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# WRITING, COPYING, AND AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPTS IN ANCIENT ROME*

A familiar image from the Roman world is a Pompeian portrait of a man and woman sometimes identified as Terentius Neo and his wife. He has a papyrus roll under his chin, while she looks out with a writing tablet in one hand, a stylus held to her lips in the other. The message of the attributes presented would seem to be: 'We can and do read and write'. But how should the message be interpreted? To judge from the houses in which this and similar portraits were found, the couple was not of the elite decurion class, but belonged to that difficult to define group of varying social, economic and cultural statuses recently described by Keith Hopkins as 'sub-elites'.[1] Does the display of book and pen then reflect the social reality of the sub-elite orders of Pompeian society, or is the self-representation rather an expression of social pretension, with the couple attempting to emulate the Roman elite?[2] If the latter is the case, what does the image say about the habits of the Roman ruling class? This question has been raised in relation to the issue of literacy, particularly women's literacy,[3] but the image invites another question. What does the presence of the writing implement in particular imply? Does it mean that a literate woman or man

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[1] Defining social categories in Roman history is a dicey business. By 'elite' and 'upper-class' I mean senators and equestrians. There were wide social and economic distinctions within this category, some of which can be observed in Roman epistolary etiquette (see below, p. 474), but in general writing practices seem to have been uniform. 'Sub-elites' was coined by K. Hopkins, 'Conquest by Book', in J. H. Humphrey (ed.), *Literacy in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor, 1991), p. 145, n. 33, in a discussion that centred around Roman Egypt. It designates people wealthy enough not to have to work with their hands—'local town-councillors, ... leading temple priests'. The portrait in question (Naples Museum, inv. 9058) was found on the wall of an exedra (*tablinum*) off the atrium of house VII, 2, 6; K. Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis* (Berlin, 1957), p. 168. The ambiguities of the portrait were discussed by P. Veyne, *A History of Private Life: from Pagan Rome to Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), pp. 6–7, (a reproduction of the portrait appears on the cover of the book), and by W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 263, n. 459, who pointed out that the woman's pose is conventional and listed six other known examples. For writing scenes on funerary reliefs see H.-I. Marrou, *ΜΟΥΣΙΚΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ* (Rome, 1964), nos. 13, 187–97. Of these nos. 13, 192, and 193 depict women; cf. Harris, p. 252, n. 411. Harris judged the couple to be 'reasonably prosperous, perhaps from the level just below the decurionate.' (p. 263); and '... well-to-do middle class, not the upper elite.' (fig. 5).

[2] For educational attainments and social climbing in Roman society—'education disguises humble origins'— see Hopkins (n. 1), p. 142–4; for the prestige of literacy see Harris (n. 1), p. 145. N. Horsfall, 'The Uses of Literacy and the *Cena Trimalchionis*', *G&R* 36 (1989), 74–89, and 194–209, discussed the role of literacy and social pretension as presented by Petronius.

[3] Harris (n. 1), pp. 262–3, arguing from the archives of L. Caecilius Iucundus as well as other evidence, suggested that most women of the sub-elite classes were not literate, while, p. 252, most upper-class women were.

of the social status of this couple would normally use the implement to write, and if so how frequently? Or, if social pretension was involved, what does the image imply about the writing practices of the Roman elite?

The frequency with which literate people put pen to paper varies widely from society to society, as well as from one social group to another within a particular society.[4] In modern, Western culture handwritten documents have become increasingly rare because of technological advances. Typewriters have been replaced by word-processors and e-mail, so that busy professional people are writing by hand less and less frequently. In the ancient world slaves served many of the functions of modern technology, and because of their ubiquity some scholars have assumed that it was rare for upper-class Romans to produce written documents in their own hands. In his important book on ancient literacy, for example, William Harris suggested that while the ability to read was general among the upper classes of the Roman Empire, writing was usually neglected because there were suitably trained slaves available. This position received support from a more specialized recent study in which Nicholas Horsfall emphasized the importance of dictating (underestimated in his view) in the lives of serious and hard-working elite Romans.[5]

If true, this view has serious implications for our understanding not only of the social history of the ancient Romans, but also the history of Roman literary culture. On the assumption that elite Romans rarely wrote in their own hands, references to manuscripts written or even corrected by well-known Romans have been taken as evidence for the widespread circulation of bogus autograph manuscripts, and the credulity of the ancient writers who regarded such documents as genuine.

This assumption, however, seems dubious, or at least in need of serious qualification. In fact, there are quite a number of passages that portray Romans of the elite classes writing various types of documents—official letters and reports, as well as literary compositions—in their own hands, some of them lengthy. The question is whether these represent normal practice or an exception to the norm. This paper will survey some of the conditions under which writing was done by elite Romans and those close to them. It will also draw attention to how Latin authors distinguished between the act of writing itself and the process of having works copied by trained slaves. By underlining the wider currency of writing, I will illustrate two things: (i) that the evidence for bogus autograph manuscripts is less abundant than some have thought; and (ii) that the act of writing, far from being thought of as a predominantly slave occupation, was closely connected to other activities—reading, literary composition, public speaking and public administration—that were of central importance to privileged, literate Romans.

## WRITING BY HAND AMONG THE ELITE

The writing practices of the upper classes were treated only in passing by Harris in *Ancient Literacy*. He concluded that members of the Graeco-Roman elite classes would not necessarily have had to do much writing in their own hands because of the

[4] E.g. K. Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern Europe', in G. Baumann (ed.), *The Written Word* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 97–131, on literate non-writers in England between 1500 and 1750.

[5] Harris (n. 1), p. 249. N. Horsfall, 'Rome without Spectacles', *G&R* 42 (1995), 49–56; cf. R. J. Starr, *CJ* 86 (1990–91), 337–43.

availability of scribal slaves, and posited this as a reason for Quintilian's statement that respectable Romans, by and large, neglected good handwriting. Two autograph papyrological documents were referred to as evidence of upper-class negligence in handwriting. There are, however, good reasons to think that upper-class Romans did write neatly when occasion required it and that numbers of them did so quite frequently.

In one of the autograph papyrological documents referred to, the subscription to an official instrument of Subatianus Aquila the prefect of Egypt, the handwriting is described by Harris as a barely legible scrawl; in the other, four lines written by three heirs of the wealthy Tiberius Iulius Theon are said to have been done very negligently.[6] We should be careful in judging the 'legibility' of ancient hands, most of which were probably more legible to contemporaries than to us. In addition, neatness and negligence in handwriting are relative terms, and in both examples, the upper-class handwriting is being judged against the professionally trained scribal hands found elsewhere on the two documents. As a rule, the neatness, regularity, and speed of scribal hands found in papyrological documents were characteristic of professionals who had gone to school to learn the skill. All others were, so to speak, amateurs among whom hands varied from childishly slow to semi-rapid cursive, and from illegibility to general legibility. The Vindolanda tablets present the same picture. These documents from an early second century A.D. fort in Britain contain several hundred hands, but in the two tablets which were certainly written by scribes—both have subscriptions in a second hand by men who seem to be officers—the hand is distinguished as 'regular and elegant'.[7]

Judged by scribal standards, the handwriting of non-professionals might appear unkempt, but that does not mean it was generally negligent or illegible. Writing for and about the Roman upper classes, Quintilian emphasized the importance of neatness and legibility in private correspondence, and we know that some eminent Romans agreed. The handwriting of Atticus is described by Cicero as 'very regular and very clear' (*compositissimae et clarissimae*), and that of Augustus was presumably neat and easy to read, since the emperor is said to have encouraged his young heirs, Gaius and Lucius, to imitate it.[8] Practice among Romans who were not of the upper classes conformed. In general, the non-scribal handwriting of sub-elite Romans found in papyri tends to be neater in private letters than in other types of documents.[9] What evidence there is also suggests that the neatness of handwriting of Romans who were not scribes could vary according to circumstance and occasion. Papyrological

[6] Harris (n. 1), p. 249. The subscription (with photograph) of Subatianus Aquila is found in *PGraecBerol* 35, dated to A.D. 209. The Theones document (also with photograph) is *POxy* 3197, dated to A.D. 111. That most papyrus letters were not written by their authors is irrelevant to our subject since, as Harris pointed out, p. 231, many of the persons concerned would have been semi-literates or illiterates.

[7] A. K. Bowman, J. D. Thomas, *Vindolanda: The Latin Writing-Tablets* (London, 1983), pp. 52, 188 and 102. The great majority of these documents were written in ink on wood. The scribal documents are numbers 21 and 30. Document number 22 is an odd exception; see the editors' comments on p. 105. See now A. K. Bowman, 'Letters and literacy on Rome's northern frontier', in A. K. Bowman, G. Woolf (eds.), *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 110.

[8] 'Quare cum semper et ubique tum praecipue in epistulis secretis et familiaribus delectabit ne hoc quidem neglectum reliquisse' (*Inst.* 1.1.29); the passage was quoted by Harris (n. 1), p. 249, n. 394, cf. Cic. *Q. fr.* 2.15 [14] (SB 19).1; *Att.* 6.9 (SB 123).1. For Atticus's hand see Cic. *Att.* 6.9 (SB 123).1; on Augustus see Suet. *Aug.* 64.5, noted by M. Corbier, 'L'écriture en quête de lecteurs', in Humphrey (n. 1), p. 106.

[9] For neatly written letters in the papyri see, e.g. *PHerm* Rees, 2 and 3.

evidence from somewhat lower on the social scale shows that an individual's handwriting might vary even within the same document. So in the case of one Timaeus who, wishing to display his learning, added a line of Homeric verse to the margin of a letter, we find him altering his writing from a neat cursive to a more formal literary hand when adding the line of poetry.[10] There is little reason to think that this type of variation in handwriting would not also have occurred among the upper classes. In the tablets from Vindolanda that can confidently be attributed to a member of the upper classes (the prefect Flavius Cerialis), the handwriting is fast and, although usually legible, difficult to decipher in places. The editors, who characterized the upper-class hand as distinctive, ascribed lack of clarity in some letter forms to the fact that the document was a 'somewhat hastily written draft'. If the upper-class author had been writing out the fair copy, he presumably would have slowed down and produced a neater hand.[11]

Nor do the documents mentioned by Harris contradict the evidence that upper-class Romans wrote neatly and frequently. The hand of the prefect Subatianus Aquila certainly is a scrawl, but it occurs in a formulaic salutation—ἐρρῶσθαι σε βούλομαι —'good health to you'. Such a familiar sentiment would be easily recognized and understood by the intended reader, so there was no more reason for Aqulia to slow down and write legibly, than there would be for a modern executive when writing his or her signature.[12] Under different circumstances—the writing of a letter to a friend, for instance—it is quite likely that the prefect of Egypt would have written in a neat hand. Harris's second example is perhaps more significant, since it is both longer and written by native Greek speakers, but his characterization of the hands of the three heirs of Theon as 'very negligent' is questionable. A comparison with other non-scribal handwriting shows that the hands of the Theones, although certainly non-scribal, are all relatively neat, accurate, and legible. They are good examples of semi-cursive, semi-rapid, but readable handwriting.[13] In lieu of a comprehensive study of the palaeographical evidence, no firm conclusion can be reached about the general handwriting abilities of elite or sub-elite Romans, but these few examples of extant handwriting do not demonstrate widespread neglect, but suggest rather that such Romans could write rapidly and neatly when occasion required, implying that they were not unpractised.

