

Ill on the road

Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages from the perspective of
landscape, movement and narrative

11-07-16

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Master Thesis Religious Studies

track Religion, Culture and Society

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Introduction

“... the Sacred Tales as a whole can be read as a series of such sacred journeys. As a literary retrospective narrative of these events, the Sacred Tales can with justice be called a pilgrimage text.”¹

The author of the Sacred Tales (*Hieroi Logoi*) that Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis mentions was Aelius Aristides. He was an orator from the second century AD, who lived close to Smyrna, in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Besides many speeches, he also wrote the *Hieroi Logoi*, a series of six books in honour of the god Asclepius² about the events around Aristides' illness, during which Asclepius helped him many times.

Why does Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, who wrote this quote, read the *Hieroi Logoi* as a pilgrimage text? In the six books, Aristides makes many journeys, with different motives, different destinations and in different ways. But are they really pilgrimages, or are they just journeys? This definition of pilgrimage has been much debated. Among anthropologists the discussion is about what pilgrimage does and how it works, but among ancient historians the question is even more basic: is there pilgrimage in antiquity? And if there is pilgrimage in antiquity, what does it look like and what should be included into the definition and what shouldn't?

It is not easy – not to say impossible – to give an answer to all these questions, because they are so extensive in scope. But I can start with what I know best, which is antiquity. Antiquity is also a large period of time, so I have to narrow it down. For this thesis I limit myself to one text: the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides. Because of the many journeys that Aelius Aristides made, there is a lot of material to work with. But more importantly, his text describes in a unique way how Aristides experiences his journeys, his illness, and the help of the god Asclepius. We rarely find this personal perspective in ancient literature. That makes this text an excellent source for studying pilgrimage in antiquity.

But how can we use this text to understand pilgrimage better? One of the arguments that is often mentioned by those who rejected the existence of pilgrimage in antiquity, is that pilgrimage is something that happens in monotheistic religions like Christianity or Islam and that we should not impose a concept from other religions upon ancient religion. One of the causes for this argument is

1 Petsalis-Diomidis, A., (2008), “The body in the landscape: Aristides' corpus in the light of the Hieroi Logoi”, 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.

2 The Greek god of illness and healing, more information in the second chapter, page 20.

that there is hardly any literature by anthropologists about antiquity and ancient pilgrimage. Antiquity is left to the historians (I am not saying this is a bad thing; after all, they know the most about it) and instead the anthropologists focus on the modern religions in which they specialized. Because pilgrimage looks so different in these religions, it is hard to see the similarities with antiquity.

But what happens when we try to combine the knowledge from anthropologists with that of ancient historians? This has already been done a few times, but not extensively. Andrea Wilson Nightingale, for example, tried to apply an important theory of anthropology – *communitas* - to an ancient phenomenon, *theoria*.³ She came to the conclusion that the theory was only partly applicable and had to adapt the theory for it to be useful. Nonetheless, she had found an interesting perspective on the ancient phenomenon.⁴ From this we can learn that although a theory always has to be adapted, it is still useful to use it and that this different perspective can lead to new conclusions and new understanding. Although many ancient historians already have begun to do this, there is also certainly a lot of work left to do, especially regarding pilgrimage.

A lot has been written about the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides, but not much research has been done about his description of his pilgrimages. Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis points in this direction and has done a lot of work regarding the themes of the body and travel in the text.⁵ Ian Rutherford has analysed two episodes from the *Hieroi Logoi*⁶, but certainly not extensively – and not from the perspective of anthropological theory. Therefore I want to fill this gap in our knowledge about pilgrimage in antiquity. For this thesis the main goal is to understand pilgrimage in antiquity better. But because I apply social-anthropological theory upon antiquity, the results will not only tell us more about antiquity, but also about these theories. If a theory needs to be adapted to fit antiquity, then that theory should maybe also be adapted for other periods and cultures. Furthermore, what we learn about pilgrimage in antiquity could also be useful for our understanding of pilgrimage in other cultures. Eventually, it can tell us a little bit more about what pilgrimage is, first of all in antiquity, but also in the end in the more general sense. Of course this is only one case study, but every stone is needed to build a house.

My main question is: How can social-anthropological theory contribute to a better

3 More about *theoria* in the first chapter. For a full analysis of the Greek word, see Brink, K.E., (2016), *From the god, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages in the Hieroi Logoi*, Leiden, 22-25.

4 Nightingale, A.W., (2005) "The philosopher at the festival: Plato's transformation of traditional *Theoria*", in: *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christianity Antiquity, Seeing the Gods*, eds.: J. Elsner, I. Rutherford, Oxford, 151-181.

5 Mainly in Petsalis-Diomidis, A., (2010), *Truly beyond wonders, Aelius Aristides and the cult of Asklepios*, Oxford. See the bibliography for her other relevant articles.

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

understanding of the various aspects of pilgrimage in the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides, and how can it contribute to a better understanding of ancient pilgrimage in general? To answer that, I first need to introduce social-anthropological theory, which I will do in the first chapter. I start with the founding father and mother of anthropological theory about pilgrimage: Victor and Edith Turner. My main focus in this chapter lies with three themes: the journey or movement, the landscape, and narrative. It is also necessary to formulate a working definition of pilgrimage, because without it, it will be impossible to find aspects of pilgrimage in the text. Furthermore, we need to introduce the author Aelius Aristides and his text *The Hieroi Logoi*, which I will do in the second chapter. I will give a basic introduction about medicine and religion in antiquity as well as an introduction to the history of interpretation of the *Hieroi Logoi*. Finally, a method for interpreting the text has to be found. Then in the third chapter I will analyse the text. A selection of fragments is used to point out the several themes in the text and conclusions will be drawn through close reading of the text. In the fourth chapter, I will return to my main question in an analytical conclusion and discuss our new insights in ancient pilgrimage and evaluate the use of the three aspects of pilgrimage that we used for our research.

Chapter 1: Theory in pilgrimage studies

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I lay the groundwork for the analysis of the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides. We can only discuss some theories, because the theories need to be appropriate for our purpose. But I cannot choose appropriate theories, when I do not know what I am dealing with. What is pilgrimage exactly? There is no clear answer to that question, either among anthropologists or among ancient historians. So first I have to discuss the definition of pilgrimage.

I start with two theories which laid the groundwork for this discussion within anthropology. The theory of Victor and Edith Turner is the first theory about pilgrimage. It concerns itself mostly with what pilgrimage is and what it does. Sallnow and Eade react to this theory and have their own idea of what pilgrimage is. After that I will discuss the difference between a tourist and a pilgrim: does pilgrimage have to be religious? This will bring us to an important discussion among ancient historians about what pilgrimage is in antiquity. We will see that some of the same questions arise. Then I finally have all the material to formulate a working definition of pilgrimage that can be applied to antiquity. After that I will focus on three themes or concepts: *landscape*, as it is discussed by Coleman and Elsner, *movement*, as it is discussed first by Morinis and more recently by Coleman and Eade, and lastly *narrative*, as it is discussed by Shannon.

1.2 *Communitas* and contestation

Every discussion of theory about pilgrimage needs to start with the theory of *communitas* developed by Victor and Edith Turner. Eade and Sallnow, in their introduction to their volume *Contesting the Sacred*⁷, describe how theories of religion both by Emile Durkheim or Karl Marx have influenced the Turners' own theory. Both theories explain religion from the perspective of sociology. Both theories deal with the function of religion, which is primarily a social one. These theories are called functionalist or correspondence theories by Eade and Sallnow.⁸ Turner says that pilgrimage is anti-structure, which means temporarily leaving society to become a small community in itself for the duration of the pilgrimage. He calls this *communitas*. This is the liminal state, as also can be found in the rite of passage as described by Van Gennep,⁹ in which a pilgrim leaves his home, which is the structure of his life and the society in which he belongs, and enters an in-between state. During his

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

8 Eade, J., Sallnow, M.J., (2000), "Introduction", in: *Contesting the sacred, the anthropology of Christian pilgrimage*, eds.: J. Eade, M.J. Sallnow, Urbana / Chicago, 1-2.

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

journey the pilgrim finds a new state of being and keeps this on his return, having made “a spiritual step forward”¹⁰. The experience of *communitas* is the most important experience of the journey: it is a state where the pilgrims feel “liberated from normative demands, when they were, indeed, betwixt and between successive lodgments in jural political systems”¹¹. In this state all differences between persons disappear and a unity is created.¹² This is the ideal form of pilgrimage, but Turner realizes that often pilgrimage is far from ideal, therefore he specifies different types of *communitas* which are all a different grade of 'ideal' *communitas*.¹³

The advantages of Turner's theory is that it views society not as only static, structured, but has also room for the anti-structure, the movement and fluidity of the world, and that of symbols.¹⁴ More importantly, he has started to theorize about pilgrimage, which has brought forth a lot of research. There has also been a lot of criticism of his theory. Coleman neatly summarizes the criticism.¹⁵ One of the most serious accusations is that Turner and his wife were influenced in their theorizing by their catholic faith and their ideals about community and thus “[confused] sociological reality”¹⁶.

In their book *Reframing Pilgrimage*, Coleman and Eade¹⁷ discuss Turner as well, pointing out that Turner does make pilgrimage seem like an exceptional event, special and set apart, while they think that pilgrimage can be very regular and ordinary and a part of daily life.¹⁸

The main criticism comes from Eade and Sallnow, who point out that Turner fails to take into account the conflicts that appear at pilgrimage shrines. They show in their volume that there are many cases to be found where *communitas* is nowhere to be found at a pilgrimage shrine. Despite Turner's claim, this meant that his theory was not universally applicable. According to Eade and Sallnow, Turner tries to reduce pilgrimage to an essence, a function, namely *communitas*, which reduces the complexity of the phenomenon.¹⁹ Eade and Sallnow think that pilgrimage is not a homogeneous, universalistic phenomenon, but is different everywhere.

Consequently, they come up with their own theory of pilgrimage. Their reaction on Turner is the opposite of his concept *communitas* - the sense of community - which is conflict, or competing

10 Idem, 15.

11 Idem, 13.

12 Idem, 206.

13 Eade, (2000), “Introduction to the Illinois paperback”, xi and further; Turner, (1974), *Dramas, fields and metaphors, symbolic action in human society*, 169.

14 Turner, (1974), *Dramas, fields and metaphors, symbolic action in human society*, 24-25, 169.

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

16 Coleman, (2002) “Do you believe in pilgrimage? *Communitas*, contestation and beyond”, 356.

17 Coleman, S., Eade, J., (2004) “Introduction”, in: *Reframing pilgrimage, cultures in motion*, eds.: S. Coleman, J. Eade, London / New York.

18 Coleman, Eade, (2004) “Introduction”, 3-4, 7-8.

19 Eade, (2000), “Introduction to the Illinois paperback”, xx.

discourses. They sketch a picture of a pilgrimage shrine that is void of any meaning, where in stead every visitor imposes his own meaning or interpretation or perspective on the shrine and this way fills it. The competing discourses differ from one shrine to another. This way the focus lies on the heterogeneity of pilgrimage shrines, in contrast with the universality of Turner.²⁰ The existence of more than one discourse at a pilgrimage centre can lead to conflicts, although not necessarily so - as is also emphasized by Coleman - because the groups involved the competing discourses can also live next to each other without any conflict whatsoever.²¹

But here criticism is possible as well. First of all, the existence of conflicts at some pilgrimage shrines doesn't exclude the possibility that at other pilgrimage shrines *communitas* is more strongly present.²² Coleman and Elsner²³ criticize Eade and Sallnow for selecting only papers about Christian pilgrimage from an anthropological perspective, while the historical perspective could have been helpful as well.²⁴ Coleman also criticizes their focus is on ideas or discourses, while the practices and rituals at the pilgrimage shrine are ignored, as well as the material aspects, like the landscape, the buildings and the art. He continues to show the similarities between Turner's theory of *communitas* and the theory of contestation of Eade and Sallnow. He shows how in both cases the "dominant theoretical metaphors"²⁵ look alike: either a blankness in the pilgrim, who is stripped from all identity in the period of *communitas* in the case of Turner, or a blankness in the pilgrimage site, which is void of all meaning in the case of Eade and Sallnow. These voids are then filled with their respective ideas of what pilgrimage should be: in the case of Turner a differentiation between pilgrimage and everyday life, or, in the case of Eade and Sallnow, accommodating mundane and everyday conflicts.²⁶

Now, how are these theories applicable for antiquity? Several ancient historians have already applied the theory of *communitas* upon antiquity. Barbara Kowalzig wanted to know how the social organization behind *theoria*²⁷ worked. She shows how *communitas* works as a social tool between city states to create a group of city states (called an amphictyony)²⁸. Andrea Wilson

20 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.

21 Coleman, (2002) "Do you believe in pilgrimage? *Communitas*, contestation and beyond", 359-360.

22 Eade, (2000), "Introduction to the Illinois paperback", xiv.

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

24 Idem, 198-200.

25 Idem, 361.

26 Idem, 361-362.

27 The Liddle, Scott and Jones ad loc: 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". It is especially the first meaning to which Kowalzig refers, which she bases on Rutherford's theory that *theoria* is state pilgrimage. For more about that, see Rutherford, (2013), *State pilgrims and sacred observers in Ancient Greece, a study of Theoria and theoroi*. An extensive analysis of the word can be found in my other thesis, [page numbers].

