van den Hout remains uncertain (1999, 385-386).
[195] See Champlin (1980), 2: '…that much of Fronto's influence at court derived from his friendship with the powerful heir apparent, rather than from any real intimacy with Pius…'

Fronto vs. Herodes Atticus: disharmony within the imperial circle

The best example to consider in the current discussion is the episode of the trial involving Fronto and the famous Athenian orator, Herodes Atticus. This thesis is not so much concerned with the details of the trial,[196] but rather at the way Marcus seems to have imposed himself into the middle of this clash between two of the most famous rhetoricians of the time. Somehow, the Caesar received word of the proceedings, and wrote a desperate letter frantically begging Fronto not to attack Herodes with his usual vigour.[197] He writes that he values both men, for Herodes was raised in the house of Marcus' grandfather, and Fronto is his beloved tutor. He cannot bear to have the two, most deservedly cherished by him, be at odds with each other. Therefore, although he does not wish to appear to be favouring Fronto's opposition, he offers this counsel, which he quickly amends to a request: that Fronto does not inveigh against Herodes.[198] He assures Fronto that Herodes will do the same, as he has already obtained the latter's consent, and simply wishes that this entire affair 'should be handled as honourably as possible'.[199] Incidentally, it is in this letter that Marcus fails to address Fronto as *magister*, calling him instead by the very friendly *mi Fronto carissime et amicissime*.

When Fronto responds, it is to defend the self-deprecating manner of Marcus' original letter: Marcus is wiser than even the most experienced man and in no way can his advice (*consilium*) be considered puerile.[200] Hence, Fronto will follow everything that his pupil

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[196] It is not even clear whether Herodes was at the centre of the trial. Some scholars maintain that it was Herodes who was the defendant, brought to trial by the Athenians (Haines [*Loeb*], I.58-59, note 2); others argue that Fronto and Herodes were two opposing advocates in the case, with Fronto being the prosecutor and Herodes the defense council (Champlin [1980], 104). See Van den Hout (1999), 94-97; Birley (1966), 98-104.
[197] *Ad M. Caes.* III.2. The other missives in this sequence are III.3, III.4, III.5 III.6, IV.1 and IV.2.
[198] *Sed quid dixi consulam? Qui id a te postulo et magno opere postulo et me, si impetro, obligari tibi repromitto.*
[199] *…honestissime negotium istud odiosissimum transigatur.*
[200] *Ad M. Caes.* III.3.

recommends, for it makes sense to not make a spectacle of themselves. Fronto admits that he did not know Marcus held Herodes in such high regard, in which case this Herodes must be a virtuous man, and Fronto should never have taken up a case against any friend of Marcus. However, the charges against Herodes are grave, and it is unlikely that Fronto can abstain from addressing seriously these severe allegations. How should he proceed? Does the Caesar want him to approach these with his usual spirit, or should he hold back even in the face of the terrible nature of the indictments? He will abide by whatever Marcus deems best, and, either way, will refrain from attacking the character of Herodes.[201] Lastly, to reassure him of Marcus' love, Fronto asks that his pupil always write his missives in his own hand.[202] This epistle is followed immediately by a second, warning Marcus that there will be others who may plead in the case and who may not be as restrained as himself – *cui rei, quemadmodum me unum putes, prospice*.[203]

Marcus seems to have been extremely delighted by the positive response from Fronto, the willingness to follow his *consilium*, as well as Fronto's reminder of what others may do in the case. Concerning the questions he raised, the Caesar has the following advice (more *consilia*): anything pertaining to the case should and must be put forward, but such *propriae adfectiones* that arise must be left out. Marcus does not care so much how others act, but he is worried lest Fronto should act beneath his station and undeserving of his dignity. Again, the missive ends not with an address of *magister* but with *mi Fronto carissime et iucundissime mihi*.

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[201] Though Fronto promises that if he does accuse Herodes of being a *graeculum et indoctum*, it will necessarily be related to the case.
[202] *Ego vero etiam literulas tuas disamo: quare cupiam, ubi quid ad me scribes, tua manu scribas*. Champlin also comments, 'That Marcus had not written in his own hand is taken as a sign of regal displeasure' (1980, 105).
[203] *Ad M. Caes*. III.4. [38.9: *putas*].

Fronto's reply to this is only to be expected, as there must have been very little chance of turning down all these so-called *consilia* from the Caesar.[204] This then resulted in quite an obsequious letter, with Fronto declaring that he will conduct all things in life as Marcus sees fit, and imploring the Caesar never to hold back his opinion but to point out anything that Fronto may do which could be contrary to his pupil's desires. Nevertheless, Fronto regains some of his dignity towards the end of the missive in maintaining that even though he will not go beyond the limits of the case, still 'my glance must needs be somewhat keen, and my voice vehement, and my words stern, and I must shew anger with a gesture here and a finger there', as befits a prosecutor of his caliber.[205] In other words, he does not intend to throw the case. For all of this, Fronto cautions, Herodes, *homo tuus*, must take in his stride.[206]

This entire episode gives us some insights into the relationship between Fronto and Marcus. For one thing, we must wonder how sincere Fronto was when he claimed that he had not known the regard with which Marcus held Herodes. Either Fronto was not closely acquainted with the wider circle of his pupil's associates, or Fronto was merely trying to provide an excuse for his part in the trial.[207] It seems unlikely that Fronto did not so much as have a suspicion about Herodes and Marcus,[208] considering how close Fronto and his pupil were purported to be. But did he go so far as to lie about his awareness of the situation? It may be a farfetched assertion, but perhaps not so unexpected as it may appear. For Fronto was engaged in conflict with someone highly respected by certain imperial personages, evidently

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[204] *Ad M. Caes*. III.6.

[205] *…tamen et oculis acrioribus et voce vehementi et verbis gravibus utendum, <hinc> autem <nutu> hinc digito irato…*

[206] Champlin reads this as Fronto instructing Herodes how to act in his defense (1980, 105).

[207] If the trial did involve the prosecution of Herodes (see p.293 n.196**),** one has to wonder why anyone would have dared to take on the case if the emperor disapproved. This is perhaps an argument against Fronto lying about his ignorance as regarding Herodes and Marcus. Still, the fact remains that at some point Herodes was brought to trial – did the emperor approve then?

