

From the god

Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages in the Hieroi Logoi

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K.E. Brink, BA, 1013939

lineke.brink@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr. K. Beerden

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Introduction

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about pilgrimage? Maybe it is an image of people walking towards Santiago de Compostella, or you may think of the masses of Muslims going to Mekka every year. Now imagine something like this happening in antiquity. Why is that so hard? Because our image of pilgrimage is influenced by the kind of religion we see all around us today: monotheism. However, in many other religions, pilgrimage is very important as well.

In his *Hieroi Logoi*, written in the second century AD, Aelius Aristides wrote:

τότε δ' ὡς εἰς θεωρίαν ἐστελλόμεθα ὑπ' εὐθυμίας αἰθρίας τε οὔσης θαυμαστῆς καὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ δεχομένης.

Then we started our journey, as if on pilgrimage, with cheerfulness, because the weather was wonderful and the road inviting.

P. Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.2

This is the beginning of an account of a journey that Aelius Aristides makes with his servants. Aelius Aristides is an orator, who became ill right at the start of his career. Unfortunately, the doctors could not find a cure, so Aristides turned to Asclepius. Before this journey, he was commanded by the god to return to the place where he became ill for the first time – the warm springs near the river Aesepus. On his way he stops at the temple of Asclepius in Poemamenon. All of this takes place in Asia Minor. Is this pilgrimage?

In the passage text this journey is in fact called “pilgrimage”, or at least in my translation. This is in line with Ian Rutherford's theory that *theoria* can be understood as state pilgrimage.¹ He explains that when going on *theoria*, delegates of a city-state travel to another state's festival, which in his eyes is a form of pilgrimage. However, Scott Scullion disagrees, and says that pilgrimage did not happen in antiquity and that translating *theoria* as such would be imposing a concept from another culture upon antiquity.² He and Fritz Graf both think that *theoria* is not pilgrimage and they would have translated *theoria* differently.³

So, is Aristides' journey pilgrimage? That question is central to almost every discussion

1 Rutherford, I., (2013), *State pilgrims and sacred observers in ancient Greece*, Cambridge.

2 Scullion, S., (2005), “‘Pilgrimage’ and Greek religion: sacred and secular in the pagan Polis”, in: *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christianity Antiquity, Seeing the Gods*, eds.: J. Elsner, I. Rutherford, Oxford, 111-130.

3 Graf, F., (2002), “Review”, *History of Religions*, vol. 42.2, 193-196. For more about this issue, see my discussion of this passage at page 24.

about pilgrimage in antiquity. Among anthropologists the discussion is often more about how pilgrimage works and how it affects pilgrims.⁴ But among ancient historians the debate is different, they wonder whether pilgrimage happened in antiquity. If it did, what did it look like? What should be included into the definition and what should not? What does that say about ancient religion? If pilgrimage could happen in ancient Greek religion, what does that say about its relationship with Christianity, where pilgrimage also happened and still happens? What does that say about the role that religion played in the daily life of a person in antiquity.

I will assume for now that pilgrimage did happen in the context of ancient Greek religion and specifically in the case of Aelius Aristides – I will explain this assumption below in the first chapter. In this thesis I want to find out how the case study of Aelius Aristides can help us better understand what pilgrimage looked like in ancient Greece and how it can contribute to the ongoing debate about pilgrimage in antiquity. In the *Hieroi Logoi*, Aelius Aristides describes many journeys, and some of those could be described as pilgrimages. Sometimes he describes these journeys quite extensively and from a personal perspective, from which we can learn a lot about how a person in the ancient world experienced these journeys. We do not have many sources left from antiquity in which we can read about such personal experiences, so this is a unique and valuable source. With the insights to be gained from Aristides' stories, we can adjust our understanding and definition of pilgrimage in antiquity.

Some work has already been done here. Ian Rutherford analyses certain elements of pilgrimage in Aelius Aristides,⁵ while Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis wrote a book about the concepts of body and travel in the *Hieroi Logoi*.⁶ She also explicitly suggests reading it as a “pilgrimage text”.⁷ But Rutherford's analysis of the text is not very extensive and Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis focuses more on the material perspective of pilgrimage in connection with the text of the *Hieroi Logoi*. What is needed now in the debate, is an analysis of the text that is purely focused on this case study and is more inclusive than the short analysis of Rutherford. In the end the experiences of Aelius Aristides can tell us a lot about what pilgrimage can look like in antiquity.

My main question is: What specifics of ancient pilgrimage can we find in the *Hieroi Logoi* and how can those help us better understand pilgrimage in ancient Greek culture? To answer my

4 For example Turner, who tried to explain what happens to pilgrims during a pilgrimage, which lead to his theory of *communitas*. More recent research is that of Coleman and Eade, which focuses on the aspect of movement in pilgrimage. More about this can be found in Brink, K.E. (2016), *Ill on the road, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages from the perspectives of landscape, movement and narrative*, Leiden, 5-18.

5 Rutherford, I.C., (1999), “*To the land of Zeus... Patterns of pilgrimage in Aelius Aristides*”, in: *Aevum Antiquum*, vol. 12, 133-148.

6 Petsalis-Diomidis, A., (2010), *'Truly beyond wonders', Aelius Aristides and the cult of Asklepios*, Oxford.

7 Petsalis-Diomidis, A., (2008), “*The body in the landscape: Aristides' corpus in the light of the Sacred Tales*”, in: *Aelius Aristides between Greece, Rome, and the Gods*, in: *Colombia studies in Classical tradition*, eds.: Harris, W.V., Rice, E.F., Cameron, A., Said, S., Eden, K.H., Williams, G.D., vol. 33, Leiden/Boston, 131-150, 137.

main question, I will start by introducing the debate among ancient historians about the use of the word pilgrimage and I will formulate my own working definition of it. In the second chapter, I will introduce Aelius Aristides and the *Hieroi Logoi*. I will give a short biography of the life of the author and a short history of interpretation of the *Hieroi Logoi*, because of its influence on how I interpret the text. Also, I will discuss some background information about illness and medicine in antiquity. Then we come to the text itself: the third chapter. I will point out certain aspects in the text, namely Aristides' contact with the god, the journey itself, and the destinations for his pilgrimage. With the help of close reading I will analyse some relevant Greek fragments and make my arguments. In the last chapter, I will give an analytical conclusion which will discuss the findings in the third chapter and reformulate my working definition with the insights from the third chapter.

Chapter 1: The debate

1.1 Introduction

What is a pilgrim and what is pilgrimage? Not everyone agrees on what the concept pilgrimage entails. This results in a lot of discussion about whether the concept pilgrimage is appropriate for describing ancient Greek religious travel. In this chapter I want to discuss the on-going debate about the question: what is pilgrimage? Any introduction into this debate needs to start with the discussion among anthropologists, because that can help us understand some of the questions and gives background to the debate among ancient historians. Next I will discuss several aspects of the debate among ancient historians. That'll lead us to a working definition, which I will use for analysing the *Hieroi Logoi* by Aristides.

1.2 Summary modern theory

Every summary of social-anthropological theory about pilgrimage starts with Victor and Edith Turner.⁸ Before them, pilgrimage did not receive much attention from anthropologists. They wrote the most important theory about pilgrimage. The Turners were influenced by Clifford Geertz, who was again influenced by Max Weber. Arnold van Gennep is also present in Turner's work about rites of passage and is the most important for Turner's work on pilgrimage.⁹ Turner describes pilgrimage in a way that resembles the rite of passage: a phase of liminality occurs when someone goes on a pilgrimage, during which he is set apart from society and the normal structure of his life falls away. During this period *communitas* - a sense of community, where the pilgrim feels "liberated from normative demands"¹⁰ - occurs with his fellow travellers, who are also set apart from society.¹¹

Sallnow and Eade criticise Turner's theory: they think that his theory is essentialist and functionalist. Turner tries to reduce a complex phenomenon like pilgrimage to one essence or function, something that Sallnow and Eade think is not useful.¹² Although this is one way to look at it, on the other hand one could also say finding out the function is as important as other aspects. Some other points of criticism are that Turner makes pilgrimage seen as something that is special, set apart, while Coleman and Eade think that pilgrimage can also be very ordinary.¹³

8 Turner, V., Turner, E., (1978), *Image and pilgrimage in christian culture, anthropological perspectives*, New York.

9 Eade, J., (2000), "Introduction to the Illinois paperback", in: *Contesting the sacred, the anthropology of christian pilgrimage*, eds.: J. Eade, M.J. Sallnow, Urbana / Chicago, ix.

10 Turner, V. (1974), *Dramas, fields and metaphors, symbolic action in human society*, Londen, 13.

11 Ibidem, 206.

12 Coleman, S., (2002) "Do you believe in pilgrimage? Communitas, contestation and beyond", *Anthropological Theory*, vol. 2(3), 355-368.

13 Coleman, S., Eade, J., (2004), "Introduction", in: *Reframing pilgrimage, cultures in motion*, eds.: S. Coleman, J. Eade, London / New York, 3-4, 7-8.

Some of this criticism resulted in the formulation of a new theory by Eade and Sallnow.¹⁴ They react to the harmony of *communitas* with a theory about competition and contestation. They see the pilgrimage centre as a void, which can be filled by several different discourses of pilgrims about what they see and find in the centre. But the discourses may not be compatible, so contestation will arise.¹⁵ But Coleman points out that this theory is not that different from Turner's: Turner creates a picture of a void of the pilgrim, who is now set loose of his daily, normal structure; while Sallnow and Eade create the picture of a void of the pilgrimage centre, which is filled with discourses. These voids are filled by their ideas about pilgrimage: Turner wants pilgrimage to be about harmony and makes it special and anti-structural, while Sallnow and Eade want it to be normal and competitive, like everyday life.¹⁶

Turner as well as Sallnow and Eade struggle with one question: what is pilgrimage? As already stated, this issue is also relevant for the debate about pilgrimage in antiquity. Other anthropologists, instead of focusing on the definition of pilgrimage, like to focus on certain aspects of pilgrimage, to find out more about the phenomenon itself. Coleman and Eade for example have started to work together to describe the aspect of movement in pilgrimage,¹⁷ while Coleman and Elsner focus on the landscape.¹⁸ Shannon works from the perspective of the pilgrim and works with narratives.¹⁹ Coleman even recommends letting go of the question what pilgrimage actually is, because like other concepts, for example 'religion' or 'ritual', the question is impossible to answer. When studying such a complex phenomenon that has so many forms, one finds that what pilgrimage is differs from situation to situation, depending on the context. When we want to define it, we risk that we either make the definition too narrow or too broad. And when we do not yet fully comprehend a phenomenon, such a definition might be premature. Besides, it isn't necessary to find a universal definition, when the problem does not stop anthropologists and historians from studying the subject and coming up with their own definition along the way as it suits them.²⁰ Nonetheless, we still need a definition when we want to study pilgrimage in this specific case. This does not have to be a definition everybody can agree on, because that seems to be impossible. So I need to formulate a definition of pilgrimage in the case of ancient Greek religion, but before I can do that, I first need to discuss the debate among ancient historians about pilgrimage in antiquity.

14 Eade, J., Sallnow, M.J., (2000), *Contesting the sacred, the anthropology of christian pilgrimage*, Urbana / Chicago.

15 Eade, J., Sallnow, M.J., (2000), "Introduction", in: *Contesting the sacred, the anthropology of christian pilgrimage*, eds.: J. Eade, M.J. Sallnow, Urbana / Chicago, 5.

16 Coleman, (2002) "Do you believe in pilgrimage? Communitas, contestation and beyond", 359-361.

17 Coleman, Eade, (2004), "Introduction", in: *Reframing pilgrimage, cultures in motion*, 14-17.

18 Coleman, S., Elsner, J., (1995), *Pilgrimage, past and present in the world religions*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 205-206, 217.

19 Shannon, P.D., (2006), *Contemporary pilgrimage narratives and social theory: a search for the self*, Berkeley, 145-162

20 Coleman, (2002) "Do you believe in pilgrimage? Communitas, contestation and beyond", 362-364.

1.3 Debate among ancient historians and classicists

As between modern anthropologists, between scholars in ancient religion a debate has been going on about what the word pilgrimage means. This paragraph discusses several aspects of the phenomenon of pilgrimage, in order to define it. What distinguishes pilgrimage from other forms of travel? Many anthropologists would intuitively answer that it is the religious aspect that makes pilgrimage different, and so would I. First, I will address the issue of our perspective on antiquity. After that, I will discuss the question whether pilgrimage is religious and from the answer to that question, I will move on to the relationship between ancient Greek religion and Early Christianity. I will also discuss some arguments against the use of the word pilgrimage in antiquity and I will explain why I still believe that the word is appropriate when used correctly. Then finally I can formulate a working definition.

1.3.1 *Emic or etic?*

Before we can discuss whether pilgrimage has a religious aspect, we need to address an important issue. We are researching antiquity in this particular case and if we want to formulate a definition, it is at least required to look at what the culture and language itself has to offer. Unfortunately, there is no equivalent to the English word pilgrimage in ancient Greek, at least not a word that has the exact same meaning. Rutherford explains *θεωρία*²¹ as state pilgrimage, which is the visiting of festivals as a delegate of the state. But consulting an oracle was called *μαντεύεσθαι*²² and someone who visits a healing sanctuary was called a *ικέτης*.²³ These are all words that mean something that can be seen as pilgrimage, but they are usually not translated as such.²⁴ For Scullion this is a reason to believe that pilgrimage cannot exist as a separate phenomenon in ancient Greece and that all these separate forms of travel cannot be captured by one concept.²⁵ But the words he mentions are all emic, in the sense that they are coined by ancient Greeks. Although emic definitions are useful to start with, they are not the only way to understand and define certain phenomena. An etic definition can be used as well, as long as you are aware of the implications: that you impose a “foreign” concept on a phenomenon, which inevitably influences your research. But when studying religion in antiquity it

21 See my analysis of the meaning of the word *θεωρία* in the third chapter, page 23-26.

22 LSJ ad loc: 1) divine, prophesy, presage, forbode, surmise; 2) consult an oracle, seek divinations; 3) later: of the god, to give an oracle. Beekes adds that the word seems to be derived from *μαίνομαι* ((to rage, to be furious), but, also thinks that this etymology seems a bit doubtful. Lampe's *A patristic Greek Lexicon* does not include the word.

23 LSJ ad loc: 1) one who comes to seek aid or protection, one who comes to seek for purification, of pilgrims to a healing shrine. Beekes adds that it is derived from *ἴκω* (to come). Lampe's *A patristic Greek Lexicon* does not include the word.

24 Scullion, (2005) “‘Pilgrimage’ and Greek religion: sacred and secular in the pagan Polis”, 126.

25 Ibidem.

is inevitable to be influenced by modern concepts and ideas about religion – which is certainly a good thing for our understanding, and not a reason to abandon those concepts and ideas altogether. Furthermore, we have some words in ancient Greek that mean something that resembles pilgrimage. We do not have one appropriate ancient Greek word for it. But that is not necessary for our research, because we can use the English word 'pilgrimage' for that, as long as we are aware of the consequences.