28 Kowalzig, B., (2005) "Mapping out *Communitas*: performances of *Theoria* in their sacred and political context", in:

Nightingale focuses on the application of *communitas* in *theoria*, because she wanted to know how the traditional *theoria* could be transformed into the philosophical *theoria*. Unfortunately she concludes *communitas* is only partly applicable.²⁹ Both scholars use a different interpretation of *communitas* than the original meaning that Turner gave to it. They both interpret it as just a sense of community. Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis does not explicitly mention the theory, but combines the sense of community with the theory of discourses in her analysis of the sanctuary of Asclepius in Pergamum. The form of contestation of discourses she shows is seen in the inscriptions found at the site, but these discourses do not give different meanings to the sanctuary, but only compete in the sense that they ask for the attention of the visitor of the sanctuary.³⁰

So when these theories are interpreted in a different way, then they are quite useful for antiquity, as these scholars have shown. But what if they were used in their original intention? Among pilgrims towards sanctuaries a sense of community could exist, but the *liminality* and exceptionality of *communitas* is difficult to prove in ancient pilgrimage, because of lack of sources. Unfortunately there are few sources about how people experienced these journeys, although the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides is one. Besides that, not much research has been done about religious experiences in antiquity. It is possible that these journeys were also part of the structure of ancient society, especially because the gods were also a part of other types of journeys like business trips. There is also a difference between the importance of the sense of community between Christianity – from which this theory is developed – and antiquity, because the ancient gods and sacred laws did not propagate a message of love and unity as the Christian Bible did. This difference between Christianity and antiquity is also present in the theory of competing discourses. Because Christianity is more text-based than ancient religion, different interpretations of this text can develop and then a contestation between the orthodox and the divergent interpretations can ensue. In antiquity there was no conflict between the priests of the sanctuary of Asclepius and the visitors who wanted healing about what should happen, but all had the same goal and there was no dogmatization of interpretations. If different discourses existed at pilgrimage centres, then there were as many as there were visitors. It is a useful insight that every pilgrim must have looked at the sanctuary differently, but when there are no groups of discourses, then it becomes hard to research it and the theory is useless. Still it might be possible that we find evidence for either theory at a

Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christianity Antiquity, Seeing the Gods, eds.: J. Elsner, I. Rutherford, Oxford, 41-72.

29 Nightingale, A.W., (2005) “The philosopher at the festival: Plato's transformation of traditional *Theoria*”, in: Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christianity Antiquity, Seeing the Gods, eds.: J. Elsner, I. Rutherford, Oxford, 151-181.

30 Petsalis-Diomidis, A., (2005) “The body in space: visual dynamics in Graeco-Roman healing pilgrimage”, in: Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christianity Antiquity, Seeing the Gods, eds.: J. Elsner, I. Rutherford, Oxford, 183-218.

pilgrimage centre in antiquity, but for that does not have my focus. As we have seen from the analysis of Coleman, both theories consist of an interpretation of what pilgrimage is or should be. This limits the possibility for research: the only question one could ask is whether *communitas* or contestation takes place and this can be answered only with a yes or a no. A less limiting way to look at pilgrimage must therefore be found.

1.5 Tourism and pilgrimage

The theories we have discussed, are concerned with the question what pilgrimage is. When asking what pilgrimage is, the question eventually comes down to this: what distinguishes pilgrimage from other forms of travel? Intuitively one could say that the tourist is a secular traveller, while the pilgrim has religious motivations. But those motivations cause the trouble: they are hard to capture or define as religious or secular, can shift easily and quickly and are endless in their possibilities. So it is hard to find out why a traveller makes a journey to a place that can either be visited as a pilgrim or as a tourist.

Cohen³¹ structures pilgrimage as a movement between the Centre (the familiar) and the Other, assuming that every culture has a Centre. While tourists travel from the Centre to the Other or the periphery, the pilgrims travel from the periphery towards the centre. When Cohen compares tourism and pilgrimage among several parameters, he comes to the conclusion that pilgrimage is more set, more formal and more obligatory, whereas tourism seeks originality and authenticity and therefore abandons the popular routes. To sum up, Cohen distinguishes different functions of pilgrimage: it “recreates and revitalises the individual, but also reinforces his commitment to basic cultural values”³²; and tourism: the recreation and revitalization of the individual in his own elective centre, alienated from society, his previous centre, which might also have a social function as it keeps unsocialized people away.³³

There has been, however, some criticism on Cohen. Coleman and Eade criticize him for creating a clear boundary between pilgrim and tourist, when there maybe is none and even think it might be harmful to create it for our understanding of pilgrimage and tourism and other kinds of travel. They have found several researches that show that the pilgrims do not care about the difference and that often in one person both tourist and pilgrim can be found.³⁴ The main insight of Coleman and Eade is that travel is constant in the lives of people, and that pilgrimage can be a very

31 Cohen, E., (1992), “Pilgrimage and Tourism: convergence and divergence” in: *Sacred Journeys: the anthropology of pilgrimage*, ed: A. Morinis, Westport, 47-63.

32 Idem, 59.

33 Idem, 54-60.

34 Coleman, Eade, (2004) “Introduction”, 11.

normal, returning point in a year, can differ in style of formality and can take place within close distance of home.³⁵ So all the differences that Cohen made between pilgrimage and travel are useless in their opinion.

Coleman warns that it is impossible to define pilgrimage and although he doesn't mention tourism at this point, it means that it is also impossible to define pilgrimage in relation to tourism. He also recommends that we do not confine the work of pilgrimage to one group of anthropologists, but also include other disciplines and other research fields to broaden the research and with that the insights in travel.³⁶

That is exactly what Badone and Roseman³⁷ did. In their introduction to the volume *Intersecting Journeys*, they include insights from many research fields and disciplines to answer the question what the similarities between pilgrimage and tourism are, because they are convinced that a dichotomy between sacred and secular, as is used in the terminology of pilgrimage and tourism, is not helpful.³⁸ Searching for similarities, they find research that shows that pilgrimages happen to non-religious places and that some tourists also have a spiritual goal on their travels.³⁹ So in the end the categories of pilgrim and tourist can be stretched to mean both, so what is the distinction? Badone and Roseman fall back on the etymology of the words, stemming from Latin. They cite Smith, who distinguishes between *peregrinus* (from which pilgrimage is derived) and *tornus* (from which tourist is derived). The first can mean stranger or foreigner, or pilgrim,⁴⁰ while the second means someone who turns⁴¹, or “to someone “who makes a circuitous journey—usually for pleasure—and returns to the starting point””⁴², as Badone and Roseman cite Smith, which is quite a bold interpretation of a word, for which I can find no evidence, as the word is not used in this sense in Latin. The point is though - and this is still a valid point - that both tourist and pilgrim are more specifically defined than traveller and that they should be the poles of a “conceptual continuum”⁴³. Among ancient historians this has also been a problem. George Williamson addresses it in his

35 Ibidem, 7.

36 Coleman, (2002) “Do you believe in pilgrimage? Communitas, contestation and beyond”, 362-364.

37 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.

38 Idem, 2-3.

39 Idem, 5-7.

40 Lewis and Short ad loc.: I. “that comes from foreign parts, strange, foreign, exotic”, II. “strange, raw, inexperienced”, substantive use: “foreigner, stranger”, Substantive in opposition to a Roman citizen, “a foreign resident, an alien”.

41 Originally *tornus* means “lathe” or “turner's wheel”, while the verb *torno* can mean, according to Lewis and Short ad loc, I. “to round off”, “to turn in a lathe”, or II. “to turn”, “to fashion” or “to smooth”. The meaning of “turning” of *torno* has developed into the word *tour* in French, which then turned into *touriste*, the word which English has borrowed. But the original meaning seems far away from what it has come to mean now. Source: P.A.F. van Veen en N. van der Sijs (1997), *Van Dale Etymologisch woordenboek* and Lewis and Short.

42 Badone, Roseman, (2004), “Approaches to the anthropology of pilgrimage and tourism”, 10.

43 Idem, 10.

article about Mucianus, where he shows how Mucianus is both a tourist and a pilgrim.⁴⁴ He also comes to the conclusion that the distinction is of no use for research in pilgrimage.

1.6 The debate among ancient historians

Ancient historians also struggle with the question what pilgrimage is, because depending on how you define pilgrimage, the word is either useful or very unuseful for describing some forms of travel in antiquity. If you agree that pilgrimage is some form of religious travel, then the question arises what religious is. This way, one's unconscious idea of what religion is can thus influence how you think about the use of the word pilgrimage in antiquity.

One of the persons who is against the use of the concept of pilgrimage is Scott Scullion.⁴⁵ He thinks that first of all, the term is influenced by its Early Christian origin and therefore not fit to describe antiquity.⁴⁶ Behind this lies the idea that pagan antiquity is much different in its form of religion than Early Christianity. But not everyone agrees on this: Rutherford and Elsner believe that this difference is in fact quite small. Scullion's objection is in a way ideological, as it is a reaction to the christianizing of religious studies by earlier scholars of ancient religion. But Rutherford and Elsner state that in fact many practices of ancient pagan religion can be mirrored with a practice in Early Christianity. They believe that it is justified because of this to use the concept of pilgrimage in antiquity, although they are also aware of the risks.⁴⁷

Fritz Graf has an objection that resembles that of Scott Scullion, although he uses more neutral phrasing. He thinks that it is dangerous to apply a concept of a different culture (that of Christianity) to antiquity, because the concept influences what one may find in the results of one's research.⁴⁸ He is right in his warnings, but I also think that it is inevitable to do this. We do it every time we use the word *religion* or the word *sacred*. It is of course wise to be aware of the implications of your conceptualization, but it does not mean you have to stop using all those concepts. Research would not be possible any more.

In addition, Scott Scullion argues that using the same concept of pilgrimage for different forms of religious travel covers up differences, while these differences are important. He focuses here on the application of the concept of pilgrimage by Ian Rutherford on *theoria*, a form of

44 Williamson, G., (2005) "Mucianus and a touch of the miraculous: pilgrimage and tourism in Roman Asia Minor", in: *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christianity Antiquity, Seeing the Gods*, eds.: J. Elsner, I. Rutherford, Oxford, 219-252, 246-247.

45 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.

46 Scullion, (2005) "'Pilgrimage' and Greek religion: sacred and secular in the pagan Polis", 119-128.

47 Elsner, J., Rutherford, I., (2005), "Introduction", in: *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christianity Antiquity, Seeing the Gods*, eds.: J. Elsner, I. Rutherford, Oxford, 2-3.

48 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.

religious travel where delegates from a city visit the festival at another city or sanctuary (for example the Olympian Games, or the Dionysia in Athens)⁴⁹. His objection is that *theoria* in his eyes is not sacred or religious, and therefore not pilgrimage.⁵⁰ Although I think his argumentation is flawed in showing that *theoria* is not religious,⁵¹ this relates to our earlier discussion the question: what is religious and what is not?

These days ancient historians think that religion is embedded in ancient society. This idea was for the first time developed by Robert Parker⁵² and expanded more by Esther Eidinow.⁵³ It means that religion was part of every aspect of life in antiquity, so also of travel. It was for example possible to go to a temple before one went on a trip, to ask the god for protection. But then what distinguishes pilgrimage from other forms of travel? What is the difference between going to the temple of Asclepius to be healed and going on a business trip and asking a god for protection in his temple? For antiquity the distinction is that pilgrimages had a religious goal, a sacred centre. A business trip is not a pilgrimage, because the goal is not to communicate with the supernatural, while going to the temple of Asclepius has as a goal to be with the god, to communicate with him, to be healed by him.

So every form of travel is religious in antiquity and so is *theoria*. But that is not what the question should be: the question is whether or not the goal of the trip to a festival is religious. What are the delegates doing there? Are they communicating with the gods? Well, it is safe to say that they are: festivals are full of rituals and sacrifices, besides the games and contests that take place. That means that *theoria* is indeed a form of pilgrimage, like the more obvious examples like going to the sanctuary of Asclepius or the an oracle.

1.7 Definition

Now that we have established that pilgrimage exists in antiquity and that *theoria* is also a form of pilgrimage, we can now put our attention to the definition. When we are going to look for aspects of pilgrimage, we should have a working definition. Based on our previous discussion, I propose the following: pilgrimage is travel towards a centre to communicate with the god. Now this is not a definitive definition that will leave no room for other results in our analysis: it is a working

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

50 Scullion, (2005) "'Pilgrimage' and Greek religion: sacred and secular in the pagan Polis", 119-121.

51 His argument is that because the personification of *theoria* in a comedy written by Aristophanes is ridiculed, that *theoria* was not taboo and therefore not sacred. I do not think that every sacred thing was taboo in antiquity, although I am no expert on taboos in antiquity. I do know that Aristophanes also jokes about the gods in his plays, which means that this part of his argument is not valid.

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

53 Eidinow, E., (2015), "Ancient Greek religion: 'Embedded' ... and embodied", in: *Communities and Networks in the Ancient Greek world*, eds: C. Taylor, K. Vlassopoulos, Oxford, 54-79. 56.

definition. This is also a definition which is meant to work for antiquity and not for other cultural contexts. With this tool we can now look at the social-anthropological theories I have chosen to work with for this thesis.

1.8 Landscape, movement and narrative

Here I will discuss the three perspectives on pilgrimage. There are many other theories worth discussing. However, I have chosen these three themes for several reasons. First of all, the availability of sources about these theories. These theories are broadly discussed by anthropologists or sufficiently expanded on. Secondly, these theories are useful for the analysis of our text. We will find some extensive descriptions of the landscape and the difficulties of the journey in our text. It will also be very useful to look at this text as a narrative about pilgrimage. These three perspectives will tell us a lot about what pilgrimage looked like in antiquity.