[10] Timaeus's letter is *PFlor* II 259. In a mid-third century papyrus Lollianus, who was the public *grammaticus* of Oxyrhynchus, seems to have written the draft of a petition in a large and formal script, but employed a smaller 'neat hand typical of the type used for commentaries' for writing a letter; see P. J. Parsons, *PCollYoutie*, 66. I owe these references to Raffaella Cribiore.

[11] Bowman and Thomas (n. 7), tablet 37, plate VIII, 1 and 2 and pp. 126–7. The same authors argued that this document is part of the archive of Cerialis in *Britannia* 18 (1987), 126. Note also the mixture of capital and cursive scripts in the same Vindolanda document; Bowman in Bowman and Woolf (n. 7), pp. 118–19.

[12] Cf. M. B. Parkes, *Scribes, Scripts and Readers* (London, Rio Grande, 1991), pp. 1–18. Unlike modern business practice, where handwriting is normally restricted to a signature, in ancient practice it was the formulaic closing subscription that authenticated a dictated document; see Bowman in Bowman and Woolf (n. 7), p. 124. In addition to formulaic salutations, authenticating subscriptions were commonly in the form of the words *legi* and *recognovi* customarily signed by emperors and high officials; see O. W. Reinmuth, *The Prefect of Egypt from Augustus to Diocletian* (Leipzig, 1935, rep. 1963), p. 92, following U. Wilcken, *Hermes* 55 (1920), 28–9. Extra-Egyptian papyri show the same practice. For a recently published document with the subscription in the hand of Julius Priscus, prefect of Mesopotamia and brother of Philip the Arab, see D. Feissel, J. Gascou, 'Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen Euphrate (III siècle après J.-C.)', *Académie des inscriptions & belles-lettres* (Paris, 1989), 545–53.

[13] See A. K. Bowman, 'Literacy and the Roman Empire', in Humphrey (n. 1), p. 127.

The passage from the *Institutio Oratoria* cited by Harris provides only equivocal support for the proposition that the upper classes rarely wrote. For although Quintilian did state that most respectable Romans did not write fast or carefully, he went on to emphasize that it is important for the aspiring orator to acquire writing skills because 'a slow pen delays thinking', and 'dictating is a nuisance'.

> Non est aliena res, quae fere ab honestis negligi solet, cura bene ac velociter scribendi. Nam cum sit in studiis praecipuum, quoque solo verus ille profectus et altis radicibus nixus paretur, scribere ipsum, tardior stilus cognitationem moratur, rudis et confusus intellectu caret; unde sequitur alter dictandi, quae transferenda sunt, labor.[14]

Again pointing to the connection between writing and clear thinking, Quintilian explained how an amanuensis might cause the orator to compose too rapidly, or, if he were incompetent, to hinder and slow down composition.[15] Quintilian went on to give practical advice on how to write, recommending wax as the preferred material, except for the nearsighted, who would require parchment and ink. He also described a scribal knack—calling it an *usus irrationalis*, or ἄλογος τριβή—by which a person could copy from a text without having to slow down to understand it, in the same way typists are trained today.[16] In Quintilian's judgment, not only was the ability to write neatly and fast an essential tool for the serious orator, but the alternative of dictation was a caprice.[17]

Nor can Quintilian's views be dismissed as idiosyncratic, or merely prescriptive, since there is evidence that Romans of the most elevated status actually did write in their own hands. There are many notices of autograph texts. Pomponius Secundus, the friend of the elder Pliny, is said to have owned manuscripts in the handwriting of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus (*Nat.* 13.83). Quintilian saw autographs of Cicero, Vergil, and Augustus and commented on the orthography (*Inst.* 1.7.20–22), and the elder Pliny stated that autographs of Cicero, Vergil, and Augustus were not uncommon (*Nat.* 13.83).[18] Documents in the handwriting of the emperors Augustus (*Aug.* 80.3, 87.1.3, 88, = Malcovati, fr. 46–9) and Nero (*Nero* 52.3.) were recognized by Suetonius.[19] Whether or not all of these were genuine—the imperial autographs seen by Quintilian and Suetonius certainly were—is beside the point. What matters is that educated Romans saw nothing peculiar about manuscripts written in the hands of distinguished men. Why should they have?

[14] 'The ability to write well and quickly is not irrelevant, though it is generally neglected by respectable persons. Writing is of the greatest importance in our studies and by it alone can true progress, supported by deep roots, be acquired. But a slow pen delays thinking, while a clumsy and illegible hand cannot be understood, from which follows another nuisance, that of dictating what is to be copied.' (*Inst.* 1.1.28).

[15] 'nam in stilo quidem quamlibet properato dat aliquam cogitationi moram non consequens celeritatem eius manus.' (*Inst.* 10.3.19, cf. 19–22). Cf. T. Kleberg, 'Commercio librario ed editoria nel mondo antico', E. Livrea (trans.), in G. Cavallo (ed.), *Libri, editori e pubblico nel mondo antico* (Rome, 1975), p. 46. Jerome echoed this sentiment; see E. Arns, *La technique du livre d'après saint Jérôme* (Paris, 1953), pp. 47–8; cf. N. Horsfall, *G&R* 42 (1995), 50.

[16] *Inst.* 10.3.31–2; for *usus irrationalis* see 10.7.11; cf. K. Quinn, 'Poet and Audience in the Augustan Age', *ANRW* 2.30.1 (Berlin, New York, 1982), p. 82, n. 21, and p. 169.

[17] 'Satis apparet ex eo, quod hanc scribentium negligentiam damno, quid de illis dictandi deliciis sentiam' (*Inst.* 10.3.18).

[18] Aulus Gellius also refers to autographs of Vergil at 9.14.7; cf. 2.3.5. On autographs see T. Birt, *Das antike Buchwesen* (Berlin 1882, repr. 1959), pp. 349–50, and Kleberg (n. 15), pp. 45–6.

[19] Augustus's orthography was discussed at *Aug.* 88. L. de Coninck, *Suetonius en de Archivalia* (Brussels, 1983), pp. 52–7 and 216, argued that Suetonius did not consult these letters in the imperial archive.

Authors of speeches and literary works often dictated to slaves, the practice being perhaps more regular among prose authors than poets. But as Horsfall's nuanced study pointed out, the place of dictation in composition was complex, and an author might dictate a text after he had written it up himself.[20] Pliny's correspondent, Voconius Romanus, stated explicitly that he was both dictating and writing a literary composition: 'multa te nunc dictare, nunc scribere'(*Ep.* 9.28.3).[21] Other authors composed their works *sua manu* by choice.[22] It is difficult to know how common the preference for writing by hand was, but a general connection between literary composition and writing *sua manu* in the late Republic is suggested by the fact that when Cicero wished to have the interrogation of the Catilinarian conspirators recorded, and required senators whose handwriting he knew to be practiced and fast, he selected literary men for the job (*Sull.* 42).[23]

Private letters also were both dictated and handwritten by upper-class Romans, the choice depending largely on the social status of the correspondents. Letters to close relatives (Cic. *Q. fr.* 2.2 [SB 6].1), intimate friends (*Att.* 5.19 [SB 112].1), social superiors (*Fam.* 3.6 [SB 69].2), and persons one wanted to flatter (Nep. *Att.* 10.4) were customarily written in one's own hand.[24] Dictating such letters was considered impolite. Cicero always excused himself when dictating a letter to his brother (*Q. fr.* 2.2 [SB 6].1; 2.16 [15] [SB 20].1; 3.3 [SB 23].1). He was forty-eight years old before he first dictated a letter to Atticus—and he apologized for the breach of etiquette (*Att.* 2.23 [SB 43].1).[25] In their later correspondence, Cicero and Atticus both did resort to dictation more frequently, but it was noted and explained (*Att.* 2.20 [SB 40].6; 11.24 [SB 234].2; cf. *Att.* 12.32 [SB 271].1).[26] Acceptable excuses for dictating a letter were pressing business (*Att.* 4.16. [SB 89].1, *Q.fr.* 3.3 [SB 23].1; Fronto, *De Fer.Als.* 4),

[20] Horsfall, *G&R* 42 (1995), 50–55; cf. 53, where Horsfall discussed the role of slaves in research. Dictation was practised by, e.g., Caesar (Plut. *Caes.* 17.3–4), the elder and younger Pliny (*Ep.* 3.5.15, 3.5.10, 6.20.5), and Vergil (Suet. *Vita Verg.* 22); see also Hor. *Serm.* 1.4.10. For dictation and its use by prose writers and poets, see also Kleberg (n. 15), p. 46, and Quinn (n. 16), pp. 85–6.

[21] Cf. Corbier (n. 8), p. 106.

[22] Horsfall, *G&R* 42 (1995), 50 and n. 21, citing St. Ambrose (Ambros. *Ep.* 47.1; Paul. *vit. Amb.* 38.2).

[23] Three of the four senators selected—M. Valerius Messalla Rufus, P. Nigidius Figulus, and Ap. Claudius Pulcher—are known literary figures; little is known about the fourth, C. Cosconius. It is important to note that these senators wrote the minutes out in full, not in shorthand. The Latin word for taking shorthand is *excipere*. Here Cicero uses *perscribere*, which means 'to write out fully'; see Gel. 10.1.7 with T. N. Winter, *TAPA* 100 (1969), 607–12 and R. J. A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton, 1984), p. 316. Plut. *Cat.Min.* 23.3 refers to shorthand used not by senators, but *notarii*, probably *servi publici*; see Th. Mommsen, *Gesammelte Schriften*, iii, *Juristische Schriften*, iii (Berlin, 1907, rep. 1965), pp. 290–313. On the use of shorthand writers (*notarii* or *actuarii*), slaves or men of low status, in the Senate, see Suet. *Jul.* 55.3, with P. Willems, *Le sénat de la république romaine*, ii (Louvain, 1883, repr. New York, 1975), pp. 204–7, with Talbert, p. 129, and H. C. Teitler, *Notarii and Exceptores* (Amsterdam, 1985), pp. 27–34 and 38–44; cf. Horsfall, *G&R* 42 (1995), n. 23 and 24, and below, note 37. That writing literary works *sua manu* was not unusual is indicated by several well-known passages: Cat. 50.1.4–5; Hor.*Serm.* 1.10.72, 1.4.14–16.

[24] See N. Horsfall, *Cornelius Nepos* (Oxford, 1989), p. 80. The Ciceronian evidence was collected by A. B. Miller, *Roman Etiquette of the Late Republic* (Lancaster, PA, 1914), pp. 61–2.

[25] Dictated letters frequently contained a subscription written by the author, e.g., Cic. *Fam.* 2.13 (SB 93).3; *Att.* 8.1 (SB 151).1; 11.24 (SB 234).2; 13.28 (SB 299).4; 6.6.(SB 121).4; Plut. *Caes.* 63.4; cf. *P. Herm.* Rees, 6. In imperial correspondence the writing of subscriptions, sometimes no more than a few words, occupied a considerable part of an emperor's workday; see F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (Ithaca, 1977), pp. 221–2, 245–8.