1.3.2 *Is pilgrimage religious?*

Rutherford and Elsner begin the introduction to their volume about pilgrimage in antiquity with the assumption: “A particular cluster of phenomena within religious practice, which have been labelled 'pilgrimage', can be identified to have existed both in Graeco-Roman antiquity and in ancient Christianity.”²⁶ Coleman and Elsner often use the word “sacred”: “sacred architecture”, “sacred journeys”, “sacred geographies”²⁷. Religion seems to be key to the definition of pilgrimage. But is all religious travel necessarily pilgrimage? And does all pilgrimage have to be religious? In antiquity we can imagine someone buying a talisman, so he can be safe from evil on his journey as a salesman. Does this make his journey a pilgrimage? That depends on our definition. But before we can formulate it, we have to start with two related questions about pilgrimage in antiquity. First, does the journey necessarily have a religious aspect? But before we can answer that, we must answer this: what is religious? Many scholars of ancient religion begin with the second question. Paradoxically, the answer to that question leads to an answer on the first question, as we will see.

W. Robertson Smith²⁸ wrote a book about ancient religion and created a dichotomy: that of the sacred versus the profane. But this idea of opposition was not found in ancient Greek culture. There were a few “religious words”, like ἄγνος or ἱερός, but they were not the equivalent for the English word sacred. The first, ἄγνος,²⁹ means the purity of the worshipper and his reverence for the divinities and their sanctuaries, while the second, ἱερός³⁰, was used to refer to anything that was related to the gods and their sanctuaries, for example the priests. The word ὄσιος³¹ meant non-holy

26 Elsner, Rutherford, (2005) “Introduction”, 1.

27 Coleman, S., Elsner, J., (1995), *Pilgrimage, past and present in the world religions*, Cambridge (Massachusetts), 6.

28 Smith, W.R., (1889), *Lectures on the religion of the Semites*, London.

29 LSJ ad loc: 1) pure, chaste, holy; 2) hallowed; 3) undefiled; 4) guiltless, upright. According to Beekes it is related to ἅγιος (holy), which is again related to the Sanskrit word for 'honor with sacrifice and prayer. Lampe translates it as 1) chaste; 2) pure.

30 LSJ ad loc: 1) filled with or manifesting divine power, supernatural; 2) hallowed, consecrated, mystical, sacred opposed to profane; 3) under divine protection; 4) of persons: devoted, initiated, dedicated. Lampe translates it as 1) holy; 2) sacred mysteries, sacraments. According to Beekes the word is connected to other words in other languages, that have meanings as 'sacrifices', 'gods', 'honour'.

31 LSJ ad loc: 1) hallowed, sanctioned, allowed by the law of god or of nature; 2) permitted or not forbidden by divine law, profane; 3) of persons: pious, devout, religious, sinless, pure, holy. Lampe translates it as 1) holy, God-fearing, religious; 2) holy, sainted; 3) saint; 4) the divinity. Beekes adds that there is no convincing etymology.

behaviour, although it was still sanctified by the gods, while ἀνίερος³² was used to refer to evil or bad deeds, so neither was an equivalent for profane. So the dichotomy was only an invention of the nineteenth century and does not reflect ancient reality. Nowadays, some scholars agree that this dichotomy is not useful to describe religion in ancient society, but there are also others who still use it for their research.³³ In this thesis I assume that this dichotomy is indeed not useful.

But then what is the role of religion in society? Robert Parker developed the term “embedded” for religion in antiquity. This was originally a term used by social economists to describe the role of economics in society, but it can also be used for religion in antiquity, in more or less the same way. He describes religion in antiquity as “a social, practical, everyday thing”³⁴. The idea is that religion is embedded into society and cannot be seen separately: religion is included in all parts and layers of society. But how this idea of embeddedness works out in detail differs per scholar. What Parker meant was that every social group also had a religious aspect and the religious aspect is thus inseparable from the social group. But Bremmer interprets Parker's theory as different religious aspects, distributed among all aspects of daily life. Price describes ancient society as something that does not even have “a separate religious sphere”³⁵ and Gordon describes several layers or grids which all contain religious aspects.³⁶ Eidinow adds that all these views on religion in antiquity focus on the public and communal aspects of religion in antiquity, while the individual aspects should not be ignored. She includes social network theory into her view on ancient religion, which focuses more on the individual and cognitive aspects of how culture – and with that religion – is formed.³⁷

Another important paradigm in ancient religion is that of the *polis* religion, as formulated by Sourvinou-Inwood. In short, it means that religion should be studied within the individual *polis*, because that context highly influences religion and religion influences the *polis* as well. Eidinow has the same problems with this paradigm: it ignores the individualistic aspects of religion.³⁸ But an important scholar of pilgrimage in antiquity, Ian Rutherford, still uses that paradigm for his work on theoria as “state pilgrimage” in antiquity.³⁹ He wants to expand the research field to the relations between the several *poleis*, which he states are created through common religious ideas and

32 According to the LSJ, this means 1) unholy, unhallowed, born out of wedlock; 2) receiving no victims. Lampe translates it as 1) unholy, unhallowed, impious. For Beekes, see note 29 about ἱερός.

33 Bremmer, J.N., (1998), “‘Religion’, ‘ritual’ and the opposition ‘sacred vs. profane’: notes towards a terminological ‘genealogy’”, in: *Ansichten griechischer Rituale*, ed: F. Graf, Stuttgart, Leipzig, 16-17, 24-30.

34 Parker, R., (1986), “Greek Religion”, in: *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, eds: J. Boardman, J. Griffin, O. Murray, Oxford, 265.

35 Eidinow, E., (2015), “Ancient Greek religion: ‘Embedded’ ... and embodied”, in: *Communities and Networks in the Ancient Greek world*, eds: C. Taylor, K. Vlassopoulos, Oxford, 56.

36 Idem, 55-56.

37 Idem, 61-63.

38 Idem, 64-65.

39 Rutherford, I., (2013), *State pilgrims and sacred observers in ancient Greece*, Cambridge, 1.

common sanctuaries. But Rutherford also notes that although many of these festivals were in name religious, many political factors were in place. This leads others, like Graf or Scullion,⁴⁰ to the question whether this can be called religious and therefore pilgrimage. But if we take over the paradigm of embedded religion, then the fact that there are many political (and other non-religious) factors at play at festivals, in addition to the religious aspects, this makes sense: religion was present in every aspect of life, so also these festivals. These festivals had a certain level of religiousness. Then is it justified to call this form of travel pilgrimage? Is this not a form of tourism?

For this issue the following discussion in the anthropology of pilgrimage is useful. Badone and Roseman⁴¹ in their volume about pilgrimage discuss several anthropologists who show how the term pilgrimage can come to mean both tourism and pilgrimage, while the same can be said about the term tourism. They come to the conclusion that the distinction between the tourist and the pilgrim is not useful, because the terms are the poles on a “conceptual continuum”.⁴²

So the answer to the second question is that religion is everywhere in ancient Greek society. But this leads to the paradox that the answer to the first question, whether or not travel is religious, is not relevant. Travelling cannot be seen apart in antiquity from religion, there are no non-religious ways to travel. But does that mean that every form of travel in antiquity is pilgrimage? That would render the concept useless. The religious aspect is not what defines pilgrimage in antiquity, it is not what distinguishes it from other forms of travel. What is distinctive from other forms of travel, is the destination. Morinis defines pilgrimage as “a journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a valued ideal.”⁴³ While this definition is so inclusive that it can include almost every form of travel, it points us in the right direction, at least for antiquity. In antiquity all types of pilgrimage that we can think of,⁴⁴ lead to a destination where contact with the supernatural is possible. That is either a temple, an Asklepieion, an oracle, or a festival. The destination is key to our definition.

1.3.3 Pilgrimage as a category in antiquity

For his etic definition of pilgrimage, Scullion goes back to the source of the concept: Early Christianity. He compares pilgrimage in the polytheistic religion of ancient Greece with pilgrimage in Early Christianity, and wonders whether this is the same phenomenon. The question is whether

40 Graf, F., (2002), “Review”, *History of Religions*, vol. 42.2, 195-196; Scullion, (2005) “‘Pilgrimage’ and Greek religion: sacred and secular in the pagan Polis”, 119-121.

41 Badone, E., Roseman, S.R., (2004), “Approaches to the anthropology of pilgrimage and tourism”, in: *Intersecting Journeys: the anthropology of pilgrimage and tourism*, eds.: E. Badone, S.R. Roseman, Urbana.

42 Idem, 10.

43 Morinis, A. (1992), “Introduction”, in: *Sacred Journeys: the anthropology of pilgrimage*, ed: A. Morinis, Westport, 1-30, 4.

44 See for an exhaustive list the typology of Elsner, Rutherford, (2005) “Introduction”, 12-29.

we can actually use the concept, because it is coined in such a different context. When Scullion compares ancient Greek pilgrimage to Early Christian pilgrimage, it comes down to a couple of negatives, for example: the importance of the journey cannot be found back in antiquity, neither can the spiritual and personal aspect of the journey and the experience at the sanctuary. He goes on with a list of how pilgrimage in antiquity is different from pilgrimage in other religions, not only Christianity, but also Islam and Hinduism.⁴⁵ Behind all this hides the idea that there is a big difference between religion in late antiquity and religion in Early Christianity. Rutherford and Elsner believe that is not true: the rise of Christianity was not a completely new, different movement and there was more continuity than change. Many aspects of pilgrimage in Early Christianity can also be found back in antiquity.⁴⁶ Galli for example explains how certain Christian aspects of pilgrimage can also be found in two case studies from antiquity.⁴⁷ That makes the argument of Scullion against the use of the word pilgrimage in antiquity invalid: Early Christianity was not very different from antiquity, so why use another word. Besides this argument, I think that the argument can be refuted otherwise: it is in fact our job as scholars to find a word from our own culture, that is appropriate for certain phenomena in antiquity, so we can understand them better. Pilgrimage is an etic category, but that does not make it inappropriate, it just means we have to be careful with our application, which is also my aim in this thesis.

1.4 Definition

So in order to define pilgrimage in antiquity we need several aspects: more than the religious aspect, the destination for the pilgrimage is important, as well as the goal of the pilgrimage. We have learned that there are certain words in ancient Greek that refer to a certain action that can be pilgrimage, but that there is not one word for pilgrimage in ancient Greek. Although we have to be careful not to be influenced by the origin of the word pilgrimage, we are also aware that although the origin of this word was in a different context, the context was not so different that it is necessary to abandon the use of the word pilgrimage completely. So now we can safely formulate our definition: pilgrimage is a journey to a place with the aim to make contact with the supernatural there. With this definition, pilgrimage can be done in groups or by individuals, many destinations are possible and the only motivation included is contact with the supernatural. Most importantly, this definition distinguishes pilgrimage from other forms of travel.

45 Ibidem, 122-130.

46 Elsner, Rutherford, (2005) "Introduction", 2-3.

47 Galli, M., (2005), "Pilgrimage as elite habitus: educated pilgrims in sacred landscape during the Second Sophistic", in: *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christianity Antiquity, Seeing the Gods*, eds.: J. Elsner, I. Rutherford, Oxford, 253-290.

1.5 Conclusion

We started with the question: what is pilgrimage? We have seen the different answers that anthropologists give and how ancient historians struggle with the application of the word pilgrimage upon antiquity. Pilgrimage is often seen a religious phenomenon. But we have seen that religion was everywhere in antiquity, in every layer of life and society. Something else distinguishes pilgrimage from other forms of travel: the destination and the aim, which are: a place, where pilgrims can make contact with the supernatural. This lead us to our definition of pilgrimage: pilgrimage is a journey to a place where contact can be made with the supernatural. Now that we have established that, we can ask the question: what did the pilgrimages of Aristides look like? And what does that tell us about ancient Greek religion?

Chapter 2: Introduction to Aelius Aristides and the *Hieroi Logoi*

In the previous chapter I gave an introduction to the debate about pilgrimage in antiquity. In this chapter I will give an introduction to the text, the *Hieroi Logoi*, and its author, Aelius Aristides. I will start with the author, by giving a short summary of his biography. Secondly, to understand the text better I also give some background information about medicine and dreams in antiquity. Lastly, I shortly introduce the text, its genre and its history of interpretation.

2.1 Aelius Aristides' life

Aelius Aristides was born in 118 AD, into a rich family that lived in Mysia, on the estate Laneion, which was located in the district Hadriani, near Pergamom in Asia Minor. His father was possibly a friend of the emperor Hadrian, who granted Roman citizenship to him and his son, Aristides.⁴⁸ Because of his father's wealth, Aristides had the opportunity to get a full education and become an orator, and he became interested in classical Greek literature, for example Homer, Pindar and Plato. Aristides was raised by several foster parents, called τροφῆς, and he had a special relationship with them. It was probably these people who took care of his religious education,⁴⁹ Aristides himself mentions Epagathus, who taught him in the practice of divine communication through dreams.⁵⁰

When he was nearly finished with his education, his father died, and Aristides inherited his fortune and became an independently wealthy man. In 141 he decided to go on a trip to Egypt, where he spent his time sightseeing and giving speeches. This was also where he got ill for the first time, we do not know what illness struck him.⁵¹

After that trip to Egypt Aristides wanted to travel to Rome, the capital of oratory. But a few days before his departure in 143, he got ill again. He did not want to cancel the trip, so he went through with it anyway. But travelling was hard on him, and when he arrived in Rome, he was so ill that he could hardly function and certainly not declaim. The doctors tried to heal him without success. After half a year, he returned back home. But back home the doctors could not help him either and Aristides was very disappointed in the medical profession. When he was in the Warm Springs in Smyrna a year later in 144, he got his first revelation of Asclepius, in which the god gave the bizarre command to walk outside barefoot (it was December, and very cold) and to keep a

48 Behr, C.A., (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, Amsterdam, 1-8.

49 Downie, J., (2013), *At the limits of art: literary study of Aelius Aristides' Hieroi Logoi*, Oxford, 10.

50 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, 9.

51 Idem, 9-22.

dream record. Later Asclepius commanded him to go to his temple in Pergamom for incubation.⁵² This is where an important part of his life began. Aristides called it the '*cathedra*', which means 'period of inactivity', or 'sabbatical', and it lasted two years, from 145 to 147. In the temple the god gave him a diverse set of cures for his several symptoms: he never fully recovered, but symptoms were relieved through bathing or abstaining from baths, exercises, fasting, etc. During his stay in the temple he stayed with one of the servants of the temple: Julius Asclepiacus. In his daily life he was accompanied by other men of the elite of Pergamom and surroundings, who stayed there to be healed, to talk about their dreams with others and to study in the big library that belonged to the temple. His doctor was Theodotus, who always listened to the interpretations of Aristides of his dreams about Asclepius, which made him a favourite of Aristides.⁵³

But Asclepius did not just help Aristides with his physical illness, but also with the mental aspect of illness. He commanded Aristides to pick up his writing, which Aristides did. The god not only became his physician, but also his mentor and teacher and his speeches got better. This was why he called himself Theodorus after a while: gift of the god. After two years, just before he left the temple in Pergamum, he got his first big commission by a big family and he was able to perform really well, even though he was still ill. His stay at the temple had probably given him more confidence, but had also made Asclepius his "Saviour".⁵⁴ After that period in the temple, Asclepius often sent Aristides somewhere to give a speech or to sacrifice at a festival.⁵⁵ In the meantime, his foster father Zosimus had gotten older and weaker and in 148 he died. Aristides was very shocked by his death and it took a long time to recover from it. Aristides seems quite healthy from then on, is sometimes active as an orator and does not dream as much as he used to.