1.8.1 Coleman and Elsner: Landscape

The first aspect is that of *landscape*. Coleman and Elsner⁵⁴ compare pilgrimage in “world religions” with pilgrimages in other religions. In the “world religions” - by which they mean Christianity, Islam and Judaism - pilgrimage takes place in a different culture and landscape than the culture and landscape that the pilgrim knows. In the other religions, for example antiquity, the pilgrimages take place within the culture that the pilgrim knows. The aspect of the new environment in the pilgrimage that takes place outside the known culture is of influence on the experience of the pilgrim. Within these two types of landscape, either strange and new or common and known, there are a few insights, with which one can analyse the landscape. For example, the practical, tactical and real experience of a pilgrimage makes it popular among everybody, because no textual knowledge is needed to experience it, which makes it something that is also accessible for the illiterate.⁵⁵ Related to movement is the landscape in which one moves, by which they mean not only the geographical landscape, but also the landscape created by text, stories, myth and the relationship between the landscape and historical events: “Physical and myth-historical landscapes provide the backdrop to movement, so that in processing through the physical geography a pilgrim travels and lives through a terrain of culturally constructed symbols.”⁵⁶ But a landscape can change through time and differs throughout the seasons, which means that it is important to focus on the changes in movement and landscape as well.⁵⁷

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

55 Idem, 208.

56 Idem, 212.

57 Idem, 212-213.

Coleman and Elsner have not received much criticism yet. That is mainly because they propose to focus on just one aspect without denying other ones. Their extensive material in the volume helps the reader to make comparisons, but they leave open the answers to the questions the reader may have about these comparisons. This on the one hand could be seen as a weakness, as they do not draw up a hypothesis. But it is also the strength of the volume, because the open questions leave much room for one's own research.

In a chapter about antiquity in their volume, the authors point out a few properties of ancient pilgrimage. Not much attention is paid to the landscape, but I think that it played an important role in ancient pilgrimage. There is a reason that oracles were found at special places in the landscape, for example the oracle of Dodona near a lonesome tree, and the oracle of Delphi on a mountain, near an abyss. But landscape can also work on another level, as Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis shows in her analysis of the sanctuary of Asclepius in Pergamum.⁵⁸ She analyses the architecture of the buildings, as they were built in the great reconstruction of the sanctuary in the second century. Less research has been done about the landscape of the journey of the pilgrim. But after many years the landscape has changed in ancient Greece, so we cannot go there and see how it looked like for the ancient pilgrims. So we have to rely on either visual materials, like paintings, or on texts. In this case we will analyse a text. With the insights of Coleman and Elsner and the added level of landscape at the sanctuary of Petsalis-Diomidis we can hopefully find out a lot more about the importance of landscape.

1.8.2 Morinis and Coleman and Eade: Movement

Closely related to the landscape is movement, as Coleman and Elsner already pointed out: movement always takes place within a landscape. When discussing movement one should start with the theory of Morinis in his book *Sacred Journeys*⁵⁹. He 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.”⁶⁰ This valued ideal is a very general way to describe religion and is very Durkheimian: religion is society, so a pilgrimage centre is a valued ideal of that society. He also analyses pilgrimage structurally as a movement between the familiar and the Other. The function of pilgrimage in his eyes is to find the solution for a problem from a higher power, who is the only one who can solve the problem. Besides this, he gives several suggestions about how to analyse pilgrimage, as he wants to focus on the similarities between all different forms of pilgrimage. He

58 Petsalis-Diomidis, (2005) “The body in space: visual dynamics in Graeco-Roman healing pilgrimage”.

59 Morinis, A. (1992), “Introduction”, in: *Sacred Journeys: the anthropology of pilgrimage*, ed: A. Morinis, Westport.

60 Idem, 4.

also gives a typology and suggests several planes on which to do research.⁶¹

Morinis' suggestions for a comparative study of pilgrimage are sometimes very useful, although his typology seems too extensive and detailed, most types of pilgrimage, for example, can be seen as instrumental in some way. The fact that he tries to find similarities leads him to generalizations of pilgrimage that are perhaps not always justified. His definition of pilgrimage as a quest for the ideal is on the one hand maybe too small, as it shows a certain idea of what religion is and what the function of pilgrimage is, but on the other hand 'a valued ideal' is also very general and with a definition too broad the concept might lose its meaning.⁶² With the last paragraphs about the function of pilgrimage he makes the same mistake, as he calls it himself, as Turner (and in some way Eade and Sallnow) did, which is reducing pilgrimage to one function.⁶³

Coleman and Eade compliment him for pointing out movement as a key element of pilgrimage, because that is their main issue in their volume called *Reframing pilgrimage*⁶⁴, although they too point out that this is the same reductionism that Turner is accused of. They choose to focus on the movement within pilgrimage⁶⁵, in contrast to other researchers who focused on the pilgrimage centre, even when they also discussed the journey towards it. This approach to pilgrimage is too fixed, according to them, and research needs more focus on flexibility and fluidity. They propose four forms of movement.⁶⁶ Like Morinis they also suggest different levels of research: the macro- and microlevel, which are respectively the international relations and the local relations.⁶⁷ Morinis reacts to them in a review, in which he points out that their focus on movement in pilgrimage might render the category useless, because it is so broad.⁶⁸ Coleman and Eade however do not want to define pilgrimage as movement, because that would indeed be too general a definition. But as an aspect of pilgrimage it is quite important, as Morinis himself already pointed out.

Scullion points out that we have little evidence from antiquity that the journey was as important as it was in Christianity.⁶⁹ This may be the lack of evidence, but it is still a good point. If movement (and the landscape in which it takes place) is such an important part of pilgrimage, then why do we find so little about it? Galli points out (with two examples, one of which is our author

61 Idem, 4-27.

62 Elsner, Rutherford, (2005), "Introduction", 5.

63 See his criticism on Turner at ibidem, 8-9.

64 Coleman, Eade, (2004) "Introduction", 14.

65 Coleman did this already, as we have seen, with Elsner in their earlier volume from 1995.

66 Coleman, Eade, (2004) "Introduction", 16-17.

67 Idem, 17-18.

68 Morinis, A., (2006), "Reframing Pilgrimage, cultures in motion, Coleman, Simon, Eade, John (eds.), 2004", *Material Religion*, vol. 2.1, 115-116, 115.

69 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, 121-124.

Aelius Aristides) that there are some texts which mention the journey.⁷⁰ But two aspects of the Christian journey are missing in ancient pilgrimage, according to him: 1) the alienation from life on earth and 2) the importance of the future in heaven as opposed to life on earth.⁷¹ That means that the spiritual experience of the journey is not missing in antiquity, but different. In our text of Aelius Aristides we will see one of the examples of a person who did experience the journey towards a sanctuary in a spiritual, personal way.

1.8.3 Shannon: Narrative and the voice of the pilgrim

Shannon⁷² uses a quite new approach towards pilgrimage: she studies and analyses narratives of pilgrims. In her opinion, social theorists have often neglected the perspective of the pilgrim himself, while “narrative inquiry may provide a way of thinking about pilgrimage that is truly pilgrim-centred.”⁷³ In her research she analyses several narratives about pilgrimage. She defines a narrative as something that is retrospective and tells a story in some way that gives meaning to the facts and experiences of the narrator. She chose narratives, rather than fieldwork at a pilgrimage shrine itself, because the answers after the pilgrimage in the narrative differ greatly from the answers given directly at the site, as do the insights of the pilgrim about their pilgrimage.⁷⁴ What can be found in their narratives is that, in contrast to what theorists believe, pilgrims are very aware of their own transformations and the processes they go through. Furthermore, “The dominant concerns in the narratives are generally not with *common* values or beliefs, but with *individual* concerns, beliefs, and well being.”⁷⁵ This in contrast to the vision of theorists that “The focus of the journey should be stabilizing and strengthening group bonds and ideology or facilitating changes in social status or position.”⁷⁶ Furthermore, her research shows that when researchers try to analyse pilgrimage and study the individual parts, the meaning of the whole experience is lost and the individual parts are not as meaningful.

This is quite a revolutionary view on pilgrimage. First of all, it is quite refreshing to see that someone starts from the material and from there tries to find out how pilgrims view pilgrimage. This new perspective helps us see how far theory can be from reality. She also shows that pilgrimage is a phenomenon that is highly influenced by time and culture and keeps evolving. This

70 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, 276.

71 Idem.

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

73 Idem, 163.

74 Idem, 2-7.

75 Idem, 154, emphasis original.

76 Shannon, (2006), *Contemporary pilgrimage narratives and social theory: a search for the self*, 154.

means that pilgrimage in modernity can be very different from pilgrimage in antiquity or the middle ages. That is at the same time her weak point: her view on pilgrimage from the point of the narrative of the pilgrim shows only a temporary idea of what pilgrimage is. It is not generally applicable. But maybe that is a good thing, because a general development she found is that people do seek cures for something, either a problem with identity or with a lifestyle change or some other psychological problem. Only in modernity these psychological problems get more focus in pilgrimage, because modern medicine can for the most part cure the physical diseases. In antiquity though physical diseases were as much a problem as the psychological problems, and maybe even more urgent.

Galli has done some research about the connection between memory and landscape. For the elite the landscape of famous places (like the Akropolis in Athens) was described in the books they read and when they would arrive at such places, there would be an interaction between those memories and the landscape.⁷⁷ This is a helpful additional insight to the analysis of narrative: the influence that the narrative of the one can have on the other pilgrim. In our analysis of narrative we are reading about someone from the elite and we hardly know what impact his stories about pilgrimage had on other people who read his books. Still, I think that with the tools that Shannon suggests, we could find out interesting things about the narrative of pilgrimage in the case of Aelius Aristides.

1.9 Conclusion

We have seen that although we might find evidence in antiquity for the theories of Turner and Eade and Sallnow about what pilgrimage should be, their answers do not lead to new questions. Instead, we looked at several themes or aspects: landscape, movement and narrative. Each of them will highlight different points in the text we want to analyse and will thus help us understand pilgrimage better. This text might even be one of the few texts in antiquity that show us how important the journey was in antiquity. I also needed to formulate a working definition of pilgrimage, so we know what we are looking for in our text. In order to do that, I discussed several aspects of the definition. The discussion about the difference between the pilgrim and the tourist helps us understand that these concepts are not exclusive to each other, but instead are two sides of a continuum. This also is the conclusion, when we look at the debate about what religion is in antiquity. The embeddedness of ancient religion in society makes that everything is religious, so what distinguishes pilgrimage from other forms of travel is not its religious aspect, but its religious goal. With these insights we can move on to our case study: the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides.

⁷⁷ Galli, (2005) "Pilgrimage as elite habitus: educated pilgrims in sacred landscape during the Second Sophistic", 272-275.

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

Before we get to the text itself, I need to introduce the author and discuss the interpretations of the text. I give a general introduction to Aelius Aristides and a short biography. After that I highlight a few important aspects of his life: the temple of Asclepius in Pergamum, medicine in antiquity and the god Asclepius. Information about these aspects are necessary for understanding the next chapters. I also introduce the *Hieroi Logoi* and give a short history of interpretations of the text. I will also discuss how we can and should interpret the text, which is a necessary question to ask before we can try to interpret it ourselves.

2.1 General introduction

Aelius Aristides was a man from a rich family in Mysia, near Smyrna in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). His father had a large estate there and his family was quite important in the region and fulfilled several official functions, like the priesthood of Olympian Zeus. Aristides and his father both obtained Roman citizenship from the emperor Hadrian, who was probably a friend of Aristides' father.⁷⁸ This meant that they had several rights that other people did not have, although in the second century AD Roman citizenship was not so uncommon in Asia Minor and other Roman provinces. During this period, Rome had conquered most of the Mediterranean world, including Greece and Asia Minor, Egypt and parts of Spain. Emperors had the power over the empire, but governors, appointed by the emperor, controlled the various regions. These governors in turn often relied on the local community to govern their region, so the Greek elite could still participate in ruling. Aristides was part of that elite, but he would never accept an official function, neither governmental nor religious. His background made it possible to have the full education that was available then: he learnt to read and write Greek (and probably Latin, although we have no texts in Latin left of him) from a *grammaticus*, after which he went to several teachers, including the famous orator Alexander, to learn about oratory. During this education by these teachers, often called sophists⁷⁹, he learned all about Greek literature and philosophy.⁸⁰ His religious education he got from his foster parents, probably servants or slaves who lived at the estate. Of these Aristides mentions Zosimus and Epagathus as two very important people in his life.⁸¹

78 Behr, C.A., (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi*, Amsterdam, 1-8.

79 From *sophia* (wisdom), people who taught students in oratory, but also were available to write your speech when you needed one. These people often declaimed publicly for greater fame – or maybe even for money.

80 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi*, 9-13.

81 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi*, 9; Downie, J., (2013), *At the limits of art: literary study of*

When he was finished with his education in oratory, his father died and Aristides inherited his wealth. Aristides took his chance and went to Egypt, to start his career in oratory there and to do some sightseeing. This is where he got ill for the first time.⁸² After travelling to Egypt, he wanted to go to Rome. But shortly before his departure, he fell ill again. He decided to travel to Rome nonetheless, but the outcome was bad: when he arrived in Rome, he was even more ill, the doctors there could not help him and disappointed about his unsuccessful journey he returned home after six months.⁸³ But also back home the doctors could not diagnose or help him and his disappointment in the medical profession was great. When visiting the warm springs in Smyrna, he got his first revelation from the god Asclepius in a dream. He was commanded to keep a dream record by the god. Later Asclepius commanded him to go to his famous temple in Pergamum. He ended up staying there for almost two years. He stayed with one of the servants of the temple, Julius Asclepiacus, and was accompanied by his foster father Zosimus. In the temple Asclepius helped him through incubation: he could go to sleep in the temple and then if everything went well in a dream the god would appear and heal him or tell him what he should do to be healed.⁸⁴

Aristides would return often to the temple of Pergamum, but first he went home: the estate Laneion in Mysia. A period followed where he suffered several setbacks, like the death of his foster father Zosimus, which left him inconsolable and very weak. Several times the officials in his region tried to give him a special official function, but he did not want that and he managed to get out of it every time through his many contacts made in the temple and through his career in oratory. He undertook several trips, to Rome and Athens, but also the town Cyzicus, where the new temple for Hadrian was built. He died there when he was sixty-three. He had become an orator, with the help of Asclepius, not because Asclepius healed him, but because Asclepius showed him how he could combine his illness with his career and inspired him for his oratory.⁸⁵

2.2 Asclepius and his temple

While Aristides was ill, he consulted several doctors, but they could not help him. While he was in Pergamum, there was one doctor whom he trusted: Theodotus.⁸⁶ But Asclepius was his main physician. Asclepius was a well-known god in antiquity and very popular. As the son of Apollo, he had 'inherited' his power of healing. He had several important sanctuaries throughout Greece, the oldest and most important one in Epidaurus.⁸⁷

Aelius Aristides' Hieroi Logoi, Oxford, 10.