[26] See the comment of D. R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero's Letters to Atticus* i (Cambridge, 1965), p. 393 on *Att.* 2.20 (SB 40).5.

travel (*Att.* 5.17 [SB 110].1, 5.14 [SB 107].1), security (*Att.* 2.20 [SB 40].5, 11.2 [SB 212]. 4), and illness—maladies of the eyes were especially common (*Att.* 7.13a [SB 137].3, 8.12 [SB 162].1; Suet. *Vita Hor.*; Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 5.47.1, *Ad Ant. Imp.* 1.2.10, *Ad Ver. Imp.* 1.5.1, *Parth.* 11, *De Eloq.* 3.2; cf. Ov. *Tr.* 3.3.1).[27] Moreover, when illness did cause a letter to a friend to be dictated rather than written by hand, the different handwriting was noticed (*Att.* 7.2 [SB 125].1, & 3; 6.9 [SB 123].1; Fronto, *Ad Ver. Imp.* 15.1 and *Ad M. Caes.* 5.62).

This etiquette of correspondence continued into the imperial period. Until prevented by work and illness, Augustus is reputed to have written letters to his friends in his own hand (Suet. *Vita Hor.* 11). We know that the majority of the letters of Marcus Aurelius were dictated (*Ad M. Caes.* 4.7.1), but the busy emperor was praised for always having written letters to close friends in his own hand (Dio 71.36.2); and this is how his letters to Fronto were written (*Ad M. Caes.* 4.8.1).[28]

In the busy public life of an upper-class Roman the practical value, even necessity of dictation is patent, and Horsfall was right to stress it.[29] But in doing so one must be careful not to overlook the practical advantages of writing *sua manu*. There were in fact good reasons for a Roman public man to write in his own hand: secrecy, decorum, convenience and efficiency. The eminent senators of the late Republic who were purported to have carried on a conspiratorial correspondence with Quintus Sertorius did so in autograph letters (Plut. *Sert.* 27.2, cf. 26.3). Caesar, too, is alleged to have written in his hand a compromising letter to Catiline (Suet. *Jul.* 17.2), and the conspiratorial letters to the Allobroges that Cicero produced in the Senate in 63 B.C. were written in the hands of the accused (Cic. *Cat.* 3.5.10–12). Security was also the reason that, while on Capri, the emperor Tiberius wrote a letter in his own hand to the urban prefect in Rome (Sen. *Ep.* 83.15).[30] Less urgent considerations could impel high-ranking Romans to eschew dictation. Official letters from Nerva to Trajan (Dio 68.3.100), and from Trajan to the Senate (Dio 68.5.2) were written *sua manu* out of courtesy and respect. The convenience and efficiency of writing over dictation noted by Quintilian is probably why Julius Caesar, who was reputed to have been able to read and write simultaneously, left behind documents written in his own hand (Plin. *Nat.* 7.91–2, Cic. *Phil.* 1.17.7, cf. Suet. *Aug.* 45.1), and why at least part of Augustus' official correspondence was written in his own hand. Augustus also received at least one letter from a consular legate written in the same way (Suet. *Aug.* 71, 88).[31]

Nor is it necessary to assume that official or quasi-official documents written in the hands of elite Romans must always have been short. According to Tacitus, Augustus's record of the 'state of the empire', which must have been of some length, was written in his own hand (Tac. *Ann.* 1.11.4, Suet. *Aug.* 101.4, cf. Vell. Pat. 2.124.3), and Constantius is said to have written in his own hand a *libellus* for Julian on court etiquette (Amm. Marc. 16.5.3). That some republican orators anticipated Quintilian's

[27] A similar picture is found in Jerome's writings; see Arns (n. 15), pp. 40–43. Some of the abundant evidence for dictated letters was colleced by Kleberg (n. 15), p. 46, and Horsfall, *G&R* 42 (1995), 51–2, who also, 49, n. 10, discussed Roman ophthalmia.

[28] Kleberg (n. 15), pp. 45–6, n. 52. On correspondence of the imperial period in general see P. Cugusi, *Evoluzione e forme dell'epistolografia Latina* (Rome, 1983), pp. 265ff., on the letters of the emperors, pp. 265–70, and for the correspondence of Marcus Aurelius and Fronto, pp. 241–64.

[29] Horsfall, *G&R* 42 (1995), 51–2 and 54

[30] Handwritten documents, sometimes forged, figured as evidence in trials, see e.g., Cic. *Brut.* 277; *N. D.* 3.74; Quint. *Inst.* 5.13.8, 6.3.100; Suet. *Tit.* 6.2; cf. B. W. Frier, *The Rise of the Roman Jurists* (Princeton, 1985), p. 207, and *Dig.* 22.5.3.1–4.

[31] On Augustus's handwritten correspondence see above, note 19. Cf. Horsfall, *G&R* 42 (1995), n. 28 and 29.

advice by writing their speeches by hand is implied by a comment of Cicero. In explaining why copies of the speeches of Publius Sulpicius did not survive, Cicero pointed to the orator not having been accustomed nor able to write them; the implication being that other orators could and did.[32]

The discussion of upper-class Roman writing practices has centred on men, because the evidence on elite women and writing is thin. In the Vindolanda documents, a dictated letter has a subscription written out in elegant Latin by an upper-class woman, Claudia Severa, but in what the editors called an unpractised hand. It would be rash, however, to conclude from this that elite women wrote less frequently than men. Literary sources suggest that upper-class women regularly wrote love letters in their own hands. So in Propertius' 'Arethusa' letter a woman describes writing a letter with her own hand, 'signa meae dextrae iam morientis erunt' (4.3.6), and one may infer from Ovid's *Heroides* that contemporary Roman women regularly wrote letters in this manner (e.g., *Her.* 11.3–4). The same impression is conveyed by Ovid's *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*, where, 'est vobis vestros fallere cura viros,/ ancillae puerique manu perarate tabellas,' (*Ars.* 3.484–5) is the exception that proves the rule.[33] The overall picture is equivocal, since women were excluded from some, but shared in other of the circumstances that prompted men to write in their own hands. While elite women's education normally ended before rhetorical studies were begun, they were expected to and did partake in Roman literary and epistolary activities, and although precluded from participating in Roman public life, some Roman women administered extensive family holdings that involved correspondence and lawsuits.[34] It is probable that an upper-class Roman woman would have done somewhat less writing *sua manu* than her senatorial or equestrian brother or husband, but is difficult to say how significant the difference would have been.[35]

Elite Romans from the highest social orders then, whether because of need or preference, were quite accustomed to writing documents in their own hands. Such handwritten documents could be the result of their private literary pursuits or of their public responsibilities, and the documents could be of significant length.

[32] 'Ipsius Sulpici nulla oratio est, saepeque ex eo audivi cum se scribere neque consuesse neque posse diceret' (Cic. *Brut.* 205). On another, in my opinion less likely interpretation, the words would mean that Sulpicius preferred extemporaneous speeches to those composed in advance.

[33] 'It is important to you to deceive your men, write a letter by the hand of your slave girl or boy' (*Ars.* 3.484–5). I owe these references to the anonymous reader.

[34] On upper-class women's education see Plin. *Ep.* 5.16, with A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (Oxford, 1966), *ad loc.*, and S. B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* (New York, 1975), pp. 170–6; women and literary culture—e.g., Plin. *Ep.* 4.19.2; women and lawsuits—e.g., Plin. *Ep.* 2.20.10; 3.9.19 ff.; 4.17; cf. E. Fantham, *et al.*, *Women in the Classical World* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 360–7, Harris (n. 1), p. 252. Although excluded from public office, some women were entrusted with public administration; Julia Domna was placed in charge of imperial *libelli* and *epistulae* by Caracalla—Dio 77.18.2; 78.4.2–3. Paul wrote that women were excluded from judicial positions not because they lacked judgement, but by tradition—*non quia non habent iudicium, sed quia receptum est, ut civilibus officiis non fungantur* (*Dig.* 5.1.12.2; cf. 16.1.1.1; 50.17.2). I owe these references to Michael Peachin. In general see J. F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington, 1991), esp. pp. 262–5.

[35] The evidence, especially from papyri, for non-elite women is slightly better and might allow somewhat firmer conclusions. Harris (n. 1), p. 262, pointed out that of the five sub-elite female creditors whose receipts survive in the archive of L. Caecilius Iucundus, none wrote out receipts in their own hand; of the 17 males creditors' receipts, eleven are written *sua manu*. On Claudia Severa see A. K. Bowman in Bowman and Woolf (n. 7), p. 124, and *Britannia* 18 (1987), 137–40.

## THE CORRECTING AND COPYING OF TEXTS

Upper-class Romans sometimes, however, wrote in their own hands for other purposes. Although proof reading was one of the tasks performed by trained slaves (Cic *Att.* 13.44 [SB 336].3; 12.6 [SB 306].3; Gell. 15.6.2), we know that some elite Romans corrected in their own hands their own works (Gell. 15.6.2; Mart. 7.17.7; 7.11; Plin. *Ep.* 4.26.1) and the works of friends (Cic. *Att.* 2.16 [SB 36].4; 1.13 [SB 13].5; Plin. *Ep.* 7.20).[36] Writing down someone else's words was another matter. We do hear of elite Romans taking dictation. What prompted Cicero to recruit his fast-writing senators (*Sull.* 41–2), however, were the unusual circumstances posed by the Catilinarian conspiracy. More curious is Suetonius's notice that the emperor Titus was so expert that he competed with the imperial secretaries in shorthand, a servile occupation (Suet. *Tit.* 3.2).[37] But there is a difference between taking down another's spoken words and laboriously reproducing a manuscript. In the Roman world the latter task was done by trained persons of low status. Most of those about whom we know were slaves; some were women. The non-slave booksellers who made copies, or had copies made, seem to have been mostly freedmen.[38] To the upper classes copying a manuscript was drudgery, epitomizing the insignificant endeavour done by rote and unworthy of the effort required: 'laboriosum non statim praeclarum. sunt enim multa laboriosa, quae si faciatis, non continuo gloriemini: nisi etiam si vestra manu fabulas aut orationes totas transscripsissetis gloriosum putaretis' (*Rhet. Her.* 4.6).[39] So a passage that portrays upper-class Romans, some of the highest eminence, actually copying the works of others in their own hands requires an explanation.

## THE LETTER OF FRONTO

In *Ad Caesarem* 1.6, Marcus Aurelius informed his teacher, Marcus Cornelius Fronto, that he had recited selections of the latter's speech and included a handwritten copy of what he had recited (1.6.2–7). Fronto thanked him for having copied out the speech in his own hand—'orationem istam meam tua manu descriptam misisti mihi' (1.7.3)—by comparing himself and Marcus to famous authors and copyists. The relevant section of the letter runs as follows:

Quid tale M. Porcio aut Quinto Ennio, C. Graccho aut Titio poetae, quid Scipioni aut Numidico, quid M. Tullio tale usu venit? Quorum libri pretiosiores habentur et summam gloriam retinent, si sunt Lampadionis aut Staberii, Plautii aut D. Aurelii, Autriconis aut Aelii

[36] See R. Sommer, 'Pomponius Atticus und Ciceros Werk', *Hermes* 61 (1926), 389–422, esp. 403–15; cf. Kleberg (n. 15), p. 49, and R. J. Starr, 'The Circulation of Literary Texts in the Roman World', *CQ* 37 (1987), 213–23, at 213–14.