In 153 he felt so well, that he embarked upon a trip to Epidauros, Athens and Rome. This is also where he stops writing in the *Hieroi Logoi* for a period of ten years.⁵⁶ But in 165 smallpox spreads throughout the Roman Empire through the army of Cassius. Aristides also got ill, but he was cured. The next year he was hit by a similar illness. In this period he keeps a diary, which he mentions in the *Hieroi Logoi*. He has a new doctor, Porphyrio (Theodotus had died), and went through the same regimen of cures and diets.⁵⁷ In the period that follows, he takes several trips, to Cyzicus and Pergamom. But after that period of good health he returns to the estate, again in bad health. He needs to stay there and he is worried about his career, but is consoled by dreams of

52 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, 22-26.

53 Idem, 41-45.

54 Idem, 45-60.

55 Idem, 61-96.

56 Idem, 73-90.

57 Idem, 91-100.

Asclepius. It is then that he starts writing his *Hieroi Logoi*.⁵⁸ Aristides was forced by his bad health to stay at the estate and wrote there in silence, as he did when he was in the temple during his *cathedra*. In 180 he died at the age of sixty-three.⁵⁹

2.2 Illness in antiquity

Medicine in antiquity differs markedly from what it is now. Israelowich mentions three characteristics of medicine in antiquity: medical thought was very closely connected to religious thought; medical knowledge was part of the general education of the elite, so everybody knew something about it and it was part of scientific knowledge about the stars and animals. Furthermore, in antiquity new ideas about the human body were not necessarily better than old ideas, so innovations were not seen as better, rather as suspicious.⁶⁰ Besides, diseases were often seen as their symptoms, because seeing symptoms as a package of problems coupled with one disease is quite a modern view. In the *Hieroi Logoi* we often see how Aristides takes a bath or refrains from bathing, fasts or eats. These are all related to the ancient concept of the body. The body consisted of several fluids or 'humours'. When one had intestinal problems, for example, this was caused by an imbalance between the humours, there was too much fluid in the body and to heal, one must dry up the body. So no bathing (this of course means more fluid) and no drinking.⁶¹ This theory about the humours was developed throughout the ages, but there was little agreement on how exactly it worked and how many humours there were. The theory of Galen, a contemporary of Aristides, finally became dominant in the second century AD and later on.⁶² This concept of the body was related to the concept of the human mind: the mind and body influenced each other. An illness or a physical shortcoming could say something about someone's character, while doctors could predict the future for an illness by looking at the character. This again was related to ancient Greek concepts about purity and pollution: an illness meant that there was a pollution and the cure was a purgation, to become pure again. So a physical illness was also a moral disease. This also meant that medical professionals were more than just doctors: they could also be priests and were often also philosopher and scientist.⁶³ But doctors were also mistrusted, because diagnosing an illness and curing it was a risky business, which often went wrong. It was not uncommon to choose the god

58 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, 108-112.

59 Idem, 112-115

60 Israelowich, I., (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*, in *Mnemosyne*, vol. 341, Leiden/Boston, 44-56.

61 Downie, J., (2008), "Proper pleasures: bathing and oratory in Aelius Aristides' Hieros Logos I and Oration 33", in: *Aelius Aristides between Greece, Rome, and the Gods*, in *Columbia studies in Classical tradition*, eds.: Harris, W.V., Rice, E.F., Cameron, A., Said, S., Eden, K.H., Williams, G.D., vol. 33, Leiden/Boston, 119-120.

62 Lloyd, G.E.R., (2003), *In the grip of disease, Studies in the Greek imagination*, Oxford, 203-204.

63 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*, 46-50.

Asclepius as one's doctor instead of a human doctor. Religion and medicine were closely connected, and a god could be trustworthier than a human. Besides, there was much overlap between the cures of the human and divine doctor. The main difference of opinion was about where the illness came from: the god or a physical imbalance.⁶⁴ Aristides believed the former.

2.3 The *Hieroi Logoi*

The *Hieroi Logoi* were composed in the 170's, although scholars disagree on the exact date. Behr says 170-171, while Weiss, and Israelowich with him, considers 175-176 more likely. At least he was finished writing it in 177, when the text was mentioned in a speech. The text itself mentions a dream diary, kept by Aristides, which serves as a source of which the *Hieroi Logoi* is a sort of summary.⁶⁵ In the text Aristides explains that this text is written as a praise and votive to Asclepius, to thank him for saving his life and helping him in so many occasions. The title, *Hieroi Logoi* (Sacred Tales) refers to a genre of texts, the aretalogy, that tell about the myth or legend that is behind a ritual or a god. These texts were probably of cultic origin. This text does not fall exactly into the genre, but it is interesting that it refers to that kind of text.⁶⁶

But there was a more implicit motive, that is worked out by Downie and Petsalis-Diomidis, each in their own way. They both argue that Aristides through the *Hieroi Logoi* had as his purpose self-presentation. Israelowich and Petsalis-Diomidis agree that the text resembles an autobiography. Israelowich argues that it resembles the autobiography in some formal aspects: the first person, the focus on the body and life of the individual and the retrospective aspect.⁶⁷ Petsalis-Diomidis shows how Aristides uses the autobiographical form of the *Hieroi Logoi* for his purpose of self-presentation.⁶⁸ Israelowich points out though that it is not possible to put this text into one genre or category.⁶⁹ Downie adds to this that he tried to renovate the style and experimented in the *Hieroi Logoi*,⁷⁰ which may mean that he aimed at a new genre altogether. So I think it is better not to put the *Hieroi Logoi* in the limiting box of just one genre, but instead to keep our options open.

2.4 History of interpretation

In her summary of the history of interpretation of the *Hieroi Logoi*, Downie shows there was a

64 Lloyd, (2003), *In the grip of disease, Studies in the Greek imagination*, 216-217.

65 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*, 16-17; Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, 116-119.

66 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*, 20-21.

67 Idem, 25-26.

68 Petsalis-Diomidis, A., (2006), "Sacred writing, sacred reading: the function of Aelius Aristides' self-presentation as author in the Sacred Tales", in: *The limits of ancient biography*, eds: McGing, B., Mossman, J., Swansea, 193-212, 203-204.

69 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*, 19.

70 Downie, (2013), *At the limits of art: literary study of Aelius Aristides' Hieroi Logoi*, 33-34.

division in interpretations that eventually came together. This division already started in antiquity: Philostratus is opposed to Arethas, who both highlight a different aspect of the *Hieroi Logoi*. Philostratus praises Aristides' eloquence and ignores the religious aspect entirely, while Arethas is mostly annoyed about Aristides' self-indulgence. In the twentieth century, Baumgart highlights the rhetorical aspect of the *Hieroi Logoi* by saying that through the healing of his illness, Aristides' career was also healed.⁷¹ But Boulanger interprets the *Hieroi Logoi* just as a prose hymn or an aretology to Asclepius, and he explicitly mentions that it did not have not a rhetorical purpose.⁷² On the side of Boulanger we can also find Dodds⁷³ and Festugière⁷⁴, who view the *Hieroi Logoi* as a useful source to look into the mind of an ancient person and focus in their research on the individual, personal aspect of religion - which they think is new and growing in the second century AD and related to the growth of Christianity - and try to explain the experiences of Aristides, especially his dreams. Behr is very useful in his extensive research on the biography of Aristides and his comparisons with other works of him.⁷⁵ Stephens also tries to explain Aristides' religiosity, by identifying “the historical and psychological factors affecting the nature of Aristides' piety”.⁷⁶

But Misch showed in his works on autobiographies that Aristides does in fact both in the *Hieroi Logoi*: he combines religion and oratory in his works by justifying his self-glorification in the *Hieroi Logoi* by calling upon the god and referring to dreams.⁷⁷ Downie also summarizes recent research, which focuses on the question what image Aristides wanted to create in his text, which is in fact a continuation of the attempt to combine the religious aspect with the rhetorical. Perkins⁷⁸ shows how Aristides developed a sense of the 'self' by observing his body, but relocated the power over the self to the divine power of Asclepius, and pain and suffering was “a channel for encountering the divine”.⁷⁹ Petsalis-Diomidis suggests that the *Hieroi Logoi* concern his relationship with his colleagues in oratory, because he wanted to create a new concept of religion for the elite, for whom a debate was going on about what the role was of religion in their lives as opposed to that of the 'masses'.

It is still hard to combine the two aspects religion and oratory in research of Aristides,

71 Baumgart, H., (1874), *Aelius Aristides als Repräsentant der sophistischen Rhetorik des zweiten Jahrhunderts der Kaiserzeit*, Leipzig.

72 Boulanger, A., (1923), *Aelius Aristide et la sophistique dans la province d'Asie au Iie siècle de notre ère*, Paris, 163-172.

73 Dodds, E.R., (1951), *The Greeks and the irrational*, Berkely / Los Angelos / London, 113-116.

74 Festugière, A.J., (1954), *Personal religion among the Greeks*, Berkely / Los Angelos, 85-104.

75 Downie, (2013), *At the limits of art: literary study of Aelius Aristides' Hieroi Logoi*, 14-27; Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*.

76 Stephens, J.C. (1982), *The religious experience of Aelius Aristides: an interdisciplinary approach*, Santa Barbara, vii.

77 Misch, G., (1950), *A history of autobiography in antiquity*, vol, II, London, 499-500, 505-507.

78 Perkins, J., (1992), “The “Self” as sufferer”, *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 85.3, 245-272.

79 Ibidem, 262.

Downie for example still wants to focus on the rhetorical aspect, although she wants to pay attention to the religious aspect as well. Others, like Petsalis-Diomidis, are able to combine both better, although Petsalis-Diomidis seems to focus more on the religious aspect when she proposes to highlight the concepts of the body, landscape and travel in the text and interprets the text as a pilgrimage text.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Downie, (2013), *At the limits of art: literary study of Aelius Aristides' Hieroi Logoi*, 30-36; Petsalis-Diomidis, A., (2010), *Truly beyond wonders', Aelius Aristides and the cult of Asklepios*, Oxford, 128-129.

Chapter 3: text analysis

In this chapter I will analyse the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides, in which I will focus on a few aspects of his travels, to better understand what pilgrimage in antiquity looked like. First, his motivation and the instruction he got from the god, second, the journey itself, and lastly, the destinations of his pilgrimage, which are quite diverse. But before I can do that, I need to work out how I can read the text and from which perspective I will look at it. All the translations of the passages in Greek are mine.

3.1 Interpretation

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there have been two ways of looking at the text: either as a rhetorical work or as a religious text. The first approach focuses more on the purpose of Aristides' text and the formal aspects, while the second focuses on the story that is contained in the text and the experiences of the author. In this chapter I will mostly work from the religious perspective, as we are concerned with pilgrimage, which, at least in antiquity is a religious phenomenon. The rhetorical aspect will sometimes be included in the analysis, but is not the main focus here.

Furthermore, I will be working from an etic perspective, which means that I will look at the text through the eyes of someone from the twenty-first century – as I am not able to do anything else. I will put the things I see in the text into a framework of knowledge from my own culture and time. Of course, the word pilgrimage is in itself a framework from which we try to understand Aristides' travels. However, we still know too little about that framework in the case of antiquity. We need to refine it and find out how we can use it in the best way. So while I use a working definition of pilgrimage in this chapter, we have to keep in mind the question: does this definition work?

Finally, I also need to say something about the theoretic framework from which I will be working. In this thesis I assume that pilgrimage really did happen in antiquity, which I explained in the first chapter. Besides that, I also assume the framework of embeddedness⁸¹ when it concerns religion in antiquity, because I think that it explains the relationship between religion and society the best. Furthermore, I assume that sacrifice is giving something to a god in return for something. It does not matter what is given, it can be anything: meat of animals, libations, or even human energy.⁸² I realise that sacrifice may be more complicated, but this thesis is too small for that

81 As discussed earlier, see: Eidinow, E., "Ancient Greek religion: 'Embedded' ... and embodied", 54-79; Parker, (1986), "Greek Religion", 265.

82 Cf Naerebout, F.G., (2006), 'Spending energy as an important part of ancient Greek religious behaviour', *Kodai* 13/14 (2003/2004), 9-18; Sansone, D., (1988), *Greek athletics and the genesis of sport*, Berkeley / Los Angeles /

discussion, so for now I will work with this limited definition.

Rutherford and Elsner made a typology of pilgrimage, in which they categorize several forms of pilgrimage, according to several aspects of pilgrimage.⁸³ The type healing pilgrimage, for example, is based on motivation: there is an ill person, who wants to be healed. But festival pilgrimage as a type is based upon the destination, whereas local pilgrimage is based on the distance of the journey, and so on. Healing pilgrimage is one important category, which is appropriate for Aristides' case.

3.2 The command of the god

In this paragraph I discuss how Aristides had contact with the god Asclepius and how this is related to his pilgrimages. Everytime Aristides goes on a pilgrimage, he does it at the command of the god. Sometimes he tells us how the god commands him:

Ἔτει δεκάτῳ περιήκοντι τῆς ἀσθενείας ἐπελθὼν φάσμα ἔλεγε τοιάδε, ἐγὼ τὴν αὐτὴν νόσον νοσήσας περιούντι τῷ δεκάτῳ ἔτει, βουλομένου τοῦ Ἀσκληπιοῦ πορευθεὶς ἐπὶ τοὺς τόπους, ἐν οἷς ἡ νόσος ἤρξατο συλλέγεσθαι, ἀπηλλάγην. τοιαῦτ' ἦν τὰ λεχθέντα καὶ ἐδόκει γεγράφθαι.

Then in the turn of the tenth [year] of my illness, an apparition came to me and said these things: While I was sick with the same disease in the turn of the tenth [year], because Asclepius wanted it, after I travelled to the place, where the disease started to come together, I got rid of it. Such were the things that were said and it seemed to have been written.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.1⁸⁴

Aristides tells us here about the apparition (φάσμα) he had, which is in this case quite clear to him: Aristides has to go back to the place where he was ill for the first time to get cured. That is also what he is going to do. There are also many other dreams in the *Hieroi Logoi* that are not this clear and easy to interpret, and they do not always indicate a journey. More often he just tells us his conclusions: “He sent me to Chius, saying that he sent me because of a purgation.” (2.11), or “In the middle of those phlebotomies he ordered a bath for me in the Caicus.” (2.48), or “And the god showed me while I was in Smyrna the whole time, and it was necessary to go on a journey again.” (5.1), and there are many more examples.

London, 37-56.

83 Elsner, Rutherford, (2005) “Introduction”, 12-29.

84 All translations of the Greek passages are mine, in consultation with Behr, 1981, unless otherwise specified.

As I already discussed in the second chapter, dreams were perceived as highly predictive in antiquity, so it is not strange that Aristides lets his dreams lead him. What is interesting though, is that he does not need to go to somewhere special to have contact with the god. I defined pilgrimage as travel to a place with the aim to communicate with the supernatural. But Aristides does not need to go elsewhere: the god visits him in dreams when he is home as well. His contact with the god is frequent and usually he does not need help explaining his visions and dreams. So what is his motivation to go on a pilgrimage, besides the god's command?