82 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi*, 14-22.

83 Idem, 22-26.

84 Idem, 26-27, 41-57.

85 Idem, 57-115

86 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi*, 41-45.

87 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Hieroi Logoi of Aelius Aristides*, 145-154.

But Asclepius was in the case of Aristides not just a physician, he became also his teacher and mentor. Aristides wanted to become a famous orator, but his career was cut short by his illness. This probably bothered him and in his dreams, Asclepius started to give him advice about his oratory as well as about his illness. With the help of his friends in the sanctuary, he started to write speeches again. This helped him to cope mentally with his illness and period of idleness (he called it *kathedra*, which is a period of inactivity, or maybe even sabbatical). The god helped him through his dreams and Aristides got better. When he left the sanctuary after two years, he got his first commission to write a speech.⁸⁸

Life in the temple could be compared to life in a monastery. There were strict purity rules, for example sexual intercourse was prohibited for those wanted to incubate.⁸⁹ Before each incubation, the participant had to participate in several rituals and ritual washings. Sacrifices of animals and offerings of bread were necessary (although the costs were never high, so also poor people could incubate). The priests wore special clothes, and the incubants wore white garments. The main activity took place at night, when people went to sleep in the *abaton*, the holy place where the incubation took place. The temple became a hotspot for highly educated individuals from the elite. Aristides was part of this group of people and made some important friends there. Next to this hotspot for the intellectual elite, the temple had another social function. Twice a year festivals were held in honour of the god. During these festivals, people from all over the world came to the temple. There were games, competitions, but also many ceremonies for sacrifices and offerings. Hymns were written by the intellectual elite and performed by a choir of boys (Aristides did this as well) and accompanied by instruments (like the citara⁹⁰).⁹¹

2.3 Medicine in antiquity

The cures that Asclepius and Aristides' doctors prescribed were very different from what doctors now would prescribe. Disease and medicine were viewed very differently in antiquity. Diseases were not seen as one cause with several symptoms in antiquity, but the symptoms were instead seen as several individual problems and for each a solution needed to be found. Furthermore, it lacked the scientific method of today where newer information is better than older information: every bit of information was as important as another – and often the older the information the better. In the ancient concept of the body, several fluids were contained in it, that each had different functions. A

88 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi*, 45-60, 57.

89 Incubation is sleeping in the a room in the temple, in the hope the god or one of his servants would appear in a dream and tell the dreamer what was wrong with him or cure him in the dream by giving some potion or even through surgery.

90 The ancient equivalent of a guitar, a snare instrument.

91 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi*, 27-40; Israelowich, I., (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Hieroi Logoi of Aelius Aristides*, in *Mnemosyne*, vol. 341, Leiden/Boston, 165-172.

disbalance in these fluids would lead to illness. When Aristides had to refrain from bathing, that was because he had too many fluids in his body – which caused his intestinal problems – and he needed to literally dry up. Baths of course consist of fluids, so he had to abstain from water and other fluids. This concept of the body did not stand alone, but was part of a greater philosophy about humans. Body and mind were connected. This is made clear in the theory of the humours made up by Galen. Thus the body could be accessed through the mind, deeds could say something about character, which said something about humours, which said something about the body, which said something about the body's future and thus the future of the character.⁹² Illness was seen as a pollution, which needed to be purged. This pollution could be physical, but also the result of some moral mistake, which connected religion and morality to the medicine.⁹³ Priests were also, as we have seen, expert in many things besides medicine. In antiquity all the different strands of science were still one and a philosopher could easily also be a doctor, a specialist in dreams and a priest.⁹⁴ In Greek medicine religion was still a great part of the knowledge about illness. Furthermore, knowledge about medicine was part of the education that the elite received and was part of the curriculum of texts. The fact that Aristides chose a god as his physician was not uncommon.⁹⁵

2.5 Dreams

Like medicine, dreams were viewed differently in antiquity. Nowadays we are highly influenced by the ideas of Freud about the subconscious, but in antiquity dreams were not seen as something that happened in our head and was imaginary, but as something that was real and took place at a real location. Dreams could also predict the future. When Aristides got his first dream about Asclepius at the warm springs in Smyrna, we would say that this is not strange, because the warm springs were also associated with Asclepius. But in antiquity, this had a special value and Aristides acted upon it: he kept the dream record that the god commanded.⁹⁶ Of course in a text which is meant for publication, Aristides could write down anything he wanted to claim to have dreamt. But whatever Aristides may have actually dreamt or made up – either consciously or subconsciously – the dreams can tell us a lot about the mind of an ancient person.⁹⁷

92 Petsalis-Diomidis, (2010), *'Truly beyond wonders'*, 77-78.

93 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Hieroi Logoi of Aelius Aristides*, 44-56.

94 Behr, (1968), *Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi*, 162-170; 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.

95 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Hieroi Logoi of Aelius Aristides*, 132.

96 Idem, 159-163.

97 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Hieroi Logoi of Aelius Aristides*, 139-140.

2.6 The *Hieroi Logoi*

In the 170's Aristides had started to write the *Hieroi Logoi*, although we are not sure when exactly. It must have been before 177, because then he mentions the *Hieroi Logoi* in another speech. He started writing at the command of the god. The main source for the speech is, as Aristides writes, the dream diary I mentioned earlier. According to Aristides, the text is written to thank Asclepius for saving him. It is hard to place the text in a genre, as also pointed out by Israelowich.⁹⁸ At the one hand, the text resembles aretalogies, because these were also often called hieroi logoi (sacred stories): stories or myths about the origin of a god or a ritual. The text also resembles an autobiography, because of the use of the first person and the focus on the individual.⁹⁹ Downie even argues that Aristides tried to start a new genre.¹⁰⁰

2.7 Interpretations

How should we interpret this text? Israelowich also struggled with this. He points out that most of what Aristides did or wrote or experienced was quite common in antiquity and we do not know any commentary on the text from antiquity that points to anything uncommon.¹⁰¹ This means that his text is at least representative of what other people in antiquity experienced but some experiences could also be shared with people from other classes. We do not know whether what Aristides writes down has really happened and is authentic or that he exaggerated a bit here and there, or that he downplayed some things – but that does not really matter. The point is that he wrote it down like this and the text in itself is worthwhile to study, even more when it seems representative for the elite in Greece.

98 Idem, 19.

99 Idem, 14-26.

100 Downie, (2013), *At the limits of art: literary study of Aelius Aristides' Hieroi Logoi*, 17-18.

101 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Hieroi Logoi of Aelius Aristides*, 179-180.

Chapter 3: textual analysis

In this chapter I will analyse our text: the *Hieroi Logoi*. First we discuss the framework from which we will be working. After that I will focus on three different aspects of pilgrimage, each with its own theories: landscape, movement and narrative. In each of those sub chapters I will point out a few issues, that I will discuss, and try to answer the questions that are relevant within that aspect of pilgrimage by close reading.

3.1. Framework

In the first chapter I already discussed some views of scholars on religion in antiquity. In this chapter I will work from the framework that I discussed there, namely that of embeddedness. Although not everyone agrees on this, I think it describes ancient religion the best: as something that is present in every part of life and cannot be seen as something separate in Greek society. Now, in this case we are reading about someone in the second century AD who lived in Asia Minor, which means that at least some changes took place since the classical period a few centuries earlier. Bremmer thinks that since the fourth century BC, a transformation has taken place within ancient Greek religion from a more public religion to a more private religion. He thinks that in the classical period religion was mainly public, which means that religion was exercised publicly and not felt privately (although there was often no one religious authority within a city state and sacrificing often happened in one's own home). According to Bremmer, this changed when the city states lost their power and instead became part of an empire, either that of Alexander the Great or that of the Romans later on, which made public religion less important for the city state. There was more attention for individual religion and more attention to the body, which can also be found back in the huge popularity of the cult of Asclepius, the god who also influenced Aristides so much.¹⁰²

We also need to discuss our own perspective. The concepts of emic and etic description are useful here. As we live a little less than two thousand years away from Aelius Aristides, our perspective on his text is exclusively etic. That means that we will be looking with modern eyes to the text and will try to put his experiences into our own theoretic framework. We will read his perception of his journeys and try to analyse it and fit it in our own perception. Our perspective is therefore quite one-dimensional: we have only one text, one person and his perception. But this specific case can nonetheless tell us a lot, because although he is one Greek person out of many, he must have had a lot in common with other Greek persons.

¹⁰² Bremmer, J.N. (1994), *Greek Religion*, in: *Greece & Rome, New Surveys in the Classics*, vol. 24, Oxford, 84-97.

3.2. Landscape and the weather

This paragraph concerns itself mainly with the perception of the landscape. The questions I will be asking are: how is the landscape part of the pilgrimage? How does Aristides perceive the landscape? Furthermore we will discuss the suggestions given by Coleman and Elsner, as discussed in the first chapter.

3.2.1 Difficult journeys

In this passage we read about a journey, but as you can see the description of the landscape is more or less narrowed down to the distance that Aristides travels and a mention of the temples on the pilgrimage site:

καὶ πάμπολυ δὴ τῶν ἄλλων ἀποσπᾶσας ἤγον εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, 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. ἤδη δὲ βαθείας ἐσπέρας εὐπορήσας ὑπηρετῶν, αὐτόθι λουσάμενος ὑπὸ λαμπτήρος ἀπὸ μικρᾶς πάνυ τροφῆς ἀνεπαύομην.

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. Then in the deep night when I found my way to the servants, after I washed myself under the light of a lamp and after a very little food, I held rest.¹⁰³

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.28

This is typical for the descriptions of the other journeys: not much is said about the landscape, although Aristides often mentions either the distance or the time it took him to travel to that place. But that distance is telling us something. Three hundred stades is about 57 kilometres,¹⁰⁴ so that is quite a distance to run or even walk. After that distance he even has energy left to walk around

103 The translations found in this chapter of the Greek text fragments are mine.

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

among the temples at the site. This is especially remarkable for a sick man. But not every time the journey goes as smooth as this time, as we see in the next passage:

νύξ τ' ἐπιγίγνεται, οἷα δὴ ἐν κλυδωνίῳ καὶ σάλῳ, καὶ κατέδαρθον σχεδὸν ὅσον εἰς ὄναρ. καὶ μοι γίγνεται πρόσταγμα πορευθῆναι πρὸς τὴν τῶν τροφέων 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 πλεόν ἢ στάδιον. ἀνέβην ἵππον καὶ ὠχόμεν, καὶ προσεκύνησα, καὶ οὐκ ἔφθην ἐπανελθὼν, καὶ πάντα ἐκεῖνα καθειστήκει.

It became night, like in a rippling, waving sea, and I slept almost long enough for a dream. 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

This time too the description of the landscape is minimal: there is mention of one important influence on his journey: the snow; and the distance that he had to cover with his journey. Remarkable is one phrase: “it was everywhere hard to get through”¹⁰⁵. This means that the journey is difficult and the landscape impassable. But Aristides is not stopped by this and goes to the hearth and the throne, although it is in the middle of the night, Aristides has not slept much and is ill.

Even when the weather is nice, there is still some trouble sometimes on the road:

ἐνταῦθα ἐτελέσαμεν σταδίους ἐξήκοντα μάλιστα καὶ ἑκατόν: καὶ τούτων τοὺς ἐξήκοντα σχεδὸν νυκτὸς, ἅτε καὶ προηκούσης τῆς ἡμέρας κινηθέντες, καὶ τινι καὶ πηλῶ περι τοῦτον ἤδη τὸν τόπον ἐνετύχομεν ἐξ ὄμβρων προτέρων οὐ ῥαδίῳ διεξελθεῖν: ἡ δὲ πορεία ἐγένετο ὑπὸ λαμπάδων.

There we finished one hundred and sixty stades, and nearly sixty of these in the night,

105 See for my analysis of this impassability and its relevance for pilgrimage Brink, (2016), From the god, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages in the Hieroi Logoi, 28-33.

because we were moved after the day started, and about here we encountered also some mud, from the previous rains, which was not easy to go through: the journey happened by torch light.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.3

Again we see the measurement of the distance. This time the distance is less, but there is some mud along the way, which makes it hard to continue. Besides, it is dark outside, which must have made it harder to travel. But more than that we do not get to read about this particular journey. In each of these fragments the same themes come back: the mention of the distance of the journey, few details about the landscape, except for one that makes it harder to travel and the fact that Aristides still makes the journey. It seems that the description of the landscape serves to show how tough the journey is for Aristides to make.

