

**XVIII. Cato's Pine Cones and Seneca's Plums:
Fronto p. 149 vdH.**

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At the beginning of Fronto's letter *De orationibus*, written to his former pupil Marcus Aurelius in the hope of rekindling Marcus' interest in oratory, the rhetorician resumes the role of *magister*, and launches the following attack upon the style of Seneca the Younger (Naber p. 155; Haines 2.100-102; van den Hout p. 149):

Fateor enim, quod res est, unam solam posse causam incidere, qua causa claudat aliquantum amor erga te meus: si eloquentiam neglegas. Neglegas tamen vero potius censeo quam prave excolas. Confusam eam ego eloquentiam cata <c> hannaë ritu partim pineis nucibus Catonis, partim Senecae mollibus et febriculosus prunuleis insitam, subvertendam censeo radicitus, immo vero †Plautinotrato† verbo 'exradicitus.'

Catachanna *m*² in marg. catahannaë *A* febriculosus: vermiculosis
Cornelissen Plautino ut utar *Brakman* Plautinotato *Hertz, Studemund* Πλαντινοτάτω *Leo* exradicitus *Plaut.* Most. 1112 (Text and partial apparatus here from van den Hout's edition, Leiden 1954. In this article, all citations of Fronto are by page in van den Hout's edition.)

Since Fronto so nearly outdid himself in this contrast of the styles of Cato and Seneca, possibly it deserves a closer inspection than it has yet received. Hauler first saw that the true reading of the Ambrosian palimpsest was *pineis nucibus*,¹ and this has now supplanted the puzzling *igneis n.* reported by Mai and Naber, and the conjectures *ligneis n.* (Buttmann) and *iligneis n.* (Orelli, Jahn). Cornelissen's emendation *vermiculosis* has received little acceptance. *Plautinotato* (or Πλαντινοτάτω) seems plausible for *Plautinotrato*; cf. Gell. *N.A.* 3.3.4 "versus . . . qui sunt, ut de illius Plauti more dicam, Plautinissimi."

Haines' translation in the Loeb series (London 1920) of the last two sentences quoted above reads:

¹ *Festschrift für Theod. Gomperz* (Vienna 1902) 392. For their technical advice, I should like to thank Miss Elizabeth C. Hall of the New York Botanical Gardens, Dr. Peter Minck, Jr. of Saddle River, N. J., and Dr. White McK. Wallenborn of Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Professor B. L. Ullman has offered several valuable suggestions.

Yet indeed I would rather you neglected it (sc. eloquence) than cultivated it in the wrong way. For as to that hybrid eloquence of the *catachanna* type, grafted partly with Cato's pine-nuts, partly with the soft and hectic plums of Seneca, it ought in my judgment to be plucked up by the roots, nay, to use a Plautine expression, *by the root of the roots*.

A sharp contrast between the stylistic austerity of Cato and the preciosity of Seneca is immediately obvious. It is also clear that even the harshness of Cato is preferable to the depraved ornament of Seneca, and that Fronto considers any attempt to fuse the two styles utterly impossible. But a number of questions arise. Is any criticism of Cato intended? What exactly are *pineae nuces* and *molles et febriculosi prunulei*, and what more precisely is the contrast between them? Finally, does the contrast refer in a general way to two opposing styles, or to some more specific element in the two styles?

A figure so contrived as this should balance, i.e., logically, *neglegas* should contrast with (*prave*) *excolas*, and *pineis nucibus* with *molli-bus et febriculosi prunuleis*, in such a way that they present extremes of the same degree. We can assume Fronto's contempt for Seneca, but would he have dared place an equally severe stricture on Cato, for whom he elsewhere displays an almost painful reverence? Cf. 123 "Cato . . . orator idem et imperator summus"; 192 "Enim vero fandi agendique laudibus longe praestantissimus omnium Cato Porcius."²

What is the meaning of *neglegas*? In stylistic contexts, *neglego* and its cognates regularly refer to a Plain Style that is either dangerously close to slovenly baldness, or has actually lapsed into that vice: Sen. *Ep.* 100.5 "Fabianus non erat neglegens in oratione, sed securus. Itaque nihil invenies sordidum: electa verba sunt, non captata nec . . . contra naturam suam posita et inversa, splendida tamen, quamvis sumantur e medio"; 114.14 "Utrumque diverso genere corruptum est, tam mehercules quam nolle nisi splendidis (sc. verbis) uti ac sonantibus et poeticis, necessaria atque in usu posita vitare. Tam hunc dicam peccare quam illum: alter se plus iusto colit, alter plus iusto neglegit"; Quint. *Inst.* 10.2.16 "sed plerumque declinunt in peius et proxima virtutibus vitia comprehendunt fiuntque pro grandibus tumidi, pressis exiles, fortibus temerarii, . . . simplicibus neglegentes."

