

PART TWO

ARISTIDES' SELF-PRESENTATION

CHAPTER FIVE

AELIUS ARISTIDES' ILLEGIBLE BODY

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Many modern readers have found it improbable that the *Hieroi Logoi* are the product of literary ambition. Their author, however, who trafficked professionally in the great Greek writers of the past, leaves little room for ambiguity about his aspirations, declaring in the first sentence: 'I see myself creating an account in the manner of Homer's Helen' (*Or.* XLVII.1).¹ Aristides' framework, then, is epic, and more specifically that of the *Odyssey*—that much is clear.²

Yet in what respects is the *Odyssey* a model for Aristides' undertaking? The most obvious point of contact is the resemblance of Aristides' sufferings to those of Odysseus, long buffeted on stormy seas. In both cases, moreover, those countless evasions of death attest the presence of a tutelary deity—Athena and Asclepius respectively.³ But why Helen? In *Odyssey* IV, we can recall, it is Helen who selects a tale from 'all the toils of stout-hearted Odysseus' to tell his son Telemachus. She is thus like an epic narrator faced with a vast archive of stories.⁴ Yet Helen,

¹ δοκῶ μοι κατὰ τὴν Ἑλένην τὴν Ὀμήρου τὸν λόγον ποιήσεσθαι. I have used Keil's edition, in which the six books of the *Hieroi Logoi* are *Orationes* XLVII–LII. Translations from Aristides are my own unless noted. Numbers preceded by a T correspond to the testimonia in Edelstein and Edelstein 1945, whose translations I have used.

² On the *Odysseus* theme, see Schröder 1987. For the importance of Aristides' travels to his understanding of the body, see the contribution of Petsalis-Diomidis in this volume.

³ ἐκάστη γὰρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἡμερῶν, ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ νυκτῶν, ἔχει συγγραφὴν, εἴ τις παρὼν ἢ τὰ συμπύπτοντα ἀπογράφειν ἠβούλετο ἢ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ πρόνοιαν διηγείσθαι. ('for each of our days, just as each of our nights, had a story if someone who was there wished either to record what happened or recount the providence of the god', *Or.* XLVII.3). I follow Wilamowitz, Festugière, Behr, and Schröder in retaining the παρὼν of the manuscripts. Keil proposed emending to παρ' ἑν, arguing that the line was corrupted under the influence of the παρὼν in the following line. Wilamowitz ably defended the manuscript reading by citing *Or.* XLVIII.56 and *Or.* L.20, cases where Aristides uses the plural (οἱ παρόντες) to refer to those who were present at an event in question (the onset of an attack and an oratorical performance) and can corroborate Aristides' account.

⁴ Aristides in fact cues the *locus classicus* of unspeakable epic magnitude, *Il.* 2.489, in the first lines (οὐδ' εἰ μοι δέκα μὲν γλώσσα, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν, *Or.* XLVII.1).

as Aristides would have surely known, is not simply Homer's double. In the story she chooses to tell, she recounts a time that she herself, when she was at Troy, met Odysseus, who had infiltrated the city in disguise; she alone discovers his identity and compels him to reveal the secret plans of the Greeks (*Od.* 4.250–264). Helen, then, is a narrator whose credentials rest in part on her ability to match the *mētis* of her subject with her own cunning intelligence like some dark Penelope. This skill turns out to be apposite to Aristides' task. He, too, is faced with a subject that is not only long-suffering but also uncommonly polymorphous: a body whose constantly changing face of disease (τὴν ποικιλίαν τῆς νόσου, *Or.* XLVIII.69) is the occasion for ongoing divine attention. The prologue to the *Hieroi Logoi* gives every indication that we are dealing not with an artless collection of dreams and everyday minutiae but rather with a deliberate attempt to tell an epic story that requires all of the narrator's resources.

In this paper, I argue that by analyzing how Aristides represents the difficulty of both interpreting and memorializing the body's suffering we can better understand his epic aspirations. In fact, I suggest that his struggle to communicate what has happened to him draws attention to a tension within those aspirations between his identity as the author of the *Hieroi Logoi* and his identity as a devotee of Asclepius. For although he wishes to give a public account of his remarkable life, albeit in response to a command from Asclepius,⁵ he is also interesting in preserving, or at least preserving the impression of, a uniquely heroic and unfathomable intimacy with the divine. In what follows, I focus on the two principal occasions for the expression of this tension: Aristides' dreams, through which he gains a privileged perspective on his symptoms, and his translation of suffering into a legible text capable of commemorating Asclepius's benefaction.

In both of these areas, we might expect the body, since it is where suffering takes place, to play an important role in interpretation and commemoration. In fact, I will argue that the body is significant to Aristides precisely because it evades these practices. In this respect, the approach adopted here diverges from recent work on the role of

⁵ νυνὶ δὲ τοσούτοις ἔτεσι καὶ χρόνοις ὕστερον ὄψεις ὄνειράτων ἀναγκάζουσιν ἡμᾶς ἄγειν αὐτὰ πῶς εἰς μέσον ('Now, after so many years and so much time later, dream visions compel us to make these things public', *Or.* XLVIII.2). Asclepius is preparing for this text from the beginning: εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς προεἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ἀπογράφειν τὰ ὄνειράτα, καὶ τοῦτ' ἦν τῶν ἐπιταγμάτων πρῶτον ('Right from the beginning, the god ordered me to record my dreams. And this was the first of his commands', *Or.* XLVIII.2).

Aristides' body in the *Hieroi Logoi*. Much of this work has been spurred, at least in part, by rising interest in the corporeal codes of identity in imperial-age ethics, medicine, rhetoric, and physiognomy.⁶ At the same time, scholars have become more aware of Aristides' literary self-consciousness, as well as the relationship of the *Hieroi Logoi* to other Greco-Roman first-person writing.⁷ In this climate, the equation of Aristides' body with a text has become something of a commonplace. That text is often understood as a 'script' of divine favor that is then copied into the archive and, eventually, the *Hieroi Logoi*.⁸ It has also been described as a 'psychic text' of Aristides' struggles against cultural codes of masculinity, an interpretation that combines the tradition of seeing Aristides' symptoms and dreams as evidence of his troubled unconscious with the equally prominent tradition of treating them as evidence of his culture's anxieties.⁹ These scholars have done much

⁶ On the body and elite (masculine) identity in the imperial period, see Gleason 1995; Gunderson 2000; Connolly 2007. The increased interest in the day-to-day life of the body in the Second Sophistic was identified early on by Bowersock (1969, 69–73). For Aristides' relationship to what P. Hadot has called 'exercices spirituels' (1981) and M. Foucault 'techniques du soi' (1986; 1997b), see Perkins 1992 (= 1995, 173–199); Miller 1994, 184–204; Shaw 1996, 300; Pernot 2002, 383.