[208] See Haines, 'It is curious that Fronto did not know of this friendship and, indeed, more about such a man as Herodes' (*Loeb*, I.64, note 1). And also Van den Hout, (1999), 95.

without proper prior consultation, and imperial anger was all too likely a consequence. As soon as Marcus' first letter arrived, Fronto knew he was in a delicate position.

Most importantly, even though throughout this business his pupil phrased all his communications in terms of friendship, favours, and loving affection, it must have been obvious, especially to Fronto, that his pupil's patience was stretched – the consistent departure from addressing Fronto in the normal fashion must have been a clear sign, not to mention all the *consilia* Marcus helpfully proposed. Why else would Fronto, a man acknowledged for his integrity and love of truth, volunteer to suppress aspects of the case and pervert the course of justice if so desired by the Caesar? Why else would he, in a state of near-panic, ask Marcus to write in his own hand as a demonstration of his love? Why else would Fronto fall into sycophancy and declare that he would henceforth do everything as his pupil wished? Thus, in spite of the *amicitia* and affection that must have already existed between them, in spite of their existence as *magister* and pupil, the authority of Caesar was too powerful to be restrained. What the Caesar wanted was for Fronto to suspend his usual practices in court, practices which won him enough notoriety to be appointed the tutor of the princes in the first place, and Fronto must relent.

Fronto vs. Herodes Atticus: aftermath

But this is not the end of our tale. In a bold move, Fronto opted to make peace with the Caesar's decision and uncharacteristically philosophizes about the situation. *Ad M. Caes*. IV.1, then, recounts the story of Orpheus, whose virtues and talents were so excellent that he has managed to attract numerous followers and friends. But it is in this that his greatest virtue is revealed, that he should incite harmony amongst and between his friends. Hence, all his

amici were able to lay aside their individual quarrels and faults, and unite in virtuous harmony spurred by their love of Orpheus.[209] Marcus, Fronto allegorizes, is comparable to Orpheus, as he too has demonstrated a great capacity for virtue and eloquence, and as such can be relied upon to *omnes amicos tuos Concordia copulas*. The one danger Marcus must be on the look out for is envy and jealousy amongst his group of *amici* (*liveo* and *invideo*),[210] for these two vices will surely cause *magna molestia magnoque labore*. To end the missive, Fronto talks about a certain Julianus,[211] who apparently was the cause of this long *sermo*, and whom Fronto assuredly loves, just as he loves anyone who loves Marcus.

Once again, Marcus is delighted by this turn of events.[212] Not only has Fronto taken the time to visit Julianus 'mostly for my benefit' (*mea maxime gratia*), and has sat along his sickbed talking about Marcus, making *amicum amiciorem mihi*, but he has spent the effort to write such a friendly letter (*tam amicis tamque iucundis litteris tuis*) even though they were due to meet the next day. Furthermore, Fronto has agreed to conduct with Herodes in a way which will undoubtedly benefit both persons, and Marcus promises that he will do whatever he can to bring Fronto into Herodes' favour.

Champlin reads these events as a crisis averted, as evidence that 'for once [Marcus'] friendship with Fronto may have been strained', as an indication of the professional rivalry in the court of Marcus, fought between the philosophers who were often privy to Marcus' attention as a personal preference and rhetoricians like Fronto who required the

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[209] *…omnes deinde paulatim vitia insita exuerent, virtutem sectarentur, probitatem condiscerent, pudore impudentiam, obsequio contumaciam, benignitate malivolentiam commutarent*. The *obsequio contumaciam* is especially interesting.
[210] *…neve quod tu alii tribueris aut benefeceris, sibi quisque illud deperire ac detrahi putet*. A very revealing note about patronage within the imperial entourage.
[211] Salvius Julianus, the jurist and an acknowledged *amicus* of Marcus (*Digest*, xxxvii. 14, 17) is suggested (Haines [*Loeb*], I.75, note 1). Van den Hout seems to agree (1999, 145).
[212] *Ad M. Caes*. IV.2.

Caesar/emperor's time in, what must have seemed to them, an official capacity.[213] All these statements may well be true, and Champlin paints an inspired and convincing picture of life at the court of this 'scholar emperor'. But we should not forget that rivalry and conflict of interests between one's *amici* must have been a common occurrence. In a world operating with the zero-sum game of patronage, it is not too difficult to imagine the jealousy, envy and rivalries that could arise, even within a select group of friends. Why did Fronto choose to further the interests of a particular *amicus* over the other? When Pliny decided to promote his *contubernalis*, Romatius Firmus, to the equestrian class, what did his other friends think? Such feelings could easily lead to dissention and resentment.

To put it another way, if *amici* were assembled due to their shared pursuits, in the way that many of Pliny's literary friends must have been, as Hoffer has pointed out, 'Even literary success is competitive, and subject to the envy of others'. This is why Pliny was keen to stress 'the mutual benefits that arise from friendly exchange…Rather than being stuck in a vicious circle of envy, detraction, and revenge…'[214] Fronto's story about Orpheus, his advice on harmony and warning against envy have a familiar ring to them, and must have pertained to many of the aristocracy at the time. None of this was out of the ordinary, and surely was the typical experience of anyone who engaged in Roman *amicitia*. However, what made the situation with Marcus exceptional was precisely that he was an imperial personage. While Fronto could write about pursuing *concordia amicitiae* as a virtue and Pliny could embed the promotion of mutual exchanges in his letters, Marcus simply had to express his mere wishes to get his *amici* in line.

[213] (1980), 104-108.
[214] (1999), 10-11.

This is not to say, of course, that such matters were not of concern to the emperors, since the fact that Marcus needed to write the initial letter is testament to how problematic the incident could have become. Moreover, we could give him the benefit of the doubt and accept that the Caesar sincerely meant every word he wrote in his missives to Fronto, that his tutor would be doing him a *gratia*, that this would be a demonstration of his love, that Fronto was the *amicissimus* of men. But, surely Fronto was not in a position to refuse: political and social suicide, and ostracism from the court were some of the possible sentences. And when emperors can, to all intents and purposes, demand that their friends get along,[215] can we still believe such problems as the jealousy and envy that must have plagued Roman *amicitia* in general still had as serious an effect? In this sense, nowhere else is the lopsidedness of *amicitia principis* more manifest.