² Cf. also 26, where Marcus Aurelius, in order to bestow the most effusive flattery on a speech by Fronto, says that one might more easily have imitated "ipsum Demos-thenen . . . aut ipsum Catonem."

There is, however, one element of the Plain Style in which a certain *neglegentia* is acceptable. This is in composition (*compositio*, the artistic arrangement of words). The Plain Style orator is freed from the bonds of prose rhythm, and, as Cicero says (*Orat.* 77-78), "Verba etiam verbis quasi coagmentare neglegat. Habet enim ille tanquam hiatus et concursus vocalium molle quiddam, et quod indicat non ingratam neglegentiam de re hominis magis quam de verbis laborantis. Sed erit videndum de reliquis. . . . Illa enim ipsa contracta et minuta non neglegenter tractanda sunt sed quaedam etiam neglegentia est diligens." It may be this not entirely unacceptable negligence in composition which Fronto has in mind as he alludes to Cato.

Excolo is relatively infrequent in stylistic contexts. It is a rather general term for the polishing and adornment of style: Cic. *Parad.* pr. 3 "nihil (sc. est) tam incultum quod non splendescat oratione et tamquam excolatur"; Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.86 "sed sunt multi ac varii excolendae orationis modi"; Tac. *Dial.* 22 "Primus enim (sc. Cicero) excoluit orationem, primus et verbis delectum adhibuit et compositioni artem."³ We can determine little from its use here in Fronto, except to say that it harmonizes etymologically with the rest of the figure.

The word *catachanna*, despite its uncertain etymology,⁴ need not detain us long. It is clearly an engrafted tree. A number of years

³ Cf. also Cic. *Orat.* 31; Quint. *Inst.* 2.6.2; 6.3.20; 10.1.97; Mart. 12.94.5; Fronto 144 "prohœmum cum cura excolendum," 145 "ἐνθιμημα . . . verbis splendidis excolas"; Macr. *Sat.* 5.11.1. In this sense the simple forms *colo* and *cultus* (eventually synonymous with *ornatus*) are much more common. See, among many examples, Hor. *Ep.* 2.2.123 "luxuriantia compescet, nimis aspera sano/levabit cultu"; Sen. *Contr.* 2.pr.1; 7.pr.5 "horridus et squalens potius quam cultus"; Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.58 "effusioem . . . cultum"; 8.3.7, 61; 10.1.124, 2.17; 12.10.23; Plin. *Ep.* 5.20.6 "dixit . . . Homulus callide acriter culte . . . Nigrinus presse graviter ornate"; Tac. *Dial.* 21 "nec voluntatem ei (sc. Calvo) quo minus sublimius et cultius diceret, sed ingenium ac vires defuisse"; and especially Fronto 140 "neglegere vero cultum orationis et gravitatem et maiestatem et gratiam et nitorem, hoc indicat loqui te quam eloqui malle, murmurare potius et friggere quam clangere."

⁴ The word is probably an adaptation of *καταχρη* "mockery," "parody," influenced by *cachinno* and *afannae* (Unger, *Jahrb. f. class. Philol.* 119 [1879] 493; Persson, *Beitr. z. indogerm. Wortforschung* [Upsala 1910-12] 1.62 f.). This is accepted by Walde-Hofmann³. As the title of a lost work by Hadrian (Spart. *Hadr.* 16), the word may mean "parody." ThLL defines the word as "res risu digna." Hauler (*WS* 39 [1917] 123, note 2) suspects that this connection with laughter is an easy popular etymology, and that actually *catachanna* is a loan-word, like *canna* and *cannabis*. Klusmann (*Emend. Frontinianae* [Berlin 1874] 32) emends Fronto 29 (quoted in text, below) to read "quam ille (Surum nomen) catachannam nominabat." Yet Pliny the Elder (*N.H.* 15.41) speaks of the *impudentia* of the *nucipruna* (the plum grafted on a nut tree).

before Fronto composed the *De orationibus*, Marcus Aurelius had described the *catachanna* to him: 29 "me commemini cum patre meo . . . in agrum Pompei Falconis devertere. Ibi me videre arborem multorum ramorum, quam ille suum nomen catachannam nominabat. Sed illa arbor mira et nova visa est mihi in uno trunco omnia omnium ferme germina (sc. ?arborum ferens)." Now, assuming that Fronto knew even the barest fundamentals of grafting, it was probably with deliberate malice that he fashioned his own *catachanna*, for scions of pine and plum cannot be successfully grafted to the same stock, not even by the process known as "double-working" (interposing between an uncongenial scion and stock a second scion congenial to both). One scion is sure to die, since conifers and deciduous trees are completely uncongenial. We need not speculate on which scion Fronto would have preferred to live; the hybrid was such a monstrosity that he wanted it utterly eradicated.