[37] Titus's proficiency in shorthand was unusual to judge from the low opinion Seneca expressed for the skill (*Ep.Mor.* 90.25). What Cicero employed (σημεῖα) in his letters (*Att.* 13.32 [SB 305].3), were probably simple abbreviations, not shorthand; see the comment of Shackleton Bailey, *ad loc.* On the servile associations of shorthand see H. C. Teitler (n. 23) p. 28, who collected the evidence for shorthand in a later period; cf. Arns (n. 15) pp. 56ff. For shorthand in the late Republic see above, note 23.

[38] S. Treggiari, 'Jobs for Women', *AJAH* 1 (1976), 78, noted women as *librariae* and women *a manu* and *amanuensis*. On copying by slaves and freedmen booksellers see Starr, *CQ* 37 (1987), 219–23; cf. Kleberg (n. 15), pp. 49, and 54ff. The preponderance of references to servile copyists in the literary sources may only reflect the economic status of elite authors; less wealthy readers having gone to booksellers. Non-servile public scribes whose principal business was writing letters and other documents for illiterates is another matter. Evidence for them is slim in the west; see N. Horsfall, 'Statistics or states of mind?', in Humphrey (n. 1), p. 69.

[39] 'The laborious is not necessarily the honourable. There are many things that are laborious, which you would not consequently boast of. Unless you thought it a glorious undertaking to copy out in your own hand stories and whole speeches.'

manu scripta e⟨xem⟩pla aut a Tirone emendata aut a Domitio Balbo descripta aut ab Attico aut Nepote. Mea oratio extabit M. Caesaris manu scripta; qui orationem spreverit litteras concupiscet; qui scripta contempserit, scriptorem reverebitur.[40]

The passage is controversial. Once interpreted as evidence for early critical editions, it is now commonly taken to show that valuable but fraudulent autograph manuscripts by famous writers were especially widespread in the Rome of the second century A.D. The latter case has been most forcefully made by J. E. G. Zetzel, who built an elegant argument around his interpretation of this and other texts.[41] Of *Ad M. Caes.* 1.7.4, Zetzel concluded that the list of writers and well-known copyists was not what Fronto thought it was (that is valuable copies of early Latin authors), but rather forged manuscripts which unscrupulous booksellers had been fobbing off on Fronto and his gullible contemporaries.[42] In reference to each of the three groups of persons whom Fronto said had handled the texts—(1) Lampadio *et alii*, (2) Tiro, and (3) Domitius Balbus, Atticus, and Nepos—absurdities and incongruities were discovered which were taken as sure signs of forgery. Of the first group, Lampadio to Aelius, it was pointed out that none is otherwise known to have copied a manuscript, and that some of them had no known connection to the authors with whom Fronto associated them. The reference to Tiro correcting a text was found highly suspect, because there is no evidence that Tiro ever edited Cicero's speeches outside of this letter of Fronto and some notices in Aulus Gellius's *Noctes Atticae*. Finally, it was said to be absurd to think that men as eminent as Atticus or Cornelius Nepos would have copied out Cicero's works in their own hands—that was a job for trained slaves—and, in addition, Nepos has no known connection with the transmission of Cicero's work.[43]

All these objections rest on two underlying propositions: one, that there is no attested connection between the particular authors and copyists; and two, that distinguished Romans would never have produced such documents in their own handwriting. The weakness of the first proposition—an *ex silentio* argument concerning men about whom we know very little—is obvious. The second proposition has to do with the writing practices of persons who were well-known in antiquity, but who occupied various social statuses; some qualifying as members of Rome's elite, others not. Both require that we investigate the individuals named in Fronto's letter.

[40] 'What like this ever happened to M. Porcius, or Quintus Ennius, to Gaius Gracchus, or Gaius Titius the poet? What to Scipio or Numidicus? What like this ever happened to M. Tullius? The books of these men have a greater value and retain the highest fame, if the copies were written in the hand of Lampadio or Staberius, of Plautius or Decimus Aurelius, of Autrico or Aelius, or have been corrected by Tiro, or transcribed by Domitius Balbus, or Atticus, or Nepos. My speech will exist in the hand of Marcus Caesar. He that thinks little of the speech will covet the very letters; he who disdains the thing written will revere the writer' (*Ad M. Caes.* 1.7.4). The text is that of M. P. J. van den Hout, *M. Cornelii Frontonis Epistulae* (Leipzig, 1988), p. 15.

[41] J. E. G. Zetzel, 'Emendavi ad Tironem', *HSCP* 77 (1973), 225–43. The other texts are the subscription on a manuscript of Cicero's speeches *contra Rullum*; references in Aulus Gellius's *Noctes Atticae* to Tiro's handling of a manuscript of Cicero's Verrine orations; and a number of Vergilian manuscripts. Zetzel's conclusions have been accepted with various qualifications by L. D. Reynolds & N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*[3] (Oxford, 1991), pp. 30 and 250; O. Skutsch, *The Annals of Quintus Ennius* (Oxford, 1985), p. 9; E. Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (Baltimore, 1985), p. 44, n. 24; R. A. Kaster, *Suetonius, De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus* (Oxford, 1995), p. 111; cf. G. P. Goold, *HSCP* 74 (1970), 162. Zetzel's conclusions were challenged by S. Timpanaro, *Per la storia della filologia virgiliana antica* (Rome, 1986), esp. pp. 33ff., 54ff., 183ff., and 197–209; cf. L. Holford-Strevens, *LCM* 7 (1982), 67 and N. Horsfall, *CR* 37 (1987), 177–80. The passage was not discussed by W. Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum* (Munich, 1971).

[42] Zetzel, *HSCP* 77 (1973), 233–9.

[43] Zetzel, *HSCP* 77 (1973), 241–3.

Fronto's list of notables began with six men—Lampadio, Staberius, Plautius, D. Aurelius, Autrico, and Aelius—said to have written out by hand the famous literary works of others. Of those who can be identified, three were *grammatici*, one a *rhetor*, one an equestrian who studied *grammatica*; all had made their reputations as scholars. The question is whether such well-known figures, who were certainly capable of writing out texts, would have made copies or corrections by hand, since these tasks were normally done by trained slaves.

In ancient Rome scholarly accomplishment was not a road to high social position, and the social status of a *grammaticus* was low. Many who gained prominence had risen from slavery, while others who were free-born ended up in poverty. Although some commanded enormous salaries, the majority seem to have been poor. Elizabeth Rawson summarized their situation well—'the profession was risky, often ill-paid, and suffered by its association with men of servile extraction'. Moreover, *grammatici*, particularly if they were freedmen, were expected to perform multiple services for their patrons. So it is reasonable to think that a *grammaticus* of freedman status would have been asked to copy out 'deluxe' or 'gift editions' at one stage or another of his career.[44]

What do we know about the identity and status of the teacher-scholars in Fronto's list? About Autrico nothing, but two or possibly three of the others had once been slaves. Suetonius specifically stated that Lucius Staberius Eros came to Italy as a slave and was manumitted because of his literary interests (Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 13; Plin. *Nat.* 35.199).[45] Decimus Aurelius is probably Aurelius Opillus, whom Suetonius described as a freedman who taught first philosophy, then rhetoric, and finally *grammatica*, before his school closed and he followed Rutilius Rufus into exile (Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 6).[46] The status and background of Gaius Octavius Lampadio are a blank, but his name strongly suggests servile origins.[47] At some point in their careers any of these men could have copied texts in order to comply with the wishes of master or patron.

Of the remaining two men on Fronto's list, Aelius is clearly Lucius Aelius Praeconinus, an equestrian who traveled in high optimate circles, and who, according

[44] Atticus's learned freedman, M. Pomponius Dionysius, seems to have been sent to help glue and catalogue Cicero's books (*Att.* 4.4a [SB 78].1, 4.8. [SB 79].2). Shackleton Bailey, *ad Att.* 79.2, doubted that such a learned man would be asked to work in a humble capacity, but see J. Christes, *Sklaven und Freigelassene als Grammatiker und Philologen im Antike Rom* (Wiesbaden, 1979), p. 108, n.10. For the social background and multiple functions of *grammatici*, see Rawson (n. 41), pp. 66–67, R. A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 51–5, and for *grammaticus* as a term of abuse, see A. D. Booth, *Florilegium* 3 (1981), 1–20. On the nature of the social mobility of freedmen *grammatici*, see Quinn (n. 16), pp. 131–2, and in general, Christes, pp. 179–92. A 'deluxe edition', written on special wide papyrus sheets (*macrocollum*), (Cic. *Att.* 13.25 [SB 333].3, 16.3 [SB 413].1), cf. *cartae regiae* (Cat. 22.6), would require editorial as well as scribal skill; see Quinn (n. 16), p. 170. Non-contemporary books were sent as gifts to friends; see Mart. 14. 183–96 with Starr, *CQ* 37 (1987), 217.

[45] Staberius was later the teacher of Brutus and Cassius. For Staberius, see Kaster, *Suetonius*, pp. 165–70; Christes (n. 44), pp. 53–5, and for Autrico, pp. 20–21, which Christes identified as a slave name.

[46] See Christes (n. 44), pp. 17–20, and Kaster, *Suetonius*, pp. 110–16; cf. Rawson (n. 41), p. 4, n. 6.

[47] See Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 2.4, with Kaster, *Suetonius*, *ad loc.* Lampadio is a slave's name in Plautus's *Cistellaria*; see Christes (n. 44), pp. 7–8, and W. Kroll, *RE* 17 (1937) 'Octavius' (67), col. 1850, H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom* (Berlin, New York, 1982), p. 95, F. Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen* (Berlin, 1895), p. 29, n. 3, and *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* i (Berlin, 1913), p. 359.

to Suetonius, acquired his cognomen *Stilo*, 'because he wrote speeches for eminent senators'.[48] Plautius is perhaps Lucius Plotius Gallus, the Latin *rhetor* whose teachings were officially disapproved by censors in 92 B.C. Although their status was somewhat higher status than that of *grammatici*, *rhetores* included freedmen in their numbers and were scorned. Despite his closeness to some eminent Romans, it is doubtful that Plotius was ever counted among Rome's elite; he may have been a freedman himself.[49] He did, however, like Aelius, compose speeches for Roman senators; at least he was named as the author of the speech delivered by the young senator Lucius Sempronius Atratinus against Caelius in 56 B.C. (Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 26).[50] Both Plotius and Aelius might have preferred to write speeches and other works in their own hand, like Quintilian's orator, to promote clear thinking and to avoid the trouble of dictating. They certainly qualify as men likely to have been in the habit of writing *sua manu*.