Fronto and the Other Pupil

Finally, we arrive at the letters between Fronto and his other imperial pupil, Lucius Verus. The first thing that strikes us about this part of the collection is how few missives there are, a mere 14,[216] in comparison with those to and from Marcus. Secondly, the only epistles we have between the two are those dated, more or less securely, to after 161, when he shared power with Marcus; hence also the title of the collection, *Ad Verum Imperatorem*. What of their relationship previous to this? Undoubtedly there were communications exchanged before this date, much along the same vein as those with his imperial brother; though it is

[215] As, for instance, when Marcus asked Fronto to write a letter to Herodes upon the death of his son (*Ad M. Caes*. I.6).
[216] There are actually 15 in the *Ad V. Imp*. books, but one of these (I.1) was probably directed to Marcus instead. Haines also speculates that *Ad V. Imp*. I.5, which has its opening section damaged, could be addressed to a friend rather than the emperor. Champlin disagrees, and offers a reconstruction of the events described in the missive (1980, 113-114). Van den Hout seems to be in agreement with Champlin (1999, 285).

unclear whether this could be attributed to the editor(s) of the collection, or to the chance of survivability. It is probably also fruitless to speculate. In any case, we must accept that we are confined to such limited evidence, and that this will necessarily restrict our picture of their relationship. Still, there are some interesting features that arise, even from such a small corpus of letters.

Addresses

Let us begin with the addresses. When Fronto writes to Lucius, in the headers, he consistently employs *Domino meo Vero Augusto*. And not unexpectedly, *domine* is also the word of choice for Fronto when he needed to address Lucius directly. In only a few instances is this accompanied by an adjective, as in *desiderantissime* in *Ad V. Imp*. II.4,[217] and a typical *dulcissime* in II.6. *Ad V. Imp*. II.1, on the other hand, gives us some exceptions, in the form of *imperator*, *O Caesar*, and even *Luci*. It has already been noted that in spite of Marcus' adoption of *imperator* and several successful campaigns, Fronto never graced him with the title. Its appearance here can perhaps be explained by the content of the letter itself: one of the longest letters in the entire collection, *Ad V. Imp*. II.1 is a congratulatory note on Lucius' triumphant operations in Armenia, and therefore, the address of *imperator* is likely to be an acknowledgement of his pupil's personal involvement in the campaign, as well as a flattering attribution.[218]

As for the personal address with the *praenomen*, it came in a section praising the speeches made by both Lucius and his brother – again, reverting back to his days as *magister*?

[217] When Lucius was off in Syria.
[218] With his other pupil, it can be argued that Fronto never had occasion to speak of such matters. And indeed, the topic of warfare never really arose between the two, except maybe in *De Bello Parthico*, but there Fronto was offering consolation for the recent disaster. It would have been very bad form to remind Marcus there that he was the *imperator*.

While all of this seems pretty much straightforward, it must be admitted that three of Fronto's missives fail to address Lucius directly, leaving out even the routine expression of *vale*, *domine*.[219] Maybe this stands out simply because there are so few epistles in all that three seem to be a significant number, but it is curious that these missives lack the feature so typically found with Marcus. It is also curious that Fronto neglected to use *mi* in any of his letters.

Lucius always heads his letters to Fronto with a simple *meo magistro*,[220] and consistently acknowledges him as *mi magister* in the body of the missives. In a few cases he includes a warm *Vale, mi magister, Vero tuo carissime et humanissime* or …*Vero tuo dulcissime et carissime*.[221] Of these, only the *humanissimus* is noticeably different. Could this have anything to do with Fronto's reputation as a φιλόστοργος ἄνθρωπος, a quality much admired by Fronto himself and left as a legacy to Marcus?[222] Otherwise, much of this is standard fare.

Some observations

Still, the exchanges between Fronto and Lucius are not without their value. Even though many of the issues that arise therein should be familiar to us because such are the topics already explored by this thesis, the subtle differences between these and the previous epistles are illuminating. The way they addressed each other, for example, reveal that Lucius as well, like Marcus, regarded Fronto primarily as a *magister*; and that to Fronto, Lucius was a

[219] *Ad V. Imp*, I.4, though the end to this missive is somewhat fragmentary, II.8, II.9
[220] When the state of the manuscript does not prevent them from being read, that is.
[221] *Ad V. Imp*. I.3 [no *humanissime*] and I.5. *Mi magister carissime* in II.10.
[222] Fronto dedicates a paragraph in his commendation of Gavius Clarus to Lucius on this quality (*Ad V. Imp*. II.7). And Fronto was to be remembered by Marcus in his Meditations not for his skills in rhetoric or even love of truth, but for his warning that patricians lacked sincere affection (*Meditations* I.11).

dominus. But beyond this basic premise we are faced with dissimilarity: their mutual addresses seem more like a mixture of the deeply affectionate and highly expressive style found between Marcus and Fronto, and the more polite and formal tones of Antoninus Pius or Trajan. So too on the issue of *familia*, Fronto is seen to enquire after the members of Verus' family, reaffirming once again his connection with the wider imperial family.[223] And yet, the co-emperor did not know about Fronto's recent bereavements, that is, until Fronto mentioned it in his own missive; this got Fronto a brief note of consolation, with Lucius claiming, somewhat lamely, *Certum esse te….etiamsi reticeam, nihil dubito quantae mihi acerbitati sit tua omnis vel minima tristitia*.[224]

The issue of imperial *auctoritas* overwhelming the claims on their love also makes an appearance: even as Fronto was describing his grief, he had to apologize for circulating a speech against an Asclepiodotus, someone rather esteemed by Lucius. Fronto admits that he was unaware of how highly Lucius regarded the man, but he assures the emperor that little damage was done, and he will undoubtedly get along with Asclepiodotus in spite of the speech, as his current affable relationship with Herodes Atticus should prove.[225] Fronto's phrasing here is interesting, and deserves to be cited: *Quid ig<itur f>ieri, quid, inquam, op<orte>t? Nisi Asclepiodotum, quom a te probetur, mihi quoque fieri amicissimum…*[226] Should he get on friendly terms with Asclepiodotus just because Lucius approves of the man? Did he do the same with Herodes Atticus? Fronto's reason for befriending Herodes is that he ought to love anyone who loves Marcus, and he goes so far as to disclose to Herodes that he