I think he goes to a specific place to do something that cannot be done anywhere else. I do not mean that for example sacrificing can only be done in a temple, but rather that only in a special place a certain act is meaningful and will provide results. The god gives meaning to these places: his command gives meaning to the place where Aristides is supposed to go. In the next passage, it is the prophecy that gives the journey and the act meaning:

ἐν μέσῳ δὲ τούτων τῶν φλεβοτομιῶν προστάττει μοι τὸ λουτρὸν τὸ ἐν τῷ Καϊκῷ, καὶ ἔδει τὰ ἔρια ἀπορρίψαντα ὁδοιπορεῖν καὶ λουῖσθαι· ὄψεσθαι δὲ καὶ ἵππον λούμενον καὶ τὸν νεωκόρον ἐστῶτα ἐπὶ τῆς ὄχθης τὸν Ἀσκληπιακόν. Ταῦτα προεῖρητο καὶ ταῦτα ἐγίγνετο. ἔτι μὲν προσιὼν τῷ ποταμῷ τὸν ἵππον ὄρῳ λούμενον. λουμένου δέ μου παρῆν ὁ νεωκόρος καὶ ἐστῶς ἐπὶ τῆς ὄχθης ἐώρα. ἡ δὲ ἐπὶ τούτῳ κουφότης καὶ ἀναψυχή θεῶ μὲν καὶ μάλα ράδια γνῶναι, ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ ἢ νῶ λαβεῖν ἢ ἐνδείξασθαι λόγῳ οὐ πάνυ ράδιον.

In the middle of these phlebotomies he ordered a bath for me in the Caicus. And it was necessary, after I threw away wool, to walk there and to bathe myself, and that I would also see a horse bathing and the temple warden Asclepiacus standing on the bank. These things he predicted and these things happened. While I was going to the river I saw the horse bathing. While I bathed, the temple warden was present and standing on the bank, he saw me. The lightness after this and the refreshment was rather easy to understand for a god, but for a person it was not at all easy to understand nor to put down in words.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.48-49

The god commands (προστάττει) Aristides to do certain things: to go to the Caicus and wash himself there (λουῖσθαι), but first he has to cast away pieces of wool. There is no particular meaning to this, except the promise of a cure by doing that is so strong, that Aristides obeys. Furthermore, the prophecy that he would see the horse bathing and the temple warden Asclepiacus, makes the reality seem more meaningful: if he really sees the horse and the temple warden, then his act of

bathing in the river will indeed have the result of him feeling better, which it does: it is even indescribably good.⁸⁵

So Aristides' contact with the god is very close, because this contact is what gives his journeys and his cures, which together form his pilgrimages, their meaning. Without this contact, without the command of the god, without the reassurance of the dreams and the signs, Aristides' journeys would be useless and would have no result. So it is clear that the god plays an important role in the life of Aristides and it explains why Aristides gives the control over his movement over to Asclepius.⁸⁶

3.3 The journey

Now that we have discussed how Aristides' journeys started, with the command of the god, we will now look at the journey itself. I would like to discuss a few elements. First of all, I discuss a passage in which Aristides compares his journey to θεωρία, because that can tell us a lot about what Aristides thought his journeys were. Furthermore I discuss Aristides' fellow pilgrims and their role in relation to Aristides. Finally the difficult circumstances of Aristides' journeys can tell us something about the nature of pilgrimage in antiquity.

3.3.1 *Theoria*

One time, Aristides went to the river Aesepus, where he got ill for the first time, in the warm springs there. He had a dream while he was staying at the Temple of Olympian Zeus, which is near his estate.⁸⁷ He is promised a cure there, which suggests some circularity in his life, going back to a place to return without the illness he got there.⁸⁸ So he starts his journey happily:

τότε δ' ὡς εἰς θεωρίαν ἐστελλόμεθα ὑπ' εὐθυμίας αἰθρίας τε οὔσης θαυμαστῆς καὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ δεχομένης.

Then we started our journey, as if on pilgrimage, with cheerfulness, because the weather was wonderful and the road inviting.

Aelius Aristides, 4.2

85 More about this aspect of indescribable experiences in Brink, (2016), Ill on the road, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages from the perspectives of landscape, movement and narrative, 39-41.

86 More about the aspect of movement in Brink, (2016), Ill on the road, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages from the perspectives of landscape, movement and narrative, 31-37.

87 For more about this, see the next paragraph: Destinations, 35-36.

88 For more about patterns in his journeys, see Brink, (2016), Ill on the road, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages from the perspectives of landscape, movement and narrative, 41-42.

With this sentence I started my introduction, where I also mentioned the use of the word θεωρία, which I translated as pilgrimage. But the meaning of the word is more complicated than that. θεωρία is translated by the LSJ as “1) the sending of θεωροί or state-ambassadors to the oracles or games, or, collectively, the θεωροί themselves, embassy, mission; 2) being a spectator at the theatre or games; 3) viewing, beholding, to go abroad to see the world, or pilgrimage”. The first option is as it is used by Rutherford in his analysis of θεωρία as state pilgrimage and the second option is connected to the first.⁸⁹ Rutherford in fact mentions all the meanings mentioned in the LSJ, but adds that the third possibility is only used in “a very limited number of cases” and does not discuss the passage from Euripides, which I will discuss below. In his book he focuses on the state pilgrims who were delegates, whose journeys he also sees as a form of pilgrimage. His explanation can be summarized thus: whether θεωρία is state pilgrimage depends on how you define pilgrimage.⁹⁰ Within my own working definition of pilgrimage θεωρία is indeed pilgrimage.

Aristides did not go to a festival or an oracle as state ambassador. The third option is more relevant: one of the possibilities is pilgrimage. Parallels for such a use for the word can be found elsewhere, for example in Herodotus:

αὐτῶν δὴ ὧν τούτων καὶ τῆς θεωρίας ἐκδημήσας ὁ Σόλων εἵνεκεν ἐς Αἴγυπτον ἀπίκητο παρὰ Ἄμασιν καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐς Σάρδις παρὰ Κροῖσον.

For this reason, and to see the world, Solon left Athens and visited Amasis in Egypt and Croesus at Sardis

Herodotus, *The Histories*, 1.30⁹¹

This is quite a famous passage in Herodotus about Solon, who goes abroad “to see the world”. The same meaning of the world can be found in Thucydides:

τοῖς δ’ ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ τῆς τε ἀπουσίας πόθῳ ὄψεως καὶ θεωρίας,

... upon those in the flower of their age, through a longing for far-off sights and scenes, ...

Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 6.24.10⁹²

89 Rutherford, (2013), *State pilgrims and sacred observers in Ancient Greece, a study of Theoria and theoroi*, 4-6.

90 Ibidem, 12-14.

91 Translation: Godly, A.D., 1926.

92 Translation: Smith, C.F., 1928.

In this passage the young people in the city are opposed to the older people in the city. The young people want to go to war, because they wanted to see the “far-off sights and scenes”. In these passages θεωρία resembles tourism: going abroad to see something unfamiliar. Then there is also this passage from Euripides' *Bacchae*:

ἐπεὶ θεράπνας τῆσδε Θηβαίας χθονὸς
λιπόντες ἐξέβημεν Ἀσωποῦ ροάς,
λέπας Κιθαιρώνειον εἰσεβάλλομεν
Πενθεύς τε κάγώ--δεσπότη γὰρ εἰπόμην--
ξένος θ' ὃς ἡμῖν πομπὸς ἦν θεωρίας.

Pentheus and I (for I was attending on my master) and the stranger who was our escort to the festival had left behind the settlements of Thebes and had crossed the river Asopus and were striking into the rocky uplands of Cithaeron.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, 1043-1047⁹³

The context: a messenger tells the chorus of bacchants that Pentheus is dead, after he was discovered by the baccants he was going to see. He was betrayed by the stranger who accompanied them, who turned out to be Dionysus. So the θεωρία to which Pentheus and the messenger were going is the sight of the bacchants performing their ritual. In his translation, Roux translates θεωρία as “pèlerinage”, because of its religious implications. He thinks this is appropriate here, although the word θεωρία is not the same as a pilgrimage.⁹⁴ His choice and the reference of the LSJ make some sense, because in this passage, at first sight the meaning of θεωρία is different than in the previous passages. In the passages from Herodotus and Thucydides θεωρία resembled tourism and could be translated as 'going abroad to see', while in this passage from Euripides θεωρία is going to a place to see a ritual, which gives it a more religious connotation. At the same time, in Euripides θεωρία is inappropriate, because Pentheus was not allowed to see what happened there and was killed for it by the bacchants. Furthermore, Pentheus went to see the ritual because it was so strange. It was not religious devotion, but curiosity that drove him and for that he is punished. So this also resembles the touristic form of θεωρία we saw previously. This does not of course mean that such a touristic journey cannot also be pilgrimage, because according to our definition a journey to a foreign country can also take the form of a pilgrimage, depending on what the motivation and

93 Translation: Kovacs, D., 2003.

94 Roux, J., (1972), *Euripide, les Bacchantes, vol. II, commentaire*, Paris, 564.

destination are. But the meaning of θεωρία is not equivalent to pilgrimage.

So how is this related to the use of the word in the passage of Aristides? In the way Aristides writes it down, he is not saying that his journey is the same as *theoria*, but it resembles it. Aristides' journeys were not *theoria* in the technical sense: he is not a state ambassador and he is not going to a festival or to another city-state. Instead he is going to a river, to the warm springs. So why does he compare it to state pilgrimage or tourism? It seems to be referring to his happiness on the journey, which he maybe associates with θεωρία. That is not impossible, probably the state ambassadors looked forward to their journey to another city state and a festival of a few days and also a touristic trip to a foreign country as a happy journey. But would that be all?

We do not know to which meaning of θεωρία Aristides referred. If he meant state pilgrimage, then that would mean that he saw a commonality between his journey and state pilgrimage, a connection we already have seen and have expressed with the word pilgrimage, but the word pilgrimage was not yet used in antiquity. This could be a sign that these forms of travel were seen as somehow related to each other in their nature. If he meant it in the touristic sense of a journey to foreign places, then he is just making a comparison with another journey, which is not necessarily religious nor a pilgrimage. The first option is of course more exciting than the second, but there is no way of telling which is more probable.

3.3.2 Fellow pilgrims?

In the several fragments we have already read, we have seen that Aristides is often accompanied by some people. Usually they are servants, but not every time. We investigate these fellow travellers and see whether these are fellow pilgrims and how Aristides' relationship with them is.

καὶ τὸ πλοῖον ἐκ πρῶρας ἀρθὲν ἐπὶ πρύμναν ὠκλάσε καὶ μικροῦ κατέδου· ἔπειτα ἐπεκλύζετο ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν· ἔπειτα ἀπεστράφη ἔξω πρὸς τὸ πέλαγος. ἰδρῶς δὲ καὶ θόρυβος ναυτῶν καὶ βοαὶ πᾶσαι τῶν ἐμπλεόντων, συνέπλεον γὰρ δὴ καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδείων τινές· ἐμοὶ δὲ τοσοῦτον ἤρκεσεν εἰπεῖν, ὧ Ἄσκληπιέ. πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παντοῖα κινδυνεύσαντες καὶ τέλος περὶ αὐτὴν τὴν καταγωγὴν μυριάκις ἀνατραπέντες καὶ ἀπωσθέντες καὶ πολλὴν ἀγωνίαν τοῖς ὀρῶσι παρασχόντες διεσώθημεν ἀγαπητῶς καὶ μόλις.

And the ship rose up at the prow and sank down at the stern and almost sunk. Then it overflowed here and there, and next it turned around, away to the sea. There was sweat and the noise of the seamen and all the screaming of the passengers – because some of my friends sailed with me – but for me it was enough to say, 'O Asclepius'. After we had risked

so many and such diverse risks, and finally at the landing were many times turned around and pushed back, providing much anguish for those who were looking, we were saved barely and scarcely.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.12

In this passage we see that Aristides brought several friends (ἐπιτηδείων). He is on his way to Chius for a purgation. It is not entirely clear why he brought his friends, and he does not mention a reason. Are these people fellow pilgrims? If they are, they would be enduring the same dangers and hardships as Aristides. That is clearly the case, as they are in the same dangerous situation at sea as Aristides. But is their goal the same as Aristides? According to our definition they are on a pilgrimage if they are going to a place to have contact with the god, but we do not know whether they were going to do that. Maybe they were just accompanying Aristides on his journey, maybe they were curious about what would happen, because miracles seem to happen around Aristides, or maybe they just went with him and would later depart for another journey elsewhere. Unfortunately, the conclusion is: we do not know. In another instance we get to hear more about the friends (φίλων) that were with him:

ἐκέλευσε λούσασθαι τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ διὰ τῆς πόλεως ῥέοντι· ὁ δ' ἔρρει πολὺς ἐξ ὄμβρων, καὶ προεῖπεν ὡς τριῶν τῶν λουτρῶν ἐσομένων. γενομένου δὲ τοῦ προστάγματος ὡς ἐπύθοντο συνῆλθον οἱ σπουδαιότατοι τῶν φίλων παραπέμποντες καὶ φροντίζοντες ὅ τι ἀποβήσοιτο, καὶ ἅμα ἀντ' ἄλλης ἱστορίας ποιούμενοι ἰδεῖν τὰ γινόμενα, καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα χειμέριος ἦν. (...) ὡς δὲ ἐγενόμεθα ἐπὶ τῆς ὄχθης, οὐδεὶς τῶν φίλων ἐθάρρει παρακελεύσασθαι, καίτοι παρῆν μὲν ὁ νεωκόρος αὐτὸς, παρῆσαν δὲ καὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων τινές, ἄνδρες καλοὶ κάγαθοί, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀγωνιῶντες καὶ ἀπορούμενοι φανεροὶ πάντες ἦσαν. καὶ γὰρ τά τε ἱμάτια ἀπερρίπτουν καὶ καλέσας τὸν θεὸν ἵεμαι εἰς μέσον τὸν πόρον. (...) ὡς δ' ἐξέβην ἐπὶ τὴν ὄχθην, θέρμη διὰ παντὸς ἐχώρει τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἀτμὸς ἄνω πολὺς, καὶ πάντα ἐπεφοίνικτο, καὶ τὸν παιᾶνα ἤδομεν. καὶ ὡς ἐπανήειμεν, αὐθις αὖ ὕδωρ ἐπιγίγνεται ἐκ Διὸς, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν λουτρῶν εἰς τοῦτο ἐτελεύτησεν.

He [Asclepius] ordered me to wash in the river which flows through the city, but it flowed high because of the rain, and he predicted that there would be three baths. After the command had happened, when they learned about it, the most zealous of my friends came together, escorting me and thinking about what would happen, and at the same time to see the things that would happen instead of from another story. And it was a stormy day. (...)