3.2.2 *The season and weather*

In the literature about landscape in pilgrimage, not much is said about the weather, except for the fact that the season can be of influence on the journey. When reading the *Hieroi Logoi* this is certainly true. There are many examples, but this is one of the most remarkable passages in the text:

χειμῶν δὲ οὕτω δὴ τι σφοδρὸς ὥστε μηδ' οἴκοι μένοντι ῥαδίως ἔχειν ὑπενεγκεῖν. καὶ συνέβη τοῦτο δὴ θειότατον τῆς ὁδοῦ, τὸ γὰρ τοῦ Ὀμήρου σαφὲς ἦν ὅτι τις θεῶν ἠγεῖτο καὶ ὅστις γε ὁ θεὸς, ἐξόπισθεν μὲν γὰρ βορέου πνεῦμα ἐπέκειτο οἷον 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 οἷον ζώνη διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ἀέρος ἦγεν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν κατ' αὐτῆς τῆς ὁδοῦ τεταμένη, σκέπην ἅμα καὶ φῶς ἔχουσα.

The winter was so violent, that it was not easy for me to undergo, even when I stayed at home. And this most divine happened on the road – that [saying] of Homer was clear that someone of the gods led, whichever god it may be. 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.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.26-27

In this passage we read about a miracle. Aristides makes a journey during a very cold winter. It is hard for him to be outside in this kind of weather, but the god makes it easier for him to travel and makes a path through the sky, keeping away the rain and snow. The path leads towards the temple, along the road that Aristides takes. This is not the first time that it is difficult for Aristides to travel, as we saw in the previous paragraph, but this time it is made easier by the god. In the next passage the god is also Aristides' saviour:

καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἤμεν περὶ τὰς νήσους, Δρυμοῦσαν καὶ Πήλην, αὖρα τις εὐρου ὑπῆρχετο καὶ περαιτέρω προϊόντων εὖρος ἤδη λαμπρὸς, καὶ τέλος ἐξερράγη πνεῦμα ἐξάσιον. Καὶ τὸ πλοῖον ἐκ πρῶρας ἀρθὲν ἐπὶ πρύμναν ὠκλασε 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, ὦ Ἀσκληπιέ. πολλὰ δὲ καὶ παντοῖα κινδυνεύσαντες καὶ τέλος περὶ αὐτὴν τὴν καταγωγὴν μυριάκις ἀνατραπέντες καὶ ἀπωσθέντες καὶ πολλὴν ἀγωνίαν τοῖς ὀρώσι παρασχόντες διεσώθημεν ἀγαπητῶς καὶ μόλις. (...) οὗ δὴ καὶ ἔγνωμεν ὅτι κάκ τοῦ πελάγους ἄρα αὐτὸς ὁ σεσωκὼς ἦν.

And when we were around the islands, Drumussa and Pele, some breeze from the east arose, and while we went further, the east wind was now furious, and finally an extraordinary wind broke out. 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 out 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 so various risks, and finally at the landing were many times turned around and pushed back, provideding much anguish for those who were looking, we were saved barely and scarcely. (...) From which we also knew that He was the one who saved us from the sea. Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.12

In this case a storm has endangered Aristides, but Aristides and his friends are saved by the god from the storm, by only saying his name. When this happens, Aristides is on his way to Chius for a purification, which he receives in the end and is successful in curing him. The curious thing is that after this the god asks Aristides to fake his drowning:

ἐπεὶ δὲ νύξ ἦκε, τὴν τε κάθαρσιν ὁ θεὸς κελεύει ποιῆσθαι, σημήνας ἀφ' ὧν. καὶ ἐγένετο

μέντοι οὐδὲν ἐλάττων ἢ ὑπὸ ἐλλεβόρου, ὡς ἔφασκον οἱ τούτου ἔμπειροι, ἅτε καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κλυδωνίου πάντων κεκινημένων. καὶ φράζει δὴ τὸ πᾶν, ὡς εἰμαρμένον τε εἶη ναυαγῆσαί μοι καὶ τούτου ἄρα ἔνεκα καὶ ταῦτα συμβαίη: καὶ νῦν ἔτι δέοι ὑπὲρ ἀσφαλείας καὶ τοῦ παντάπασιν ἐκπλῆσαι τὸ χρεῶν, ἐμβάντα εἰς λέμβον ἐν τῷ λιμένι οὕτω ποιῆσαι, ὡς τὸν μὲν λέμβον ἀνατραπῆναι καὶ καταδῦναι, αὐτὸν δὲ ἐξάραντός τινος ἐξενεχθῆναι πρὸς τὴν γῆν: ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ τελεῖσθαι τὰ ἀναγκαῖα. ἐποιοῦμεν ταῦτα ἄσμενοι δηλονότι. καὶ πᾶσι δὴ θαυμαστὸν ἐδόκει τὸ σόφισμα τῆς ναυαγίας ἐπ’ ἀληθινῶ τῷ κινδύνῳ γενόμενον.

Then the night came, and the god ordered me to do a purgation, showing me from what. And it happened to be nothing less than by hellebore, because, as those who are experienced in this said, everything was disturbed by the waves. And he showed everything, how it was destined for me to suffer shipwreck and that because of this these things happened, and that now it was necessary for my safety and for the fulfillment of my destiny, that I would embark on a fishing boat and to arrange in the harbour, that the boat would turn over and sink, and that I myself should be brought back to land after someone picked me up. In this my destiny would be fulfilled. We did these things quite gladly. And the clever contrivance of the shipwreck, which happened after a real danger, seemed wonderful to all.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.13-14

Asclepius asks Aristides to repeat the circumstances of the dangerous situation earlier and in this way to fulfill his destiny. Aristides has to die, but not really, so he can be saved from death and be cured. Actually the landscape and the weather (the sea and the storm) were supposed to kill Aristides, but the god intervened and took care of Aristides. These are elements we also saw in the other passages. So the description of the landscape and the weather serves to show how tough the journey is for Aristides, but the weather shows that the god can save Aristides from difficult circumstances. But the opposite can also happen:

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,¹⁰⁶ with cheerfulness, because the weather was wonderful and the road inviting.

106 The Greek word is *theoria*, for more about this translation and the use of that word, see Brink, (2016), From the god, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages in the Hieroi Logoi, 22-25.

Here we see that the weather can also be of positive influence on the journey. Aristides and his servants are happy, partly because of the weather, partly because the road was inviting (literally 'accepting').

The weather can change the landscape, can change one's perspective on the landscape, but can also be influenced by a higher power. Clearly the weather is as much an influence - as we can also see in this passage in the juxtaposition of the weather and the road - as the landscape is on the pilgrimages of Aristides.

3.2.3 *Suggestions*

So we have found some interesting conclusions about the landscape in the text. Furthermore, there are some things we can add to the points suggested by Coleman and Elsner regarding landscape. The first point we need to look at, is that pilgrimage in antiquity took place within a familiar place, in contrast to pilgrimage in for example Christianity where the pilgrimage often takes place in unfamiliar places. The question is: what is familiar? The places where Aristides went on pilgrimage, were mostly in Asia Minor, which was familiar territory for him, as he grew up there. But he was also not inexperienced in travelling: before he had gotten ill, he went as a tourist to Egypt, about which he has written nothing unfortunately, and he has also been to Rome, Athens and Epidaurus, which are all outside Asia Minor, but still within the Roman empire. When is a place no longer familiar? In any case, the fact that he knew the places where he went, was maybe of influence on his lack of description of the landscape. If he knew the places, it was less marvellous and wonderful for him to see the landscape and less interesting to write about it, as his direct readers (probably friends) would also know the landscape. Maybe with every pilgrimage he describes, his first readers had already a picture in mind of the landscape he was going through. In any case, my suggestion to Coleman and Elsner is to specify and nuance this.

Coleman and Elsner see the landscape not only as the physical landscape, but also the more implicit landscape that has been created by texts, stories, myths, history about the landscape. But unfortunately Aristides does not refer to stories or texts, although he must have read a lot of books during his education for orator. There is only some intertextuality to the *Odyssey* of Homer, as Odysseus also travels a lot. But this intertextuality is not related to the landscape, only to the movement. So here there is little material to work with.

In conclusion, we have seen that the landscape and the weather have a very physical influence on the journey: they can either make it very hard or very easy, which has an influence on

the hopes and fears of the pilgrim. We have found out that although not much attention is given to the season and the weather, this has a huge influence on the experience of the journey. Furthermore we could add to the points suggested by Coleman and Elsner and nuance something: familiarity of a place can influence the narrative. And although we did not find enough material in the *Hieroi Logoi* to work with the relationship between the text and the landscape, I do think that this is a very interesting approach, which has been proven to work.

3.3. Movement

In this paragraph I discuss several aspects of the journey that are important. I start with the contact with the god that takes place, then I continue to discuss Aristides' fellow travellers and whether we can call them pilgrims as well. I will shortly discuss the different destinations of Aristides' pilgrimages. I conclude with a reflection on how this fits in the theoretic framework of movement, which I discussed in Chapter 1.

3.3.1 *The god commands*

Almost every time it is the case that the god commands Aristides to go somewhere. As I already mentioned, the god speaks to him in dreams. Sometimes Aristides tells us what the dream was and how he interpreted it, but more often he just explains he had a dream or that the god commanded him to go. The deeper his relationship with the god grows, the more the god controls his movement. This becomes clear in for example this passage, where Aristides doubts whether he should make a journey:

ὅμως δὲ ἔτι διεσκοπούμην περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς εἰς Πέργαμον διὰ τὰ πρόσθεν ὄνειράτα: ἐνταῦθα δὴ σαφῶς ἐδηλοῦτο ἐπισχεῖν. τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ περὶ ἑσπέραν ποι κεκινήσθαι καὶ μεταγινώσκειν καὶ φάσκειν ὅτι ἀδύνατον εἶη Ἀδριανοῦ θήρας κατατυχεῖν, τοῦτο δὲ ἐδόκουν ἀπὸ Ἀδριανοῦ θήρας τινὰ ἐλθεῖν, βιβλίον τι κομίζοντα τῶν Μενάνδρου, καὶ λέγειν ὅτι πηλός τε εἶη ἀμήχανος καὶ τέλμα καὶ ἀνύσαι ἀδύνατον. πάλιν δὲ ὕειν τε ἔδοξα καὶ προσελθόντα μοι τινὰ λέγειν ὡς ἄρα τῶν ἀντιδίκων τις εἶη ἐν Ἀδριανοῦ θήρα καὶ δέοι κατιέναι ὥστε τι πρᾶξαι. καὶ τί, φάναι, πλέον τοῦ θεοῦ μένειν προειρηκός; τοῦτο καὶ αὐθις ἔδοξα πρὸς τινὰς λέγειν καὶ τὸ πᾶν οὕτω λαμβάνειν, ὅτι ἐπειδὴ δυσχερέστερον εἶχον πρὸς τὴν μονὴν, ἔξοδον προὔδειξεν ὁ θεός, βουλόμενος μεταβαλεῖν μου τὴν γνώμην, ἵνα ἥδιον μένοιμι. ἐνῆν δὲ καὶ ἀλουσίας σύμβολα. καὶ ἐπεγένετο ὑετὸς καὶ χειμῶν ἀμήχανος ἐξ ἑσπέρας.

Nevertheless I still was considering the journey to Pergamum because of dreams before, in which it was made clear to stay. On the one hand, it seemed that I had moved somewhere at evening, that I changed my mind and said that it was impossible to reach Hadrianutherae; on the other hand, it seemed that someone came from Hadrianutherae, bringing with him some booklet of Menander, and said that the mud was unmanageable and the swamp impossible to go through. Again I thought that it rained and that someone came to me to say that someone of my opponents was in Hadrianutherae and that it was necessary to go down there so that I could manage something. And I thought I said, “Why is it more than the god saying that I should stay?” Again I thought that I spoke to some people and to understand everything this way, that because I was quite annoyed about staying, the god showed the way out, because he wanted to change my mind, so that I would stay more pleasantly. With that there was a sign for not bathing. And in the evening there was rain and an enormous storm.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 1.51-52

Aristides is torn between dreams. Earlier he had dreamt that he had to go to Pergamum. This is not strange, Pergamum was where the god had his temple and Asclepius sent him there more than once. But now there is some indication that he needs to stay where he was. We read about his thought process, including the dreams that he receives about it. Eventually it turns out that a storm was coming and that it was dangerous to travel. But in some way Aristides thinks that Asclepius wanted him to teach him some kind of lesson. The point is though that Aristides is influenced greatly by the dreams he gets about leaving or staying. But he also profits from this:

ἐπελθόντος δὲ τοῦ χειμῶνος ἤγε πάλιν τὴν ἐπὶ Σμύρνης, καὶ γίγνεται τῶν ἡμερῶν ἡ πρώτη σφόδρα ἥπιος. ὡς δὲ κατέβην εἰς τὸ πεδῖον τῆς ἐπιούσης νυκτὸς, ἄλλα τε ὄνειρα ἐγίνετο ἐπισχόντα καὶ δὴ καὶ Νεφέλας Ἀριστοφάνους ἐδόκουν μεταχειρίζεσθαι: καὶ ἅμα ἔφ' ἔφη τε ἦν καὶ ὑετὸς οὐ πολὺ ὕστερον. “Ὡσθ’ οἱ μὲν συνέχαιρον ὡς οὐ προεξήλθον, οἱ δ’ ἐθαύμαζον τῆς προρρήσεως τὴν ἀκρίβειαν. (...) καὶ μου προϊόντος ἤδη ὑπεκινεῖτο ὁ ἀήρ, ὡς πρὸς ὕδωρ τε καὶ χειμῶνα. καὶ δέος ἦν μὴ καταληφθῶμεν, ἄλλως τε καὶ δυσπόρων ὄντων. ὅμως δὲ τοσοῦτον ἀντέσχεν ὅσον δύο σταδίους ἐλλείπεσθαι πρὸς τὸ ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος. τῆνικαῦτα δὲ ὀμίχλη τε κατέβη βαθεῖα καὶ ψακάς τις διέθει: καὶ παρελθόντων εἴσω λαμπρῶς ἤδη τὸ ὕδωρ παρῆν, ὥστε ἐορτὴν ἡγομεν. ἐπισχόντων δὲ με κἀνταῦθα ὄνειράτων ἐπέμεινα.