The phrase *pineis nucibus* causes somewhat more difficulty. In both his articles (above, notes 1 and 4), Hauler takes *pineae nuces* to mean "pine-nuts" ("Piniolen"), the edible seeds of the wild pine (stone pine, *pinus pinea*) so common in Italy. Haines, Brock,⁵ and D'Alton⁶ all follow Hauler. On the other hand, Marache, apparently without hesitation, translates *pineis nucibus* "pommes de pin."⁷ I feel certain that Marache is correct. Pine-nuts, which are close relatives of the "Indian" nuts sold today, hardly suggest the roughness or force of Cato's style, since they are smooth and round, with a fragile shell, and rarely as big as a man's little fingernail. Hauler cites Cato *Agr.* 48.3 and Plin. *N.H.* 15.35-36 in support of his interpretation. In the passage from Cato, the *pineae nuces* may well be the small seeds of the pine, but in the passage from Pliny Hauler misread his own evidence, which I reproduce here:

Grandissimus (sc. fructus est) pineis nucibus altissimeque suspensus, intus exiles nucleos lacunatis includit toris, vestitos alia feruginis tunica, mira naturae cura molliter semina conlocandi. Harum genus alterum Tarentinae digitis fragili putamine aviumque furto in arbore. Et tertium sappinae e picea sativa, nucleorum cute verius quam putamine adeo molli ut simul mandatur. Quartum pityidia e pinastris, singularis remedii adversus tussim in melle decoctis nucleis. Taurini ravicelos vocant.

⁵ M. D. Brock, *Essays on Fronto and his Age* (Cambridge 1911) 129.

⁶ J. F. D'Alton, *Roman Literary Theory and Criticism* (London 1931) 351.

⁷ R. Marache, *La critique littéraire de la langue latine* (Rennes 1952) 123.

Hauler failed to notice how carefully Pliny distinguishes the *pineae nuces* from the *nuclei*. This same distinction is made in *N.H.* 17.64 and in Pallad. 12.7. The *nuclei* are surely the pine-nuts, and the *pineae nuces* are the shaggy cones which enclose these seeds. It is clear that Pliny considers the pine cone to be the "fruit" of the pine (as in fact it is). Another passage substantiating the meaning "cone" for the phrase *pineae nux* is Macr. *Sat.* 2.6.1, where the story is related that Vatinius, while presenting gladiatorial games, was stoned by the populace. He thereupon obtained from the aediles an edict barring any missiles except fruit. This raised the question whether the *pineae nux* was a fruit (*pomum*). The jurisconsult Cascellius, being asked his opinion, maliciously replied that so long as it was to be thrown at Vatinius, it could be considered a fruit. The *pineae nux* of this story can hardly be the practically weightless and consequently harmless pine-nut, but must rather be the cone, which on the stone pine grows as big as a man's fist, and would have been a weapon well worthy of a target like Vatinius.⁸ In addition, the use of *pineae* alone to mean "pine cone" (Colum. 10.239; Lampr. *Commod.* 9.6) may suggest that originally the full term was *pineae nux*. Finally, although it may be folly to try to determine exactly what Fronto visualized for the *catachanna*, one could hardly graft a pine scion which bore a pine-nut without the cone. We can therefore be confident that Fronto was actually thinking of the cones.

On the other hand stands Seneca with his *mollibus et febriculosis prunuleis*. The softness and cloying sweetness of an over-ripe plum is not a topic which requires scholarly exegesis, but we should attempt to determine to what, if to any, specific aspect of Senecan style the epithet *mollis* applies. Certainly it is in the strongest sense pejorative, and from this it is a reasonable guess that it may refer to composition, for it is in this area of criticism that *mollis* carries its strongest connotations of effeminacy.⁹ Seneca's depraved and

⁸ For the pine cone's ability to inflict physical damage, cf. Lampridius on Commodus' suppression of the devotees of Isis (*Commod.* 9.6): "Isiacos vere pineis usque ad perniciem pectus tundere coebat."