So scholars who had begun as slaves might be asked to copy out texts, while those of higher status might be requested to compose speeches for their patrons. All of the men Fronto listed, therefore, might well have copied or written texts *sua manu*. But other objections have been raised against Fronto's list on the basis of the particular relationship of the famous copyists to the authors with whom Fronto associated them; for most of them there is no other attested connection. Here we must look more closely at the document.

The pairings of six authors and six copyists are in fact loose, since they are based on the relative order of the two series of names. Standing first in Fronto's list of *grammatici*, Lampadio would seem to be coupled with the text of Fronto's first author, Cato. But because Aulus Gellius mentioned an Ennian manuscript *Lampadionis manu emendatum* (Gel. 18.5.11), it has been suggested that the names are reversed, and that Lampadio should instead be associated with the text of Ennius, the second author Fronto listed. It is possible, therefore, that Fronto's reference to Lampadio was an error.[51]

There is no other extant evidence that connects the following three pairs of authors' texts and copyists, but given the little we know about the lives and work of early Latin *grammatici* and *rhetores* this is not surprising. The second man listed, Lucius Staberius Eros, is not known to have worked on the texts of any particular author, but it is certainly within reason to think this former slave would himself have produced an *édition de luxe* of Ennius or Cato. If Plautius is Lucius Plotius Gallus, then an interest in the speeches of Gaius Gracchus is wholly appropriate for the man

[48] 'Quod orationes nobilissimo cuique scribere solebat' (Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 3.2), with Kaster, *Suetonius*, pp. 73–7. Rawson (n. 41), p. 76, pointed out that significantly Suetonius did not record Aelius as a *grammaticus*, but rather as a man who advanced the study of grammar.

[49] For the identification of Plautius as L. Plotius Gallus see Zetzel, *HSCP* 77 (1973), 242, Rawson (n. 41), p. 238, n. 55, and esp. Kaster, *Suetonius*, p. 292. Censors' disapproval—Cic. *de Orat.* 3.93; Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 25.2, 26; Quint. *Inst.* 2.4.42, with K. Ziegler, *RE* 21.1 (1951) 'Plotius' (16), cols. 598–601, and Kaster, *Suetonius*, pp. 273–5. Plotius was highly regarded by Marius (Cic. *Arch.* 20). For the low status of *rhetores*, see Cic. *Orat.* 142; Sen. *Cont.* 2. *pr.* 5; H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans antiquité*[6] (Paris, 1965), pp. 412–13, and S. Treggiari, *Roman Freedmen During the Late Republic* (Oxford, 1969), p. 118. Treggiari also suggested (p. 117) Plotius's freedman status, but see Kaster, *Suetonius*, p. 292.

[50] On Atratinus, R. G. Austin, *Cicero, Pro M. Caelio Oratio*[3](Oxford, 1960), appendix vi, pp. 154–7, and Kaster, *Suetonius*, pp. 294–7.

[51] That Suetonius (*Gram. et rhet.* 2.4) mentioned Lampadio only in connection with Naevius's *Bellum Punicum* does not prove that Lampadio did not also work on the text of Ennius, or of Cato. Nor does it prove a bogus autograph; *contra* Zetzel, *HSCP* 77 (1973), 242; cf. S. Timpanaro (n. 41), pp. 38–9.

who was Rome's first teacher of Latin rhetoric and who had personal ties to prominent *popularis* figures.[52] Moreover, we can perhaps see a reference to scribal activities of *rhetores* in general and of Plotius in particular in a Ciceronian insult. For in a derogatory remark that was almost certainly directed at L. Plotius Gallus, Cicero referred to *rhetores Latini* as *librarioli Latini*—copyists (*Leg.* 1.7).[53]

Again, no other source connects Aurelius Opillus, who taught in the 90s B.C., with the text of any author, but this ex-slave could certainly, at one time or another, have copied the text of the second-century orator and tragic poet Gaius Titius.[54] Aelius Stilo's connection with Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus was personal and is well established—he accompanied the optimate hero into exile in 100 B.C. (Suet. *Gram. et rhet.* 3.2)—but it has been questioned whether he wrote speeches for Numidicus. At *Brutus* 206, Cicero listed the senators for whom Aelius composed speeches, and named a Quintus Metellus among them: 'scribebat tamen orationes, quas alii dicerent, ut Q. Metello ... f., ut Q. Caepioni, ut Q. Pompeio Rufo ... Cottam autem miror summum ipsum oratorem minimeque ineptum Aelianas levis oratiunculas voluisse existimari suas' (*Brut.* 206).[55] The text is corrupt—the filiation missing—and some have doubted that Metellus Numidicus, an orator of note, would have needed or allowed Aelius Stilo to write a speech for him. The doubts seem misplaced, since Cicero also recorded that Gaius Aurelius Cotta, whom he described as a distinguished orator, also gave a speech composed by Aelius.[56] Alternatively, Aelius may have copied out some of Numidicus's speeches while putting together a collection of the great exile's works.[57] With the possible exception of Lampadio and Cato, therefore, the pairings in Fronto's first group of authors and copyists are all plausible, and some seem likely. Consequently, Fronto's first group—Lampadio through Aelius—provides little evidence of forgeries.

The next item mentioned by Fronto is Tiro's correction of Cicero's speech—*a Tirone emendata*. Since Tiro was Cicero's slave until 53 B.C., and thereafter his trusted freedman, there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of Fronto's Tironian text on the basis of dubious association or social status. Although no other source explicitly states that Tiro corrected Cicero's speeches, we know that both during Cicero's lifetime and after his death Tiro had occasion to work on many of Cicero's literary productions. It happens to be recorded that Tiro collected (*contraxit*) Cicero's working notes to his speeches—*commentarii*—(Quint. *Inst.* 10.7.30–31; 4.1.69;

[52] For Plotius and Marius see Cic. *Arch.* 20. Plotius almost certainly was the man who taught Latin rhetoric to the *popularis* annalist Gaius Licinius Macer (Cic. *Leg.* 1.7); cf. Rawson (n. 41), p. 78. This is not to say that Plotius's teaching was necessarily attacked by the censors because of *popularis* connections or that his teachings were part of a *popularis* program; see E. S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Leiden, 1990), pp. 180–81, with n. 95, and Kaster, *Suetonius*, pp. 273–5, 293.

[53] L. P. Kenter, *M. Tullius Cicero, De Legibus: A Commentary on Book I* (Amsterdam, 1972), p. 45, held that Cicero here referred to Plotius.

[54] On C. Titius see Cic. *Brut.* 167.

[55] 'However he wrote orations which others delivered, for Q. Metellus, son of ..., for Quintus Caepio, for Quintus Pompeius Rufus, ... I am amazed however that Cotta, himself a great orator and by no means lacking in judgment, should have been willing to let the trivial little speeches of Aelius be thought his own'; and see *Brut.* 169.

[56] *Contra* Kaster, *Suetonius*, pp. 76–7, whose argument is based on a narrow interpretation of Cicero's words, *his enim scriptis etiam ipse interfui* (*Brut.* 207). Cicero did not have high regard for the speeches of Numidicus; an attitude not shared by others. Cf. Cic. *Brut.* 135 and the opinions canvassed by H. Bardon, *La littérature latine inconnue* (Paris, 1952), p. 100.

[57] Aulus Gellius, who refers to the speeches of Numidicus at 1.6, 7.11.2, 12.9.4, and 15.14, seems to have used a collection of Numidicus's works and Aelius is a likely compiler; see H. M. Hornsby, *A. Gellii Noctium Atticarum Liber I* (Dublin, 1936), p. 92.

Jerome, *Contra Ruf.* 1.16), took part in the collection of his letters (Cic. *Att.* 16.5 [SB 410].5; *Fam.* 16.17 [SB 186].1),[58] and wrote Cicero's biography (Asc. *Mil.* 48.25–26; Gel. 4.10.6; Plut. *Cic.* 41.3, Tac. *Dial.* 17.2). He also authored a work on miscellaneous subjects (*Pandectae*), which seems to have centred around questions of language and literature (Gel. 13.9.1–6; 12.3.3; Charisius, *Gram.* 269.14–20 [Barwick]).[59] Given Tiro's talents and interests, and the range of meanings associated with *emendare*, [60] it seems unreasonable to deny that Tiro might also have worked on a Ciceronian speech in the manner described by Fronto.[61]

But if an out-of-hand rejection of Tiro's Ciceronian manuscript is unwarranted, it would certainly seem correct to insist that men of the status of Atticus and Cornelius Nepos would not themselves have copied texts, as Fronto seems to have stated they had—*descripta aut ab Attico aut Nepote*. This would seem a strong argument for Fronto's credulous acceptance of a forgery. But a closer look at the letter raises questions. Fronto divided his examples into three groups, and used three different verbs to describe what each group had done to copies of texts. In the first group we find *manu scripta*, which means that the copies had been written out in the hands of Lampadio and the others. In the second group, *emendata* means that the texts had been corrected by Tiro. But what was implied about the actions of Domitius Balbus, Atticus, and Cornelius Nepos by *descripta* is less clear. What is clear is that the sense of the three-part comparison would be somewhat strange, if *manu scripta* and *descripta* meant the same thing. It would be especially strange, however, to find three near synonyms used indiscriminately by Marcus Cornelius Fronto. Fronto had strong opinions on making fine distinctions between words of similar meaning, and did not hesitate to reprimand his imperial student for neglecting them (*Ad M. Caes.* 4.3.4–7). It is unlikely that Fronto would have been guilty of the same negligence in a letter to Marcus: 'nos vero, qui doctorum auribus servituti serviendae nosmet dedimus, necesse est tenuia quoque ista et minuta summa cum cura persequamur.'[62] *Scripta*, *emendata*, *descripta*: the question is one of Latin usage.

## THE USAGE OF *DESCRIBERE*

Classical Latin has a number of words meaning 'to copy a text' that occur with an upper-class Roman as their subject, the distinction between them being determined primarily and significantly by the length of the text being copied. *Notare* (*adnotare*) and *excerpere* mean to take down short notes or excerpts,[63] and while *exscribere* too can refer to copying a brief item—a name or a line or two of poetry—it is also used for somewhat longer documents, such as a passage from an account book or a

[58] A. Setaioli, *SO* 51 (1978), 105–20, argued cogently for 'early' publication (general access) of Cicero's letters.

[59] See W. C. McDermott, 'M. Cicero and M. Tiro', *Historia* 21 (1972), 259–86.

[60] On the meanings of *emendare* see J. E. G. Zetzel, *CP* 75 (1980), 38–59, esp. 41 and 56, and Timpanaro (n. 41), pp. 23–4.

[61] Zetzel, *HSCP* 77 (1973), 242, also attacked the genuineness of Fronto's Tironian manuscript by identifying it with a document which he considered to be undoubtedly forged, that is the *liber Tironianus* discussed by Aulus Gellius at 1.7.1ff., and 13.21.15. But that Gellius's Tiro was a forgery has been questioned by Timpanaro (n. 41), pp. 203–5. Even if it were, there is no compelling reason to think that Fronto was referring to the same manuscript.

[62] 'In truth, we who have given ourselves to the bondage of guarding over the ears of the cultured, must attend to these fine and subtle [distinctions] with the greatest care' (*Ad M. Caes.* 4.3.6).