When winter came, he led me again on the road to Smyrna, and the first of the days was very mild. When I descended to the plain on the following night, other dreams happened,

keeping me and it seemed that I was studying the Clouds of Aristophanes, and at the same time at dawn, there were clouds and not much later rain. So that some rejoiced with me that I had not gone further, and some wondered about the precision of the prediction. (...) And while I went forward, the air changed, as if for water and storm. And the fear was that it would seize us, and especially because it was impassable. Nevertheless this air held so far, leaving out the two stades to the temple of Apollo. Then a deep mist came down and some drops of rain fell down, and when we had arrived inside the rain was already sharp, so that we held a feast. Because my dreams held me there, I stayed.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.18-19

In this fragment get to see how he interprets a dream: he reads the Clouds, a comedy, of Aristophanes and that apparently means that it is going to rain. We would never interpret a dream like this, but for him this is completely logical. This time though he profits by it because his dream comes true and some people even congratulate him, something which must have made him happy. Later, at the end of the fragment, he rested because the god commands him to stay there at the temple. Aristides fully trusts on the god to decide his plans and movement. Sometimes he is not happy about it, sometimes he profits from it.

We can see that contact with the god is possible everywhere: at home, on the road, etc. He does not need to go to the temple to have a dream, more the other way around: he needs a dream to go to the temple. Then why does he go on a pilgrimage? This is a question I will discuss in my other thesis.¹⁰⁷

3.3.2 Pilgrimage: different from other journeys?

Are Aristides' pilgrimages different from his other journeys? From the perspective of movement this would be interesting, because it would mean that his movement in pilgrimage is different. Let us look at the following passage, in which Aristides describes how he returns from Rome:

ἔδόκει δὴ χρῆναι κομίζεσθαι οἴκαδε, εἴ πως εἴη διαρκέσαι. κατὰ γῆν μὲν οὖν ἄπορον ἦν, οὐ γὰρ ἔφερε τὸ σῶμα τὸν σεισμόν: πλῶ δὲ ἐπεχειροῦμεν. τῶν δ' ὑποζυγίων τὰ μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν χειμώνων ἐτεθνήκει, τὰ δὲ περιόντα ἀπεδιδόμεθα. καὶ συμβαίνει τις Ὀδύσσεια, εὐθύς μὲν ἐν τῷ Τυρρηρικῷ πελάγει ζάλη καὶ ζόφος καὶ λιψὴ καὶ ταραχὴ τῆς θαλάττης ἀκατάσχετος, καὶ ὁ κυβερνήτης μεθῆκε τοὺς οἴακας, καὶ ὁ ναύκληρος καὶ οἱ ναῦται σποδὸν καταχεάμενοι σφᾶς τε αὐτοὺς ἀπώμωζον καὶ τὸ πλοῖον. ἡ δὲ ἐπεισέρρει πολλὴ κατὰ πρῶραν καὶ κατὰ πρύμναν

107 Brink, *From the god, Aelius Aristides' pilgrimages in the Hieroi Logoi*, 20-22.

ἡ θάλαττα, καὶ κατεκλυζόμεν τῷ τε ἀνέμῳ καὶ τοῖς κύμασι, καὶ ταῦτα ἐγίγνετο ἡμέραν καὶ νύκτα. Μέσαι νύκτες σχεδὸν ἦσαν, ἡνίκα πρὸς τὴν Πελωρίδα ἄκραν τῆς Σικελίας προσηνέχθημεν.

It seemed necessary to be carried home, if I would somehow endure. Over land there was no way out, because my body would not endure the shaking. We attempted sailing. Some of the beasts of burden had died because of the storms, we sold those that were left. And some Odyssey happened, because right in the Tyrrhenian Sea, there was a storm, darkness, a south western wind and uncontrollable disorder of the sea, and the steersman let go of the tiller, and the captain and the seamen, while they poured ashes over themselves, bewailed loudly themselves and the ship. A lot of seawater flowed in over the prow and the stern, and I was deluged by the wind and the waves, and these things happened day and night. It was almost in the middle of the night, when we were brought to the Peloric headland of Sicily.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.64-67

In this passage Aelius Aristides has to return home disappointed after a failed trip to Rome. Just before he went to Rome he got ill and that troubled him during the trip to Rome and ruined his stay there, even though doctors try everything they can to heal him. He is too weak to be carried over land, so he has to go by boat. If we compare this passage to the other passage we read before about a dangerous journey over sea, then we see a lot of the same elements. There is the storm, the people who are scared, the seamen who are most scared of all, and helpless wandering of the ship, and the bodily troubles of Aristides because of his illness. But one thing is different: Asclepius does not come to help Aristides. This passage happens before Aristides has his first dream about Asclepius and he does not yet have a great relationship with the god. So he does not cry out to the god, nor is he saved by the god. We do not get to hear about his fear at sea or whether he believed some other god would save him, we only get to know that his body got more ill from travelling over sea. Later the same happens when he travels further to his home in Asia Minor (Cephalonia is an island at the west of Greece, so he has a long way to go over sea to Smyrna and Pergamum in Asia Minor, which is now Turkey.) In that passage too, we hear nothing about the help of the god.

Strangely enough, there is a passage in the fourth book (*Hieroi Logoi* 4.32-37) about the same trip from Rome back home, in which Aristides performs a sacrifice to the God (which seems to be Apollo in this case, but that is unclear) and later thanks the gods for their providence and saving him from dangers at sea. I find these two passages hard to put together, as they seem to tell the same story, but in very different ways. In this passage the gods play no role in his story, which is

easy to explain, because Aristides has not yet such a close relationship with the god, while in the other story the gods get all the credit. But why would he tell the same story twice, with such different perspectives? This remains unclear. However, this version of the story is also telling us something; difficult journeys are not just exclusive to pilgrimages. In the other version of the story the gods play as big a role as in the pilgrimages, in keeping Aristides safe.

That pilgrimages are not different journeys than other journeys in this sense of the word, can also be seen by the fact that Aristides uses no different words for his pilgrimages than for his other journeys. So in ancient Greek culture movement in pilgrimages was not different than movement in other journeys.

3.3.3 Transformations

Although movement may look the same as other forms of travel, the results of the movement may be different in the case of pilgrimage:

θέρους ὥρα πονήρως εἶχεν ὁ στόμαχος καὶ δίψος ἦν νύκτα καὶ ἡμέραν καὶ ἰδρῶς ἀμύθητος καὶ λύσις τοῦ σώματος, καὶ μόλις ἂν δύο καὶ τρεῖς εἴλκον ἀπὸ τῆς κλίνης ἀναστῆναι δεόμενον: καὶ ὁ θεὸς σημαίνει ἔξοδον ἐν Σμύρνη ὄντι τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον, καὶ ἔδει ἐξίεναι αὐτίκα. καὶ ἐξῆειν μὲν τὴν ἐπὶ Περγάμου: (...) καὶ διαβάντι τὸν ποταμὸν νύξ τε ἦν ἤδη καθαρὰ καὶ προσέβαλεν αὔρα τις ἐλαφρὰ καὶ ψυχρινή, καὶ τό τε σῶμά πως ἀνελάμβανε καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ τόνος τις μετ' εὐθυμίας ἐνεδύετο, ὡς τῷ τε ἀέρι ὁμιλεῖν καθ' ἡσυχίαν καὶ ἅμα πρὸς τὴν παρελθοῦσαν ἡμέραν τὰ παρόντα κρίνοντι ὅπόσον τι μεταβεβλήκει. (...) ἦν δὲ τὸν χρόνον τοῦτον ἐργώδη τὰ περὶ τὴν φάρυγγα, ὑπὸ τε φλυκταίνης συνεχοῦς πιεζόμενα καὶ ὑπὸ παντὸς αἰὲ τοῦ συντυχόντος ἀναξαινόμενα. τότε δὲ τῆς τε ἄμμου πολλῆς ἅμα τῷ ἀνέμῳ φερομένης ἐπὶ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τοῦ κονιορτοῦ σύρδην ἀπανταχόθεν ἐπίπτοντος οὐκ ἀγωνιᾶν μᾶλλον τι παρειαίεται μοι ἢ θαρρεῖν: ἅμα μὲν οἶον ἀπονοία τινὶ καὶ παρατάξει, οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἀναφυγὴ, ἅμα δ' ὡς ἀντεῖχον παρὰ πᾶν τὸ εἰκός. Οἱ δὲ ἰατροὶ τὰ πρὸ τοῦδε ἀνακογχυλιάζειν τε ἐκέλευον καὶ σκέπην ἀκριβεστάτην καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα εἰσηγοῦντο. δευτέρῃ 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 Σμύρνη προείρητο, ἐλαύνειν ὀρθὴν εἰς Διὸς χωρίον. καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἤδη ῥάω τὰ τῆς διαίτης ἐπιφανῶς ἦν.

In the time of summer my stomach had trouble and I was thirsty day and night, and there was unspeakable sweat and the break down of my body, and only just could two or three

men drag me out of my bed, because I needed to get up. And the god showed me while I was in Smyrna the whole time, and it was necessary to go on a journey again. And we went out to Pergamum. (...) And the night was clear, when I crossed the river, and some light and cold wind stroke me, and my body somehow recovered and in my mind some tension together with happiness entered, so that I started to like the weather in the quiet, at the same time comparing the present to the the day before. (...) 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 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 same time in some way through some desperation and obstination, because there was no escape, but at the same time 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*, 5.1-3, 9-10

Twice Aristides is changed by his journey. The first time, he is troubled by the heat during summer, but when he continues in the night, because he does not like his room at the inn where he wanted to stop, he feels better, because of a breeze. Now this can be explained by the fact that the heat made him feel sick, while the cool breeze helps him. But as he has explained earlier, he was not feeling well before his journey either, in fact he felt so bad that he hardly left his bed. But during that journey he starts to feel better, even happy, and his outlook on the weather and the journey changes with it. The second time, which is only a little further in the text, when he returns from his journey to Pergamum, he is troubled by a lesion in his throat, but during his journey he feels confident and when he returns he feels better.

His movement cures him from his illness, but also makes him more confident about his own body and make him happy. His movement is of influence on his health and his happiness and if Aristides is transformed by his journeys, then it means that the pilgrimages are different from his other journeys. Although we have seen that his journeys sometimes may look the same and that in fact to Aristides they may have been the same, we see that the pilgrimages lead to other results. In Aristides' eyes this is because of the help of the god: he commands when and where he goes on his journeys, he commands what to do to get better. But although he loses his independence, he gets

something in return: he is cured from his illness, saved by the god, and he still has some kind of career. Furthermore, his illness made him immobile as well, so the journeys commanded by the god are a way for him to leave his house and to live a life even though he is restricted by his illness.

3.4. Narrative

In this paragraph we use the example that Shannon has set in her analysis of modern day pilgrimage. Our methods differ: she used many stories and compared them, whereas we only will be looking at one story. Furthermore, the distance in time between Aristides and the blogs and stories that Shannon read is very great. Therefore we will ask our own questions, as our source is different from hers. Aristides did not use a specific word for his pilgrimages, as I have already mentioned. So he does not describe them differently from other forms of travel. So what he thinks about what we call his pilgrimages, we have to look for in the text. The questions we will discuss now are: how does Aristides look at his own pilgrimages in retrospective? What was his goal and how does he feel about the results, has anything changed?

In this text everything he wrote was in retrospect, but most of what he wrote are descriptions and stories. But there are a few passages in which he gives some sort of meta-analysis of what he experienced. These are the interesting parts.

3.4.1 *Illness and healing pilgrimage*

We will start with the question how Aristides perceived his own journeys. The following passage we have read before:

ὅμως δὲ ἔτι διεσκοπούμην περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆς εἰς Πέργαμον διὰ τὰ πρόσθεν ὄνειράτα: ἐνταῦθα δὴ σαφῶς ἐδηλοῦτο ἐπισχεῖν. τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ περὶ ἐσπέραν ποι κεκινήσθαι καὶ μεταγινώσκειν καὶ φάσκειν ὅτι ἀδύνατον εἶη Ἀδριανοῦ θήρας κατατυχεῖν, τοῦτο δὲ ἐδόκουν ἀπὸ Ἀδριανοῦ θήρας τινὰ ἐλθεῖν, βιβλίον τι κομίζοντα τῶν Μενάνδρου, καὶ λέγειν ὅτι πηλός τε εἶη ἀμήχανος καὶ τέλμα καὶ ἀνύσαι ἀδύνατον. πάλιν δὲ ὕειν τε ἔδοξα καὶ προσελθόντα μοι τινὰ λέγειν ὡς ἄρα τῶν ἀντιδίκων τις εἶη ἐν Ἀδριανοῦ θήρα καὶ δέοι κατιέναι ὥστε τι πρᾶξαι. καὶ τί, φάναι, πλέον τοῦ θεοῦ μένειν προειρηκότος; τοῦτο καὶ αὐθις ἔδοξα πρὸς τινὰς λέγειν καὶ τὸ πᾶν οὕτω λαμβάνειν, ὅτι ἐπειδὴ δυσχερέστερον εἶχον πρὸς τὴν μονὴν, ἔξοδον προὔδειξεν ὁ θεός, βουλόμενος μεταβαλεῖν μου τὴν γνώμην, ἵνα ἥδιον μένοιμι. ἐνῆν δὲ καὶ ἀλουσίας σύμβολα. καὶ ἐπεγένετο ὑετὸς καὶ χειμῶν ἀμήχανος ἐξ ἐσπέρας.