⁹ Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 12.10.12 "quem (sc. Ciceronem) tamen et suorum homines temporum incessere audebant ut tumidiorem et Asianum et redundantem et in repetitionibus nimium et in salibus aliquando frigidum et in compositione fractum exultantem ac paene . . . viro molliorem." This attack on Cicero, apparently the work of the Atticist faction (cf. Hendrickson, *AJP* 47 [1926] 242-49), bears at least two other resemblances to the letter of Fronto under inspection here, and this suggests that an "Atticist" attack on a literary opponent followed a fairly set pattern; cf. Fronto 149 "Neque ignoro copiosum sentiis et redundantem hominem esse," 150 "Primum

jingling word-arrangement is one of the *dulcia vitia* of which Quintilian speaks (*Inst.* 10.1.129), and it is probably to this that Fronto is referring when he castigates (149) *sententiae eius tolutares*,¹⁰ "his aphorisms that go trot, trot, trot." Later in this letter, a marginal note on the palimpsest suggests that Fronto did take Seneca's com-

illud in isto genere dicendi vitium turpissimum, quod eandem sententiam milliensi alio atque alio amictu indutam referunt." Other examples of *mollis* (and cognates) applied to effeminate composition: Sen. *Contr.* 2.pr.1 "cultus nimis adquisitus, compositio verborum mollior"; 9.2.24; Sen. *Ep.* 114.15 "quorundam non est compositio, modulatio est: adeo blanditur et molliter labitur"; Fronto 18 "potius ut in compositionis structuraeque mollitia sit delictum quam in sententia inpudentia." Seneca himself seems to have been fascinated by this "softness" in Cicero: *Ep.* 100.7 "Lege Ciceronem: compositio eius una est, pedem curvat lenta et sine infamia mollis," 100.6, 114.16. Of composition, but without pejorative connotation: Cic. *Orat.* 40 "primus (sc. Isocrates) instituit dilatare verbis et mollioribus numeris explere sententias," 192. There is even a certain pleasing soft quality in the Plain Style's failure to avoid hiatus: Cic. *Orat.* 77 (quoted above 258). Of poetic composition: *Ciris* 20 "gracilem molli liceat pede claudere versum"; Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.58 "versiculos . . . magis factos et euntis/mollius"; Pers. 1.63; Mart. 11.90.1; Plin. *Ep.* 1.16.5.

Mollis and its cognates are of course used in many other areas of criticism. In general, of the plasticity of speech as a means of expression: Cic. *Orat.* 52 "est oratio mollis et tenera et ita flexibilis ut sequatur quocumque torqueas"; cf. *De orat.* 3.177; *Auct. ad Her.* 3.20 (of the flexibility of the voice). In an inclusive sense, of the less elevated styles (Plain or Middle): Cic. *De orat.* 2.95 "alia quaedam dicendi molliora ac remissiora genera"; *Brut.* 38 "Hic primus (sc. Demetrius Phalareus) inflexit orationem et eam mollem teneramque reddidit et suavis . . . videri maluit quam gravis," 132 "molli et Xenophontio genere sermonis," 274; *Orat.* 64 "Mollis est enim oratio philosophorum"; Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.44 "molle atque facetum" (cf. Jackson, *HSCP* 25 [1914] 117-37); Quint. *Inst.* 10.2.19; Plin. *Ep.* 9.22.2. Of subdued diction and figures of speech: Cic. *Orat.* 85 "utaturque (sc. orator tenuis) verbis quam usitatissimis, translationibus quam mollissimis"; *De orat.* 3.165; Sen. *Contr.* 7.4.6; Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.72; 9.2.32, 92; 11.1.85, 90. Particularly of the tenderness of tone and stylistic restraint of elegy: Hor. *Carm.* 2.9.17; Prop. 1.7.19; 2.1.2; 3.1.19, 3.1.8; Domit. Mars. *Vita Tibull.* Of the actual sound of the voice, or of words or syllables as they are uttered: Cic. *De orat.* 3.41, 98; Quint. *Inst.* 1.5.42; 11.3.32; Mart. 9.11.10; Gell. *N.A.* 1.5.3; 13.21 (20).15, 20. Of delivery and gesture (regularly pejorative): Cic. *Brut.* 225; *Orat.* 59; Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.128; cf. Hor. *Sat.* 1.9.25. Of the effeminate character of an author (as it bears upon his style): Sen. *Ep.* 114.8 "Apparet enim (sc. Maecenatem) mollem fuisse, non mitem. Hoc istae ambages compositionis, hoc verba transversa, hoc sensus miri, magni quidem saepe, sed enervati dum exeunt."

¹⁰ The complete passage reads: "sententias eius tolutares video nusquam quadripedo concito cursu tenere, nusquam pugnare, nusquam <ma> iestatem studere," ut Laberius ait, 'dictabolaria, immo dicteria, potius eum quam dicta confingere.' " Hauler (above, note 4) 122-34 thinks Fronto borrowed the whole passage from Laberius and applied it to Seneca. Note also the passage (150) immediately following this, in which Fronto concedes to Seneca's *sententiae* a certain "agitated, modulated tintinnabulation" one would not find in an author like Sergius (?Flavius ?Plautus; cf. Schanz-Hosius⁴ 2.361): "Itane existimas graviores sententias et eadem de re apud Annaeum istum reperturum te quam apud Sergium? 'Sed non modulatas aequae.' Fateor. 'Neque ita cordaces.' Ita est. 'Neque ita tinnulas.' Non nego."

position under fire, whether or not in these exact words: 152 "Quid verba modulate collocata, effeminate fluentia?"¹¹ But, even if it did not have so specific an application, *mollis* here surely indicates a lack of virility, pugnacity, and majesty.