[63] *Notare*—Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.33, Gel. 9.4.5; *adnotare*—Gel. *pr.* 2; *excerpere*—Cic. *Inv.* 2.4, Plin. *Ep.* 3.5.10, Suet. *Aug* 86.3; see *ThLL* 5.2, 1227, l. 77ff.

student's notes (*hypomnemata*).[64] When lengthier documents are involved, such as a complete work of literature or an entire book, the word that is regularly employed is *describere*, more rarely *transcribere*.[65] Normally, however, the subject of these verbs is not a member of Rome's elite, but a scribe. The usage is clear in Cicero's writings. When telling how a recently published law was copied, Cicero used *describere*, and specified that it was done by scribes (*librarii*): 'Concurrunt iussu meo plures uno tempore librarii, descriptam legem ad me adferunt' (*Leg.Agr.* 2.13).[66] When using *describere* to relate how the minutes of the Catilinarian trial were copied and made public, Cicero again mentioned scribes: 'sed statim describi ab omnibus librariis, dividi passim et pervulgari atque edi populo Romano imperavi' (*Sull.* 42).[67]

The close connection between *describere* and *librarii* is brought out particularly well when a distinction is drawn between the functions of scribes and authors, as in a letter to Atticus where Cicero used *scribere* to denote what he himself was doing, *describere* what the copyists had done: 'quin etiam feci, quod profecto ante me nemo, ut ipse me per litteras consolarer. quem librum ad te mittam, si descripserint librarii. adfirmo tibi nullam consolationem esse talem. totos dies scribo, ...' (*Att.* 12.14 [SB 251].3).[68] In another letter to Atticus, using *scribere* and *describere* in the same way, Cicero distinguished between himself both writing a letter and a literary work, and scribes copying a text: 'Varroni quidem quae scripsi te auctore ita propero mittere ut iam Roman miserim describenda. ea si voles, statim habebis. scripsi enim ad librarios ut fieret tuis, si tu velles, describendi potestas.' (*Att.* 13.21a [SB 327].1).[69] The same distinction is found in the uses of *scribere* and *transcribere* in a letter of Marcus Aurelius: 'ego adeo perscripsi—tu mitte aliud quod scribam—sed librarius meus non praesto fuit qui transcriberet.' (*Ad M. Caes.* 5.41.1).[70]

But in certain passages where it is clear that *describere* denotes the copying of a lengthy text, we find that its subject is not a scribe, but an upper-class Roman. In a

[64] *Hypomnemata* (long enough that Cicero junior wanted a slave to take them for him)—Cic *Fam.* 16.21 (SB 337).8. To jot down a name—Pl. *Rud.* 15; lines of poetry or short poems—Gel. 3.3.8, 9.3.4, Mart. 2.6.6 (referring to *vitelliani* for which see Mart. 14.9.1; copies from accounts (*tabulae*)—Cic. *Verr.* II 1.98, II 2.198; see *ThLL* 5.2, 1830, l. 68 to 1831, and N. Horsfall, 'Two Problems of Late Imperial Literary History', *Liverpool Classical Papers* 3 (Liverpool, 1993), p. 321.

[65] *Describere* meaning 'to copy' occurs first in Cicero's works. Of the cognates *rescribere* means to reply (Cic. *Q. fr.* 3.7 [9] (SB 27).9), or to rewrite so as to correct (Suet. *Jul.* 56.4, Plin. *Ep.* 7.9.5). *Conscribere* means to compose a letter or a literary work (Suet. *Nero* 15.1, Cic. *Att.* 11.5 [SB 216].3), or simply to write on something, such as a wall (Plin. *Nat.* 28.20) or a tablet (Suet. *Jul.* 81.1); see *ThLL* 4, 375, l. 36–377. For *perscribere* see note 23 above.

[66] 'On my orders a great numbers of scribes run in together and deliver to me a copy of the law.' On this and the following Ciceronian passages see R. Sommer (n. 36), 391ff. The scribes here and at *Sull.* 42 were probably *servi publici*; cf. Plut. *Gal.* 8 and see Th. Mommsen (n. 23), pp. 290–313. When *describere* otherwise refers to the copying of a public legal inscription (Cic. *Att.* 2.20 [SB 40].4; Suet. *Gaius* 41.1) or of a political pamphlet (Cic. *Phil.* 7.5), its unspecified subject is the Roman people.

[67] 'At once I ordered that [the records] be copied by all the scribes, distributed everywhere, and published and made public to the Roman people.' cf. Plut. *Cat.Min.* 23.3. For other references to *librarii* making copies (*descibere*) see Cic. *Fam.* 12.17 (SB 204). 2.

[68] 'I have even done what no one before me has done, consoled myself with letters. I will send you the book as soon as the copyists have finished copying it. I swear to you, there is no consolation like this. I write all day long.'

[69] 'I am so eager to send Varro what I have written, on your advice, that I have already sent to Rome for copying. You shall have it immediately if you wish. I wrote to the copyists to let your people make a copy, if you wished.'

[70] 'In fact I have finished writing it [a rhetorical assignment], so you can send me something else to write, but my scribe was not present to copy it.' For *transcribere* used in this way, see also Cic. *N. D.* 3.74, *Rhet. Her.* 4.6, and cf. Plin. *Ep.* 4.72, and Gel. 2.2.13.

letter to Atticus, Cicero mentioned that their mutual friend Lucius Cornelius Balbus had written to him about making an unauthorized copy of book five of the recently completed *De Finibus*, and Balbus is the subject of *describere*: 'scripsit enim Balbus ad me se a te quintum de finibus librum descripsisse; in quo non sane multa mutavi, sed tamen quaedam' (*Att.* 13.21a [SB 327].1).[71] Later in the same letter Cicero informed Atticus about what their acquaintance Caerellia had been doing with *De Finibus*, making that lady the subject of *describere*: 'mirifice Caerellia studio videlicet philosophiae flagrans describit a tuis: istos ipsos de finibus habet. ego autem tibi confirmo (possum falli ut homo) a meis eam non habere; numquam enim ab oculis meis afuerunt. tantum porro aberat ut binos scriberent, vix singulos confecerunt.' (*Att.* 13.21a [SB 327].2).[72] Cicero made himself the subject of *describere*, when telling Atticus about his own handling of some books by the Greek poet Alexander of Ephesus: 'a Vibio libros accepi. poeta ineptus, et tamen scit nihil; sed est non inutilis. describo et remitto' (*Att.* 2.20 [SB 40].6),[73] and in another letter, Cicero gave Atticus permission to copy his recently completed *de Oratore*, and Atticus is the subject of *describere*: 'de libris oratoriis factum est me diligenter. diu multumque in manibus fuerunt. describas licet' (*Att.* 4.13 [SB 87].2).[74]

Such passages present a dilemma for those who would claim that Fronto's *aut a Domitio Balbo descripta aut ab Attico aut Nepote* constitutes evidence of forgery. For if it is absurd to think that a Cornelius Nepos or an Atticus would copy a long text (and *describere* denotes a long text) in their own hands, it is equally absurd to think that Cicero, or Cornelius Balbus or Caerellia would have done so. Indeed Atticus is himself the subject of *describere* in Cicero's letter. We are forced to conclude either that it was not that unusual for upper-class Romans to copy texts of considerable length in their own hands—in which case there is nothing absurd about Fronto's words on Atticus and Nepos—or that Cicero and Fronto were using *describere* in a special sense.

It seems highly unlikely, however, that Romans as eminent as those mentioned by Cicero would themselves have copied out long texts. As we have seen, there is evidence to show both that upper-class Romans scorned copying, and that in the Roman world the copying of texts was done by professionals of low status. Cicero did not, therefore, mean that the active and distinguished public man Lucius Cornelius Balbus actually copied with his hand, even for his own use, all of book five of *De Finibus*—some forty-eight Teubner pages—or that Atticus, who owned highly trained copyists, would himself write out the entire *de Oratore*, or that Cicero would have spent his own time copying the work of a *poeta ineptus*. Cicero must have been using *describere* with a causative sense conveying the meaning 'cause to be copied'.

Transitive active verbs are used with a causative sense not infrequently in Latin, but

[71] 'Balbus writes to me that he copied *On Ends*, book five from your manuscript; a book in which I have made changes, admittedly not many, but some nevertheless.' On the tone of this letter see Sommer (n. 36), 410–11.

[72] 'Caerellia ablaze in her wonderful enthusiasm for philosophy no doubt, is copying from your people. She has this very work *On Ends*. Now, I assure you (being human I may be wrong) that she did not get it from my people—it has never been out of my sight. Moreover, so far from writing two copies they had difficulty in finishing one.'

[73] 'I received the books from Vibius: a poet without skill, and yet he does not know anything! But he is not useless. I am copying and returning them.' On Alexander of Ephesus see Strabo 14.1.25.

[74] 'I have been working hard on the book on oratory. It has been in my hands for a very long time. You can copy it.' Cf. *Att.* 4.6 (SB 83).3, and see Sen. *Cons.Polyb.* 6.3, 'omnes illi, qui opera ingenii tui laudant, qui describunt, ... ' *Transcribere* is used in the same sense at Plin. *Nat.* 14.33, Sen. *Ben.* 1.3.8, Curt. 9.1.34, and Ovid, *Met.* 7.173.

only when it is clear from the context that the subject him or herself does not perform the action. So a Latin author would write, *Scipio Kartaginem delevit*—'Scipio destroyed Carthage' (*Rhet. Her.* 4.19)—when of course it was Scipio's soldiers who levelled the city, or *ubi hortos aedificaret*—'where he [Balbus] could build an estate' (Cic. *Att.* 9.13a [SB 181])—when the actual building would be done by construction workers.[75] In the same way an upper-class Roman might write *describo*—'I copy'—when what he meant was 'my slave copies', much as a professor might tell a colleague 'I am photocopying your article', when in reality the job is being done by a student. So the meaning of Cicero's words, 'scripsit enim Balbus ad me se a te quintum de finibus librum descripsisse', is not that Balbus himself copied the text, but that 'Balbus wrote that he is causing book five of *de Finibus* to be copied'.[76]

It is rarer to find a Latin verb used in the passive with a causative sense, but the usage does occur when again it is clear from the context who is really performing the action. So Cicero wrote, 'Carthaginem atque Numantiam ab eodem Scipione esse deletas'—'Carthage and Numantia were destroyed by the same person, Scipio' (Cic. *Man.* 60),[77] and 'a Sex. Serrano sanctissima sacella suffossa, inaedificata, oppressa, ... esse nescimus?'—'Do we not know that the most sacred shrines had been undermined, or walled up, or buried ... by Sextus Serranus' (Cic. *Har.* 32). Because the connection between copying (*describere*) and copyist (*librarii*) was so close and regular in ancient Rome, and since, at least among the wealthy, a copyist would have been a slave, an upper-class Roman would quite naturally have used the causative sense of *describere* in the passive, just as he might use the passive form of *delere* or *inaedificare* with a causative meaning when writing of the destruction of an enemy city or the demolition of a building. To another Roman it would have been clear from the context that the upper-class man or woman did not him or herself perform the act of copying, just as the general did not himself level the city nor the owner tear down the building with his own hands. Hence, when Fronto wrote *a Domitio Balbo descripta aut ab Attico aut Nepote*, he meant not that Domitius Balbus, Atticus or Cornelius Nepos had themselves copied a long text, but that they had caused a copy to be made. Given what we know about the practices and attitudes of elite Romans in regard to copying texts, and about Fronto's attitude about diction, it is difficult to imagine him using *descripta* here in anything but a causative sense. The alternative requires us to believe that he was being either inattentive with words, or mindlessly gullible, or both, and, whatever his other faults, Fronto was neither careless nor a fool.