⁷ On the literary and rhetorical character of the *Hieroi Logoi*, see Percy 1988; Pigeaud 1991; Quet 1993; Castelli 1999; and the contribution of Downie in this volume. Others (Michenaud and Dierkens 1972; Gigli 1977) have argued that the text is ordered by the logic of the dream. On Aristides' relationship to contemporary autobiographical writing, see Bompaire 1993; see also Harrison 2002, arguing that Apuleius is a critical response to Aristides' model of religious autobiography. On first-person writing as a 'technique du soi': Foucault 1997a.

⁸ See Percy 1988, 391: 'But the *Sacred Tales* record also the creation of a second text...It is the body of Aristides himself. In its illnesses and recoveries, the medical history of Aristides makes up a narrative of Asclepius' providence and favor. Physical existence is transitory...The *Sacred Tales*, themselves, however, might endure, to present the complex interpenetration of reality by the word of the god and the transformation of the diseased and imperfect text of Aristides' body into the lasting text of the *Sacred Tales*'. See also Perkins 1992, 261 (= 1995, 187): 'In Aristides' representation, bodies become texts on which the god's purposes and intentions are written'; King 1999, 282: 'the creation of a story from the minute details of [the body's] physicality paradoxically seeks to transcend its materiality and make it into a sign of divine favor'. Percy, *op. cit.*, 377–378 and Gasparro 1998 place the *Hieroi Logoi* alongside works by other imperial-age devotees of Asclepius.

⁹ Miller 1994, who finds in Aristides' oeuvre 'an insistent thematic move whereby oratorical writing and the symptomatic 'writing' of the body function as signs of each other, all under the aegis of Asclepian oneiric practice' (189), looks beyond the 'text' of divine favor to 'the symptoms of a rebellion against [Aristides'] culture's construction of masculinity', symptoms that articulate a desire for 'the intimacy and privacy that cultural codes denied to men of his standing and profession' (200). See also Brown 1978, 4 on 'the unremitting discipline imposed on the actors of the small and unbearably well

to bring the different layers of the *Hieroi Logoi* to light. They have also happily succeeded in shifting discussion from Aristides' alleged hypochondria to the historical meanings of the body and disease in both the cult of Asclepius and Greco-Roman elite culture; indeed, this work has made clear the very importance of the physical body as a vehicle of meaning in those contexts.

Nevertheless, the conflation of Aristides' body with a text needs to be questioned for the reason that within the *Hieroi Logoi* themselves, signs and stories are systematically displaced from that body's surface. As Aristides recounts in the second book, the origins of this displacement lie in the failure of even the best physicians at Rome to make sense of his symptoms within the semiotic framework of contemporary medicine (*Or.* XLVIII.5–6, 62–64, 69).¹⁰ It is at this moment that Asclepius begins to offer Aristides another conduit of interpretation in the form of the dream, through which bodily symptoms are transformed into symbolic narrative. By restoring meaning to Aristides' sufferings, the dream allows Aristides to interpret and to overcome them, albeit

lit stage of an ancient city'. For retrospective diagnoses of Aristides' psychological condition, see Gourevitch and Gourevitch 1968; Michenaud and Dierkens 1972; Hazard-Guillon 1983; and esp. Gourevitch 1984, 22–47, recounting a long history of such diagnoses by both medical professionals and philologists. Cf. the remarks in Pigeaud 1991 and Andersson and Roos 1997 on the limitations of this retrospective diagnosis. For readings of Aristides as an exemplar of his era, see Festugière 1954, 85–104; Dodds 1965, 39–45; Bowersock 1969, 71–75; Reardon 1973; Brown 1978, 41–45; Horstmanshoff 2004, 332–334; and supra, nn. 6–8.

¹⁰ That is, medicine that explains diseases and remedies primarily in terms of physical causes inside the body and external factors such as diet or environmental conditions. The relationship between secular physicians and Asclepian priests was often symbiotic: see Edelstein and Edelstein 1945 II, 139–140; Horstmanshoff 2004; Gorrini 2005, with nos. 18–19 [*IG* II/III² 3798 and 3799]. Ancient sources saw continuity between Asclepius and the human physician, often casting the god as the inventor of modern medicine (Edelstein and Edelstein, *op. cit.*, II, 140–141), and indeed, Aristides has high esteem for the historical figure of Hippocrates (King 2006, 261–262). Moreover, many scholars have detected similarities between Asclepian therapies and those developed in secular medicine, particularly as time wore on (Oberhelman 1993, 153–155; Boudon 1994, 165–168; Chaniotis 1995, 334–335; LiDonnici 1995, 48), and the two traditions shared disease terminology (Chaniotis, *op. cit.*, 330 n. 38). It is also the case that Aristides was surrounded by physicians both in the temple precinct and away from it. Nevertheless, as far as he was concerned, Asclepius was always the true doctor (*Or.* XLVII.4, 57), and the theme of medicine's limits is a *Leitmotif* in the *Hieroi Logoi*; for references, see Behr 1968, 169 nn. 23–24. For another example of an elite patient who resists being 'read' by the physician (though in this case the physician comes out on top), see the case of Sextus in Galen's *On Prognosis* (10.1–16, 14.650–656 Kühn=120, 16–124, 22 Nutton).

temporarily, a process that creates a story (συγγραφή, *Or.* XLVII.3) to be recorded in the archive. No trace of this story remains, however, on the body itself: its ability to 'forget' appears synonymous with its recovery of health. Recognizing both the forgetfulness of the body and the shift of signs from its surface to the dream can clarify its role within Aristides' epic project. The central argument of this paper is that the body, and particularly embodied experience, is metonymic of all that Aristides wishes to represent as beyond the public record and sometimes beyond words altogether.¹¹ The tension within Aristides' double identity as exegete-narrator and divine protégé is thus realized through the elusive figure of the body.

I begin by examining how, as a result of a shift from the theater of the sickbed to the theater of the dream space, Aristides ceases to be equated with a body that serves as the passive object of medical interpretation and becomes a privileged interpreter of his mysterious sufferings.¹² Yet if information gained from the dream must be mapped back onto the lived body, there is always room for error. Aristides quite naturally assumes that the body is fully transparent to the god; at times, he refers to found texts that imply the existence of another, complete divine text. Thus despite his advantage over other interpreters of his body, he often remains uncertain about how to interpret his dreams. Built into the *Hieroi Logoi*, then, is a sense that the body itself remains in shadow.