When we were at the river bank, none of my friends dared to encourage me, although the temple warden himself was present, and some of the philosophers were also present, good and noble men, but nevertheless they all seemed in anguish and troubled. And I threw off my clothing and having called upon the god, I threw myself in the middle of the river. (...) When I got out and on the riverbank, a warmth spread through my whole body and much steam rose up, and everything became red, and we sang the Paean. And when we went back, again there was Zeus' water, and in this way the third of the baths ended.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.51-53

In this passage Aristides brings some of his friends to a bath in the river. He tells us a bit about them: they are the most zealous (οἱ σπουδαιότατοι) of his friends, among them are philosophers (φιλοσόφων) and a temple warden, and they are good and noble men (ἄνδρες καλοὶ κάγαθοί). Probably these friends of Aristides are like him people from the intellectual elite, who had an education. The subjects of philosophy, oratory and religion were closely interrelated in this period and in some way Aristides saw himself as a philosopher as well. Probably there were many discussions among his friends and Aristides about his illness and the best cure. Nonetheless they are very worried about Aristides when – at the command of the god – he bathes in the cold and wild river water. Aristides puts this in opposition to the statement that they were good and noble men: he thinks that the more reasonable people should understand that he had to follow the command of the god to be cured and thinks that their disbelief is in contrast to their status as philosophers. But are these friends fellow pilgrims? They do not participate in the ritual of the bath, although afterwards they do participate in the giving thanks to the god (τὸν παιᾶνα ἤδομεν). They seem mostly concerned with Aristides health and are curious about what is going to happen. They are not there with the same goal: to get in contact with the god to get something done. Instead they are passive and only participate in the ritual at the end: the giving thanks. So they are not fellow pilgrims.

One time, Aristides explicitly speaks about fellow pilgrims:

μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐλθόντα εἰς τὸ ἱερόν θῦσαι τῷ Ἀσκληπιῷ τέλεια καὶ στήσαι κρατῆρας
ἱεροῦς καὶ νεῖμαι μοίρας ἱερὰς ἅπασιν τοῖς συμφοιτηταῖς·

After this [it was necessary] to go to the Temple to sacrifice a full-grown animal to Asclepius and to place sacred bowls and to distribute the sacred shares among all my fellow pilgrims.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.27

This passage is part of a command by Asclepius to Aristides, whom the god just told that he would die in a few days, that was his fate. To prevent him from dying, Aristides has to do quite a lot of things, among which: to go to the Temple, to make a sacrifice to Asclepius, and to share the meat of the sacrifice with the people that travel with him (τοῖς συμφοιτηταῖς).⁹⁵ He does not elaborate who these people were, as it is only a command, but there will be fellow pilgrims according to Asclepius. They will participate in an important ritual: the feast after a sacrifice, the sharing of the meat, and in this case also important: they will share in his journey.

So it appears that while Aristides has no fellow pilgrims, he is usually not alone. In the second passage in this paragraph, he is followed by other people, either there to help him as his servants, or there to see what is going to happen, out of intellectual curiosity. Sometimes he has fellow pilgrims, with whom he shares the sacred rituals at the Temple. Unfortunately, Aristides does not tell us much about his fellow pilgrims or the followers that are not fellow pilgrims. These curious friends have an important role to play, although it is different from that of a fellow pilgrim. Whereas a fellow pilgrim also has a problem, because of which he wants to contact the supernatural, Aristides' friends do not have this goal in mind. Their intellectual curiosity for Aristides' cures and miracles, is part of their intellectual culture as philosophers and orators. It is quite possible that a pilgrim from the elite had a different kind of fellow pilgrims. He did not need companions on the road for his own safety, because he could use servants for that, so instead he brings friends, who do not participate, but look on and analyse the miracles that happen. The one time that fellow pilgrims are mentioned is in a dream of Aristides about Asclepius, who commands him to share the meat of his sacrifice with his fellow pilgrims. This aspect of sharing is not found elsewhere in the *Hieroi Logoi*, which shows us Aristides' solitude.

3.3.4 Difficult circumstances

Something else also gives meaning to the journey. Difficulties on the road are a theme throughout the *Hieroi Logoi*.⁹⁶ But Aristides seems to be tireless:

ἤδη δὲ βαθείας ἐσπέρας ἦλθον εἰς Λάρισσαν, καί μοι ἀσμένῳ γίγνεται ὡς τά τε ὀχήματα
οὐ κατείληπτο καὶ τὰ τῆς καταγωγῆς οὐδὲν ἀμείνω τῶν πρόσθεν ἦν, ἀλλ' ἀνάγκη παρῆν

95 Συμφοιτητής means fellow pilgrim according to LSJ, but it is a composition of two words: συμ (together, with) and φοιτάω, which is a verb which means according to the LSJ “to go back and forth”, “to go or roam around”. The LSJ gives as a translation for συμφοιτάω “go regularly to [a place] together”. So these fellow pilgrims are the people that travel with Aristides, not just the people that were already in the Temple.

96 For the influence of the landscape and the weather on Aristides' journeys, see Brink, (2016), III on the road, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages from the perspectives of landscape, movement and narrative, 25-31.

ἔχεσθαι τῆς ὁδοῦ καὶ διακαρτερεῖν. καὶ μέσαι τε ἤδη νύκτες ἢ καὶ ἔτι πορρωτέρω, καὶ γιγνόμεθα ἐν Κύμῃ, καὶ πάντα ἀπεκέκλειτο καὶ μάλ' ἀγαπητῶς ἐμοί. παρακαλέσας δὲ τοὺς ἐπομένους, οἱ παρέπεμπόν με ἀπὸ τοῦ χωρίου προσταλαιπωρῆσαι καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν, ὡς οὐκ εἰσόμενον αὐτοῖς, πάντως δὲ ὀλίγον τ' εἶναι καὶ προφέρειν οὐκ ὀλίγον μοι δοκεῖν τῆς προαιρέσεως διαμαρτεῖν, ἐχώρουν ἔξω πυλῶν, καὶ ψυχός τε ἤδη ἦν ὑγρότερον, ὥστε καὶ θέρμης δεῖσθαι.

And deep in the evening I arrived at Larissa, and I was happy that the carriages had not caught up with me and nothing of the inn was better than the one before, but it was necessary to continue on the road and to endure. And now it was in the middle of the night or maybe even later, and we were in Cyme and everything was closed, which was fine by me. After I had called the servants, who escorted me from my land, and I had told them to persevere also for the rest of the journey, because there was no entry for them, that it was a little further altogether, and that it seemed not a little better to me to change the plan, we went out of the gates. And now the cold was more moist, so that I needed warmth.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.4-5

Aristides is on a journey to Pergamum and while his servants are hesitant about moving on, Aristides seems to be in a hurry to continue. He does not want to wait for the carriages, he does not want to sleep in an inn with bad rooms, but in stead he continues his journey.

ἐν ὄσῳ δὲ πῦρ τε ἐπορίζετο καὶ πορισθέντος ἔμελλον χρίσεσθαι τε καὶ πίεσθαι, καὶ δὴ ἑωσφόρος τε ὑπερεῖχε καὶ φῶς ἡμέρας ὑπέφαινε, ἐδόκει χρῆναι μὴ μαλθακίζεσθαι μηδὲ καθεύδειν ἡμέρας οὔσης, ἀλλ' ἔργον ἔργῳ συνάπτειν καὶ βαδίζειν εἰς τὸ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἱερὸν, εἰς Γρυνεῖον, εἰωθός μοι καὶ ἰόντι καὶ ἐπανιόντι θύειν τῷ θεῷ.

In the time the fire was brought, and after it was brought, I planned to wash myself and drink, and already the morningstar rose above the horizon, the light of the day began to shine, and it seemed to be necessary to not be soft and to sleep while it was day, but to add work to work, and walk to the Temple of Apollo in Gryneion, as it was custom for me to go sacrifice to the god both when I went and when I returned.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.7

When he finally stops somewhere, it takes a lot of time before he has actually the time to eat and

drink, but when the fire is finally ready, instead he decides to walk to Gryneion, where the Temple of Apollo stood, because he does not want to be soft and sleep during the day (μὴ μαλθακίζεσθαι μηδὲ καθεύδειν ἡμέρας οὔσης). Again he seems to have a lot of energy on this journey.

καὶ ὁ βορέας ἐπέκειτο πάντα κινῶν. ἦν δὲ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον ἐργώδη τὰ περὶ τὴν φάρυγγα, ὑπὸ τε φλυκταίνης συνεχοῦς πιεζόμενα καὶ ὑπὸ παντὸς ἀεὶ τοῦ συντυχόντος ἀναξαινόμενα. τότε δὲ τῆς τε ἄμμου πολλῆς ἅμα τῷ ἀνέμῳ φερομένης ἐπὶ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τοῦ κονιορτοῦ σύρδην ἀπανταχόθεν ἐμπίπτοντος οὐκ ἀγωνιᾶν μᾶλλον τι παρειστήκει μοι ἢ θαρρεῖν· ἅμα μὲν οἶον ἀπονοία τινὶ καὶ παρατάξει, οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἀναφυγὴ, ἅμα δ' ὡς ἀντειχόν παρὰ πᾶν τὸ εἰκός. Οἱ δὲ ἰατροὶ τὰ πρὸ τοῦδε ἀνακογχυλιάζειν τε ἐκέλευον καὶ σκέπην ἀκριβεστάτην καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα εἰσηγοῦντο. Δευτέρᾳ δὲ ἢ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ παρελθὼν τὴν πατρῶαν οἰκίαν γίγνομαι ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου· καὶ θύω πρὶν καταλῦσαι τὴν ὁδὸν, ὥσπερ μοι καὶ τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς εὐθύς ἐν Σμύρνῃ προεῖρητο, ἐλαύνειν ὀρθὴν εἰς Διὸς χωρίον. καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἤδη ῥάω τὰ τῆς διαίτης ἐπιφανῶς ἦν.

And the north wind lay heavy upon us, moving everything. And it was in that time that troubles around my throat started, because underneath it was pressed down by a constant lesion and turned apart by everything that touched it. And although from time to time much sand was carried into my face, and dust was thrown violently from all sides, and being courageous stood no more before my mind than anguish, at the one hand in some way through some desperation and obstinacy, because there was no escape, but on the other hand also because I hold on against all odds. The doctors before ordered to break open and proposed the most precise covering and such things. I arrived at the second or third day at the house of my fathers in the Temple of Olympian Zeus, and I sacrificed before I ended the journey, because he had told me beforehand from the beginning in Smyrna, to go straight to the land of Zeus. And after this my diet was clearly easy.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.9-10

Later, when he is returning to his estate and the Temple of Olympian Zeus nearby, he is troubled by a lesion in his throat. His journey is now particularly difficult, with the pain in his throat and a sand storm, but he endures it, about which he is happy, and he is at the same time confident and anxious, although it is not sure about what. He seems determined to finish his journey on his own strength, which he has much more than he expected, while the doctors prescribed him to be very careful.

In the next passage, the journey is also difficult, but the god helps him:

ἐξόπισθεν μὲν γὰρ βορέου πνεῦμα ἐπέκειτο οἶον ψυχρότατον, νεφέλας ἐλαῦνον μελαίνας καὶ πυκνάς, ἐκ δεξιᾶς δὲ ἅπαντα κατενίφετο, ὅτε δὲ ἐν ἀριστερᾷ, καὶ ταῦτ' ἦν παρὰ πᾶσαν τὴν ἡμέραν τε καὶ τὴν ὁδόν. Μία τε οἶον ζώνη διὰ παντός τοῦ ἀέρος ἦγεν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν κατ' αὐτῆς τῆς ὁδοῦ τεταμένη, σκέπην ἅμα καὶ φῶς ἔχουσα. καὶ πάμπολυ δὴ τῶν ἄλλων ἀποσπᾶσας ἦγον εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν, μεθ' ἑνὸς ἀκολούθου σταδίου οὐκ ἔλαττον ἢ τριακοσίους διαδραμών. καὶ ἦν μὲν τῆς ὥρας τὸ μετὰ λύχνους τοὺς ἱερούς· ἐν ὅσῳ δὲ τοὺς τε ὑπολειφθέντας ἐπανέμενον καὶ καταγωγὴ ἐπορίζετο, διέτριψα τοὺς τε νεῶς περιῶν ὡς εἶχον ἐκ τῆς ὁδοῦ καὶ βαδίζων ἄνω καὶ κάτω περὶ τὸ ἱερόν.

For from behind a north wind pressed, which was very cold, and drove forth black and thick clouds, on the right everything was covered with snow, on the left it was raining, and this was for the entire day and the entire road. But one zone, as it were led through the whole air to the temple, stretching over this road, giving both shelter and light. And while I was drawing far apart from the others, I lead the way to the sanctuary, together with one follower, running nothing less than three hundred stades. It was then the time after the Sacred Lamps; I waited for those who were so far left behind and an inn was made ready. I passed the time by walking around the temples, just as I went from the road, and I walked up and down around the sanctuary.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.27-28

A wondrous miracle happens: the god makes a way through the snow and the rain to the temple of Asclepius in Pergamum. Aristides makes use of it: he runs (διαδραμών) to the Temple, together with someone else. Threehundred stades is quite a distance: 57 kilometers.⁹⁷ Running this far seems almost impossible. And when he has arrived, he still has the energy to walk around at the temple site. One could wonder how it is possible that Aristides has this much energy. It is because of the help of the god, which also becomes clear from a sentence a little further in the text:

καὶ μὴν τά γε ἄλλα σαφῶς ἐγίγνετο σὺν θεῷ...

And also other things happened clearly with the God's help...

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.29

97 Schröder, H.O., (1986), *Heilige Berichte, Einleitung, deutsche Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Heidelberg, 131.

This sentence implies that the previous thing also happened with the god's help.

Another question to ask is though: why does Aristides do this? Why is he in such a hurry in the first passage, and why does he run so far in the second? It almost seems like Aristides is spending his energy on purpose. He does not have much energy, because of his illness, but thanks to the god he can travel for a long time during his pilgrimages. What if he is giving his energy to the god, as a kind of sacrifice?

This idea is not completely my own, I owe a lot to David Sansone⁹⁸ and Frits Naerebout.⁹⁹ Sansone explains in his discussion of the origin of sports in ancient Greece, the possibility that energy can be seen as a kind of sacrifice to the gods, especially when for example sports were a part of the Olympian Games, which were dedicated to Zeus.¹⁰⁰ This is related to his idea of rituals, which he lends from Lorentz,¹⁰¹ and he traces the source of sports back to the early days of the huntsman. He uses the theory of Meuli, expanded by Burkert, according to which sacrifices are very diverse and from different aspects of life, that go back to very early in the history of mankind. According to him, sport is a remnant of a form of sacrifice: the giving of energy, so he can later get energy again.¹⁰²

Naerebout agrees with Sansone on the idea of human energy as a sacrifice to the gods, although he dismisses his “speculations” about the origin of sports. He also mentions other areas where the same could be true, including pilgrimage: “One can think of mock combat, initiation rites, ordeals, *pilgrimage over long distance and through inhospitable terrain, ...*”¹⁰³ Furthermore and very important, he gives evidence for his claim, by analysing two inscriptions.¹⁰⁴

I think these are valuable ideas when we look at our own case: especially if energy is so rare, as in the case of an ill person, energy can be very valuable. The stades that Aristides ran to the Temple can be seen as a sacrifice to Asclepius, who also gave him the energy in the first place. This is an interesting idea of what pilgrimage may be: a sacrifice. Not every pilgrimage of Aristides always involved these amounts of energy spent, nor was every journey as difficult, but some journeys were also dangerous, as travelling always was in antiquity.

