**Transcorporeality and Suspension in Aelius Aristides’ *Proomia***

1. **Motion of Sea and Bodily Distress, *Hieroi Logoi* II.65**

A sort of Odyssey took place. Straightaway in the Tyrrhenian sea, a storm and a darkness and a southwester and the turbulence of the sea was unbearable, and the steerman let go of the rudders and the captain and the sailors poured ashes, and bewailed themselves and the ship. The sea rushed in mightily over the prow and the stern and I was deluged by wind and waves, and these things happened day and night. It was nearly midnight when we were borne to the Peloric promontory of Sicily. Then wandering and running in the strait, sometimes forwards, sometimes backwards. We crossed the Adriatic in two nights and a day, escorted by a noiseless current. When it was necessary to put in at Cephallenia, again a high wave and the wind was not favorable, but we wandered up and down. Manifold pains and the dissolution of my body. (Trans. adapted from Behr 1981. Dramatic date: 144 CE;[[1]](#footnote-1) written in 170s)

καὶ συμβαίνει τις Ὀδύσσεια. εὐθὺς μὲν ἐν τῷ Τυρρηνικῷ πελάγει ζάλη καὶ ζόφος καὶ λὶψ καὶ **ταραχὴ** τῆς θαλάττης ἀκατάσχετος, καὶ ὁ κυβερνήτης μεθῆκε τοὺς οἴακας καὶ ὁ ναύκληρος καὶ οἱ ναῦται σποδὸν καταχεάμενοι σφᾶς τε αὐτοὺς ἀπῷμωζον καὶ τὸ πλοῖον. ἡ δὲ **ἐπεισέρρει πολλὴ κατὰ πρῷραν καὶ κατὰ πρύμναν** ἡ θάλαττα, καὶ **κατεκλυζόμην** τῷ τε ἀνέμῳ καὶ τοῖς κύμασιν, καὶ ταῦτα ἐγίγνετο ἡμέραν καὶ νύκτα. μέσαι νύκτες σχεδὸν ἦσαν, ἡνίκα πρὸς τὴν Πελωρίδα ἄκραν τῆς Σικελίας προσηνέχθημεν. ἔπειτα ἐν πορθμῷ **πλάναι καὶ δρόμοι, τὰ μὲν εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν, τὰ δὲ εἰς τοὐπίσω**. τοῦ δὲ Ἀδρίου τὸ μὲν πέλαγος δυοῖν νυξὶ καὶ ἡμέρᾳ διήλθομεν, ἀψοφητὶ παραπέμποντος τοῦ ῥεύματος. ὡς δ’ ἔδει πρὸς τὴν Κεφαλληνίαν προσσχεῖν, αὖθις αὖ κῦμα ὑψηλὸν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα οὐκ ἔφερεν, **ἀλλ’ἐπλανώμεθα ἄνω καὶ κάτω**. **κάματος παντοδαπὸς τοῦ σώματος καὶ λῦσις**.

1. **Body as a Ship: *Hieroi Logoi* III.17**

And a spasm follows the fever and neither something speakable nor was it imaginable, but my body was drawn in every direction and my knees were drawn upwards to my head, and dashed against it. It was impossible to control my hands, but they beat against my neck and face. My chest was thrust outward, and my back was drawn opposite toward the back like a sail bulging in the wind. No part of my body was still, nor did it change a little from its natural condition, but the movement was extreme and the torment of the pains unspeakable and I was not able to be silent, but I met with an even louder voice... (Dramatic date: 148 CE; written in 170s)

καὶ ἐπιγίγνεται σπασμὸς ἐπὶ τῷ πυρετῷ οὔτε τις ῥητὸς οὔθ’οἷον ἄν τις καὶ διανοηθείη, **ἀλλ’εἵλκετο πάσας ἕλξεις τὸ σῶμα**, καὶ **τὰ μὲν γόνατα ἄνω πρὸς τὴν κεφαλὴν** ἐφέρετο καὶ προσερρήγνυτο, τὰς δὲ χεῖρας οὐχ οἷόν τ’ἦν κατέχειν, ἀλλ’εἰς τὸν τράχηλον καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον ἐνέπιπτον· **τὸ δὲ στῆθος ἔξω προεωθεῖτο** καὶ **τὸ νῶτον εἰς τοὔπισθεν** ἀντεσπᾶτο **ὥσπερ ἱστίον ἐξ ἀνέμου κεκυρτωκός**. ἠρέμει δὲ οὐδὲν τοῦ σώματος οὐδὲ μικρόν τι παρήλλαττεν τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν, ἀλλ’ ἦν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον **ἡ κίνησις** καὶ ἡ τῶν ὀδυνῶν κατάτασις ἄρρητος, οὔτε σιωπᾶν ἐῶσα καὶ πρὸς τὴν φωνὴν ἔτι μεῖζον ἀπαντῶσα...