[223] *Ad V. Imp*. II.4. There is some difficulty in identifying to whom Fronto was referring when he asked Verus to greet his *socrum*: should this be read as *socrum*, i.e. Faustina, or *socerum*, i.e. Marcus. See Van den Hout (1999), 268-269. This does not detract from the argument of the thesis, since Fronto also asks about Verus' children.
[224] From Fronto, *Ad V. Imp*. II.9; II.10 from the emperor.
[225] Fronto claims here that they are fast friends.
[226] [113.12: *Quid igit<ur, q>uid igitur, inquam, probabis? Asclepiodotum…*].

and Fronto were rivals for their pupil's affections;[227] but to befriend someone just because he was 'not thought ill of' by the emperor (*a te non improbari*) must have been a bit of a stretch. Can we detect a hint of irony in these words? Fronto seemed genuinely to have been concerned when he was accosted by Marcus regarding Herodes, but here, it is as if Fronto was simply briefing Lucius about things he may find offensive in the speech, and as an afterthought added that he should very well befriend Asclepiodotus. But then again, we should remember that Fronto's encounter with Herodes took place around 20 years prior to this, and his priorities must have changed since then.[228]

All of this has led Champlin to interpret the relations between the two as 'mercurial', and one which was strained by Lucius' flaws in character. That is, 'the prince of pleasure can have had little time for the advice of an elderly valetudinarian', and Fronto must have had little patience himself for such a *princeps*.[229] And Champlin's reconstruction can be supported by further evidence, for on several occasions Marcus has prompted Fronto to write more often to this brother of his, as Lucius also would take much pleasure in Fronto's reassurance of his love.[230] So too when the emperor was away in the east, his apology for not maintaining contact managed to incorporate a reproach against Fronto for the same crime: *Denique, quamquam mihi lacessitus a me saepius numquam tamen rescripsisses, dolebam Hercules sed pacti memoria non succensebam*.[231] This also reminds us of that incident which resulted in *Ad V. Imp*. I.3, in which Lucius' complained about how neither Fronto nor his brother thought fit to inform him of their *magister's* visit. The way that Fronto felt he had to give a detailed

[227] *Epist. Graec*. 3.
[228] Fronto quickly changes topics here to talk about his opus magnum on the Parthian Wars.
[229] (1980), 110-117.
[230] *Ad Ant. Imp*. I.4, II.3.
[231] *Ad V. Imp*. II.2. See also Champlin (1980), 111-112.

account to justify the episode does suggest he was not as comfortable with this relationship.[232] It must have seemed, even to Lucius, that Fronto was much closer to Marcus than to himself.

With such a conclusion, we can attribute further significance to these letters: they demonstrate that, even though the circumstances were more or less analogous, Fronto and Marcus just got along better than Fronto and Lucius did. We expect this in modern day friendships, that certain people simply match up better with some, and not so well with others. Personalities, preferences and individuality all played a part in this complicated relationship called friendship – this is all too little appreciated in modern studies of Roman *amicitia*. And in some ways, this is exactly what Pliny was describing in the *Panegyricus*: do not expect the emperor to dispense his attention and favour to everyone equally, as he too is allowed to be selective in his friendships. We see within the letter with Lucius and Fronto that this advice works both ways, that even if it means offending the co-emperor, Fronto preferred to dedicate his energy to Marcus.

Still, perhaps this is not being fair to Lucius. After the spectacular display of the intensity of affection between Marcus and Fronto, the afterthought that is his brother can only come off as mildly lukewarm. Especially given that we only have their letters exchanged after the imperial brothers have assumed power, with nothing to indicate how Fronto associated with Lucius during his adolescent years, the picture we have is necessarily skewed. Moreover, no one can deny that there was a drastic change in tone even between Marcus and Fronto in the later years of their association. And *Ad V. Imp*. II.8 appears to show that Lucius still treated Fronto with much regard, so much so that they were required to adopt preventive measures to curb the jealousies that arouse!

[232] Birley (1966), 158-159.

Indeed, *Ad V. Imp*. II.8 is a truly fascinating letter, as it effectively puts into practice what Pliny preached in the *Panegyricus*, as well as Fronto's allegory on Orpheus, about how members at court ought not to feel jealousy and envy should they not be as favoured as another. It describes Fronto's delight at being offered a helping hand when he had trouble standing, at almost being carried when he could not walk, at the friendly gestures and extended conversations they shared. These may be trivial things, but to Fronto, and evidently to other members of the court as well, they are indicative of the *amor honorque* that the emperor bore him. This is why they must limit such outward displays of affection in public, and resort to private greetings in Lucius' chambers. This is also why, Fronto admits in a startling statement, that he prefers to have Lucius as a mediator between him and his other pupil, *Igitur quaecumque a Domino meo tuo fratre petenda fuerunt, per te petita et impetrata omnia malui*.[233]

Amicitia Principis: Final remarks

So after this detailed analysis, what can we conclude about *amicitia principis*? It should be obvious by now that the topic is much more involved than just studying the people who surrounded the emperors. It should be equally obvious that political considerations, such as legal expertise or other areas of specific knowledge, are not the sole justification for the emperor to befriend certain of his subjects. *Amicus Caesaris*, it must be admitted, can take on very politically nuanced overtones, and as such, it is only fitting to regard people of this appellation as part of the emperor's immediate entourage, or even of his *consilium*. However,

[233] There is unfortunately not enough evidence for us to justify this statement. I cannot help but wonder how sincere Fronto was in claiming this. However, it is true that within the entire collection of letters between Marcus and Fronto, there are only two letters of recommendation (*Ad M. Caes*. V.34 and 37); from the little we have of Lucius and Fronto, we have this many already.

amicus Caesaris can also designate a very personal relationship, one that does not involve his *consilium* whatsoever. And so, Pliny was invited to sit on Trajan's council on a couple of occasions, yet through their missives we learn that neither of them would claim to be each other's *amicus*. Trajan's polite language is not enough to mask the voice of an emperor giving directions to his subject, as opposed to the type of mutually affectionate exchange between Marcus and Fronto, who, so far as the evidence suggests, was never privy to such a political and/or legal council.