If what Fronto wrote does not mean that Domitius Balbus, Cornelius Nepos, and Atticus made copies with their own hands, we must then consider the likelihood of these men having had especially good, accurate, and, therefore, valuable copies of Cicero's works made by trained slaves. About Atticus there is of course no doubt. Cicero and others frequently sent their works to the skilled scribes of their friend Atticus to have copies made precisely because they knew the copies would be accurate and legible.[78] But what marks out Atticus's scribal activities is their scale and the fact

[75] See Kühner-Stegmann 100.26.6, where other examples are cited.

[76] Since at the time the usage would have been formed, the world of the books at Rome was in large measure a Greek world—see V. Burr, *RLAC* (1959), coll. 600 and Reynolds & Wilson (n. 41), p. 22—it is possible that this use of *describere* was modelled on the Greek phrase *ἀπογράψασθαί τινα*.

[77] Cf. 'ne ... nomenque Campanorum a Q. Flacco deleri sinerent'—'lest they permit the name of the Campanians to be wiped out by Q. Flaccus' (Livy 26.27.11); 'Teutoni a Mario trucidati'—'the Teutoni were slaughtered by Marius' (Julius Obsequens, *Prod.* 44); 'multi ... bello a Severo superati sunt'—'many men ... were defeated in war by Severus' (*SHA*, *Severus* 12.5)

[78] See e.g. Cic. *Att.* 13.22 (SB 329).3 and see Sommer (n. 36), esp. 409–11.

that we happen to know a great deal about them from Cicero. Atticus cannot have been unique in owning more than a few skilled copyists.[79] While we have no record of Cornelius Nepos having had scribes copy the speeches of Cicero, Nepos was a protégé of Atticus and he exchanged letters with Cicero, besides writing a biography of him. He also assisted in the publication of Cicero's letters. Given the limited information we have about copying in the late Republic outside of the Cicero-Atticus relationship, it seems presumptuous to deny the possibility that Nepos played some part in copying Cicero's speeches, which Fronto and his contemporaries knew about and we do not.[80] As for Domitius Balbus's role, we do not possess enough information to say anything with certainty.[81]

Once we understand that the three terms—*manu scribere*, *emendare*, *describere*—and the persons associated with them, represent three distinct types of scribal activities, the structure of Fronto's response to Marcus becomes clear. For the sequence in which Fronto presents the scribal activities corresponds to the way in which literary works were produced and distributed in ancient Rome.[82] The process was informal and essentially private and therefore varied considerably, but in general there were three stages. First, there was the production of a draft copy. To indicate this stage, Fronto had *manu scripta e{xem}pla* and his list of famous scholar-copyists. (As a high-class ghostwriter of senatorial speeches Aelius Stilo constituted a special category.) Second, there was a stage of correction, criticism, and revision undertaken first with assistants or close friends, then by a somewhat larger group of friends. Fronto represented this stage with *exempla ... a Tirone emendata*. Third, at last, multiple copies were made of the final, polished version by the author's own scribes, or if he was lucky, by a friend's *librarii* who had a reputation for producing good and accurate copies. When referring to the last stage, Cicero regularly employed the word *describere* in a causative sense. This is what Fronto had in mind when he wrote *a Domitio Balbo descripta aut ab Attico aut Nepote*. Fronto, in fact, had alluded to the form that his comparison would take when earlier in the letter he made reference to what had prompted him to create his three-stage comparison—Marcus's handwritten copy of his speech. For there he had also used *describere*, but significantly had qualified it with *tua manu*: 'orationem istam meam tua manu descriptam' (*Ad M. Caes.* 1.7.3).[83]

## MARCUS THE SCRIVENER

If upper-class Romans did not copy texts, and if Fronto's words do not suggest that they did, we are still left with the fact that the young Marcus Aurelius did copy Fronto's speech *sua manu*. There is no question that it was unusual for Marcus to have done this. Although he honoured friends like Fronto with handwritten letters,

[79] On scale see Nepos, *Att.* 13.3. Note the comment of E. J. Kenney, *CHCL* II, p. 20, 'What Atticus did on a large scale and in a way that happens to be well documented, many others must have done to the extent that their more limited resources allowed'. Sommer (n. 36), 415, demonstrated the limited productivity of even Atticus's copyists and stressed the role of other contemporaries in the copying and distribution of Cicero's works.

[80] The relationship between Nepos and Cicero was examined by J. Geiger, *Latomus* 44 (1985), 265–70; cf. N. Horsfall, *Cornelius Nepos* (Oxford, 1989), p. xvi.

[81] He is mentioned only here in Fronto's letter and perhaps again as the third person listed in a subscription of Statilius Maximus on the manuscript of Cicero's speeches *contra Rullum*: 'emendavi ad Tyronem et Laetanianum et Dom. et alios veteres'; see Zetzel, *HSCP* 77 (1973), 228.

[82] For the process of producing and distributing literary texts, with variations noted, see Sommer (n. 36), 403–14; Kleberg (n. 15), pp. 43–50; Quinn (n. 16), pp. 169–70; and Starr, *CQ* 37 (1987), 213–23.

[83] 'That speech of mine copied by your hand.'

we know from his correspondence that most of Marcus's official letters were dictated to scribes—as many as thirty at a session. The correspondence also informs us that Marcus did not normally return handwritten copies of the rhetorical exercises Fronto had set for him. It was his habit rather first to write them out in draft, and before sending them to Fronto, to have them copied by a scribe, no doubt because the professional hand was easier to read.[84] The handwritten copy of Fronto's speech cannot, therefore, be attributed to Marcus's idiosyncratic habits.[85]

Why then would someone of the exalted status of Marcus Aurelius write out the work of another, even a revered teacher and friend? The question is important not only for an understanding of the social practices of elite Romans, or of Marcus Aurelius himself, but also for determining the usefulness of Fronto's letter as a source for the literary history of Rome. Before using Fronto's list as evidence for Latin textual transmission, we should first consider why he constructed it. Fronto's comparison to famous authors and copyists was predicated on Marcus having written out the text of the speech by hand (*Ad M. Caes.* 1.7.3). If Marcus's sending of the handwritten copy was more than a polite expression of his high regard for Fronto—the desire to know how his hand compared to those on old manuscripts for instance—then one might expect a thoughtful response. Intent and tone are fundamental. All and all, the circumstances behind Marcus's copying Fronto's speech appear remarkable and it is surprising that no one has examined them more closely.

In A.D. 138, five years before he became suffect consul, Marcus Cornelius Fronto was appointed tutor in rhetoric to the imperial princes Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Marcus was sixteen years old and bookish; Fronto was one of Rome's leading literary figures, the preeminent orator of his day. A correspondence between Fronto and Marcus began almost immediately; the earliest surviving letters are dated to A.D. 139. The letters are affectionate and highly personal. To some they might seem cloying, for an overriding concern of both Fronto and Marcus was the expression of mutual admiration.[86] Not surprisingly, the admiration was frequently expressed in literary terms, often in the form of comparisons with notable literary figures from the past. So Fronto wrote that Marcus's maxims rivaled those of Sallust (*Ad M. Caes.* 3.12.1), and Marcus favourably compared Fronto's consular speech before the Senate to those of Demosthenes and Cato (*Ad M. Caes.* 2.6.1). In another letter, Marcus is Phaedrus to Fronto's Socrates (*Var. Aceph.* 7.3).

The letter in which Marcus included the handwritten copy of Fronto's speech (*Ad Caesarem* 1.6) was written in A.D. 143 or soon after. In it Marcus related how he had also recited the speech before the emperor. This occurred because on the day Fronto was to have delivered the speech in the emperor's court, Antoninus Pius was

[84] To excuse turning in an assignment late, Marcus pleaded that his scribe was absent: 'ego adeo perscripsi (tu mitte aliud quod scribam), sed librarius meus non praesto fuit qui transcriberet' (*Ad M. Caes.* 5.41.1); see above, note 70. Fronto read and corrected such texts by hand, see *Ad Am.* 2.1, 'legam libenter itaque ut soleo corrigam quantum manus, quae infirmissimae sunt, tolerare potuerunt'; cf. Plin. *Ep.* 7.9.16. Fronto also listened to readings and corrected them orally, *Ad. M. Caes.* 4.3.3. For Marcus's writing letters to his friends *sua manu* see Dio 71.36.2 and *Ad M. Caes.* 4.8.1. For his regular practice of dictating see *Ad M. Caes.* 4.7.1.

[85] Marcus was not, therefore, an amateur calligrapher such as the fourth century Furius Dionysius Filocalus, on whom see A. Cameron, 'Filocalus and Melania', *CP* 87 (1992), 140–4; or Theodosius II, whose sobriquet was καλλιγράφος, see O. Jahn, *Ber. d. sächs. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Leipzig*, Phil.-Hist. Klasse 3 (1851), 342–5, cf. A. Momigliano, *Essays on Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford, 1977), p. 152. For other later examples see A. Cameron, *The Greek Anthology* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 130–1.

[86] This is especially so of the early correspondence; see Cugusi (n. 28), pp. 252ff.

otherwise engaged. It was therefore arranged that the emperor would listen to Marcus declaim selections of the speech at another time.[87] Given Fronto's status and his relationship to Marcus, it is not surprising that it was Marcus who recited parts of the speech which Fronto had picked out for him. Quintilian had recommended that teachers select passages from famous orators for their students to recite, and Fronto was not an overly modest man. Nor is it unusual that Marcus would recite the speech before Antoninus Pius, his adoptive father, since it was customary for young Romans to give declamations attended by family, friends, and in particular by their fathers.[88]

Fronto's response, *Ad Caesarem* 1.7, was fawning and framed around literary comparisons. To express his gratitude for Marcus's declaiming his speech, Fronto wrote that authors of old, whose works were recited by the famous actors Aesopus and Roscius, were not as fortunate as himself, and to complete the metaphor, he called Marcus a performer, and Antoninus Pius his audience (1.7.3). Then, as thanks for the autograph copy, he compared himself and Marcus to noted authors and copyists in an order that corresponded to the way in which texts were produced (1.7.4). All this might be very clever, but none of it is remarkable. In fact, during the whole episode the only unusual occurrence is Marcus producing a handwritten copy of Fronto's speech.

While it is possible that Marcus copied the speech for no reason other than flattery, it seems unlikely for two reasons. First, the text is fairly long; in the modern editions it covers over two printed pages to which must be added two indecipherable manuscript pages that are not printed; Marcus seems to have copied the whole speech—*puto totum descripsi* (1.6.7). But more important is the fact that Marcus also recited the speech. For a significant but neglected connection between declaiming and writing *sua manu* itself provides a plausible explanation for Marcus's scribal activities.