Nevertheless I still was considering the journey to Pergamum because of dreams before, in which it was made clear to stay. On the one hand, it seemed that I had moved somewhere at evening, that I changed my mind and said that it was impossible to reach Hadrianutherae; on the other hand, it seemed that someone came from Hadrianutherae, bringing with him some booklet of Menander, and said that the mud was unmanageable and the swamp impossible to go through. Again I thought that it rained and that someone came to me to say that someone of my opponents was in Hadrianutherae and that it was necessary to go down there so that I could manage something. And I thought I said, “Why is it more than the god saying that I should stay?” Again I thought that I spoke to some people and to understand everything this way, that because I was quite annoyed about staying, the god showed the way out, because he wanted to change my mind, so that I would stay more pleasantly. With that there was a sign for not bathing. And in the evening there was rain and an enormous storm.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 1.51-52

Here we see an indirect example of how Aristides thinks about his journeys. They are primarily commanded by the god, as he feels it, but sometimes he wants to do something different than the god commands. But in his view, the god then tries to ease his mind about that as well. In retrospect, he thinks that the god was very wise in his commands. He is very thankful to the god, as he also states here:

πόθεν οὖν τις ἄρξεται, πολλῶν τε καὶ παντοίων ὄντων, καὶ ἅμα οὐκ ἐν μνήμῃ πάντων, πλήν γε δὴ τῆς χάριτος τῆς ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν;

Where should one begin, when there are so many and such different things, and at the same time not all in our memory, except then the gratitude because of them?

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 2.11

He admits that he has trouble remembering the details. He only remembers that he was very thankful for what happened. The Hieroi Logoi are a thank offering to Asclepius, so we should expect such emotions. We cannot know whether he really felt that, but it is not strange to assume: we can see in the text that he has a very close relationship with Asclepius and that in his eyes the god has helped him many times with his illness and even saved him from death a few times. Gratitude is a fitting emotion in his case. But gratitude comes only after someone has done something for you and Aristides needed a lot to be done for him. In his gratitude we can also find

his dependence on the god: he needed the god for his health, for his career, for protection against the dangers of travel. By letting the god help him he also becomes very vulnerable, but he is only so vulnerable because of his illness, as becomes clear when he gets better:

θεῶν δὲ οὕτω διδόντων ἐγένετο ἀπὸ τούτων ἤδη τῶν χρόνων μεταβολὴ περὶ πᾶν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν δίαιταν σαφῆς, καὶ τὸν τε ἀέρα ὑπῆρξε μᾶλλον φέρειν καὶ ὁδοιπορεῖν ἐπεικῶς οὐδὲν ἔλαττον τῶν πρὸς ὑπερβολὴν ἐρρωμένων. καὶ τῶν σκεπασμάτων τὰ περιττὰ ἀφηρέθη, οἳ τε ἀνώνυμοι κατάρροι καὶ σφάκελοι περὶ τὰς φλέβας καὶ τὰ νεῦρα ἀπεπαύσαντο. τροφὴ δὲ πῶς ἤδη διωκεῖτο καὶ ἀγῶνας ἐντελεῖς ἠγωνιζόμεθα οἴκοι τε κἂν τοῖς δημοσίοις. καὶ δὴ καὶ πόλεις εἰσήλθομεν ἠγουμένου τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ τῆς ἀγαθῆς φήμης καὶ τύχης.

Because the god gave it so, it happened that from these times on a change through my whole body happened and it was clear concerning my diet, and the bearing of the climate grew more and more, and the walking nothing less like those who were in good health to the extreme. And the excessive covering was taken away, and the anonymous catarrhs and convulsions of the arteries and the nerves stopped. My food was in some way digested and I engaged in full contests at home and in public. And also we went to cities, while the god led us with good fame and fate.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.8

The god cures him, his body changes and the results of the pilgrimage become clear: he feels much better, so much better even that he can pick up his career. In this we can see that his illness is an important part of his experiences of his journeys. The illness makes it harder for him to make the journey, but also makes it necessary to journey, because the pilgrimage can cure him, and the pilgrimage is only successful if he finds any relief. So his pilgrimages are seen mainly in the light of his illness and the cures the god can provide him during those pilgrimages. This should not be underestimated in the study of healing pilgrimages: that the illness, in antiquity often physiological, is of big influence on the pilgrimage, not only as a motivation to go, but also as a large factor on the road.

3.4.2 Beyond description

Those cures are an important part his experience as well, as we will see in the next passage:

ἐν μέσῳ δὲ τούτων τῶν φλεβοτομιῶν προστάττει μοι τὸ λουτρὸν τὸ ἐν τῷ Καϊκῷ, (...) ἢ δὲ

ἐπὶ τούτῳ κουφότης καὶ ἀναψυχὴ θεῶ μὲν καὶ μάλα ῥαδίᾳ γινῶναι, ἀνθρώπῳ δὲ ἢ νῶ λαβεῖν ἢ ἐνδείξασθαι λόγῳ οὐ πάνυ ῥάδιον.

In the middle of those phlebotomies he ordered a bath for me in the Caicus. (...) 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

I am concerned with the last sentence here: he writes that only a god can understand what he felt after he was cured from the bath. Men cannot understand it, nor can he, also a man, write about it. This makes his relationship with the god extra special: only the god can understand what he feels. Those special experiences happen more often:

ἦν οὖν οὐ μόνον τελετῇ τινι εἰκοῦς, οὕτω θείων τε καὶ παραδόξων τῶν δρωμένων ὄντων, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνέπιπτε τι θαυμαστὸν ἀηθεία, ἅμα μὲν γὰρ ἦν εὐθυμεῖσθαι, χαίρειν, ἐν εὐκόλοις εἶναι καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος, ἅμα θ' οἷον ἀπιστεῖν εἴ ποτε ταύτην ἰδεῖν ἐξέσται τὴν ἡμέραν, ἐν ἣ τις ἐλεύθερον αὐτὸν τῶν τοσοῦτων πραγμάτων ὄψεται, πρὸς δὲ καὶ δεδιέναι μή πού τι τῶν εἰωθότων αὐθις συμβάν λυμήνηται ταῖς περὶ τῶν ὅλων ἐλπίσι. κατεσκευάστο μὲν οὕτω τὰ τῆς γνώμης καὶ μετὰ τοιαύτης ἡδονῆς ἅμα καὶ ἀγωνίας ἢ ἀναχώρησις ἐγίγνετο:

It was not only like some initiation, because the rituals were so divine and incredible, but also because something wonderful came together with something new. Because at the same time there were gladness, rejoicing, being satisfied both in mind and in body, and again, such a disbelief whether it was ever possible to see the day, on which someone would see himself free of such matters, and add to that the fear that some of the usual things would happen again, which ruins the hopes about the whole. Thus turned out my mind and after such pleasure and at the same time fear, my return happened.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.7

Again his experiences are beyond description. He uses many different words for the ritual (divine, incredible, wonderful, new), and for his emotions (gladness, rejoicing, satisfaction, incredulity, fear). It is fairly understandable that he compares his experience to an initiation into a mystery cult, because of such things men were forbidden to speak. Yet he tries to put in words what he called earlier indescribable. In his words we find two emotions: fear and hope. On the one hand he hopes

to be cured and not to get ill again, on the other hand he fears that 'the usual things would happen again'. These are emotions we can understand very well, because they are so human. This is an important aspect of healing pilgrimage: there are sometimes conflicting emotions at work and the stakes for the pilgrim are high: health is a very important factor for happiness.

3.4.3 Journey patterns

But Aristides describes his journeys also in another way:

ἀλλὰ' ἐπειδὴ προσέταξεν ἀναστρέφειν, ἐπαινέσας τὸ ἐν Λανείῳ ὕδωρ, σχεδὸν ὥσπερ στροφὴν τινα δευτέραν ἀποδιδόντες, ἐπανήειμεν, τῇ τε ὥρᾳ τῆς ἐξόδου μάλιστα πως παραπλησίως, διὰ τὸ καὶ τότε αὐθημερὸν ἐξιέναι ἐπὶ τῷ προστάγματι, καὶ δὴ καὶ τῇ συνεχείᾳ τῆς πορείας.

But when he commanded to return, praising the water in Laneion, almost as if giving some second strophe, we returned, in the time of departure somehow nearly the same, because then too we left on the same day after the command, and also nearly the same in the continuity of the journey.

Aelius Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.17

Here we see in a few words a very interesting idea: that his journey home is the same as his journey towards Cyzicus, where he went to give a speech during a festival. He compares it to the chorus in a play: the god was the lead singer who sang a strophe, after which Aristides and his servants responded. It is not clear to which that sentence refers: if it refers to the sentence before, it meant that the response of Aristides was on the command to return and the response is then that he returned immediately. But if that sentence refers to the sentence after that, it means that the second strophe is the repetition of the first strophe, both of which are journeys. There is not one correct interpretation, but if we choose the second, that has some interesting implications for how he sees his journey. But why is it important that these journeys back and forth are the same? Aristides wants to see a pattern in his journeys. Elsewhere, he also sees patterns in his journeys: he makes three journeys to Cyzicus, which he counts in his text, and explains how they are the same or exactly at the same time. If he can find a pattern in his journeys, then it means that these journeys were meant to be in that pattern by the god: it signifies that there is an intention behind these journeys. They become meaningful through this supposed intention of the god and the god gives his authority to them and the cures.

So a few things are of influence on how Aristides looks at his journeys: first, his health, which make it either more difficult or easier for him to travel, second, the hope and fears that are related to his health and third the patterns that he sees in his journeys. Especially the fact that his health is such an influence is an important insight, but very specific to healing pilgrimage.

3.5. Conclusion

In the *Hieroi Logoi* several aspects of pilgrimage can be found. When we look through the lens of the landscape, we see that the landscape and the weather have a very large influence on the experience of the pilgrimage. Mud and rain storms make it difficult for Aristides to make his journey, but when the weather is nice, that also makes Aristides happy about his journey. Especially the importance of the weather is a useful insight. Coleman and Elsner have already mentioned the relationship between texts and landscape, for which we found in this case little material to work with. We could add to their insights by nuancing their suggestion about familiarity. All in all, the concept of landscape can tell us a lot about the perception of pilgrims on their own culture and environment. But so can the concept of movement. We have looked at several aspects of movement in the text. We found that Aristides is highly influenced by the god in his movement, which sometimes is in his advantage and sometimes angers him. Although in his movement his normal journeys seem the same as his pilgrimages, because they contain the same elements of the difficult journey, some things are also different: first of all, the influence of the god on the circumstances, and secondly, the results of the journey: in the case of the pilgrimages, he does not get more ill, but he feels better. The pilgrimage transforms him, not only in his health, but also in his happiness and confidence. Thanks to the commands of the god, he not only has the chance to get better, but also he is able to move and to travel, and he can have some kind of career. That his health is of great importance to him, we can see when we look through the perspective of narrative: his health influences his experiences of the pilgrimage, as well as his hope that he will get better and the fear that he will fall ill again. In his hopes for finding a cure, he sees patterns in his journeys, which make him believe that the god has a purpose with all those journeys.

Chapter 4: Analytical conclusion

In this chapter I will analyse the conclusions from our previous chapter and return to our main question. I will start with a general analysis of the use of the three perspectives or aspects we have used in our text analysis, after which I will discuss what we have learned about ancient pilgrimage and the implications of our new knowledge.

4.1 Landscape, movement and narrative

These three perspectives on the text lead us to different insights, although they are sometimes related to each other. From the perspective of landscape, we have seen that it is necessary to have enough material to come to useful conclusions. In this case, that material was hard to find. When analysing a text, there is only a limited perspective on the pilgrimage and the experiences of the pilgrim. We only get to read what he writes down. That can sometimes be very useful, but in this case can also make it harder to find the information you need. The same goes for the perspective of narrative: in this case there were a few fragments that could tell us something, but the material has to fit the perspective.

But the perspective of movement lacks that restriction: movement is necessarily part of the pilgrimage and is therefore usually present in the material. That makes it a very useful concept to work with, but it also makes it very broad. Here I interpreted it in a specific way, to be able to work with it in this case study. The scope of the material – in this case only one person and one perspective – and the kind of material - in this case an autobiographical text - have great influence on what conclusions can be drawn. Others would probably interpret this particular case differently, which could probably also be useful. Nonetheless, I found it very helpful to look at the several aspects individually. The aspects are also related: the perspective of narrative also tells us a lot about movement and landscape, whereas the movement takes place within the landscape, etc. Therefore it was sometimes hard to choose from which angle I would look at a certain passage. These relationships between the different perspectives is also something that can be interesting to look at, because the pilgrims in Shannon's research think that the pilgrimage can only be seen as the whole and cannot be taken apart, because then it loses all meaning.

When applying these three aspects onto pilgrimage in antiquity specifically, not many problems arise. The greatest problem is that we cannot do anthropological research, in the sense that we cannot ask Aristides the questions we want answered, but instead we are dealing with a text which only gives us the information that Aristides choose to provide, and that information is

furthermore sometimes hard to understand and interpret. That leaves us sometimes with too little material to work with. But because landscape, movement and narrative are such general concepts, it is not hard to apply them to the text.