It should not surprise us that the Roman emperor had personal friends, selected based on personal reasons, something which Pliny's *Panegyricus* wholeheartedly endorsed. For, if we really think about the nature of the imperial system, we realize that even though the emperor stood out as the first among equals, the *princeps*, the *dominus*, *imperator*, Caesar, Augustus, or whatever the situation demanded, he was still required to function within a framework established by centuries of Roman social customs and behaviour. These customs spoke about patronage, reciprocity and sincerity in affections: such were the features and benefits of Roman *amicitia*. Furthermore, it can certainly be argued that the emperor preferred to work within the system rather than outside it, as he too was raised by the system, and since everyone else did the same, it only made sense for him to follow suit.

At the centre of that system was *amicitia*. It was the basis of mutual exchange in the Roman world, and it offered an explicit set of rules which applied to everyone, even one as powerful and extraordinary as the Roman emperor.[234] It may not always have been genuine and heartfelt, as our modern understanding of friendship dictates, but a bid towards *amicitia* did imply that all of the parties involved were guaranteed certain expectations which ideally

[234] See also Patterson (2007), 122.

had to be met. It made things easy and predictable; manageable.[235] And because most members of the upper classes adhered to such a system, it promoted social cohesion and sustainability of their way of life. This, again, the emperor must have been keen to pursue.

We can also conclude that, contrary to ideas presented by modern scholarship, a claim of *amicitia* with the emperor did not mean a claim of equality, nor did their difference in status prevent *amicitia* from being formed and exercised. The relationship between Pliny and Trajan may have been characterized by *indulgentia*, but we must remember that it was as much a result of them being ruler and subject as them not being actually very close to each other. Whereas Fronto's relationship with Marcus (can we include Lucius in this as well?) was characterized by affection and mutually self-professed *amicitia*, even though they too were subject and ruler. This fact was constantly and consistently acknowledged by Fronto, every time he addressed Marcus as *domine*; and yet, this has not prevented Fronto from proclaiming his love for his pupil, his Caesar and later his Augustus, and demanding love in return from this *amicus*.

It is, of course, much more difficult to find instances of emperors revealing to their subjects the reality of them being subjects, with their continued practice of the ritual of condescension, but, as this thesis has pointed out, there is a marked difference between not only Trajan's, or even Antoninus Pius', method of address and those from Marcus, but also in the tenor of their respective missives. Indeed, this aspect of their relationship, that they were acutely aware of their hierarchical differences, is best exhibited when the emperor must

[235] Conversely, when these expectations of *amicitia* were not met, when the emperor became unpredictable in his relationships, which in turn caused life at court to become unmanageable, this is when accusations of tyranny would arise. Tacitus charged Nero with perverting friendships, and Domitian was condemned for his unpredictable behaviour as regards his entourage. Even Hadrian, that most enlightened of emperors, at the end of his reign was much maligned for his rivalries with, and betrayals of, his educated friends. No one dared to establish true *amicitia* with these figures because they could not be trusted to maintain properly such a fundamental relationship.

impose his will and demand from his *amicus* something above and beyond the accepted duties of *amicitia*. That Fronto was prepared to subvert the course of justice for Herodes Atticus, and that he tried to suppress his speech against Asclepiodotus, are both indicative of his awareness of his situation: no matter how close he was to his pupils, they were his rulers and he was their subject.

That Marcus was careful not to be regarded as commanding Fronto in his prosecution but as requesting a favour from his friend, and also when he 'recommended' Themistocles in the traditional fashion, show just how keenly the Caesar wanted to engage as according to the customs of *amicitia*; but such attempts must have had the opposite effect, and served only to remind their *amici* that it was the emperor making the application. Fronto's response to this was most revealing. But the important thing to remember is that, despite this, despite the huge discrepancy in their social and political standings, they still managed to achieve *amicitia* in the truest sense of the word, in which patronage was dispensed, where possible reciprocation was given, affection abounded, and their relative statuses acknowledged and respected. Here, then, *amicitia* as a force for social cohesion and integration must be recognized, if it, as a concept and in practice, was able to overcome even the extraordinary position of the Roman emperor: to reiterate once more, the emperor may have been unique, but he was no exception to the exercise of *amicitia*.

Concluding Remarks

In exploring the expressions and exercise of *amicitia*, I hope to have demonstrated its role and significance in the Roman Empire. A further contribution I hope to have made is in opening up new perspectives and avenues of research on the wider question of Roman social relationships. Indeed, for the past couple of decades, scholars have been so content with the patronage model that few advances have been made in this field of study, and the topic has become somewhat stagnant. It is time we revisited the issues to see how we can improve our knowledge of society in the Roman Empire. And my proposal is to do this through even more detailed analyses of the impact of *amicitia* in society.

While the patronage model is helpful for us as commentators in dealing with certain aspects of Roman society, such as the tension between social stratification and the need for interdependence between the different classes, to employ it as our primary model for research can be problematic. First and foremost, it ignores the importance our sources themselves attach to *amicitia*, and instead imposes modern exchange theories on the evidence. In addition, this is an approach favouring the etic point of view, which relies on generalizing the concept of patronage and applying it to identify social institutions. Throughout the thesis I have tried to adopt an emic one, which, contrary to the etic, involves locating the role of friendship in a specific cultural context.[1] This, I believe, leads us to a better understanding of the driving forces behind Roman social behaviour.[2]

[1] The definition of emic provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary* captures the idea well: 'Describing the structure of a particular language or culture in terms of its internal elements and their functioning, rather than in terms of any existing external scheme'. Pike further explains (1967, 37-38): 'The etic system may be set up by criteria or 'logical' plan where relevance is external to the system being studied. The discovery or setting up of the emic system requires the inclusion of criteria relevant to the internal functioning of the system itself'. Pike also mentions that the etic can be seen as the initial approach, which then leads to the emic, which, effectively, is what this thesis attempts to do. See also Verboven (2002), 61-62.
[2] Pike also makes this point (1967), 41.