1. **Storm, Purgation and Mock Shipwreck, *Hieroi Logoi* II.13**

And he explained everything, that it was fated for me to be shipwrecked and that it was because of this that these things happened; and that now it was necessary, for my safety and in order to fulfill my destiny completely, to embark in a skiff and to arrange it in the harbor, so that the skiff overturn and sink, but that I myself be picked up by someone and brought to land. For in this way what was necessary would be accomplished.

καὶ φράζει δὴ τὸ πᾶν, ὡς εἱμαρμένον τε εἴη ναυαγῆσαί μοι καὶ τούτου ἄρα ἕνεκα καὶ ταῦτα συμβαίη· καὶ νῦν ἔτι δέοι ὑπὲρ ἀσφαλείας καὶ τοῦ παντάπασιν ἐκπλῆσαι τὸ χρεὼν, 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. (Dramatic date 149 CE; written 170s)

1. **Harbor Metaphors**
2. *Concerning Concord*, 17

One would not even say that the region here was without a harbor, but it is most correct and just to state that this is the most secure and firmest of all harbors, and the one which receives the largest number of people and enjoys the greatest calm, where for all mankind the stern cables of safety have been fastened to Asclepius

οὐκοῦν οὐδὲ ἀλίμενα φήσαι τις ἂν εἶναι τὰ τῇδε, ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνο ὀρθότατον καὶ δικαιότατον λέγειν, ὡς ἄρα οὗτος λιμένων ἁπάντων ὀχυρώτατος καὶ βεβαιότατος καὶ πλείστους δεχόμενος καὶ γαλήνῃ πλεῖστον προέχων, ἐν ᾧ πᾶσιν ἐξ Ἀσκληπιοῦ τὰ ἐπίγυια τῆς σωτηρίας ἤρτηται (*Concerning Concord* (24.17), 149CE)

1. *Regarding Asclepius, 1*

O you who have often for many reasons been summoned by us, night and day, publicly and privately, O Lord Asclepius, how glad and eager we were when you granted us, as it were, from a great sea of despair, to reach a calm harbor and to address the common hearth of humankind…

Ὦ πολλὰ δὴ πολλάκις ἐν νυξί τε καὶ ἡμέραις ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ δημοσίᾳ κληθεὶς ὑφ’ ἡμῶν, Ἀσκληπιὲ δέσποτα, ὡς ἀσμένοις καὶ ὑπερποθοῦσιν ἔδωκας ἡμῖν οἷον ἐκ πελάγους πολλοῦ καὶ κατηφείας λιμένος τε λαβέσθαι γαληνοῦ καὶ προσειπεῖν τὴν κοινὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἑστίαν

1. **Prooimia**
	1. *Regarding Zeus* (*Or*. 43)

We bring these gifts to you, O Zeus, king and savior, in accordance with our vow. But do you accept them, and just as you kindly saved me, do you also receive this thank offering and aid my speech and escort it to the greatest possible limits attainable by the speech of man, so that we may not be completely ridiculous and that we may not entirely fail. Yet now that I am engaged here, I do not understand who I am. But I seem to understand quite well that I was in great danger and lost my self-control because of the sea, when I made such a vow, which is not easy to fulfill, and attempting which perhaps inspired no confidence in my moderation, since I promised that I would deliver a hymn to Zeus, and at that in prose. Indeed, then the sea was great and made me do and say everything.