In the second half of the essay, I approach the complex relationship of the living body to its story from the perspective of commemoration. Drawing on motifs that were important over half a millennium of the cult of Asclepius, Aristides appears to see the scarred or inscribed body as petrified in time without hope of renewal. This is not to say that he does not represent the body as marked in sickness; quite the contrary. Rather, insofar as the miracle of Asclepian healing involves

¹¹ In addition to *Or.* XLVII.1, cited in n. 4, see also e.g. *Or.* XLVII.59 (ὄσας οὐδεὶς πω ἠρίθμησεν); *Or.* XLVIII.56 (καίτοι τίς οἴός τ' ἂν εἶη λογισῶν λαβεῖν ἐν οἷς ἡμεῖς ἤμεν τότε); *Or.* XLVIII.58 (citing *Od.* 3.113–114, τίς κεν ἐρεῖνα πάντα γε μυθήσαιο καταθνητῶν ἀνθρώπων); *Or.* IL.30 (ἄλλα τοίνυν μυρία ἂν εἶη λέγειν φαρμάκων ἐχόμενα...). For the *topos* in the aretological tradition, see Festugière 1960, 132–134. On ἄροητος εὐθυμία, see *Or.* XLVIII.22, cited below.

¹² Theater should be understood in literal terms here. We have evidence of regular public anatomical demonstrations and rhetorical performances by physicians in the second century CE (von Staden 1994; Debru 1995; Perkins 1995, 158–159), and Aristides, as a rhetor, was well acquainted with the theater.

the body's regeneration, that body is a poor site for commemoration. Writing happens elsewhere: in letters discovered in dreams, in the dream archive and the public tales, on votive offerings, and, most extraordinarily, on the bodies of other people. Aristides' body evades its stories, I suggest, not because it is subject to death, as is sometimes said, but because it *resists* death.

The Odyssean slipperiness of the body in the *Hieroi Logoi* poses challenges of interpretation for both Aristides and his readers. Those challenges are important to understanding not only the relationship of the *Hieroi Logoi* to their putative epic model, but also Aristides' divided position as both that epic's preternaturally perceptive narrator and its elusive hero. The tension that results from that position may, in turn, help us understand why Aristides, whether we adopt a traditional biographical-diagnostic approach or the more recent approaches that situate him within his cultural and historical milieu, remains so difficult to pin down. He seems to display the familiar persona of an elite Greek of the Roman period while, at the same time, undermining all attempts to turn him into an example. Aristides has been called many names; he has been given many diagnoses. He turns out to satisfy all of them, and then some.

Interpreting the disease

Dreams and decipherment

The chronological *archê* of the *Hieroi Logoi*, as we have just seen, lies in the failure of the doctors first at Rome, then at Smyrna, to understand or to alleviate Aristides' polymorphous pain.¹³ No amount of purging or bleeding provides relief. In the end, the bedside scene of ingenious decipherment of which Galen, a generation after Aristides, is so fond never occurs. The physicians are left in an *aporia*. It is at this point in Aristides' life, when medicine's trust in the body as revelatory of hidden truths—a trust shared by physiognomy and ethical self-fashioning—proves misplaced, that the god steps in to open up another

¹³ On the literary *topos* of being *derelictus a medicis*, see Horstmanshoff 2004, 328–329 n. 10.

means of understanding symptoms: the dream.¹⁴ The dream transforms not only the semiotics of bodily suffering but also the conditions of interpretation.

We can begin to understand these transformations by looking at a dream recounted in connection with Aristides' near-death experience during the Antonine plague. That dream also raises the question of the relationship between interpretation and salvation. Aristides reports that as he was lying sick in bed, 'I was aware of myself just as though I were somebody else, and I perceived my body ever failing until I came to the last moment' (οὕτω παρηκολούθουν ἑμαυτῶ, ὥσπερ ἂν ἄλλῳ τινί, καὶ ἡσθανόμην ὑπολείποντος αἰεὶ τοῦ σώματος, ἕως εἰς τοῦσχατον ἦλθον, *Or.* XLVIII.39). At this point, Aristides turns towards the wall and falls to dreaming that he is an actor at the end of a play who is about to turn in his buskins. Asclepius suddenly makes him turn over so that he is again facing outwards; the dream seems to end. That abortive final act appears to signal that death has been averted.

Translated into the terms of the theater, Aristides' brush with death suggests a relationship between the alienation from the self characteristic of illness and the self-interpretation that dreams make possible while also demonstrating his capacity, *qua* dreamer, to move between the roles of sufferer and interpreter. In the first phase, when Aristides is still awake, the body drifts away from the first-person speaker, an indication of impending death. In the second phase, however, Aristides dreams himself into the position of the departing player. Nevertheless, the dream's dramatic setting ('I seemed to be at the end of the play') still leaves a formal place for the subject of the earlier verbs 'I was conscious of' (παρηκολούθουν ἑμαυτῶ) and 'I perceived' (ἡσθανόμην). That is to say, even as Aristides identifies with the disappearing body, the waking person who had been conscious of the body being left behind

¹⁴ Medicine's commitment to the idea that the symptom reveals truths of the physical body dates from the classical period (Holmes, forthcoming). This commitment is strengthened, at least in some quarters, by the anatomical investigations of the Hellenistic period. This period, however, also sees the eruption of debates about the physician's ability to know what is hidden and the therapeutic usefulness of anatomical and physiological knowledge. A useful overview of the consequences of these debates for medicine in the early Roman Empire can be found in Nutton 2004, 157–170, 187–247. Despite the epistemological debates among the medical sects, the interpretation of symptoms as expressions of an inner bodily truth continues to be the dominant model in the early imperial period, reaching its pinnacle with Galen (Barton 1994, 133–168; Perkins 1995, 142–172). Although dreams were used alongside symptoms in medical diagnosis, in Aristides they are opposed to the physicians' tactics of decipherment.

now becomes the implied spectator of the dream performance and its imminent close. Finally, upon waking, Aristides again explicitly assumes the position of the spectator in order to recount both this dream and the following one, in which Athena appears and exhorts him to persevere. The dream thus translates the split self of the near-death experience into the relationship between performer and audience within the theater while shifting the weight of the ‘I’ away from the audience to the performer. After the dream ends, the ‘I’ again migrates back to the position of the watcher, who reflects upon the visions (ὄψεις) in which he himself appeared.¹⁵

What is perhaps most remarkable here is that the situation dramatized by this dream, namely the actor’s moment of passage from the stage into the ‘real’ world, implies that oneiric performance is crucial to life. For the actor’s exit paradoxically signals *not* the reunification of the self-reflexive pronoun (ἐμαυτῶ) with the first-person subject of the verb, but impending death. We might ask, then, why the stage is so vital to Aristides.

The buskins dream gives us the beginning of an answer to this question. In this dream Aristides already has a sense that he is on the brink of death, a sense to which the dream gives metaphorical expression by equating life with dramatic performance and staging its final scene (‘I had come to the end’, εἰς τοῦσχατον ἤλθον, Aristides says just before the dream begins). Even though the dream shows Aristides something he presumably already knows (‘I am dying’), the very act of showing seems to release him from the crisis staged in the dream: the body left on stage remains in play, i.e. remains alive.