But perhaps more importantly, the scope which the patronage model offers for the exploration of Roman social interaction is inadequate. It does not take into consideration the horizontal connections between people, for which *amicitia* must be used in its place. As a consequence of this, *amicitia* itself becomes regarded as being restricted by these very boundaries. Nor does patronage make allowances for the many different ways in which people could be connected. Although in the Roman world acts of patronage probably existed within a myriad of relationships, patronage was not the determining factor which demarcated relationships, as we have observed. And the reason for the shortcomings of the patronage model, I suspect, is because it rests on a number of strict definitions, which, again, while useful in some ways, in others severely limit its potential. One example of this is in the description of a client, which is typically given as someone who is unable to make an equivalent return for benefits received. But surely social interaction is more complex than what this simple statement has allowed, and to reduce our perception to this most basic denominator does not really contribute to our knowledge of Roman society.

Thinking in terms of *amicitia*, however, as our sources professed to have done, is useful for overcoming these limitations. Since *amicitia* has its own set of prescriptions, which helps to set it apart from other types of association, friendships can be fairly easily identified and studied. Furthermore, so long as we keep in mind that *amicitia*, as with friendship in the modern world, was a personal experience, we should have no trouble accounting for the variations within those prescriptions.[3] That is to say, however many rules, conventions and expectations there were in governing *amicitia*, however much decorum was responsible for proper behaviour in friendships, there remained nonetheless a high degree of personal negotiation between the participants.

[3] Also advocated by Powell (1995), 44-45.

And both of these elements, to be sure, were essential to the ideology of *amicitia* itself. Such rules and decorum not only ensured an atmosphere which encouraged the initiation and fostering of *amicitia*, as they curtailed the potentially unpleasant aspects of personal associations; at the same time, these very conventions dictated that within each *amicitia* how the individuals chose to interact was to be decided upon by the particulars of personality and circumstance. In other words, even as *amicitia* provided the basic framework in which to conduct social relationships, the *amici* themselves were free to associate in whatever capacity they deemed fit. In this sense, *amicitia* was a flexible relationship, accommodating to the various factors that permeated Roman society in a way the patronage model cannot and could not.[4]

Another benefit for analyzing Roman social interaction through *amicitia* is that it allows us to fully appreciate the complexity of the interconnectivity within Roman networks. As Verboven points out, networks that are based around patronage can be represented by the 'primary star' model, which places the patron at the centre, surrounded by clusters of his clients. The problem with this image, for our purposes, is that while the clients in the star are necessarily linked to their patron, there is little indication of connections amongst the clients themselves.[5] A network such as this is insufficient to cope with the demands of a society which relied heavily on interpersonal relationships for the distribution of goods and services, as channels for communication, for the exchange of culture and learning, and so forth – in short, as a system to ensure its survival. Even if we take into consideration the possibility of bonds between a client and multiple patrons, which would effectively join a single individual to a number of networks, because the client is linked only to the patrons and not to each other in those networks, the potential for exchange is still limited. And when this is coupled with the unilateral character of

[4] The ability to accommodate is what led Burton to conclude that *amicitia* was useful as an ideology for conducting the negotiations during the wars of the Middle Republic (2003, 365).
[5] Verboven (2002), 347. See also Landé (1977), xix-xx.

patronage, where resources only emanate from the centre and never back in, it becomes increasingly clear that the patronage model does not adequately accommodate Roman networking.[6]

Networks of *amicitia*, however, are much more involved and densely packed than the 'primary star' model, so much so that there is no single practical representation to account for the possible interconnections.[7] Alexander and Danowski have attempted to map Cicero's network of correspondents,[8] and although the result is hardly satisfying,[9] the convoluted chart they produce does begin to reveal the complicated nature of the *amicitia* network.[10] This is, of course, precisely the point: the complexity of an *amicitia* network both reflects, and is a product of, the robust system of exchange and reciprocity, which in its essence depends on the high degree of interconnectivity within society.[11] And it is in the ability to facilitate and to regulate the entire process of networking that *amicitia* as an ideology and in practice finds its value.

But a network serves not only for the exchange of goods and services. It also provides the means through which ideals are transmitted and values are confirmed. Indeed, through the diffusion of ideologies within a network, they are in turn reaffirmed and perpetuated. The practices of *amicitia*, such as reciprocity and letters of recommendation, are not just conventions, but open expressions of the system at work. They demonstrate, both to us and to their contemporary audience, the importance of that system to the functioning of society, or perhaps the degree to which the functioning of

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[6] Granted, as a return for services rendered, patrons did receive prestige, gratitude, honours, and other forms of symbolic capital; but very little provision is made in the patronage model to relate how such patrons acquired goods and services for themselves, to which only certain members of their group of clients would have had access. In other words, if all patrons received from their clients was symbolic capital, then this would not be enough to sustain a network of exchange.
[7] Boissevain (1974, ch.2) provides a useful analysis of networks. See in particular 24-25, 28-35 and 45-48.
[8] (1990), 334-335. See below, Figure 1.
[9] Verboven agrees (2002, 347, n.8).
[10] 'Begins' because the chart only takes into account those with whom Cicero had three or more exchanges. If we had more information, both in terms of more letters and of more details about their connections, the chart would be even more convoluted.
[11] See also Landé (1977), xxxiii-xxxv.

society depended on that system. Seen in this fashion, the exercise of friendship formed a fundamental part of the Roman experience.