But why is pilgrimage then sacrifice to the gods and are other forms of travel just travel? This is because of the meaning that is given to the journey and the place towards which one travels,

98 Sansone, (1988), *Greek athletics and the genesis of sport*.

99 Naerebout, F.G., (2003-2004), “Spending energy as an important part of ancient greek religious behaviour”, *Kodai, Journal of Ancient History*, vol 13/14, 9-18.

100 Sansone, (1988), *Greek athletics and the genesis of sport*, 37-41.

101 Idem, 30.

102 Idem, 62-64.

103 Naerebout, F.G., (2003-2004), “Spending energy as an important part of ancient greek religious behaviour”, *Kodai, Journal of Ancient History*, vol 13/14, 13, the emphasis is mine.

104 Idem, 13-14.

as can also be seen in my working definition. If one takes the trouble to travel somewhere, just because for example the god commanded it, or because one thinks that someone or something can help him, then a special meaning is given to this place, as we already discussed, but also to the journey. By going somewhere to make contact with the divine and to get something done from the divine, the journey itself gets meaning and the energy becomes a sacrifice towards this god, as the journey is undertaken for the god and towards the god. In return for the energy and other sacrifices, the god can give something back to the pilgrim, for example his health.

3.3.4 Conclusion

The journey is a major aspect of pilgrimage, as we have seen in the literature about pilgrimage. First of all, we have analysed the meaning of *theoria*, to which Aristides compared his journey. There are two options: either he compared it to state pilgrimage, which meant that he saw some resemblance between state pilgrimage and his own healing pilgrimage, although there was not yet a overarching word for that resemblance, like pilgrimage is now, or he compares it to a touristic journey to foreign sites. Also important for the journey is the presence of fellow pilgrims. Aristides' has no fellow pilgrims, except for one time in a dream of Asclepius, but in stead has friends and servants. These friends are part of his intellectual milieu and fulfill a different role, that of bystander. Furthermore, the lack of fellow pilgrims of Aristides shows his solitude in his experiences of his pilgrimages. Scott Scullion thought the journey was not that important in ancient pilgrimage, which made it for him clear, among other reasons, that using the concept pilgrimage for going to the temple was not appropriate. But with Aristides' case we have shown that the journey is in fact of quite some importance.¹⁰⁵ Aristides encounters a lot of difficulties on his journeys. I linked this with the theory of Sansone and Naerebout that human energy can be a sacrifice to the gods, which lead me to the conclusion that pilgrimage could also be a sacrifice: the difficult circumstances and the sometimes unbelievable performances of Aristides are a gift for the god, as much as the other sacrifices made at the Temple itself. This makes the journey also very important for Aristides' pilgrimages.

3.4 Destination

The destinations for Aristides' journeys differ. Often he goes to a temple, of which I will give a few examples, but sometimes he goes to a river or to another specific place in nature. Even more special are his journeys to a city to give speeches there, also at the command of the god. These are not pilgrimages at first sight, but we still will take a look at them, because they contain some elements

¹⁰⁵ In my other thesis I show in a different way the importance of the journey: [page numbers].

of pilgrimage. I will discuss whether these journeys to different destinations, are pilgrimages and why they are (not).

3.4.1 Temples

When going on a pilgrimage, going to a temple seems to be the most obvious choice. Aristides did that several times. Often he went to Pergamum, where he also stayed for two years while being incubated:

ἀδελφὰ δὲ τούτων καὶ αἱ τῶν χειμώνων ἀνυποδησίαι αἱ συνεχεῖς καὶ διὰ παντός τοῦ ἱεροῦ κατακλίσεις, ἐν ὑπαίθρῳ τε καὶ ὅπου τύχοι, καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα δὴ ἢ ἐν τῇ ὁδοῦ τοῦ νεῶ ὑπ’ αὐτὴν τὴν ἱερὰν λαμπάδα τῆς θεοῦ γενομένη.

Familiar to these things were also my going barefoot in the winter, and my constant lying down through the whole temple, in the open air and wherever it may be, and this happened not in the least on the road to the Temple under the sacred lamp of the goddess.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.80

The Goddess of the Sacred Lamp (λαμπάδα τῆς θεοῦ) is Hygieia, daughter of Asclepius,¹⁰⁶ and also related to health and healing. Apparently, Aristides performed his incubations not only in the *abaton* in the Temple, but also outside in the open air and on the road. This ritual, as we have discussed, was very specific for an Asklepieion. But that was not the only temple Aristides visited:

ἔδόκει χρῆναι μὴ μαλθακίζεσθαι μηδὲ καθεύδειν φαινεν, ἔδόκει χρῆναι μὴ μαλθακίζεσθαι μηδὲ καθεύδειν ἡμέρας οὔσης, ἀλλ’ ἔργον ἔργῳ συνάπτειν καὶ βαδίζειν εἰς τὸ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἱερὸν, εἰς Γρυνεῖον, εἰωθός μοι καὶ ἰόντι καὶ ἐπανιόντι θύειν τῷ θεῷ.

And it seemed to be necessary to not be soft and to sleep while it was day, but to add work to work, and walk to the Temple of Apollo in Gryneion, as it was custom for me to go sacrifice to the god both when I went and when I returned.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.7

During a journey throughout Asia Minor, to Pergamum, but also past Myrina, Gryneion, Elaea and ending in “the land of Zeus”, he visits the Temple of Apollo, where it is his custom (εἰωθός) to

106 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, 47.

sacrifice to the God. Apollo was seen as the father of Asclepius and was also a healing god, so it is not very special that Aristides goes on a pilgrimage there. It is more interesting that it is his custom to go there. Did he do that everytime he went to Pergamum? He says he sacrificed there both when he went and when he returned (καὶ ἰόντι καὶ ἐπανιόντι). It is not sure which way back and forth he means, but a map shows us where Aristides was going.¹⁰⁷ He was going from Smyrna to Pergamum and passed Myrina, Gryneion and Elaea. After that he moves on to the old hearth, the land of Zeus, which is in the neighbourhood of Hadrianotherae. So it seems not logical that when he returned from Pergamum, he went back to Gryneion, as that was not en route. Instead it is more logical he went to Gryneion, came by the Temple of Apollo, which was maybe near the main road, and when he went further to Elaea, he came by the Temple again. Still it remains unclear what he means exactly. In any case, he went to sacrifice there as a habit. One could discuss whether going to a temple as a habit is still a pilgrimage, but I do not see why not: it contains the same elements of the journey, of making contact with the supernatural and sacrificing something to the god in return for something.

There is another destination to discuss: I already mentioned the land of Zeus, to which Aristides is commanded to go a few times. This was the old hearth (τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἐστίαν), the place where he grew up and where he received his religious education, which is near the estate Laneion. In the whole region, where his estate was, there are (lost) inscriptions, and the god sometimes commanded him to leave marks (for example altars, βωμοὺς) to the god on special places:

ἕκτη γὰρ σχεδὸν ἢ ἑβδόμη ἡμέρα πρότερον ἢ σεῖσαι τὸ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐκέλευσε πέμπσαντα εἰς τὴν ἀρχαίαν ἐστίαν, ἣ ἐστὶ πρὸς τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου, ἱερά τε δὴ δρᾶσαι καὶ βωμοὺς ἰδρύσασθαι ἐν κορυφῇ τοῦ λόφου τοῦ Ἄτυος.

Because on the sixth or seventh day before the beginning of the earthquake, he ordered me that I send someone to the old hearth, which is at the Temple of Olympian Zeus, and to make sacrifices and to establish altars on the top of the hill of Atys.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 3.41

He needs to go the old hearth, that is the Temple of Olympian Zeus (τῷ ἱερῷ τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου). We can see it on the map:¹⁰⁸ the hill of Atys is near Laneion, while the temple is a little further away:

107 See map 1 of Asia Minor in the appendix.

108 See map 2 of Laneion and surroundings in the appendix.

καί μοι γίγνεται πρόσταγμα πορευθῆναι πρὸς τὴν τῶν τροφῶν ἐστίαν, καὶ προσκυνῆσαι τὸ ἔδος τοῦ Διὸς πρὸς ᾧ ἐτρέφόμεν· καὶ φωναί τινες, οἷμαι, καὶ ὁ τρόπος τῆς ἱκετείας διήρητο. χιῶν δ' ἦν οὐκ ὀλίγη καὶ δυσέξοδα παντελῶς, καὶ ἀπεῖχε τὸ οἰκίδιον τῆς οἰκίας πλέον ἢ στάδιον. ἀνέβην ἵππον καὶ ὠχόμεν, καὶ προσεκύνησα, καὶ οὐκ ἔφθην ἐπανελθὼν, καὶ πάντα ἐκεῖνα καθειστήκει.

And a command came to pass for me to go to the hearth of my foster parents, and to make obeisance to the throne of Zeus, by which I was brought up. And there were some utterances, I think, and the way of the supplication was determined. There was not a little snow and it was everywhere hard to get through, and the small house was more than a stade from the main house. I mounted a horse and went, and I made obeisance, and I had not come back, or everything settled down.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 3.20

One stade is only 185 meters, so that is not very far. Is it still pilgrimage when the journey is so short? According to Rutherford and Elsner,¹⁰⁹ this would fall into the category of local pilgrimage. We can see in the second passage that Aristides does go there to make contact with the god, and with the right effects: everything settled down.¹¹⁰ He even makes a short journey on horse, so in the end it would qualify as pilgrimage, although it is very local. Maybe the important aspect is that Asclepius is commanded to go there and not somewhere else. That gives the place a special meaning, as we discussed before, which makes it pilgrimage.

So when we look at these different temples as his destinations, we see that Aristides can visit other gods besides Asclepius. Although he has a special relationship with Asclepius, other gods are also important to placate and ask for help, so he sacrifices to them as well. This fits of course in the picture of polytheistic religion in ancient Greece. Here we can see how the first seemingly monotheistic tendencies are still connected to the polytheistic system.

3.4.2 Bathing

Besides pilgrimages to temples, there are also pilgrimages towards rivers and other places in nature that are not temples. This especially happens a lot in the second book of the *Hieroi Logoi*, with several examples following each other closely. The first passage:

109 Elsner, Rutherford, (2005), "Introduction", 18.

110 For the aspect of the results of a pilgrimage, see Brink, (2016), Ill on the road, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages from the perspectives of landscape, movement and narrative, 35-37.

ἐν μέσῳ δὲ τούτων τῶν φλεβοτομιῶν προστάττει μοι τὸ λουτρὸν τὸ ἐν τῷ Καϊκῷ, καὶ ἔδει τὰ ἔρια ἀπορρίψαντα ὀδοιπορεῖν καὶ λουῖσθαι· ὄψεσθαι δὲ καὶ ἵππον λούμενον καὶ τὸν νεωκόρον ἐστῶτα ἐπὶ τῆς ὄχθης τὸν Ἀσκληπιακόν. Ταῦτα προεῖρητο καὶ ταῦτα ἐγένετο. ἔτι μὲν προσιῶν τῷ ποταμῷ τὸν ἵππον ὁρῶ λούμενον. λουμένου δέ μου παρῆν ὁ νεωκόρος καὶ ἐστῶς ἐπὶ τῆς ὄχθης ἐώρα. ἡ δὲ ἐπὶ τούτῳ κουφότης καὶ ἀναψυχὴ θεῷ μὲν καὶ μάλα ῥαδία γνῶναι, ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ ἢ νῶ λαβεῖν ἢ ἐνδείξασθαι λόγῳ οὐ πάνυ ῥαδίον.

In the middle of those phlebotomies he ordered a bath for me in the Caicus. And it was necessary, after I threw away wool, to walk there and to bathe, that I would also see a horse bathing and a temple warden Asclepiacus standing on the bank. These things he predicted and these things happened. While I was going to the river I saw the horse bathing. While I bathed, the temple warden was present and while he stood on the bank, he saw me. The lightness after this and the refreshment was rather easy to understand for a god, but for a person it was not easy to grasp in his mind or to put down in words.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.48-50

In this case, Aristides has been ordered to undergo phlebotomies (φλεβοτομιῶν, bloodlettings) by the god, but then he receives a command to go to a river, the Caicus, a river that flows past Pergamum and Elaea towards the Aegean Sea. There is a sign in the dream that will signify the reality of the dream and that the god is looking after him. And the bath works: Aristides feels better, even so much better that he cannot describe it. Later on, he is ordered another bath:

ἐκέλευσε λούσασθαι τῷ ποταμῷ τῷ διὰ τῆς πόλεως ῥέοντι· ὁ δ' ἔρρει πολὺς ἐξ ὄμβρων, καὶ προεῖπεν ὡς τριῶν τῶν λουτρῶν ἐσομένων. (...) καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα χειμέριος ἦν. πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ὕσθημεν παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἦν τῶν λουτρῶν τοῦτο· καὶ γὰρ ἀνήκειμεν ἀνωτέρω τὴν ἐφ' Ἴππωνος, βουλόμενοι καθαρῷ τῷ ὕδατι ἐντυχεῖν καὶ ὃ μῆπω ὠμίληκε τῇ πόλει. ὡς δὲ ἐγενόμεθα ἐντυχεῖν καὶ ὃ μῆπω ὠμίληκε τῇ πόλει. ὡς δὲ ἐγενόμεθα ἐπὶ τῆς ὄχθης, οὐδεις τῶν φίλων ἐθάρρει παρακελεύεσθαι, καίτοι παρῆν μὲν ὁ νεωκόρος αὐτὸς, παρῆσαν δὲ καὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων τινές, ἄνδρες καλοὶ κάγαθοί, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀγωνιῶντες καὶ ἀπορούμενοι φανεροὶ πάντες ἦσαν. καγὼ τὰ τε ἱμάτια ἀπερρίπτουν καὶ καλέσας τὸν θεὸν ἵεμαι εἰς μέσον τὸν πόρον. ὁ δὲ ἐκυλίνδει μὲν πέτρας, ἔφερε δὲ ὕλην, ἐκύμαινε δὲ ὡσπερ ἐξ ἀνέμου, καὶ τῶν κάτω φανερόν ἦν οὐδὲν, ἡχὴ δὲ καὶ θόρυβος πολὺς. ἐνταῦθα δὴ αἱ μὲν πέτραι ἀντὶ φύλλων περιέρρεον, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ οὕτω κοῦφον ἦν ὡς οὐδὲν τῶν καθαρῶς

διαφανῶν, καὶ διέτριψα δὴ εἰς ὅσον πλεῖστον ἐξῆν. ὡς δ' ἐξέβην ἐπὶ τὴν ὄχθην, θέρμη διὰ παντὸς ἐχώρει τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἀτμὸς ἄνω πολὺς, καὶ πάντα ἐπεφοίνικτο, καὶ τὸν παιᾶνα ἦδομεν. καὶ ὡς ἐπανήειμεν, αὖθις αὖ ὕδωρ ἐπιγίγνεται ἐκ Διὸς, καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῶν λουτρῶν εἰς τοῦτο ἐτελεύτησεν.