The therapeutic value of the dream-stage makes even more sense when we consider that in a far more common scenario Aristides’ sufferings are unintelligible, not only to the physicians, but also to Aristides himself. For one of the basic premises of the *Hieroi Logoi* is that the body is besieged by invisible or mysterious threats: Aristides’ sense that he has been violated is almost always belated; even then, he is usually in the dark about what has caused his symptoms. Since the tempests of Aristides’ abdomen or his asthmatic attacks abruptly sever the reflexive pronoun (ἐμαυτῶ) from the first-person speaker, thereby bringing the body to conscious awareness as a mysterious, alien entity, they can be seen as variations on his near-death experience during the plague.

¹⁵ Dreaming is treated by ancient authors as a kind of seeing (Oberhelman 1987, 48).

Like the buskins dream, the dreams that comment on these tempests or attacks enable the body to be saved. Yet they do so not by simply staging the crisis of illness. In most cases, the dramatic format of the dream generates interpretation that gives rise in turn to therapeutic action.

Aristides' projection of the self into the imaginative and dramatic space of the dream is consistent with his more general sense of the body as strange or alien in cases of disease. In fact, symptoms like dramatic pain or stomach trouble may simply exaggerate Aristides' more persistent sense of the inside of the body as a mysterious and strange place, vulnerable to violations that are not always immediately felt: even before symptoms, then, there would be a need for dreams to provide a window onto this hidden space. Aristides' perception of his body in these terms participates in wider Greco-Roman attitudes. Over the last century, the Freudian unconscious has powerfully shaped how we understand the part of the self that is submerged below our everyday perceptions, although the priority of psychoanalysis in this regard has been challenged in recent decades by genetics, medical imaging, and the flourishing of neuroscience and cognitive psychology. That the soul has its own hidden recesses is an idea found in some Greek sources.¹⁶ Yet perhaps the most opaque and most daemonic part of the self was the inside of the physical body, at least from the fifth century BCE when that body definitively takes shape as a place where disease silently develops.¹⁷ The trust of laypersons and physicians alike in diagnostic and prescriptive dreams suggests that anxious uncertainty about the hidden body was widespread, as was the desire to access this concealed space.¹⁸

¹⁶ See Plato's remarks about the flourishing of repressed desires in dreams at *R.* IX, 571c3–d4, although I would argue that the non-transparency of the soul here is developed on analogy with the non-transparency of the physical body. At the same time Greek ethical philosophy becomes increasingly interested in the opaque parts of the soul in the Hellenistic period.

¹⁷ See Holmes, forthcoming.

¹⁸ On the ancient diagnostic or prescriptive dream, see Oberhelman 1993; Holowchak 2001. Notice that ancient dream interpretation has typically been distinguished from modern (psychoanalytic) interpretation on the grounds that the ancients cared about the future, while we care about the past (Price 1990). The diagnostic dream (ἐνύπνιον) can be accommodated within this opposition, insofar as it sheds light on a disease *before* it breaks into the patient's conscious awareness (Oberhelman 1987, 47). Nevertheless, in the case of such dreams the opposition that I describe above between different kinds of unseen spaces in the self, i.e. the opposition between the modern unconscious and the (non-conscious) innards of the ancient material body, is

Concern about the hidden life of the body is fostered by the rise and dissemination of naturalizing medicine. Despite the impasse of the doctors at Rome, access to the hidden life of the body—typically imagined along the very broad lines of the body described by humoral medicine—remains central to the *Hieroi Logoi*, as in the cult of Asclepius more generally in the imperial period. Thus at one point, shortly into the first book, Aristides recounts a dream in which the transparency of the body is literalized. Sitting in a warm bath, he bends forward and *sees* that the lower part of his stomach is in a rather strange state (προκεκλυφώς δὲ εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν ὀρώην τὰ κάτω τῆς κοιλίας ἀτοπώτερον διακείμενα, *Or.* XLVII.8). The difference is that, in the cult, information about the body comes not from the body but from the god.

Dreams help the patient see into his or her body by creating contexts through which its experiences and states become visible. The vague or imprecise feeling of the body as something strange is transformed into the perception of a concrete object, a visible anomaly, or an invasive act—that is, something that can be seen and understood by the dreamer. Aristides might dream that a bone is troubling him, for example, and that it needs to be expelled (*Or.* XLVII.28). A dream may make Aristides aware of the fact that he has been defiled (μολυνθῆναι) even before he *feels* violated (*Or.* XLVII.7). In one dream, Aristides is offered figs, but learns from the prophet Corus that they are poisonous; he becomes suspicious and vomits, while still worrying that he has not vomited enough and that there are other, unidentified poisonous figs

as important as the past-future opposition. Indeed, just as the twentieth century saw an enormous investment of cultural imagination in the idea that our secrets about our neuroses lie in our dreams, the popularity of diagnostic dreams in antiquity may suggest a similar cultural investment in the idea that the secrets of our suffering bodies lie in our dreams. W.V. Harris has pointed out that the widespread interest in medical-anxiety dreams in antiquity can be correlated with the far greater number of health problems that the average person would have faced (2005, 260). It may also be true that it was precisely because physicians validated the meaning of dreams as medical that so many dreams seemed to dreamers to be *about* the body. In recent centuries, this validation has no longer been forthcoming; compare to Aristides' interaction with his doctors the following exchange between the nineteenth-century belle-lettrist Alphonse Daudet, who suffered from syphilis, and his physician: 'Daudet told us this evening that for a long time he had dreamed that he was a boat whose keel caused him pain; in the dream, he would turn on his side. The persistence of this dream caused him to ask [Dr.] Potain if this meant his spine was rotting. Potain's response was to laugh' (Daudet 2002, 6).

(*Or.* XLVII.54). The message of the dream, Aristides thinks when he wakes up, is to fast, although he suspects that some vomiting might be in order.

Here, then, we begin to glimpse how the splitting of the self in the dream can counteract the alienation from the body most visibly realized in disease. The dream, where the 'I' is both actor and spectator, unlocks the mysteries of embodiment by bringing to light, at least dimly, the web of relationships and events in which the lived body is invisibly and treacherously embedded. Moreover, by situating embodied experience within a thicket of symbols, the dreams also show Aristides the remedies (*ἀλεξιφάρμακα*) to counter the threats that he is constantly facing.¹⁹ It is precisely because the body, like Odysseus, is always beset by danger that 'each of our days as well as our nights has a story' (*Or.* XLVII.3).

With the transformation of the embodied self into a theatrical player within a dream, then, Aristides' sense of distance from that self becomes the condition of his understanding of it. Like Helen remembering the toils of Odysseus, he is reporting in the *Hieroi Logoi* on the troubles of someone, or rather something, else. Indeed, although he is ostensibly narrating his own epic adventures, he sets out by announcing that he wants to talk about his abdomen (*νῦν δὲ ὡς ἔσχεν τὸ τοῦ ἥτρου δηλῶσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς βούλομαι*, *Or.* XLVII.4). And just as Helen remembers cutting through Odysseus's disguise, Aristides recalls how he deciphered the mysterious suffering of the abdomen, albeit through the medium of the dream.