Potential for Future Research

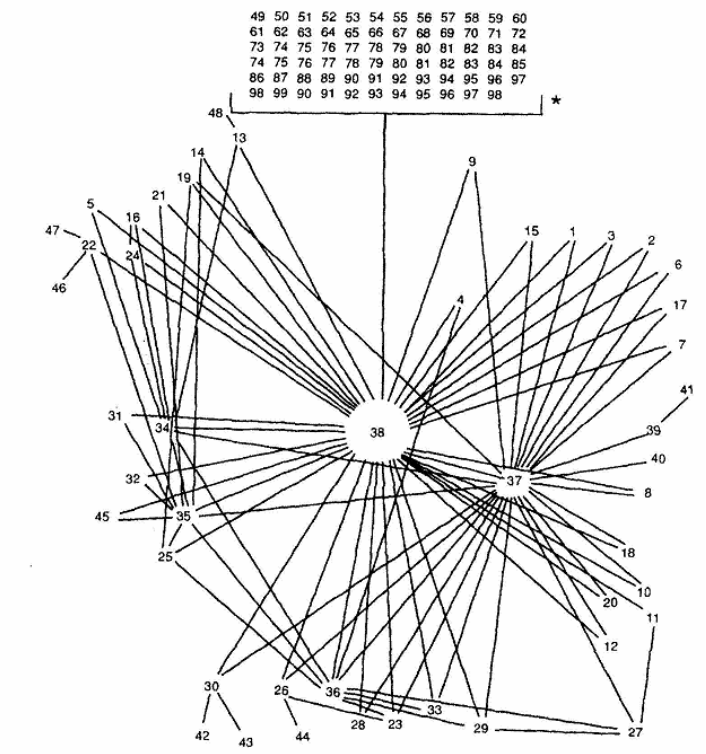
This thesis cannot and does not claim to have the final word on the topic of *amicitia*. In fact, I freely admit that there are many issues left unexplored, a consequence both of the methodology adopted in this thesis, and the limitations of space and time. Of these, I include the little attention spent on analyzing the emotional aspects of Roman friendship, as well as the minimal consideration for the rhetoric of affection which permeates these correspondences. I would also like to have provided a more in-depth examination and detailed commentary of the various philosophical traditions in order to further contextualize my own arguments. Furthermore, I believe the letters of Cicero could have figured more prominently than it has, but my justification is that it would have required another thesis to do the study any justice. So too, regret must be expressed at the lack of discussion on the language of friendship in the epigraphic material, which fell outside the scope of this thesis.[12]

Speaking of documentary material, another area which deserves much more interest and is full of untapped potential is in the role of friendship in the letters preserved on papyri. Some preliminary research has indeed gone into this,[13] but I believe the topic would benefit from employing the approach adopted by this thesis – that is, in the detailed examination of the vocabulary of friendship. Unfortunately, to perform such a study would require a robust database for searching the papyri, which is not readily available at the present. In the meantime, we can perhaps satisfy our curiosity by looking into *amicitia* in the church fathers, to see how the onset of Christianity, with its emphasis on

[12] Four papers collected in Peachin (2001a) do deal with the topic, but also see Konstan (2002).
[13] For instance, Evans (1997). There is also a short section on this topic in Parsons (2007) 122-136.

brotherhood and fraternal love, has impacted the traditional notions and ideals of *amicitia*: a search on the continuity and changes in ideology and in the practice of friendship should prove beneficial to our understanding of both cultures. For this, we can return to the epistolary tradition and make use of the letters left by such authors as Ambrose, Jerome, Basil and Augustine. Altogether, the potential for future research on *amicitia* is vast, and it is only by drawing on this potential that we can come to appreciate C. S. Lewis' statement: to the Ancients, friendship was truly the happiest and most human of all the loves.

Figure 1: Cicero's networks, consisting of three or more contacts. Courtesy of Alexander and Danowski (1990), 334-335.



*Nodes whose only link is to Cicero

1. N. Numestius (1)
2. L. Saufeius (5)
3. C. Vestorius (1)
4. Statius (2)
5. C. Oppius (9)
6. Patro (Patron 8)
7. M. Terentius Varro (84)
8. Philogenes (3)
9. L. Cincius (2)
10. M. Laenius (2)
11. M'. Curius (6)
12. Pilia (3)
13. C. Memmius (8)
14. M. Licinius Crassus (68)
15. L. Lucceius (6)
16. L. Cornelius Balbus (69)
17. M. Pomponius Dionysius (14a)
18. P. Pomptinus (1)
19. Q. Hortensius Hortalus (13)
20. Philotimus (1)
21. T. Annius Milo (67)
22. A. Gabinius (11)
23. Pomponia (not in RE)
24. C. Trebatius Testa (7)
25. P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther (238)
26. Terentia (95)
27. M. Tullius Tiro (52)
28. Tullia (60)
29. M. Tullius Cicero (30)
30. M. Iunius Brutus (53)
31. Ap. Claudius Pulcher (297)
32. P. Clodius Pulcher (48)
33. Q. Tullius Cicero (32)
34. C. Iulius Caesar (131)
35. Cn. Pompeius Magnus (31)
36. Q. Tullius Cicero (31)
37. T. Pomponius Atticus (102)
38. M. Tullius Cicero (29)
39. M. Aemilius Scaurus (141)
40. Clodia (66)
41. P. Valerius Triarius (367)
42. L. Gavius (3)
43. M. Scaptius (1)
44. Caecilia (124a)
45. L. Volcacius Tullus (8)
46. L. Cornelius Lentulus (197)
47. C. Memmius (9)
48. Cn. Domitius Calvinus (43)
49. Chrysippus (10)
50. C. Furnius (3)
51. P. Cornelius Lentulus Spinther (239)
52. Phemius (not in RE)
53. Sicca (1)
54. Asclapo (not in RE)
55. Atilius (4)
56. C. Coelius Caldus (14)
57. T. Munatius Plancus (32)
58. Cn. Plancius (4)
59. Acutilius (1)
60. Q. Axius (4)
61. L. Cassius (6)
62. C. Claudius Marcellus (216)
63. L. Clodius (9)
64. L. Cossinius (3)
65. L. Livineius Trypho (6)
66. L. Mescinius Rufus (2)
67. Precius (not in RE)
68. Cn. Sallustius (6)
69. Acastus (not in RE)
70. Anneius (Annaeus 2)
71. M. Curtius Postumus (26)
72. L. Papirius Paetus (69)
73. Phania (2)
74. Ser. Sulpicius Rufus (96)
75. Tyrannio (not in RE)
76. Xeno (Xenon 9)
77. C. Antonius (19)
78. Ti. Claudius Nero (254)
79. Furius Crassipes (54)
80. L. Tullius (9)
81. L. Aemilius Paullus (81)
82. C. Calpurnius Piso Frugi (93)
83. Caecilia Attica (128a)
84. Q. Caecilius (23)
85. C. Scribonius Curio (10)
86. P. Vatinius (3)
87. Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos (96)
88. Q. Fabius Gallus (Fadius 6)
89. M. Caelius Rufus (35)
90. M. Valerius Messala (268)
91. M. Calpurnius Bibulus (28)
92. P. Cornelius Dolabella (141)
93. Ariobarzanes (7)
94. Deiotarus (2)
95. M. Porcius Cato (16)
96. Q. Minucius Thermus (67)
97. C. Scribonius Curio (11)
98. P. Sestius (6)

Numbers in parentheses to the right of names refer to the identifying numeration found in PAULYS REAL-ENCYCLOPAEDIE DER CLASSISCHEN ALTERTUMSWISSENSCHAFT.