He ordered me to wash in the river which flows through the city, but it flowed high because of the rain, and he predicted that there would be three baths. (...) And it was a stormy day. First we were rained upon along the way and this was the first of the baths, and we went up to the road to Hippon, because we wanted to find pure water and what was never joined by the city. When we were at the river bank, no one of my friends dared to encourage me, although the temple warden himself was present, and some of the philosophers were also present, good and noble men, but nevertheless they all seemed in anguish and troubled. And I threw off my clothing and having called upon the god, I threw myself in the middle of the river. It rolled around the rocks and carried wood, it swelled as through the wind and of the things below nothing was visible, but there was noise and much tumult. There the rocks instead of leaves flowed around, but the water was so light than none of the clear transparent ones, and I spend in this as much time as possible. When I got out and on the river bank, a warmth spread through my whole body and much steam rose up, and everything became red, and we sang the paean. And when we went back, again there was Zeus' water, and in this way ended the third of the baths.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.51-53

The weather is bad: it is cold, there is a storm and much rain (ἡ ἡμέρα χειμῆριος ἦν). But Aristides does not hesitate and goes into the water. The water had to be pure (καθαρῶ), so they went a little outside the city. Within the city, the river was often used as a drain for garbage and excrement, so the water was very filthy. Upstream the river would be more clean, so this is where they went. Furthermore, the river was rising, maybe from all the rain, or from the melting water from the mountains upstream. The river is very wild and strong and takes everything with it, so it was very dangerous to swim there. But Aristides does it anyway and ends up having a great time. He gets all warm, so warm that the water on his body starts to steam. As a thank offering they sing the Paean (τὸν παιᾶνα ἦδομεν), a hymn that was often written for Asclepius. Besides this bath, twice the rain makes him wet, which he sees as baths as well, and therefore there are three baths. The number three was not special or important in ancient Greece, but it fits the prophecy that the god gave him in his dream. That Aristides sees the rain as a form of a bath is quite understandable: probably it was

a big shower of rain and he must have gotten quite wet from it.

These baths are meant to cure Aristides. So his journey is in fact a healing pilgrimage, where the cures take place even during the journey, because of the rain as a bath.¹¹¹ Unlike his friends, Aristides has full trust in the god that this bath in a dangerously wild river in a storm will cure him. This trust can also be found in the next passage:

Ἔτερον τοίνυν ἐν Ἐλαίᾳ ταύτῃ γερόμενον. Ἐπεμψέ με λουσόμενον θαλάττῃ, πλοῖόν τε δὴ προειπὼν Ἀσκληπιὸν ὄρμοῦν ἐπὶ τῷ στόματι τοῦ λιμένος, καθ' ὃ ῥῖψαι δεῖν ἑαυτὸν, καὶ φωνάς τινὰς τῶν ναυτῶν καὶ ἕτερα ἃ οὐ μέμνημαι πάνθ' ἐξῆς τοῖς μεθ' ἡμέραν ἀποβᾶσιν ὁμολογήσαντα. ὡς οὖν κατήλθομεν εἰς τὴν Ἐλαίαν, παρῆμεν ἕξω πρὸς τὸν λιμένα, καὶ εὐθὺς μὲν τὸ πλοῖον εὐρίσκετο, Ἀσκληπιὸς ὄνομα, εὐθὺς δ' ἐβῶν οἱ ναῦται τὸν θεὸν, ὡς εἶδον τὰ γιγνόμενα. ἦν δὲ ἀπαρκτίας λαμπρὸς, ὥστ' ἐκβὰς ἐδεήθην σκέπης. πάλιν οὖν τῆς ἐπιούσης νυκτὸς κελεύει τῇ μὲν θαλάττῃ κατὰ ταῦτ' ἀχρῆσθαι, ἐκβάντα δὲ τοῦ ὕδατος στάντα ἐναντίον τοῦ ἀνέμου οὕτω θεραπεῦσαι τὸ σῶμα.

Another thing happened here in Elaea. He sent me to bathe in the sea, after he foretold me that there was the ship Asclepius lying at anchor in the mouth of the harbour, in which I had to throw myself, and he foretold some utterances of the sailors and other things, which I cannot all remember in the right order, but which were in correspondence with the things that happened after on that day. Thus we went down to Elaea, we were outside the city at the harbour and immediately the ship was found, with the name Asclepius, and immediately the sailors cried out to the god, when they saw what happened. The northwind was sharp, so that when I came out, I needed covering. Again on the following night, he ordered me to do the same thing in the sea, and after I came out of the water and stood against the wind, to cure my body this way.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.54-55

This time he needs to wash in the sea (θαλάττῃ). This is the Aegean sea at the west coast of modern-day Turkey. In the harbor there is supposed to be a ship, the Asclepius. This is an important sign: a ship named after the god himself. The sailors of this ship must also have big faith in the god.

111 More about baths and their working in: Holmes, B., "Aelius Aristides' illegible body", in: *Aelius Aristides between Greece, Rome, and the Gods*, in: *Colombia studies in Classical tradition*, eds.: Harris, W.V., Rice, E.F., Cameron, A., Said, S., Eden, K.H., Williams, G.D., vol. 33, Leiden/Boston, 81-114; Downie, J., (2008), "Proper pleasures: bathing and oratory in Aelius Aristides' Hieros Logos I and Oration 33", in: *Aelius Aristides between Greece, Rome, and the Gods*, in: *Colombia studies in Classical tradition*, eds.: Harris, W.V., Rice, E.F., Cameron, A., Said, S., Eden, K.H., Williams, G.D., vol. 33, Leiden/Boston, 115-130.

Aristides goes to the sea and swims. And indeed, the sailors are quite surprised about what happened and cry out to the god. Aristides gets very cold, but after the same bath the next night he is cured by the water and the wind. These two stories both include some bystanders who watch the miracles that happen to Aristides, the first time Aristides' friends and the second time the sailors at the ship. This is not always an aspect of pilgrimage, but it is of miracles: miracles cannot happen without bystanders who wonder about it. Furthermore, the prophecy of the sailors who will watch, gives the command some extra confirmation in reality, as we saw earlier when Asclepius promised that he would see a bathing horse and the temple warden.

So going to a place in nature or to warm springs to bathe there can be a way of curing an illness. But are the journeys towards these places pilgrimages? A river or another place in nature is not per definition the place to seek contact with the supernatural, but it can be also be done. The fact that Aristides can have dreams everywhere, shows that the gods can be everywhere. So Aristides can also go to a river and make contact with a god, and be cured from his illness through a bath. Again the place where Aristides goes, becomes meaningful through the command of the god.

3.4.3 *Psychological healing*

A few times the god commands Aristides to go to a city to give a speech. Is that pilgrimage? It certainly has a religious aspect, because of the command of the god and because the god helps Aristides with his career. But does he go there to communicate with the god? Not necessarily so. Still, it can be seen as a form of healing pilgrimage, but then what we would call 'psychological' healing. Aristides' career has greatly suffered from his illness and the god helps him to find a new way to make career. By sending him somewhere to give speeches, he is in fact also sending him on a healing pilgrimage, to be cured from his bad career. That is also why in the description of such a journey certain aspects of pilgrimage are present, as we can see in this passage:

ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἔναγχος εἰς τὴν Ἔφεσον ἀπέστειλε κατὰ τοὺς λόγους, ὕσθημεν καὶ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν πολλῶ, τῇ τρίτῃ τῶν ἡμερῶν, τὴν γὰρ δευτέραν αὐτὸς ἐπέσχε, καὶ συνέβη τὸ ὕδωρ εὐθὺς τότε γίνεσθαι. σχεδὸν δὲ οὐκ εἰς ἐκείνην ἔφερε μόνον τὰ φανθέντα, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐπιούσαν, κἀγὼ προὔλεγον ταῦτα τοῖς σὺν ἐμαυτῶ. οἱ δὲ τὴν ἑτέραν ἔφερον τὴν τοῦ προϊέναι, ἄλλως τε καὶ τὴν σπουδὴν ὀρῶντες τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὡς εἶχον πρὸς ἡμᾶς. εἰσὶ γὰρ οἱ βαδίζοντες εἰς Πέργαμον τῶν θεωριῶν ἕνεκα, καὶ ὡς εἶδον ἡμᾶς, ἀνέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν Ἔφεσον δρόμῳ. καὶ ταῦτα μὲν οὕτως εἶχεν.

But when recently he sent me away to Ephesus because of a speech, we were rained upon a

lot on the road, on the third of the days, because on the second he himself held us, and it came to pass that the rain started right then. The things that appeared applied not only to that [day], but also on the following day, and I foretold these things to those who were with me. They determined to choose the other option of continuing, especially when they saw the zeal of the people, as they had of us. For there were some people who, going to Pergamum because of the festival, when they saw us, turned around to Ephesus in a haste. And so these things were.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.81-82

This journey has the elements of the difficult journey, this time because it is raining a lot (ὑσθημεν καὶ παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν πολλῶ). Furthermore, the god commands him to go and continues to speak to him through dreams during his journey. Even more revealing are the next two sentences of that passage:

ὑσθέντος δέ μου καὶ ἀγωνιῶντος οὐ πολλαῖς ὕστερον ἡμέραις ἐπειδὴ ἐν τῇ Ἐφέσῳ ἐγενόμην, ἐπιτάττει ψυχρὸν λουτρὸν, καὶ ἐλουσάμην ἐν τῷ γυμνασίῳ τῷ πρὸς ψυχρὸν λουτρὸν, καὶ ἐλουσάμην ἐν τῷ γυμνασίῳ τῷ πρὸς τῷ Κορεσσῶ. οἱ δ' ὀρῶντες οὐχ ἤττον τὸ λουτρὸν ἢ τοὺς λόγους ἐθαύμαζον· τὰ δ' ἀμφοτέρ' ἦν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ.

But after I had been rained upon and was in anguish, not many days later when I was in Ephesus, he ordered a cold bath and I bathed in the gymnasium by the Coressus. Those who were looking, wondered no less at the bath than at the speech. But both were from the god.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.82

Not only does the god order him to speak, but he also gives him the command to bathe. This is more related to his physical illness. But the last sentence says it all: τὰ δ' ἀμφοτέρ' ἦν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ (But both were from the god). This means that the god cured him of both his physical discomfort as well as his bad career. So when putting all these aspects together, this would certainly qualify as pilgrimage.

3.4.4 Conclusion

So, like going to the temple and bathing in a river, giving speeches is also commanded with the goal to heal Aristides. Each of the destinations discussed here, have their own way of curing Aristides: going to the temple to sacrifice and placate the gods, going to a river to bathe, or going to a city to

give a speech to make career. The pilgrimages to cities to give speeches stand out as exceptional pilgrimages, they were probably only done by Aristides, as a specific pilgrimage for a specific problem. We can conclude that whether something is pilgrimage, depends on many factors and on the individual aspects of the pilgrim: his problem and motivation, the solutions for those problems within his specific culture, etc. So whether something is a pilgrimage destination is hard to capture in a definition, as it is so specific to the pilgrim and his goal, as well as to his cultural environment.

3.5 Conclusion

We have discussed several aspects of Aristides' journeys in this chapter. When we looked at the contact of Aristides with his saviour, Asclepius, we found that it is this contact with the god that makes his pilgrimages and the cures meaningful. This also explains the close relationship that Aristides has with the god.

The aspect of the journey told us various things. Depending on our interpretation of the word *theoria*, Aristides already saw some commonalities between his pilgrimage and *theoria*, which means that our later understanding of both being pilgrimage is supported by evidence from antiquity, or he just compared his journey to a touristic journey. Furthermore, when we looked at Aristides fellow pilgrims, we saw that for someone from the elite fellow pilgrims had a different function. They were not on the journey for the same goal as he was, which makes him alone on his pilgrimages, but he is also sometimes accompanied by friends, who have the function of the intellectual elite looking at the miracles that happen to Aristides. Finally, we have concluded that the difficult circumstances and Aristides' performances show us how – when linked with Sansone's and Naerebout's theory - Aristides' pilgrimages can be seen as sacrifices to the god.

As the final aspect of Aristides' journeys we have looked at the destinations of his pilgrimages. When he went to the Temple, he did not just go to the temple of Asclepius in Pergamum, but he visited temples from several gods in different places, which shows he had not chosen Asclepius as his only god, but that besides his close relationship with Asclepius, other gods were still of some importance – which is part of his polytheistic religious world view. Furthermore, we have come to the conclusion that the destination of a pilgrimage can also be something unexpected like a city, because the destinations are chosen because of the cures that are needed by the pilgrim. The needs of a pilgrim can differ and can sometimes lead to unconventional destinations, which would normally not look like pilgrimage centers.

Chapter 4: Analytical conclusion

In this chapter I will analyse the conclusions from the previous chapter and discuss the consequences. I will start with the question whether we can draw conclusions from Aristides' case about pilgrimage in antiquity in general. Next, I will discuss my working definition, which I formulated in the first chapter, and I give a new working definition, taking into consideration what we have learned from Aristides' pilgrimages. Finally I will address some issues about the typology of pilgrimage.

When we really want to find out more about pilgrimage in antiquity, we need to discuss whether Aristides' experiences are applicable to pilgrimage in antiquity in general. Israelowich also points out the experiences that Aristides had and the way he wrote it down, were not cause for any commentary and from this *argumentatio ex silentio* he infers that most ancient readers did not think that what Aristides wrote was uncommon.¹¹² I think he is right that these stories were actually more common than we think, but there are few stories left to us now. We have seen how some of the elements of Aristides' pilgrimages were actually part of the bigger picture of ancient Greek medicine or ancient Greek religion. This is also what researchers like Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis and Israelowich have shown: how Aristides' writings fit in his cultural environment. But because we know so little about pilgrimage in antiquity, it is hard to fit this part of the picture into the larger picture of pilgrimage in antiquity. This picture of Aristides' pilgrimages fills a large section of our bigger picture, so we have to be careful with our conclusions.

Nonetheless, some of our conclusions are certainly interesting for our understanding of ancient pilgrimage. Based on my conclusions in the previous chapter, I need to rephrase my working definition, as was provided in my first chapter. I have found out that travelling to a place to make contact with the divine is too simple for a definition. A crucial element to pilgrimage, or at least to healing pilgrimage, is that there is a problem for which the pilgrim seeks a solution from the god. Aristides goes on a pilgrimage because he wants to go to a place where the god was more powerful or where the cure was more powerful, because he needs this power to be cured. So I need to add to my definition that pilgrimage is not only travel to make contact with the divine, it is also making contact with the divine at a special place. Furthermore, we have seen that the journey of a pilgrimage can become a sacrifice to the divine, as a gift in return for health, in Aristides' case. This is not necessarily the case in every pilgrimage, but it can be the case in some. But even if not every pilgrim sacrifices his energy to the god, then sacrifice is still an important aspect of pilgrimage. Furthermore, usually the pilgrim has some kind of problem – in the case of Aristides an illness –

¹¹² Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Sacred Tales of Aelius Aristides*, 179-180.

and what he asks from the god is a solution for this problem. With this in mind, I propose this as a definition: pilgrimage is travel towards a special place to make contact with the god, in order to give something to the god to get something in return which solves a problem the pilgrim has. Through this new definition, it is more clear what we mean by the word pilgrimage in the case of antiquity. It will help us see other examples of pilgrimage, because it is more specific and explains more. When studying other texts than the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aristides, we can see more clearly which journeys are pilgrimages and which are not.