Knowledge confers power: once dreams are interpreted, they lead Aristides to the appropriate therapeutic response. Dreaming of the trapped bone, for example, carries with it a sense of bloodletting; the fig dream prescribes vomiting or fasting.²⁰ By determining how to act

¹⁹ πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἄλλα ἐπεσήμηνεν ὁ θεὸς ἐκ τῶν ἐφρευκτότων αἰεὶ κινδύνων ἔξαπαύζων, οἱ πυκνοὶ νυκτὸς ἐκάστης καὶ ἡμέρας ἦσαν, ἄλλοτε ἄλλοι προσβάλλοντες, τοτὲ δὲ ἐπανιόντες οἱ αὐτοί, καὶ ὁπότε ἀπαλλαγείη τις, ἀντιλαμβάνοντες ἕτεροι καὶ πρὸς ἕκαστα τούτων ἀλεξιφάρμακα ἦει παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραμυθία παντοῖα καὶ ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ ('For the god signified many other things in the course of snatching me away from the threats always besetting me, which came thickly every day and every night, some assailing me at one time, some at another, and sometimes the same ones resurging, and whenever one was freed from them, others attacking in turn. For each of these things antidotes came from the god, and manifold consolations both in word and in deed', *Or.* XLVIII.25).

²⁰ 'For Aristides, dreams were basically staging areas for physical treatments...' (Perkins 1992, 251; *id.* 1995, 178). Yet the dreams must almost always be interpreted.

on the sick body, Aristides, not unlike his contemporaries committed to elaborate regimens of self-care underwritten by physicians, gains control over it. At one point, in fact, Aristides believes he could have expelled his disease entirely (πᾶσαν ἐξέβαλον τὴν νόσον, *Or.* XLVIII.72) had he not been led astray by the ‘evil council’ of his companions, who persuaded him to adopt their own misguided explanations of the dreams.²¹ These companions, as competitive interpreters of Aristides’ suffering (via the dreams), are not unlike physicians, and their failure of understanding reconfirms Aristides’ identity as the expert interpreter of his own body. His capacity to perform this role is directly created by the shift from symptoms to dreams: Aristides alone, after all, has the claim to autopsy; he is the one ‘trained in divine visions’ (γεγυμνασμένος ... ἐν θείαις ὄψεσιν, *Or.* XLVII.38). These skills, it is worth noting, also establish his authority as the narrator of the *Hieroi Logoi*.

Yet the ‘evil council’ episode also reminds us that Aristides’ decipherment of a mysterious body, unlike the physician’s, is mediated by divine signs that themselves require interpretation. Let us consider, then, how the substitution of a divine sign for a bodily one complicates Aristides’ access to the truth about his body and the translation of that truth into the *Hieroi Logoi*.

Dreams and obscurity

Aristides’ dreams grant meaning to the sick body, yet they are also objects of interpretation. What this means is that his situation is even more complex than Helen’s. For one thing, whereas Helen relies on her own intuition in the (direct) encounter with Odysseus, the information that dreams provide Aristides about his body’s condition, and indeed the dreams themselves, come from a place as foreign as the disease itself. In the warm bath dream, where Aristides observes the strange state of his abdomen, it is an unnamed person who has to tell him that there is no need to guard against bathing, because the *aition* of

On the interpretation of Asclepian dreams through puns and wordplay, verbal and visual imagery, and analogy, see Oberhelman 1981; on Aristides’ interpretations of his own dreams, see Nicosia 1988, 183–185.

²¹ The scene and language are Odyssean, recalling the episode in Book 10 where the companions open Aeolus’s bag of winds. Although practices of dream interpretation were codified, as Artemidorus’s dream book makes clear, and although Artemidorus makes a point of stressing how easy divine prescriptive dreams are to decipher (IV.22), Aristides regularly asserts his unique ability to uncover oneiric meaning.

his problems has nothing to do with bathing. In another remarkable dream, Aristides imagines that some barbarians gain control over him; one of them approaches and makes as though he is going to tattoo him (δόξαν παρασχέιν ὡς στίξοντα).²² Yet rather than doing so,

ἔπειτα καθεῖναι τὸν δάκτυλον οὕτωςι μέχρι τοῦ λαμποῦ καί τι ἐγγεῖαι κατὰ δὴ τινα ἐπιχώριον νόμον, ὀνομάσαι δὲ αὐτὸ ὀξυσιτίαν· ταῦτα δὲ ὕστερον ὡς ὄναρ διηγείσθαι καὶ τοὺς ἀκούοντας θαυμάζειν καὶ λέγειν ὡς ἄρα τοῦτο αἴτιον εἶη τοῦ διψῆν μὲν, μὴ δύνασθαι δὲ πιεῖν, τῷ τρέπεσθαι εἰς ὄξος τὰ σιτία. ἔκ δὴ τούτου ἔμετός τε ἐδείκνυτο καὶ προσέταξεν ὁ βάρβαρος λουτροῦ τε ἀποσχέσθαι καὶ διάκονον ἓνα παραστήσασθαι τὸ τήμερον εἶναι. ἀλουσία καὶ ἔμετος μετὰ ῥαστώνης. (*Or.* XLVII.9)

...he put his finger all the way into my throat and poured in something according to a kind of local custom, and he called this 'oxusitia'. Later on [I dreamed] that I narrated these things as a dream and the listeners were amazed and said that this, then, was the cause of my thirst, on the one hand, and my inability to drink, on the other, namely that my food was turning sour. From this [dream] vomiting was indicated, and the barbarian ordered me to abstain from bathing and that today I produce one witness to this. No bathing and vomiting with relief.

Confronted with both the barbarian and his invasive gesture, we are led to see the origins of the disease as external to Aristides. More interesting is the fact that the diagnosis—*oxusitia*, “indigestion” or “food-turning-sour,” as the later gloss shows—is of equally foreign provenance. In fact, it is the barbarian who delivers the presumably god-sanctioned command to abstain from bathing. Etiological clues and treatment prescriptions are delivered by an ‘attending someone’ (τις παρών) with a better grasp of what has happened than Aristides himself.²³

Given that the dreams arrive from a place outside of Aristides and given, too, that they are populated with shadowy informants, the reader of the *Hieroi Logoi* has the impression of a strange symbiosis between the invasive object and the divine message. I do not mean to imply that Asclepius is somehow responsible for the disease. Admittedly, there is little question that a drama of salvation requires the continual breach of the body's defenses, and Aristides has been accused (or celebrated) more than once—including by his contemporaries (*Or.* L.27)—of stay-

²² For the translation of στίξω as ‘to tattoo’ (rather than ‘to brand’), see Jones 1987; *id.* 2000.

²³ See also e.g. *Or.* XLVII.56; *Or.* II.11. The τις παρών is first mentioned at *Or.* XLVII.3.

ing sick for the benefits that sickness brings.²⁴ What I want to stress here, however, is simply that the story of Aristides' suffering, which eventually becomes the text of the *Hieroi Logoi*, has its origins in a space as estranged from Aristides as the disease itself.²⁵ That is, grasping the hidden experiences or condition of the body requires opening up channels of knowledge as mysterious as the passages through which the disease first entered. This knowledge is acquired indirectly within the theatrical space of the dream rather than directly rendering the lived body transparent or legible.