Appendix: Loeb and Teubner Editions

Because the Loeb edition uses a different numbering system from the Teubner, I provide here a concordance. It follows the format of Loeb (page):Teubner (page).

Ad M. Caes. I.1 (I.80): Ad M. Caes. I.1 (1)
Ad M. Caes. I.2 (I.80): Ad M. Caes. I.2 (1)
Ad M. Caes. I.3 (I.82): Ad M. Caes. I.3 (2)
Ad M. Caes. I.4 (I.90): Ad M. Caes. I.4 (5)
Ad M. Caes. I.5 (I.96): Ad M. Caes. I.5 (8)
Ad M. Caes. I.6 (I.154): Ad M. Caes. I.6 (10)
Ad M. Caes. I.7 (I.162): Ad M. Caes. I.7 (13)
Ad M. Caes. I.8 (I.118): Ad M. Caes. II.2 (17)
Ad M. Caes. II.1 (I.108): Ad M. Caes. II.4 (24)
Ad M. Caes. II.2 (I.112): Ad M. Caes. II.5 (25)
Ad M. Caes. II.3 (I.128): Ad M. Caes. II.6 (27)
Ad M. Caes. II.4 (I.116): Ad M. Caes. II.7 (28)
Ad M. Caes. II.5 (I.116): Ad M. Caes. II.10 (29)
Ad M. Caes. II.6 (I.140): Ad M. Caes. II.11 (30)
Ad M. Caes. II.7 (I.144): Ad M. Caes. II.12 (31)
Ad M. Caes. II.8 (I.144): Ad M. Caes. II.13 (32)
Ad M. Caes. II.9 (I.146): Ad M. Caes. II.14 (32)
Ad M. Caes. II.10 (I.136): Ad M. Caes. II.8 (28)
Ad M. Caes. II.11 (I.140): Ad M. Caes. II.9 (29)
Ad M. Caes. II.12 (I.150): Ad M. Caes. II.16 (34)
Ad M. Caes. II.13 (I.152): Ad M. Caes. II.17 (34)
Ad M. Caes. II.14 (I.152): Ad M. Caes. II.18 (35)
Ad M. Caes. II.15 (I.154): Ad M. Caes. II.19 (35)
Ad M. Caes. II.16 (II.94): Ad Ant. Imp. II.1 (95)
Ad M. Caes. II.17 (II.96): Ad Ant. Imp. II.2 (95)
Ad M. Caes. III.1 (I.52): Ad M. Caes. III.1 (35)
Ad M. Caes. III.2 (I.58): Ad M. Caes. III.2 (36)
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Ad M. Caes. III.4 (I.66): Ad M. Caes. III.4 (38)
Ad M. Caes. III.5 (I.66): Ad M. Caes. III.5 (38)
Ad M. Caes. III.6 (I.68): Ad M. Caes. III.6 (39)
Ad M. Caes. III.7 (I.32): Ad M. Caes. III.7 (40)
Ad M. Caes. III.8 (I.34): Ad M. Caes. III.8 (40)
Ad M. Caes. III.9 (I.50): Ad M. Caes. III.10 (43)
Ad M. Caes. III.10 (I.52): Ad M. Caes. III.11 (43)
Ad M. Caes. III.11 (I.12): Ad M. Caes. III.12 (44)
Ad M. Caes. III.12 (I.14): Ad M. Caes. III.13 (44)
Ad M. Caes. III.13 (I.218): Ad M. Caes. III.14 (45)
Ad M. Caes. III.14 (I.100): Ad M. Caes. III.15 (47)
Ad M. Caes. III.15 (I.100): Ad M. Caes. III.16 (47)
Ad M. Caes. III.16 (I.104): Ad M. Caes. III.17 (49)
Ad M. Caes. III.17 (I.106): Ad M. Caes. III.18 (50)
Ad M. Caes. III.18 (I.78): Ad M. Caes. III.19 (51)
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Ad M. Caes. III.20 (I.172): Ad M. Caes. III.21 (51)
Ad M. Caes. III.21 (I.172): Ad M. Caes.III.22 (52)
Ad M. Caes. IV.1 (I.70): Ad M. Caes. IV.1 (53)
Ad M. Caes. IV.2 (I.74): Ad M. Caes. IV.2 (54)
Ad M. Caes. IV.3 (I.2): Ad M. Caes. IV.3 (56)
Ad M. Caes. IV.4 (I.174): Ad M. Caes. IV.4 (60)
Ad M. Caes. IV.5 (I.178): Ad M. Caes. IV.5 (61)
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Ad M. Caes. IV.7 (I.184): Ad M. Caes. IV.7 (63)
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Ad M. Caes. V.3 (I.188): Ad M. Caes. V.3 (70)
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Ad M. Caes. V.5 (I.192): Ad M. Caes. V.20 (71)
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Ad M. Caes. V.9 (I.196): Ad M. Caes. V.24 (73)
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Ad M. Caes. V.11 (I.194): Ad M. Caes. V.26 (73)
Ad M. Caes. V.12 (I.198): Ad M. Caes. V.27 (73)
Ad M. Caes. V.13 (I.198): Ad M. Caes. V.28 (73)
Ad M. Caes. V.14 (I.198): Ad M. Caes. V.29 (74)
Ad M. Caes. V.15 (I.200): Ad M. Caes. V.30 (74)
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