4.2 Ancient pilgrimage

In the second chapter I discussed the question whether Aristides was unique or that his experiences were common among the Greeks and together with Israelowich I concluded that at least most of what Aristides wrote down, was not uncommon, because there is no evidence that other Greeks reacted with surprise on his *Hieroi Logoi*. Furthermore, we know that many people went on pilgrimages to Asklepieia and that how Aristides deals with his illness was also common among the Greeks. So what can Aristides' experiences tell us about Greek pilgrimage in general? When we look at the bigger picture, we can conclude that healing pilgrimage is a very specific kind of pilgrimage. In some way every kind of pilgrimage is a healing pilgrimage, in the sense that there is a problem which needs to be solved one way or another. But in healing pilgrimage, the physical illness of the pilgrim is of great influence on his journeys, his destinations, his experiences, on everything. Whether we look through the scope of the landscape, or movement, or narrative, Aristides' illness keeps returning and it invades every aspect of his life. So my conclusions here mostly concern healing pilgrimage.

First of all, in answer to Scott Scullion: this is unmistakably a case of pilgrimage, because Aristides went to a place with the aim to communicate with Asclepius. Therefore, we can conclude that pilgrimage did happen in ancient Greece. But what should also be noted, is that it happened in the second century AD, in a time when Early Christianity had already spread through the Roman empire. It is still interesting that there is a parallel for pilgrimage in polytheistic Asia Minor for the pilgrimage in Early Christianity, but it would have been even more interesting if there were more examples from earlier in time. There is evidence left of visits to Asklepieia from very early on in ancient Greek history, but we have hardly any literature left about that, so we cannot compare the experiences of Aristides with those of somebody else in another time period (or even in another place in Greece).

Nonetheless, the descriptions of Aristides of his pilgrimages have proven to be a valuable source, with sometimes even moving stories about his experiences. We have seen that the same emotions play a role in healing pilgrimage in ancient Greece as in the rest of the world: hope and fear. But we can also see many specifics for ancient Greek pilgrimage. Much of it is related to our understandings of ancient Greek religion and medicine. For example, it is possible for Aristides to go to many different temples of many different gods: Asclepius, Apollo, Olympian Zeus, and that

does not matter. This is related to the polytheism in ancient Greek religion. We can also link this to Bremmer's insights: many people choose one god to worship out of many, as Aristides also did with Asclepius. More related to the aspects we have studied in this thesis, is the fact that Aristides has a very close relationship with the god: only he and the god can understand what he experiences during the rituals during his pilgrimages, and the god decides about his pilgrimages. This is an example of the private religion that Bremmer talked about, although Israelowich also points out that Aristides performed both private and public religion and thus the two are not mutually exclusive.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, we already knew that travelling in ancient Greece was not easy and often very dangerous, but now we have seen in reality how the landscape and the weather have influence on the journey. But most importantly, we have found out that the pilgrimages differ in one important aspect from other kinds of travel: the results. When Aristides is on a pilgrimage, he feels better after his journey, while he often felt worse after a normal journey. So our working definition should be adopted to include this: pilgrimage is travel to go to a specific place to communicate with the god which leads to certain results for the pilgrim. Of course it is imaginable that sometimes a pilgrimage does not succeed and the pilgrim does not feel better, which also happens in the case of Aristides (the time he goes across the sea to perform a purgation by vomiting, *Hieroi Logoi* 1.65), but that exception only confirms the rule.

So thanks to Aristides' case we have learned some things about ancient pilgrimage: first that it really happened, or at least in the second century AD, parallel to Early Christianity. But also we have learned that the pilgrimage in Aristides' case is related to its context: religion and medicine in antiquity. Aristides' preference for one god was part of a more general transformation of Greek religion. Furthermore, we learned that often in a pilgrimage the results matter: whether the pilgrim feels better.

108 Israelowich, (2012), *Society, medicine and religion in the Hieroi Logoi of Aelius Aristides*, 179.

Conclusion

How can social-anthropological theory contribute to a better understanding of the various aspects of pilgrimage in the *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides, and how can it contribute to a better understanding of ancient pilgrimage in general? That is the question we want to answer. When we look at some social-anthropological theories, it appears that first there was a discussion about what pilgrimage is and what its function is. Turner and Eade and Sallnow debated about pilgrimage, who brought each an interesting aspect of pilgrimage into light. But then Coleman was of the opinion that the definition of pilgrimage is as hard to formulate as the definition of, for example, religion, so that we should stop trying so hard and instead try to find out more about it. Among classicists the same discussion is going on: what is pilgrimage? Could pilgrimage also happen in antiquity? Some thought it could and wrote papers about it, but others, like Scott Scullion, advised against the use of the concept. One reason for that was that the term was influenced by its origin in history: Early Christianity. Another reason was that the concept was confusing for research in ancient history and especially ancient religion, because it put several forms of travel under one umbrella, which should not be confused with each other. I then discussed three perspectives on pilgrimage: landscape, movement, and narrative. Nonetheless, I still had to formulate a working definition, to make it possible to work with the concept. My definition is: pilgrimage is travel towards a centre to communicate with the god.

The *Hieroi Logoi* of Aelius Aristides are a very suitable text for research in pilgrimage in antiquity, because the author went on pilgrimages several times. He is an author from the second century AD, who wrote six books on his experiences while he was ill and tried to find a cure with the help of the god Asclepius, the god of medicine. Medicine in those times functioned differently from medicine now: it was completely normal to go to the doctor and to the Asclepian priest as well. Throughout the *Hieroi Logoi* it becomes clear how close the relationship between Aristides and Asclepius becomes and how Aristides trusts fully on his god and saviour. That is also why he wrote the *Hieroi Logoi* as a thank offering to the god. What matters for our interpretation of the text, is that it was probably quite representative for ancient Greek pilgrimage, because no one in antiquity reacted to the *Hieroi Logoi* with surprise.

When we look from the three different perspectives to the text, one important element plays a big role: his illness. That is no surprise, but it is interesting to see how great the influence is of that illness. The landscape and the weather make it either easy or difficult for Aristides to travel, but especially the importance of the weather is a new insight in our understanding of pilgrimage. In his

movement, Aristides is influenced by the god, who controls where and when he travels. At first his movement during his pilgrimages does not look that different from other forms of travel, but when we look closely, we can see that the results of movement in pilgrimage is different: Aristides gets better, he feels better and is more happy, he feels more confident and he regains some of his career, that was greatly hindered by his illness. The fact that the god controls his movement, can be seen as a loss of independence, but also as enrichment of his life, as he was immobilized by his illness. The influence of the illness on his life can also be found when looking from the perspective of narrative: his health greatly influences his experiences of his travels, as well as his hope to get better and his fear to get ill again. The patterns he sees in his journeys can also be explained by this: he believes that the god has a purpose with those journeys, which makes it more believable for him that he will get better, because the god is taking care of him. All of this is part of the general picture of ancient pilgrimage. Aristides was close to one god: Asclepius, which is part of a larger aspect of Greek religion in the second century. His pilgrimages show how ideas about religion, medicine, dream interpretation, etc, worked out in reality. The most important thing we learned is that how a pilgrimage ended, the transformation that resulted from the pilgrimage, matters in its distinction from other forms of travel, so it should be part of our definition of pilgrimage.

Furthermore, we have learned about the use of the three aspects of pilgrimage we studied. They are all related, but also bring up other insights. Landscape and narrative are appropriate ways to look at pilgrimage, but are dependent on how much and what kind of material there is available for research. The same goes to a lesser extent for movement, but movement is necessarily part of a pilgrimage, so usually there should be enough material for that.

In conclusion, we can say that the three perspectives were all in their own extent useful for our understanding of pilgrimage in antiquity. We now understand better how illness had an influence on the pilgrimages of Aelius Aristides and we have adapted the working definition according to our new insights about pilgrimage in antiquity.

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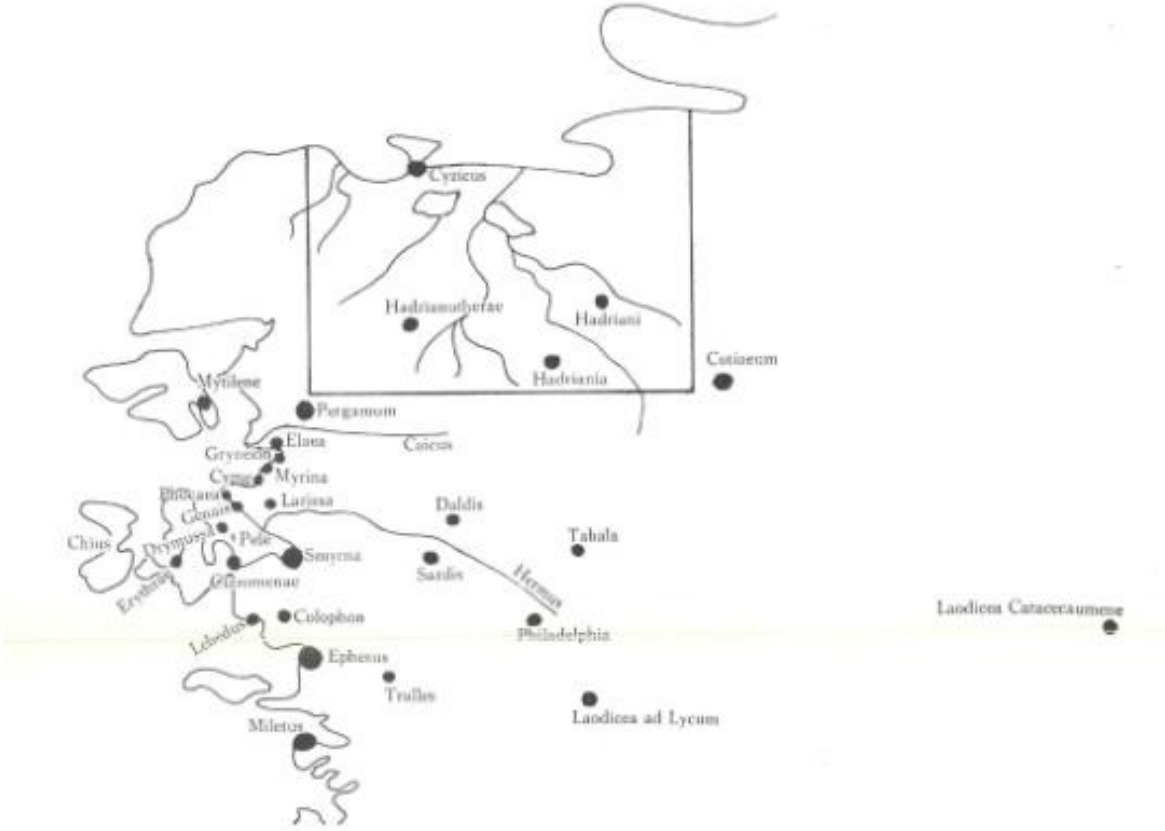
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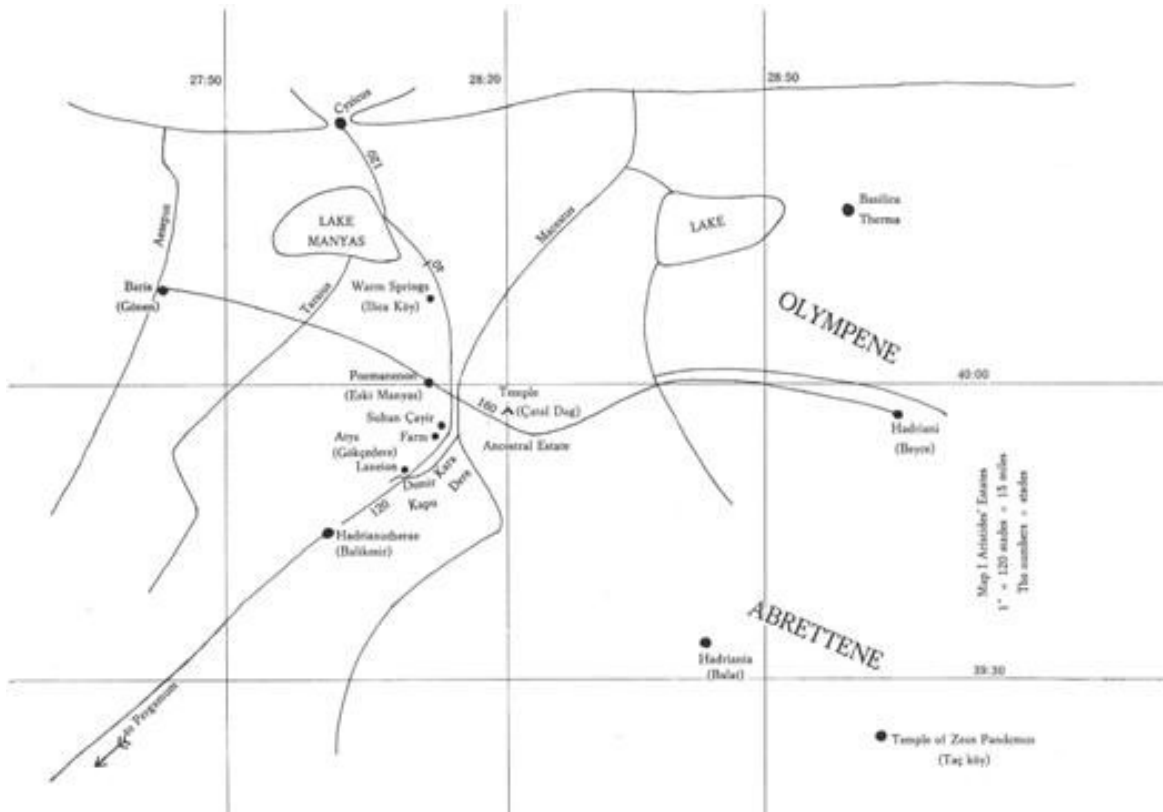
Appendix

Map 1:



Map of Asia Minor, source: Behr, (1968), Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi.

Map 2:



Map of Laneion and surroundings, source: Behr, (1968), Aelius Aristides and the Hieroi Logoi.