By using dreams to decipher his suffering, Aristides, as we have seen, redefines his sense of distance from the body to turn it into an object of knowledge. Yet even when he is defined as a knower, Aristides is not fully at home. That is, if Aristides acquires knowledge neither intuitively nor, like Helen, through his own *mêtis*, but through his relationship to the divine Other, *neither* self in the split-self divide offers much familiarity. Thus, although Aristides claims an authoritative position of knowledge about his body vis-à-vis other experts (physicians, companions), that position is always unstable on account of the gap that remains between what he knows and what the god knows. Moments of confident interpretation are interspersed with moments of doubt (should I bathe? should I eat?).²⁶ Whatever Aristides might see of the abdomen, there is always more that the stranger who magically appears beside him can tell him.

The idea of a stranger who knows more about the mysterious body than Aristides himself means that Aristides' identification with Helen, whose authority to tell her story is rooted in experience, is complicated by a more traditional epic model in which the access to knowledge is partial. Unlike Odysseus in Helen's story, who tells Helen *all* the purposes of the Achaeans (*Od.* 4.256), the body is never fully denuded of its secrets. And unlike Helen, Aristides' *mêtis* depends on a muse. As a result, we cannot reliably identify the 'attending someone' (τις παρών) mentioned in the prologue who might be able to record what happened or relate the providence of the god. In fact, the mysterious knowing stranger is instrumental not only in the initial interpretation

²⁴ Festugière 1954, 86; Behr 1968, 46; Reardon 1973, 84; Brown 1978, 41; Gourevitch 1984, 50–51, 58–59. Cf. Quet 1993, 243; Andersson and Roos 1997, 37.

²⁵ Note that *hieroi logoi* are marked 'as spoken or written manifestations of "the Other"' (Henrichs 2003, 239).

²⁶ E.g. *Or.* XLVII.7, 27, 40, 55–56.

of symptoms but also in the composition of the story they generate. In the preface of the second tale, we learn that in writing the *Hieroi Logoi*, Aristides relied on Asclepius's assistance, since his body had long forgotten its pains and his original records of the dreams were lacunose or had been lost.²⁷ So the knowledge for the text in our hands also originates outside of Aristides. His task is simply to make this knowledge public.

The incompleteness of Aristides' knowledge comes into relief against a master text whose existence is implied by the bits and pieces of other writing that appear in the dreams and elsewhere. As Aristides tells his foster father Zosimus within a dream, 'Look! The things I dreamed that the dream said I discover written in a book' (θέασαι, ἃ λέγειν ἐδόκουν ὄναρ, εὐόισκω γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ, L.69); on another occasion, he finds a letter, in which everything that he has been foretold in a dream is written in detail (*Or.* XLVII.78).²⁸ It is unclear whether these discovered texts are anterior to the dream, thereby functioning as a kind of script. Yet they do imply that the dreams are part of a grand narrative of Aristides' life that unfolds under the sign of the god.

To the extent that the written things that Aristides discovers often express divine truth, they model the faithful record of events that the *Hieroi Logoi* should be. Yet the writing of the *Hieroi Logoi* is troubled at the outset, even before the loss of the archive, by the challenge of understanding the body through the filter of the dream. Aristides' difficulties as an autobiographical narrator with epic pretensions stand out as the particular difficulties of someone trying to capture an infinitely

²⁷ On the relationship between the archive and the *Hieroi Logoi*, see Percy 1988. See King 1999 on Aristides and the difficulty of writing about chronic pain. Aristides repeatedly draws attention to the problems that plague the composition of the *Hieroi Logoi*: the magnitude and the number of his sufferings defy calculation and transcription (see above, n. 11); the archive that contained the decades of notes has been scattered and lost; indeed, it was patchy to begin with (*Or.* XLVIII.1–4); given that Aristides began composing the tales late in life, in the early 170s (see Behr 1994, 1155–1163), well after his first doomed trip to Rome in 145 when he was around 26 years old, he can remember but a fraction of his past woes; and his body has constantly interfered with the composition of its history (*Or.* XLVII.4; *Or.* XLVIII.2). Thus, insofar as Aristides' past is itself a kind of alien wisdom, he needs Asclepius as a muse: the *Hieroi Logoi* are composed according to 'however the god should lead and move' (ὅπως ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἄγῃ τε καὶ κινή, *Or.* XLVIII.4; cf. *Or.* XLVIII.24; *Or.* L.50) its author.

²⁸ See also *Or.* II.30–31; *Or.* L.1; *Or.* LI.45, with Percy 1988, 385–386. The discovery of a piece of writing that confirms the truth of a story is a *topos* (Festugière 1960, 124–126). On the association of writing with special, often sacred, authority, see Heinrichs 2003, 249.

multiform object from a perspective that, however privileged vis-à-vis the perspective of the physicians or the Asclepian priests, remains fuzzy and blinkered.

Through dreams, signs are displaced from the lived body, where they might be read via dominant cultural codes (physiognomic, medical, ethical) as symptoms of an inner reality, into a phantasmic world to which Aristides has privileged access. His interpretations engage not only the meaning of the suffering body, but divine meaning as well. I would like to shift now to the question of how the lived body relates to the diagnosis and the stories that it generates. I am particularly interested in a situation that is averted in the dream we just saw about the barbarians who capture Aristides, namely a tattooing. In order to understand what is at stake in Aristides' avoidance of this fate, let us look at some instances where bodies and body parts (or their surrogates) are in fact marked, scarred, or inscribed.

Remembering suffering

Inscription, memory, and death

One of the most astonishing and well-known episodes in the *Hieroi Logoi*, the death of Aristides' foster daughter Philumene, vividly relates a case in which the god, rather than simply communicating through the dream, literally inscribes a body. The story begins when Aristides, while traveling, receives news that Philumene is ill. That night, he has a dream wherein he finds himself inspecting the entrails of a sacrificial animal in accordance with the prophetic practice of hieroscopy. Two nights later, after he has learned of Philumene's death, he has a second dream that hauntingly echoes the first. Philumene's father has received wondrous oracles, not only about his daughter, but about Aristides, too. These he writes down and dutifully sends to Aristides, who reports:

κεφάλαιον δ' ἦν, ὡς ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ σώματι τῆς Φιλουμένης καὶ τοῖς ἐντός, ὡσπερ ἐν σπλάγχνοις ἱερείων, ἐγγεγραμμένου παντός τοῦ περὶ αὐτὴν πράγματος. ἐδόκουν δὲ καὶ κοιλία τινὲς εἶναι πλείους, καὶ ἅμα πως ἐώρων αὐτάς, αἱ μὲν ἄνω ὑγιεῖς καὶ εὖ διακειμέναι, ἐν δὲ τῇ τελευταίᾳ τὸ πεπονθὸς ἦν. καὶ ἐδείκνυντο ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐφροσώτος ὅστις καὶ ἦν. καὶ ἠρόμην γὰρ δὴ αὐτόν· 'πόθεν οὖν οἱ ὄκνοι καὶ ἡ δυσέργεια;' ὁ δὲ ἐδείκνυεν ἐκείνον τὸν τόπον. οἱ δ' οὖν χρησμοὶ τοιοῦτοί τινες ἦσαν. ἐνεγέγραπτο μὲν τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἐμὸν οὕτως· 'Αἴλιος Ἀριστείδης' καὶ σχεδὸν ἐκ διαλειμάτων ἄλλα καὶ ἄλλα ἐπίσημα τοῦ ὀνόματος· προσηνεγέγραπτο δὲ Σωσιμένης καὶ ἕτερα τοι-

αὐτὰ σωτηρίαν ἐπαγγελλόμενα, καὶ ὅτι ἡ Φιλουμένη ψυχὴν ἀντὶ ψυχῆς καὶ σῶμα ἀντὶ σώματος ἀντέδωκεν, τὰ αὐτῆς ἀντὶ τῶν ἐμῶν. (*Or. LI. 23*)

But the main point was that the whole affair concerning Philumene had been inscribed on her very body and on her innards, just as on the entrails of sacrificial animals. And there seemed to be a good deal of intestine, and at the same time somehow I was looking at it. The upper parts were healthy and in good condition, but at the end was a diseased part. And this was all pointed out by the one standing nearby, whoever he was. For indeed I was asking him, 'what, then, is the cause of my troubles and difficulty'? And he pointed out that place. The oracles went something like this: *my* name had been inscribed in this way, 'Aelius Aristides', and nearby, spaced apart, were different naming marks. 'Sosimenes' had been written as well, as well other things announcing salvation and that Philumene had given a soul in exchange for a soul, a body for a body, hers in place of mine.

The girl's innards, just like Aristides' lower abdomen in the warm bath dream, appear to be diseased. Yet whereas Aristides had required the 'attending someone' to explain why his entrails are diseased, in this case the attendant simply points to where Philumene's story is already inscribed (ἐγγεγραμμένου παντὸς τοῦ περὶ αὐτὴν πράγματος). The girl thus resembles, as Aristides says outright, the sacrificial animal whose entrails Aristides had examined in the first dream. As in hieroscopy, the matter written on Philumene's entrails turns out to be more about Aristides than about her. The question posed is about Aristides' pains; accordingly, it is his own name that he finds inscribed into (ἐνεγράπτο) his foster daughter's body. The signs all indicate that Philumene had dedicated her body for his and a soul for a soul, her story for the future of his.²⁹

In his pioneering reading of this episode, L. Pearcy likened Philumene's innards to Aristides' own diseased body (1988, 387–389). It is true that she is cast as Aristides' surrogate. Yet the two also differ from one another in that Philumene's body is literally inscribed with the meaning of her disease and her death, which turns out to be the meaning of Aristides' disease and his survival. Philumene's dreamed body thus takes over the role of Aristides' own dreamed body in attracting signs

²⁹ See also *Or. XLVIII.44*, another example of the life-for-a-life logic. These episodes have understandably attracted attention and are often interpreted as an unsavory sign of Aristides' megalomania or his psychological instability. Gourevitch places the substitution narratives in the context of contemporary perspectives on Antinous' death (1984, 55, with nn. 77–78).

that make the difficulties of the lived body comprehensible, but with a twist. For it is as if Philumene's serving as a site of interpretation in the dream, and specifically her conversion into a text, expresses her monumental act of substitution in the waking world, namely the gift of a life for a life. By assuming both the disease and the *written* word, Philumene also assumes Aristides' death, releasing him from the story that is for her both the first and final sacred tale.

Philumene's body offers a site where Aristides' story and Asclepius's saving grace may be both staged (as in the dream) *and* recorded (as in the archive and the *Hieroi Logoi*). As a result of her gift her foster father understands (albeit in a limited sense) his own trouble and, most importantly, gains new life. A similar, less disturbing substitution that nevertheless also involves an act of inscription is found in an episode where Aristides learns in a dream that he will die in two days. The fate may be averted if he completes a series of sacrifices, makes an offering of coins, and cuts off a part of his body for the sake of the well-being of the whole (δεῖν δὲ καὶ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ παρατέμνειν ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ παντός, *Or.* XLVIII.27). Fortunately, Asclepius remits this demand and allows Aristides to substitute his ring (δακτύλιος) for his finger (δάκτυλος).³⁰ By inscribing (ἐπιγράψαι) this ring with the words 'O son of Cronus' and dedicating it to Telesphorus, Aristides cheats death.

The Telesphorus episode, like the Philumene story, points to the desire to *protect* the body from writing. For it is precisely the body's conversion into a textual surface that appears to preclude its regeneration. The fixed nature of the inscription is overdetermined as a signifier of the irreversibility of death, on the one hand, and the promise to remember divine benefaction, on the other. Philumene's fate and Telesphorus's ring suggest a relationship between inscription, memory, and death in Aristides' imagination.

Such a relationship may seem, at first glance, counter-intuitive, given the fundamentally important role of commemorative tablets and votives in the healing events that take place in the cults of Asclepius and other healing gods. On reflection, however, we can see how the association of inscription with death might make sense in such a context. However speculative, etymologies of Asclepius's name in Homeric scholia offer

³⁰ Compare *Or.* XLVIII.13–14 (the enactment of a shipwreck averts a real one); *Or.* L.11 (a dusting stands in for actual burial). Such performances may be seen to persuade the gods that the demand has been satisfied: see Taussig 1993.

a useful point of orientation. Scholiasts commonly took the name to be the combination of the adjective σκληρός, 'hard, rigid', and the alpha-privative, the stated rationale being that, as the god of healing, Asclepius opposes the hardening and withering brought on by disease and death. Porphyry's account is paradigmatic:³¹

τὸ ἀσκελές σημαίνει τὸ ἄγαν σκληρόν. σκέλλειν γὰρ ἔστι τὸ σκληροποιεῖν, καὶ ὁ σκελετὸς ὁ κατεσκληκῶς διὰ τὴν ἀσαρκίαν, καὶ Ἀσκληπιὸς κατὰ στέρησιν μετὰ ἠπιότητος, ὁ διὰ τῆς ἰατρικῆς μὴ ἔῶν σέλλεσθαι. (*Homeric Questions*, α 68=T269, Edelstein and Edelstein)

Dried up means what is too harsh. For σκέλλειν means to make harsh. Also the skeleton is that which is dried up through lack of flesh, and the name Asklepios comes from this word with an alpha privative, together with the word for gentleness, that is, he who by the agency of the medical art does not permit dryness.