Marcus's formal declaiming of Fronto's speech before the emperor was an important occasion over which the diligent Marcus worked hard, as Fronto noted—*studiumque ad pronuntiandum adhibuisti* (1.7.2). In presenting a declamation, or any type of speech, delivery was the critical factor; Cicero had called it 'the one dominant element in oratory'.[89] Special attention was therefore given to voice and pronunciation, movement, gesture, and facial expression, all points on which Fronto's letter complimented Marcus.[90] According to the tenets of Roman oratory, the point of all this careful preparation was to appear spontaneous. Of the great orator Marcus Antonius, Cicero had said that although always well-prepared, he gave the appearance of being unrehearsed. Cicero credited Antonius's wonderful spontaneity to his extraordinary memory, and it is significant that Quintilian also stressed that a good

[87] The case involved a disputed will, but the details are obscure. It is not even certain that Fronto ever delivered the speech. For a discussion see E. Champlin, *Fronto and the Antonine Age* (Cambridge, MA, 1980), pp. 61–3. On the chronology of the letters, see Champlin, *JRS* 64 (1974), 136–59, esp. 141; Cugusi (n. 27), pp. 240ff.; and van den Hout (n. 40), pp. 292–4.

[88] Passages chosen by Fronto—'orationis meas particulas, quas excerpseram' (*Ad M. Caes.* 1.7.2); recommendation to cite passages from famous orators and historians—Quint. *Inst.* 2.7.1–4; declaiming before fathers—*Inst.* 2.7.2. Quintilian recommended *declamationes* for polished orators as well as for students; *Inst.* 10.5.14.

[89] 'Actio, inquam, in dicendo una dominatur' (Cic. *de Orat.* 3.213).

[90] Quintilian treated all these in great detail; *Inst.* 11.3.1–149. In *Ad M. Caes.* 1.7.2, Fronto wrote 'qua in re et oculos mihi tuos utendos et vocem et gestum et inprimis animun accommodasti'—'on doing all this you lent me the use of your eyes and voice and gesture and above all, of your mind.'

memory was essential for an effective delivery.[91] Rhetorical manuals devoted considerable space to systems for helping the memory, but the mnemonic requirements of the orator were various. The most famous system was that of visual association,[92] but this method had practical limitations. Roman orators were often called on to memorize long passages or whole speeches verbatim (*Rhet. Her.* 3.38–9; Quint. *Inst.* 2.7.1–4; cf. Sen. *Con.* 3, *pr.* 15), and while the visual association method worked well for mastering the sequence of the subjects of a speech, it was less effective for memorizing a speech word for word, as Quintilian pointed out: 'minus idem proderit in ediscendis quae orationis perpetuae erunt' (*Inst.* 11.2.24); 'at verborum contextus eadem arte quomodo comprehenditur?' (*Inst.* 11.2.25).[93] For verbatim memorization other mnemonic devices were therefore needed, and Quintilian offered a number of suggestions. This takes us back to Marcus's handwritten copy. For according to Quintilian, one of the best ways to memorize whole passages is to write them out by hand: 'illud neminem non iuvabit, iisdem quibus scripserit ceris ediscere. sequitur enim vestigiis quibusdam memoriam et velut oculis intuetur non paginas modo, sed versus prope ipsos ...' (*Inst.* 11.2.32); 'unde accidit, ut quae per plures dies scribimus ediscendi causa, cognitatione ipsa contineamus' (*Inst.* 11.2.10).[94] In all likelihood it was as a mnemonic technique used in preparation for recitation that Marcus had produced the handwritten copy of Fronto's speech, using ink and paper rather than wax.[95]

Despite being passed over by modern scholarship on rhetoric and memory, the mnemonic technique of writing also seems to have been a normal oratorical practice.[96] That Marcus then sent the document to Fronto is perhaps remarkable, but given the spirit of their relationship, not especially surprising. For having the document on hand, Marcus decided to give his teacher a treat by including it in his letter to him. The gesture fits their doting relationship. In an earlier letter Marcus had written that a manuscript of Ennius's work *Sota* seems to be on a cleaner surface, in

[91] On Antonius the orator—'erat memoria summa, nulla meditationis suscipio; imparatus semper aggredi ad dicendum videbatur, sed ita erat paratus ...' (*Brut.* 139). At *Brut.* 301, Cicero commented on Hortensius's powerful memory. For Quintilian see *Inst.* 11.3.12, 'nam certe bene pronuntiare non potuit, cui aut in scriptis memoria ... defuerit'—'For certainly he would be unable to speak well who could not remember what he had wrote.' For the continued importance of spontaneity see Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men, Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1995), p. 53. On classical Greek orators learning speeches by heart but appearing spontaneous see H. Ll. Hudson-Williams, 'Political Speeches in Athens', *CQ* 45 (1951), 68–73.

[92] See Cic. *de Orat.* 2.350–60; lengthier descriptions in *Rhet. Her.* 3.29–40 and Quint. *Inst.* 11.2.17–22. For memory and rhetoric see *Rhet. Her.* 3.28; Cic. *de Orat.* 2.355–60; Quint. *Inst.* 11.2.8–9, 11.2.40ff., 1.1.35. For *memoria* as one of the five *officia oratoris* see *Rhet. Her.* 1.3; *Inv.* 1.7.9; Cic. *de Orat.* 1.142–3.

[93] 'The same [method] will be less effective in memorizing parts of a completed speech' (*Inst.* 11.2.24); 'but how can a series of words be learned by the same method?' (*Inst.* 11.2.25); see also *Rhet. Her.* 2.21–39, where the visual method's deficiencies are admitted.

[94] 'This will help everyone, to memorize from the same wax tablets that one has written on. For one will follow the memory by certain tracks and one will fix one's eyes not only on the passages, but also on the lines' (*Inst.* 11.2.32); 'thus it happens that what we write over the course of many days in order to memorize it, we retain by virtue of the mental effort itself' (*Inst.* 11.2.10).

[95] Marcus wrote letters and extracts with a pen, '... et haec ad te eodem calamo scribo' (*Ad. M. Caes.* 2.7).

[96] Quintilian referred to it in a series of practical tips (*Inst.* 11.2.27ff.) which were characterized as 'of a simple and technical sort' by G. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World* 300 *BC—AD* 300 (Princeton, 1972), p. 505, who gave it no further comment. The technique was not commented on by H. Blum, *Die antike Mnemotechnik* (Hildesheim, 1969).

a more attractive binding, and in prettier lettering, just for having been read by Fronto![97] When graced with a copy of his speech written by Marcus's own hand Fronto responded with characteristic hyperbole: 'quot litterae istic sunt, totidem consulatus mihi, totidem laureas triumphos, toga picta arbitror contigisse' (*Ad M. Caes.* 1.7.3).[98] Equally characteristic was Fronto's decision to respond with a flattering comparison. But on this occasion the comparison was especially elaborate, using as examples some of his and Marcus's favorite authors: Ennius and Cato, Gaius Gracchus, Metellus Numidicus, and Cicero. After having compared himself to famous orators, however, Fronto had to give a list of notable copyists whose hands had made their authors' texts more valuable (*pretiosiores*); he added the reference to Domitius Balbus, Atticus, and Nepos to complete the tricolon.[99]

Fronto's list of authors and copyists was a playful response prompted by a flattering gesture; interest in the textual tradition was subsidiary. There is nothing in Fronto's letter that compels us to believe that the autograph manuscripts mentioned were forged. The majority of Fronto's pairings of authors and scholar copyists are perfectly plausible.[100] That some autographs were forged is of course true,[101] but *Ad M. Caesarem* 1.7.4 provides no support for the view that such forgeries were especially common in Antonine Rome. The idea that it does arises principally from misunderstanding about ancient Roman writing practices.

## CONCLUSIONS

In ancient Rome copies were made by professionals, many of whom were slaves. To be sure, a copy might be made by an upper-class Roman as a pedagogical exercise of one kind or another, or on occasion a scholar, particularly if he was a freedman, might copy a text as an obligation to a patron. But copying the work of another was a task inappropriate for an important and busy elite Roman. The writing and correcting of original documents carried no such stigma, however. For a variety of reasons—some practical, some personal, others having to do with good manners—many upper-class Romans choose to write *sua manu*. There is some reason to think that elite women wrote in their own hands less frequently than men, but the evidence is slight and inconclusive. How neatly or quickly upper-class Romans wrote varied not only by individual, but by occasion. While few would have possessed the fluid

[97] 'Sota Ennianus remissus a te et in charta puriore et volumine gratiore et littera festiviore quam antea fuerat videtur' (*Ad. M. Caes.* 4.2.6), noted by Timpanaro (n. 41), p. 199.

[98] 'For every letter of yours I imagine that I possess a consulship, a victory crown, a triumph, and a triumphal robe.'

[99] The relationship between Fronto and Marcus was obviously close enough that a comparison to a copyist or an actor would not offend Marcus.

[100] The one questionable item, Lampadio's Cato (see above, p. 480), should not be pressed. Under the circumstances in which the letter was written, we simply cannot know how much credence either Fronto or Marcus placed in each and every name. So Timpanaro (n. 41), p. 198, 'si è trovato nella necessità di "imbrogliare un po le carte".'

[101] Zetzel, *HSCP* 77 (1973), 233–9, also argued for forged Vergilian autographs. Lucian mentioned selling a forged autograph manuscript at *Pseudologista* 30, and one of the targets of his satire on the ignorant bibliophile is gullibility that could believe that Demosthenes had produced in his own hand not one but eight copies of Thucydides's history (*Adv. Indoctum* 4) or that Atticus was a himself a copyist—βιβλιογράφος (*Adv. Indoctum* 24; cf. 2 where 'beautiful copies written with great care by the famous Atticus and Callinus', are referred to). For the relationship between this passage, T. Pomponius Atticus, and *Atticiana* editions, see Dziazko, *RE* 2.2 (1896) ('Αττικιανά) cols. 2237–39. Under Roman law only forged wills were illegal, see Speyer (n. 41), p. 89.

handwriting of the trained professional, some elite Romans did possess hands that were neat and distinctive, and, if only because of epistolary etiquette, many upper-class hands must have been quite legible.

If only because of its importance to the elite, the ability to write in one's own hand, therefore, like the ability to read, almost certainly carried social prestige, a prestige that was diminished no more by the presence of professional scribes, than that of reading was diminished by literate slaves.[102] The Pompeian self-representations of Terentius Neo and his wife with tablet and stylus appealed to that prestige. Whether the appeal was rooted in the practice of members of the municipal sub-elites to which the couple seems to belong, or whether it reflects emulation of social practices determined by class or gender distinctions remains an issue, but in the portrait, prestige was conveyed as much by the image of the pen as that of the book. Each represented implements the use of which was important to literate Romans of the Imperial Age.

*Department of History*, MYLES MCDONNELL
*University of Washington*

[102] Cf. Corbier (above n. 8), pp. 105–7.