Τάδε σοὶ κατ’εὐχὴν, Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ τε καὶ σῶτερ, δῶρα ἀνάγομεν, σύ δὲ δέξαι, καὶ ὥσπερ ἔσωσας εὐμενῶς, καὶ προσοῦ τὰ χαριστήρια τῷ τε λόγῳ ἐπάρκεσον καὶ παράπεμψον εἰς ὅσον ἀνθρώπου λόγον ἐξίκεσθαι δυνατὸν ὡς πλεῖστον, ὡς μὴ τελέως καταγέλαστοι γενώμεθα μηδὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς πέσωμεν. καίτοι πρὸς αὐτῷ γιγνόμενος οὐκ ἔχω τίς γένωμαι, ἀλλὰ νῦν μοι δοκῶ καὶ σφόδρα μανθάνειν ὡς τελέως ἄρα ἐκινδύνευον, καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἐμαυτῷ ἦν ὑπὸ τῆς θαλάσσης κατὰ τοιούτων εὐχόμενος, ἅ μήτε ἀποπλήρωσαι ῥᾴδιον μήτε ἐγχειρῆσαι σωφροσύνης ἴσως ἔχει πίστιν, ὑπισχνούμενος ὑμνον ἐρεῖν Διός, καὶ ταῦτα ἄνευ μέτρου. ἦ πολλὴ τότε ἦν θάλαττα καὶ πᾶν ἐποίει καὶ πράττειν καὶ λέγειν.

* 1. *Isthmian, To Poseidon* (Or. 46):

After I was absent from the festival at Olympus, since unfortunately I was physically unable to participate in the proceedings with you and I was in extreme danger from the illness which I had then contracted, and now that I have found favor with Zeus the Savior and Poseidon the Securer, brother of Zeus, and have reached as it were, a kind of harbor, I mean my present state of health, safety, and opportunity to stay with you, ... So… I decided that I must not hesitate to appear before you … and if it turns out otherwise than proper, to consider my capability and not the magnitude of the subject, since it is beyond the limits of language and even the attempt to discuss this matter is the same as if one should wish “to count the pitchers of the ocean.” However, since this god is accustomed to make even the greatest and boundless seas traversable, and sometimes even with fair winds for those toward whom he happened to be well disposed, let our speech about him now be put to sea and let it be made fast to the god himself, like a stern cable, as one might say.

Ἐπειδὴ τῆς γε Ὀλυμπικῆς πανηγύρεως ἀπελείφθην, τύχῃ τινὶ ἀδυνάτως ἔχων κατὰ τὸ σῶμα συμμετασχεῖν ὑμῖν τῶν γιγνομένων, κινδύνου τε εἰς ἔσχατον ἐλθὼν ἐκ τοῦ τότε μοι συμπεσόντος νοσήματος, Διός γε Σωτῆρος τυχὼν καὶ Ποσειδῶνος ἀδελφοῦ Διὸς Ἀσφαλίου, καὶ τινος οἷον λιμένος τῆς τε παροῦσης ταύτης ὑγιείας τε καὶ σωτηρίας λαβόμενος καὶ τῆς διατριβῆς τῆς μεθ’ὑμῶν ... κἂν ὡς ἕτερως συμβαίνῃ, πρὸς τὴν ἐμὴν δύναμιν ὁρᾶν, καὶ μὴ πρὸς τὸ τοῦ λόγου μέγεθος ἀμύθητον ὄν καὶ ταὐτὸν ἀτεχνῶς τὸ λέγειν τι περὶ τούτων καὶ ἐγχειρεῖν ὥσπερ ἂν εἴ τις ἐξαριθμεῖσθαι βούλοιτο τοὺς χόας τῆς θαλάττας. οὐ μὴν ἀλλ’ἐπειδὴ καὶ τὰ μέγιστα τῶν πελαγῶν καὶ ἀνήνυτα παρέχειν ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς εἴωθε πορεύσιμα καὶ ἐνίοτέ γε καὶ ἐξ οὐρίων οἷς ἂν ἵλεως ὤν τυγχάνῃ, ἀνήχθω καὶ νῦν ἡμῖν ὁ περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος, καὶ ἀνήφθω γε ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ πρυμνησίου τινὰ τρόπον, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις.