But not every pilgrimage in antiquity is healing pilgrimage. Maybe this definition is appropriate only for healing pilgrimage.¹¹³ However, one can wonder whether all pilgrimages are in fact some way of healing something, either an illness or another problem. When we look at the typology of Rutherford and Elsner, as discussed in the third chapter, we can see that they distinguish between different types of pilgrimage, basing this distinction on different aspects of pilgrimage, which is in my opinion quite confusing. I think that we want to distinguish between forms of pilgrimage, such a typology is not helpful. Instead these several aspects need to be included at the same time in a typology. First of all the destination, but also the journey, the motivation or the specific problem for which the pilgrim seeks a solution. In stead of putting the pilgrimage or journey into one category, there are several aspects to choose from. This leaves more room for the scholar who is researching in ancient pilgrimage to choose an appropriate category.

I already suggested how to structure such a typology: with different aspects that have different categories within them from which one can choose. What kind of categories those should be, is up to discussion, but I will make a small beginning here. When dealing with motivations, this is difficult, because the possibilities for motivations to go on a pilgrimage are sheer endless. But even then some categories can be made, for example in the case of healing: physical and psychological illness; but there are many other problems imaginable, which do not fall in that category. So this aspect should stay open, because there are as many motivations as there are pilgrims. When categorizing destinations, it is less difficult: for Aristides it is for example possible to speak about institutionalized and non-institutionalized destinations: the temples are institutions, but the rivers and other places in nature are not. Even the cities to which he goes to give a speech could fall into that category. Lastly, in the case of the journey, one could imagine that there are several modes of transport (walking, riding a horse, being carried in a carriage, in the case of Aristides) and maybe one could even categorize the spiritual aspects of the journey.

But before we get stuck into categorizing every pilgrimage, this is not the main goal: it is

¹¹³ His illness had a great influence on how Aristides perceived his pilgrimages and the way he performed them. More about the influence of his illness in Brink, (2016), *Ill on the road, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages from the perspectives of landscape, movement and narrative*, 44-45.

only one way to deal with the data we get from research. There are other ways to deal with these data. Certainly more research is needed about pilgrimage in antiquity. We are limited by the material about it, but I am sure that if we start looking for aspects of pilgrimage, we will find more examples like that of Aristides. With our new definition, we can now see more clearly which examples are pilgrimage and we can understand them better.

Conclusion

We started by wondering what pilgrimage in antiquity looked like, specifically in the case of Aelius Aristides, and what this could tell us about ancient Greek religion. But the concept of pilgrimage is not without problems. Anthropologists and sociologists have trouble defining the word and argue about its nature and function and the distinction with tourism. In the debate about pilgrimage in antiquity, there are proponents and opponents of the use of the term for certain forms of travel in antiquity. Opponents, specifically Scott Scullion and Fritz Graf, think that the use of the word imposes a category upon phenomena in antiquity, while it is from a different culture – Early Christianity – and therefore not appropriate. Furthermore, Scott Scullion thinks that the umbrella that the word pilgrimage forms over several forms of travel is confusing and harms research, because it hides the differences between these forms of travel. Nonetheless, the proponents for pilgrimage in antiquity use the concept for their research. I did the same with the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides, after I discussed the several issues around defining pilgrimage and formulated a working definition: pilgrimage is travel towards a place, with the aim to make contact with the supernatural.

Aristides was an orator from the second century AD who lived in the neighbourhood of Smyrna and Pergamum in Asia Minor. He wrote six books, together called the *Hieroi Logoi*, about his experiences during a life long illness and his pilgrimages to several places in Asia Minor. In antiquity having an illness not always meant going to a doctor, instead Aristides went to the god Asclepius, with whom he developed a close relationship. It is also to his temple in Pergumum that many of his pilgrimages take place. Many times the god commands him in a dream to go somewhere and then heales him or relieves his symptoms, for which Aristides is thankful. The *Hieroi Logoi* are written as a thank offering to Asclepius, but recently scholars believe that Aristides had also a hidden agenda for the *Hieroi Logoi*, which was self representation. It is not possible to put the *Hieroi Logoi* in one genre, but the possibilities are aretology or autobiography.

When reading the text, we focused on several aspects. First, I discussed Aristides' contact with the god, which was very close. This can be explained by the fact that Aristides' journeys became meaningful through this contact. Aristides did not have to go to some temple to have contact with the god, but once the god gave him the command to go somewhere, then only there Aristides could be healed, with the help of the god. Secondly, I discussed the aspect of the journey. Depending on how we interpret the word *theoria*, Aristides saw the resemblance between his own journey to the Aesepus to be cured and state pilgrimage. This could mean that already in the second

century, people in antiquity saw the resemblance between these types of journeys, with the existence of a separate word for it, like pilgrimage. But it could also be possible that Aristides just meant to compare his journey to a touristic journey to a foreign or unknown place. Furthermore, for a pilgrim from the elite, there were usually no fellow pilgrims who shared his troubles, but there were bystanders and intellectual friends for support. This also shows us the solitude of Aristides during the rest of his journeys. Finally, we discussed the difficult circumstances of Aristides during his journeys and his extraordinary performances during those journeys and how they gave meaning to the journey. This led me, with thanks to the theory of Sansone and the evidence of Naerebout, that pilgrimage could be seen as a sacrifice to the god, in return for something else.

As the last aspect we discussed, the destinations seemed to be crucial for understanding pilgrimage and especially for our working definition. Many types of destinations are possible for Aristides: some conventional, like going to the temple, but others less conventional: going to a river to bathe, or even going to a city to give a speech. I argued that both were forms of pilgrimage, because they all aim to heal Aristides from either his illness or his bad career and the mental issues belonging to that.

Now the question is how this could help us understand better what pilgrimage looked like in antiquity. The question is then to what extent Aristides' case study is applicable to pilgrimage in antiquity in general. I agree with Israelowich that there was nothing uncommon about what Aristides wrote. Furthermore, many of his experiences can be placed into the larger framework we already have of medicine and religion in ancient Greece. Then I reformulated my working definition, to add our insights about the importance of the destinations and the motivations of the pilgrim. I concluded that the destinations for a pilgrimage can be very different from what we expect, because the pilgrimage is some way of solving a problem of the pilgrim and the destination is specific to this problem. So what is pilgrimage and what is not, depends on the individual needs of the pilgrim. This is at least the case for healing pilgrimage, which is a specific kind of pilgrimage, out of many others.

Then I discussed the typology of Rutherford and Elsner, which is confusing in my eyes, because it categorizes different types of pilgrimage by different standards. Instead I propose to use a typology in which one can choose from different aspects of the pilgrimage among several categories. I made a start for such a categorization of pilgrimage: I propose to use several factors for categorization: the motivations, the destinations and the way of travelling. Many additions and changes can be made in this categorization. Nonetheless, the focus of our research in pilgrimage should not lie with the typology of pilgrimage, but ask different questions, which can tell use more about the phenomenon as well as its role within ancient Greek religion.

We now have a new definition of pilgrimage in antiquity, which should help us with our research in other examples of pilgrimage in antiquity. More research is needed to understand pilgrimage in antiquity to a greater extent, but for now we understand better which aspects are important when studying ancient pilgrimage.

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Appendix

Map 1:

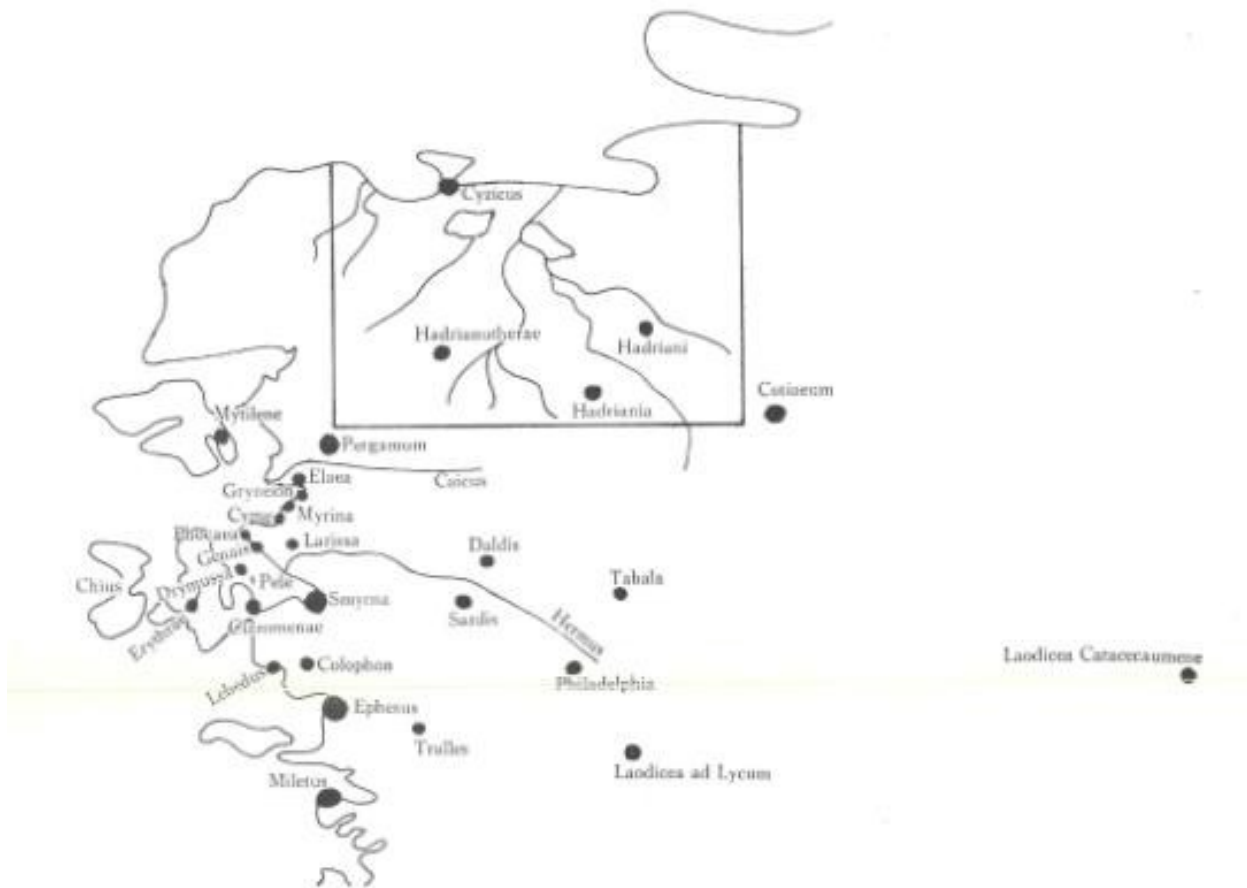


Image 1: Map of Asia Minor; Source: Behr, C.A., (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, Amsterdam.

Map 2:

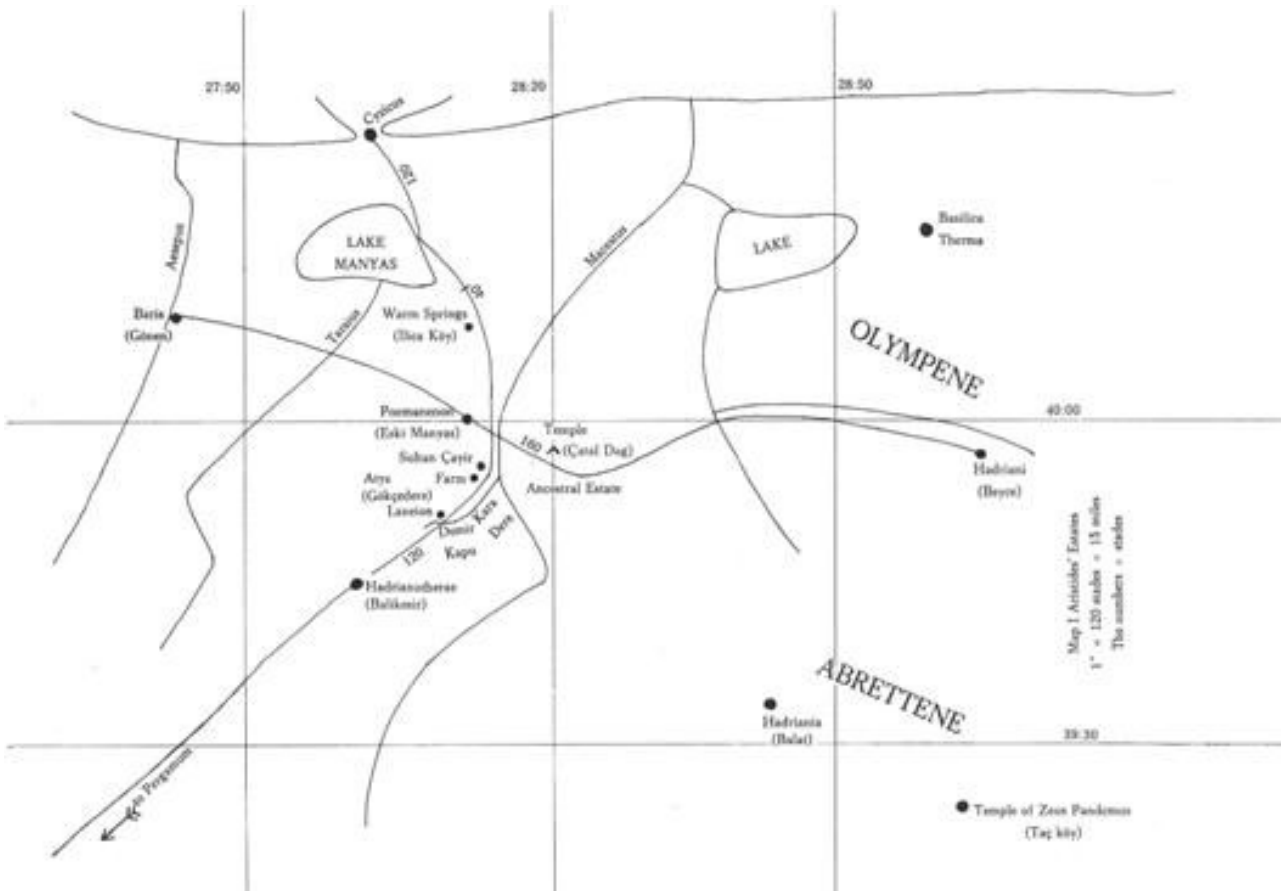


Image 2: Map of Laneion and its surroundings; Source: Behr, C.A., (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*, Amsterdam.