The diminutives *febriculis* and *prunuleis* compound Fronto's withering contempt. For this instance of *febriculosus* Lewis and Short given an active meaning, "febrific," "producing fever." Forcellini says "qui febrem excitat." *ThLL* suggests "fortasse febrem efficiens." Granted, Seneca's style was dangerous: Quintilian found in it (*Inst.* 10.1.129) "corrupta pleraque atque eo perniciosissima, quod abundant dulcibus vitiis." But this active meaning is strained, and there is to my knowledge no evidence that plums were considered to produce fever.¹²

It seems to me to be possible to take *febriculosus* here according to its natural etymological sense, "mildly feverish."¹³ This mean-

¹¹ Closely following this is another marginal note: "Aque de sipunculis concinnius saluti quam de imbris," which again suggests a criticism of composition.

¹² The mild purgative effect of plums was of course well known (cf. Diosc. 1.121 Wellman; Plin. *N.H.* 23.132; Gal. *Vict. atten.* 10-11 [p. 6 Kalbfleisch], 51 [17 K.], 76 [25 K.]), and the use of purgatives in the treatment of fever may have been responsible for some vague association between plums and fevers, but it would hardly suggest that plums cause fever. As a matter of fact, in the one instance known to me where plums are clearly connected with a fever, they serve as a remedy for it, or rather as a false pretext for what was actually a "miraculous" cure. In the early 15th century, Fra Giovanni Dominici (*Lucula noctis* Chap. 47, line 67 Hunt) wrote: "Vidi . . . esu quinque prunorum (*sic!*) ad tegendum miraculum futurum speratum a validis febribus in momento personam plenam sanitatem cepisse incurabilibus morbis, id videntium cunctorum medicorum responsu." Coluccio Salutati (4.217 Novati) was quick to correct Dominici's homeopathic solecism, but does not comment on the effectiveness of the cure. For other ancient medicinal uses of plums, plum-leaves, and the gum of the tree, see Steier, *RE* s.v. "Pflaume" 1460-61.

Nevertheless, Hauler (above, note 1) 392 likewise translates *febriculis* as "fiebersbringenden," contrasting it with the supposed medicinal value of pine-nuts cooked in honey as a cough remedy (Plin. *N.H.* 15.36, quoted above). To be equally literal about it, a cough need not be accompanied by a fever, and in any such pine-nut and honey nostrum (the prototype of our cough drop) the effective agent would have been the honey, since the volatile pine oil would probably have been boiled away. It is remotely possible that Fronto's *prunulei* are the fruit of the *myxa* (sebesten, *cordia sebesten*), an evergreen (but not a conifer) bearing small orange plum-like fruit. The *myxa*'s fruit was not itself poisonous, but it resembled the reputedly poisonous fruit of the *persea*, which grew only in the East (Plin. *N.H.* 15.45). It is futile to speculate whether Fronto knew just enough about all these trees to confuse them.

¹³ A cursory inspection of some 300 adjectives ending in *-osus* has yielded only a very small number to which an active meaning may reasonably be assigned, viz., *calamitosus*, *fructuosus*, *perniciosus*, and *quaestuosus*. S. H. Weber, in a Princeton dissertation (*Anthimus, De Observatio* [sic] *Ciborum* [Leiden 1924] 102), notes that the later medical writers regularly used adjectives in *-osus* as substantives to describe the

ing well suits the word in two instances (Plaut. *Cist.* 406; Catull. 6.4) where it is applied to prostitutes. Outside of the passage from Fronto before us, the only other instance of the word is in Gellius (*N.A.* 20.1.27), where it is explained that a *morbus febriculosus* may be a grave and disabling ailment, like a critical *morbus santicus*. In this passage from Gellius, to be sure, *febriculosus* would mean "accompanied by a fever," and might even mean "febrific." (Strangely, both Lewis and Short and *ThLL* take this example in the passive sense.) If, however, we take the meaning in Fronto to be "mildly feverish," what are the "mildly feverish little plums"? They are stunted and over-ripe, and putrefaction, which generates heat, has set in. Not a great amount of heat, to be sure — the plums are merely *decocti*¹⁴ or *tepidi*,¹⁵ but not *calidi*¹⁶ or *fervidi*,¹⁷ and certainly not *ardentes*¹⁸ or *inflammati*¹⁹ — for to Fronto Seneca utterly lacks the fire of the Grand Style. Furthermore, feverishness suggests fitful and ineffective movement, and thus the *tolutares sententiae*, the minute Senecan concinnities and periodlets, each like a little round plum, which bounce along and never unite to form a single powerful and majestic period. All in all, it is hard to imagine

