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## **[Bowersock. Greeck sophists and roman empire - suite]**

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### **Présentation de la fiche**

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in the Fronto collection,<sup>1</sup> and they are something quite new to epistolography. In all the vast correspondence of Cicero, Seneca, and Pliny there is nothing to compare with what appears in the letters of Marcus and Fronto. To be sure, Cicero sometimes complains of *lippitudo*, and Seneca can show himself neurotic on occasion. But many letters, often detailed, exclusively on matters of pain and illness are something else again. Aristides was more characteristic of his age than many admirers of it would like to think.

Nor are we confined to Aristides, Marcus, and Fronto for displays of hypochondria. A long Oxyrhynchus text, evidently written by a highly literate person and originating in the second century, contains such things as this: 'It was night, when every living creature was asleep except those in pain . . . ; a violent fever burned me, and I was convulsed with loss of breath and coughing, owing to the pain proceeding from my side.'<sup>2</sup> These are the words of a worshipper of Asclepius, like Aristides. In that unhappy night the speaker describes how Asclepius appeared to him—as he regularly did—in a dream; for hypochondriacs dreams are important.

Men of considerable intelligence in the second century attached great value to dreams, men like Galen's father (whose dream determined Galen's career),<sup>3</sup> Marcus Aurelius (who acknowledges the role of his dreams in a passage of the *Meditations*),<sup>4</sup> or Cassius Dio (to whose dreaming we owe the Roman History).<sup>5</sup> An inscription recorded a dream of the sophist Polemo at Pergamum.<sup>6</sup> And through an appropriate accident the one great dream book which has survived from antiquity is Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*, which seems to belong to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fronto, *Epist.*, pp. 73-87 van den Hout. The letters on health all belong, it appears, to Book V of the Epistles to Marcus before 161. The arrangement is by subject-matter, rather than by chronology. Mommsen's account (*Hermes* 8 [1874], 212 = *Ges. Schr.* 4, 483) of a chronological arrangement, whereby letters from 147-61 are all implausibly packed into Book V, has to be rejected. Book V also contains the *Empfehlungsbriefe*.

<sup>2</sup> *P. Oxy.* 1381, col. v.

<sup>3</sup> See above p. 60.

<sup>4</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *Ad se ipsum* 1. 17. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Dio 72. 23 (Boissevain, pp. 304-5). Cf. *Gnomon* 37 (1965), 470. One might also adduce Favorinus' dream (*VS*, p. 490), Hermocrates' dream (*VS*, p. 611), or, for that matter, Lucian's *Somnium*.

<sup>6</sup> Phrynichus, p. 494 Rutherford. Cf. the anecdote about Polemo in the Pergamene Asclepium in *VS*, p. 535.

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