* 1. **Oration 26, Regarding Rome**:

It is customary for those sailing and traveling on foot to make whatever vows each may conceive of. Some poet once said in jest that he vowed “golden-horned frankincense.” But we, gentlemen, on the road here and our sailing, made this vow, which was not uncultured, out of tune, or separated from our art, that if we should be kept safe, we would publicly address the city. It was impossible to vow a speech equal to the measure of the city, but that truly required another vow. Perhaps it is even for one greater than I to dare to raise up such a speech, which will equal the great and weighty dignity of this city…

Ἔθος τοῖς πλέουσι καὶ ὁδοιποροῦσιν εὐχὰς ποιεῖσθαι καθ’ ὧν ἂν ἕκαστος ἐπινοῇ· ποιητὴς μὲν οὖν ἤδη τις εἶπε σκώψας εὔξασθαι ‘κατὰ χρυσόκερω λιβανωτοῦ’, ἡμεῖς δέ, ὦ ἄνδρες, παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν τὴν ἐνταῦθα καὶ τὸν πλοῦν εὐχὴν ταύτην ἐποιησάμεθα, οὐκ ἄμουσον οὐδ’ ἐκμελῆ οὐδ’ ἄπο τῆς τέχνης, εἰ σωθείημεν, προσερεῖν ἐν τῷ μέσῳ τὴν πόλιν. κατὰ ἰσομετρήτου μὲν οὖν εὔξασθαι τῇ πόλει λόγου οὐκ ἐνῆν, ἀλλ’ ὡς ἀληθῶς εὐχῆς αὖ προσεδεῖτο ἑτέρας· ἴσως μὲν οὖν καὶ μείζονος δυνηθῆναι τοιοῦτον ἆραι λόγον, ὅστις παρισώσεται τοσῷδε ὄγκῳ πόλεως…

**Bibliography**

Alaimo, S. 2012. “States of Suspension: Trans-corporeality at Sea,” Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment 19.3 (Summer): 476-493.

--------. 2010. *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press

Behr, C. 1981. *Aristides*. Vol. 2. Cambridge.

Downie, J. 2017. “The Experience and Description of Pain in Aelius Aristides’ *Hieroi Logoi*.” In, J. Z. Wee, ed., *The Comparable Body: Imagination and Analogy in Ancient Anatomy and Physiology*, 247-74. Brill.

--------. 2013. *At the Limits of Art: A Literary Study of Aelius Aristides'* Hieroi Logoi*.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Goeken, Johann. 2012. *Aelius Aristide et la rhétorique de l'hymne en prose. 15 15*. Turnhout: Brepols.

Horden, P. 2005. “Travel Sickness: Medicine and Mobility in the Mediterranean from Antiquity to the Renaissance.” In W. V. Harris, ed., *Rethinking the Mediterranean.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 179-199.Jori, A. 1994. “Les ‘Rêves d’Eau’ dans le Traité du Régime.” In, R. Ginouvès, A-M Guimier-Sorbets, J. Jouanna and L. Villard, eds., *L’Eau, La Santé et La Maladie dans Le Monde Grec*, Paris: De Boccard, 61-75.

Jori, A. 1994. “Les ‘Rêves d’Eau’ dans le Traité du Régime.” In R. Ginouvès, A-M Guimier-Sorbets, J. Jouanna and L. Villard, eds. *L’Eau, La Santé et La Maladie dans Le Monde Grec*, Paris: De Boccard. 61-75.

Jouanna, J. 1994. “L’Eau, La Santé et La Maladie dans La Traité Hippocratique des *Airs, Eaux, Lieux*.” In R. Ginouvès, A-M Guimier-Sorbets, J. Jouanna and L. Villard, eds. *L’Eau, La Santé et La Maladie dans Le Monde Grec*, Paris: De Boccard. 25-40.

--------. 1998. “L’Intérpretation des Rêves et la Théorie Micro-Macrocosmique dans le Traité Hippocratique *Du Régime*: Sémiotique et Mimesis.” In, P. Potter, D. Nickel, K. Fischer, *Text and Tradition: Studies in Ancient Medicine and Its Transmission: Presented to Jutta Kollesch*. Leiden: Brill.

King, H. 1999. “Chronic Pain and the Creation of Narrative.” In J. I. Porter, ed., *Constructions of the Classical Body*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Presss. 269-286.

1. Dates taken from Behr 1981. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)