patient according to the part affected by the disease, e.g., *lienosi*, "those with spleen trouble" (Marcell. *Med.* 23, *passim*), *torminosi*, "those with colic" (Scrib. Larg. 112). Note also the following comparable use of the formation *febriculentus* (Marcell. *Med.* 22.13): "haec potio his modis ieunis danda est: ciliacis et colicis, qui sine febre erunt, ex aqua frigida, febriculentis ex hydromelis cyatho vel ex aqua mulsa."

¹⁴ Cf. Cic. *De orat.* 3.103 "Ita sit nobis igitur ornatus et suavis orator . . . ut suavitatem habeat austeram et solidam, non dulcem atque decoctam"; Pers. 1.125 (somewhat less pejorative). The stylistic metaphor in *decoctus* is derived from the practice of boiling wine to heighten its sweetness.

¹⁵ Cf. Fortunatianus 3.9 (Halm, *Rhet. Lat. Min.* p. 126) "*μέσση* (sc. generi dicendi) quod est contrarium? Tepidum et dissolutum et velut enerve"; Tac. *Dial.* 21 "lentitudinis ac teporis."

¹⁶ Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10.3.17 "sequentes calorem atque impetum ex tempore scribunt"; Sen. *Suas.* 3.6; Suet. *Rhet.* 30; Apul. *Apol.* 95 "ut in illa (sc. oratione) neque Cato gravitatem requirat, neque Laelius lenitatem, nec Gracchus impetum nec Caesar calorem."

¹⁷ Cf. Cic. *Brut.* 129 "C. Fimbria . . . lutulentus asper maledicus; genere toto paulo fervidior atque commotior," 108, 241, 388 "Sic istis (sc. Atticis) censuerim et novam istam quasi de musto et lacu fervidam orationem fugiendam" (a figure from the fermentation of wine); Hor. *Carm.* 4.2.7.

¹⁸ Cf. Cic. *Orat.* 99 "At vero hic noster (sc. orator grandis), quem principem ponimus, gravis, acer, ardens," 132; *De orat.* 2.35, 188, 190, 197; *Brut.* 93, 278, 317; Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.90; Tac. *Dial.* 24, 40; Plin. *Ep.* 1.16.2.

¹⁹ Cf. Cic. *Cael.* 27 "P. Clodius . . . cum se gravissime vehementissimeque iactaret et omnia inflammatus ageret tristissimis verbis, voce maxima"; *Orat.* 99, 132; *De orat.* 1.219; 2.183, 190, 194; *Brut.* 37 "Itaque (sc. Demetrius Phalereus) delectabat magis Atheniensis quam inflammabat," 89, 278, 279.

a better translation for *febriculosus* than Haines' "hectic," for this at once suggests the tepidity and the nervous jingling of Seneca's style. In this sense, *febriculosus* seems a possible parallel to the minute, "fractured" quality which Quintilian also deplores in Seneca,²⁰ and to the debased over-rhythmical type of Asianism which Cicero castigates.²¹

Now it is clear from the prominence of *neglegas* and *excolas* that the basic contrast in Fronto's metaphors lies between an uncultivated style and an elaborated one. The choice of pines and plums fits well with this, for the pine thrives in the wild, while the plum, to produce a steady yield, must be given fairly careful cultivation. It also seems clear that Fronto is thinking of a contrast in size and texture, since the rough pine cone is a more impressive object than a small, smooth plum. And there are other points of contrast, any or none of which may have passed through Fronto's mind. If the metaphor involves the sense of taste, the succulent plum nicely symbolizes the sickening sweetness of Seneca, and the inedible pine cone (or even the slightly pungent pine-nut) the acerbity and asperity of Cato. If a contrast of stylistic "color" is intended, the sober brown or black of the mature cone would well suit Cato, while the plum, which ranges through almost every color from waxy-white to purplish-black, depending on its species (Plin. *N.H.* 15.41-43), would indicate that from Fronto's austere point of view Seneca's style was much too highly colored.²² Even the fact that the cone of the stone pine matures slowly, taking about four years to ripen, and will then, if not broken open, preserve the seeds inside

²⁰ *Inst.* 10.1.130 "si non omnia sua amasset, si rerum pondera minutissimis sententiis non fregisset, consensu potius eruditorum quam puerorum amore comprobaretur."

²¹ *Orat.* 230 "Sunt etiam qui illo vitio, quod ab Hegesia maxime fluxit, infringendis concidendisque numeris in quoddam genus abiectum incidunt versiculorum (*Jahn*: sicularum *codd.*) simillimum," 231 "neque inferciens verba quasi rimas expleat nec minutos numeros sequens concidat delumbetque sententias, nec sine ulla commutatione in eodem semper versetur genere numerorum"; cf. *Brut.* 325-26.

²² Note *purpurisso litum* in 153, where Fronto assumes that Marcus will challenge him to point out any stylistic extravagances in his speeches: "Dicas fortasse: quid in orationibus meis novicium, quid crispulum, quid luscum, quid purpurisso litum aut <t>umi<dum aut> pollutum? Nondum quicquam; sed vereor . . ."; cf. 18. Almost all the instances in which the use of striking stylistic color is said to produce artificiality and effeminacy are derived from the dress and the use of cosmetics: Hor. *Ars* 15 "purpureus . . . pannus"; Cic. *Orat.* 78 "fucati vero medicamenta candoris et ruboris omnia (sc. a tenui genere dicendi) repelluntur: elegantia modo et munditia remanebit"; Quint. *Inst.* 8.pr.20 "illa translucida et versicolor quorundam elocutio res ipsas effeminat"; 10.1.33 (where see Peterson's note).

almost indefinitely may have suggested to Fronto a certain enduring classic quality in Cato's writings, which by his day had stood the test of three and a half centuries. On the other hand, the plum will often fail to set its fruit, even after a profusion of blossoms, and in most varieties the fruit, if it does appear and ripen, is notoriously perishable (Plin. *N.H.* 15.42). Seneca, despite the passage of a century, was still a "Modern" to Fronto, and we can assume that Fronto's prejudices may have led him to the belief — mistaken, it is true — that Cato's writings would survive long after Seneca's had been forgotten. At the same time, Fronto may have known how tenacious of life the plum tree is, and how it will regenerate itself even from a fragment of root (Theophr. *C.P.* 1.3.3; *H.P.* 3.6.4), so that it must be utterly eradicated (*exradicitus*) if it is to be destroyed. Finally, as Hauler (note 1, above) has suggested (392), the pine cone grows on the loftiest branches (Plin. *N.H.* 15.35, quoted above, 259), the plum on relatively low-lying ones.

If, with Hauler, we assume that this last question of relative height, and thus sublimity of style, is implied in Fronto's contrast, we ought not to be surprised that Fronto took so graceless and austere an author as Cato as a model, not only of the Plain Style, but of the Grand Style as well. Since, in a later age, Fronto himself became a model of the *genus siccum* (Macr. *Sat.* 5.1.7), it is reasonable to suppose that his tastes naturally led him to choose Cato as his own model of oratory, and, once having chosen him, to attribute to him the mastery of any style. This is what Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus had done for Demosthenes, and Cicero for himself as well.²³ This is what Fronto appears to do when he recognizes Cato's power and vehemence: 50 "oratores veteres, quorum pauci aut praeter Catonem et Gracchum nemo tubam inflat";²⁴ or 132 "Contionatur autem Cato infeste, Gracchus turbulente, Tullius copiose. Iam in iudiciis saevit idem Cato, triumphat Cicero, tumultuatur Gracchus." At the other extreme, Fronto considers no orator ever born so scrupulous as Cato in his choice of words

²³ Dion. Hal. *Demos.* 34; Cic. *Brut.* 35; *Orat.* 23, 110–11. For Cicero on himself, *Orat.* 102–4. Macrobius later took Virgil as a model for not three, but four styles (*Sat.* 5.1.1–18)!

²⁴ Cf. 143 "Catonis et Sallustii et Tulli tuba." For the *tuba* as a symbol of the Grand Style, cf. 36 "ut qui scias eloquentiam Caesaris tubae similem esse debere, non tibiarum, in quibus minus est soni, plus difficultatis"; Prud. *Contr. Symm.* 2.71. Particularly of the Grand Style typical of epic poetry: Mart. 8.3.22 "Angusta cantare licet videaris avena,/dum tua multorum vincat avena tubas"; 8.56.4; 10.64.6; 11.3.8.

(56–57). No one ever used the figure *paraleipsis* more tastefully (*elegantius*) (92). And, from another marginal note (202), Fronto apparently attributes to Cato even the suavity of the Middle Style: “Modo dulce illud incorruptum sit et pudicum, Tusculanum ac Ionicum, id est Catonis et Herodoti.” Thus, if to Fronto Cato is a master of every style, Cato’s Grand Style would be the type Cicero describes as “harsh, severe, and uncouth, without formal composition or rounded periods.”²⁵

In this connection it is interesting to inspect Cicero’s opinion of Cato in the *Brutus* (65–69). Why, Cicero says, if these Atticists are so interested in ancient orators like Lysias and Hyperides, do they not study Cato as well? Lysias has a certain vigor and attractive plainness, but consider Cato as an orator. “Who was more weighty than he in praise, more bitter in vituperation, more clever in aphorism, more subtle in analysis and presentation? . . . If the Atticists will pick out from his speeches the passages worthy of special note, they will find every oratorical virtue. Even his *Origines* — what flower or ornament of rhetoric do they lack?”²⁶ But, just as Theopompus with his high-flown style eclipsed Philistus and Thucydides, and just as Demosthenes eclipsed Lysias, so has today’s style, built up ever higher and higher, cut off the light from Cato . . . “Granted his language is somewhat archaic, and some of his diction rather uncouth, but this was the way they spoke in his day. Change this, which he could not, *add rhythm, and, to make his style more connected, fit his words together, cement them so to speak (something not even the early Greek orators practiced), and you will find no one to surpass Cato.*”²⁷ If you look for the ornament produced by the figures of speech and thought, you will be amazed at the richness and distinc-

²⁵ *Orat.* 20 “Nam et grandiloqui . . . fuerunt cum ampla et sententiarum gravitate et maiestate verborum, vehementes, varii, copiosi, graves, ad permovendos et convertendos animos instructi et parati — quod ipsum alii aspera, tristi, horrida oratione neque perfecta atque conclusa *consecuti sunt*, alii levi et structa et terminata.”

²⁶ *Brut.* 65 “quis illo gravior in laudando? acerbior in vituperando? in sententiis argutior? in docendo edisserendoque subtilior? . . . Licet ex his eligant ea quae notatione et laude digna sint: omnes oratoriae virtutes in eis reperientur. (66) Iam vero *Origines* eius quem florem aut quod lumen eloquentiae non habent?” Note that Cicero seems to cover all three of the *officia oratoris* (*movere* — *delectare* — *docere*). The *oratoriae virtutes* may well be the four technical “virtues” — correctness, clarity, ornament, and propriety.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 68 “Antiquior est huius sermo et quaedam horridiora verba. Ita enim tum loquebantur. Id muta, quod tum ille non potuit, et adde numeros et *ut* aptior sit oratio, ipsa verba compone et quasi coagmenta, quod ne Graeci quidem veteres factitaverunt: iam neminem antepones Catoni.”

tion with which Cato employs them. "But I do not forget that he is not yet sufficiently polished as an orator, and that we must look for something more nearly perfect."²⁸

I submit that Fronto's figure of Cato's pine cones is in virtually the exact tenor of Cicero's opinion. Cato is an extremely great orator, and a supreme model, but he has one minor and understandable technical limitation. Since we know of Fronto's boundless admiration for Cato's old-fashioned diction, for his scrupulous choice of words, and for his emotional power, we may fairly conclude that to Cato's style Fronto would add only some employment of the principles of artistic word-arrangement and prose rhythm. It is the neglect of these principles which accounts for Cato's rough pine cones — but how much more to be preferred were these pine cones than the soft and hectic little plums of Seneca. Thus, despite his personal preferences, Fronto was honest enough to recognize technical advances in oratory. Undoubtedly he found them realized in Cicero, who, despite a certain lack of diligence in searching out unexpected and recondite words, was the *caput atque fons Romanae facundiae* (57), the *summum supremumque os Romanae linguae* (marg. 119).²⁹

²⁸ *Ibid.* 69 "Nec vero ignoro nondum esse satis politum hunc oratorem et quaerendum esse aliquid perfectius." Apparently Cicero did not feel that these last remarks sufficiently qualified his praise for Cato. Later (293-94) he represents Atticus as twitting him for the attempt to make a serious comparison between Cato and masters like Lysias and Thucydides. It is interesting to note that Gellius (*N.A.* 6[7].3.52-53; 10.3.14-16) almost exactly parallels Cicero's judgment upon Cato, even to the reservations regarding composition and the development of a more nearly perfect orator.

²⁹ The once prevalent notion which attributed to Fronto some indifference to Cicero's excellence is now being overcome; cf. Haines, *Introd.* xxxi-xxxii; Brock (above, note 5) 133-38; D'Alton (above, note 6) 350-51. Marache (above, note 7) 152-79, in a thorough discussion of all Fronto's literary judgments, rightly gives Cato first place over Cicero in Fronto's hierarchy of orators, but perhaps by too wide a margin. At the same time, Marache seems to realize (164, 170-72) how completely Fronto's judgment, and consequently our own estimate of his preference, is at the mercy of his passion for archaic diction.