Asclepius restores to life, as the symbol of the snake, capable of shedding its skin, suggests.³² In our earliest Greek poetry and philosophical speculation, in fact, we find the idea of life as something aqueous, labile; in death, everything turns to bone.³³ Asclepius is a god of suppleness.

The very suppleness guarded by Asclepius, however, makes the protection of memory a crucial question. Every god needs poetry and myth to keep their deeds visible in cosmic memory. The problem faced by Asclepius, however, is not simply the ephemerality of action and event.³⁴ For a god whose work lies in restoring to life, the site of his power is uniquely resistant to manifesting that work in any lasting way. Gods like Apollo or Hecate or Aphrodite might break into the mortal world via symptoms; Asclepius erases them from the body. Whereas health, like beauty, can index divine benevolence, nothing in it signifies

³¹ See also T267–268; 270–276.

³² On the snake and the renewal of life, see T701, 703–706.

³³ Thus Aristotle reported—although he is not necessarily to be trusted—that Thales based his idea that the primary element of the world is water on the fact that the nurture (*trophê*) of all things was moist and that coming-to-be required the moist (*Metaph.* I.3, 983b6). Theophrastus conjectures that Thales privileged water as the principle of life after seeing that corpses dry up (Theophr. *Phys. op.* fr. 1=DK11 A 13). Disease could also be represented in medicine, however, as the liquefaction and disarticulation of the body, an elaboration in materialist terms of the archaic concepts of 'limb-loosening' (λυσιμελής) *erôs* and death. See e.g. Archil. 118 (W), Sapph. 137 (LP), Hes. *Th.* 121, with Vermeule 1979, 145–177.

³⁴ Ephemeral events such as sacrifices or, in healing cults, the nocturnal encounter with the healing god, were often represented on votive offerings (van Straten 1981, 83–86, 98; *id.* 1992, 256–257).

its own history. Yet it is precisely the before-and-after that is important to Asclepius: the very absence of the mark on the healed body belies its history of sickness and the intervention of the god.

We can contrast to the *tabula rasa* created by Asclepius's healing the almost imperceptible scar discovered postmortem on the body of the saint Macrina by her brother and the author of her fourth-century CE *Vita*, Gregory of Nyssa.³⁵ Through Macrina's nurse, we learn that the scar, likened by Gregory to a mark (στίγμα) made by a small needle, replaced a painful sore that had appeared on the saint's breast after she had prayed for healing. The scar is identified as a sign (σημεῖον) and commemoration (μνημόσυνον) of God's removal of the pathos (*V. Macr.* 31.5–7).³⁶ The mark signals, then, not death, but the renewal of life under the aegis of divine power. Macrina wears the memory of this renewal on her own person.

The difference between Macrina's scar and the Asclepian *tabula rasa* would seem to reflect a historical shift. For the interpretation of that scar takes place against the backdrop of Christianity's valorization of the scarred, wounded, and inscribed body in the first centuries CE, a valorization that departs sharply from Greco-Roman ideas about the corporeal mark. As a surge of recent scholarship has shown, throughout Greco-Roman antiquity a mark such as the tattoo cued subjection to a master, narrowing one's identity to whatever was imprinted on the skin and locking that identity against the passage of time.³⁷ The tattoo can thus be seen as concretizing the surplus of power that licensed the more general use and abuse of bodies deemed subhuman by masters and governments and effectively canceled the individual's claims to self-determination.³⁸ If we read Aristides' avoidance of the tattoo in the dream with the barbarians in this context, it is possible to see it as a promising sign for Aristides' eventual recovery of health. Through

³⁵ See Frank 2000 and Burrus 2003 for discussion of Macrina's scar, which Frank reads as an allusion to Odysseus' famous οὐλή and a site for fixing Macrina's 'shifting identities' (529).

³⁶ Compare the representation of the martyr's wounds as 'God's writing' at Prud. *Peri.* 3.135, cited by Shaw 1996, 306.

³⁷ duBois 1991; Steiner 1994, 154–159; Shaw 1996, 306; Jones 2000, 10; Burrus 2003, 404–408. The mutilated body could also be read in such terms (Gleason 2001, 79–80), although cf. Edwards 1999, on the valorization of Scaevola's scarred body in Seneca's letters.

³⁸ For this argument in classical Athens, see e.g. Dem. *Against Androtion* 55; Pl. *Leg.* 854d. Aristides himself uses στίζω in the metaphorical sense of 'to defame', 'to abuse' (καὶ τῶν μὲν οἰκετῶν οὐδένα πώποτ' ἔστιξας τῶν σαυτοῦ, τῶν δ' Ἑλλήνων τοὺς ἐντιμοτά-

the spectacular performances of the early martyrs, Christians reclaimed the marked and tortured body as a site for the resistance to Roman power while at the same time investing the concept of subjection to a higher power with new meaning.³⁹ For most Greeks and Romans, however, corporeal inscription was strongly associated from at least the fifth century BCE with slaves, barbarians, and criminals, groups lacking in the corporeal integrity necessary for self-mastery and the mastery of others, i.e. the integrity of the citizen or elite body. If Asclepian healing is to restore this integrity, it is incompatible with the mark.

Asclepius's need for a site of commemoration independent of the primary site of his power offers one explanation for why he so often issues directives to create a record when dispensing cures.⁴⁰ Ancient reports and archaeological evidence indicate that sanctuaries of Asclepius overflowed with inscriptions and votive offerings.⁴¹ Anatomical ex-votos—both molded forms and body parts executed in repoussée relief (τύποι ἔγμακτοι, κατάμακτοι)—have been discovered in healing sanctuaries throughout the Greek world, particularly from the fourth century BCE onwards.⁴² By doubling body parts in durable materials—recall the substitution of Aristides' ring for his finger—these votives commemorate

τους και τοὺς ὑπὲρ τῆς κοινῆς ἐλευθερίας ἀγωνιζομένους ἴσα και σίξας γεγένησαι, 'And you never tattooed any of your servants, but you have done as much as tattoo those who were the most honored of the Greeks and who fought on behalf of their common freedom...' *Or.* III.651, cited in Jones 2000, 9–10).

³⁹ See esp. Shaw 1996. On the changing meaning of the marked and tortured body, see also Gustafson 1997, 98–101; Gleason 1999, 305. In speaking of a 'new meaning', I refer to Christianity's interaction with classical Greco-Roman culture. Religious tattooing had long been common among other peoples (Gustafson, *op. cit.*, 98–99; Jones 2000, 2–6).

⁴⁰ See e.g. *IG* IV².1 122 XXV=T423; *IG* IV².1 126 (ἐκέλευσεν δὲ και ἀναγράψαι ταῦτα)=T432; *IC*, I, xvii, nos. 17–18=T439–440.

⁴¹ Van Straten 1981, 78–79; LiDonnici 1995, 41; van Straten 1992, 270–272. For an overview of the anatomical votives found in healing sites across the Greek-speaking world, see Rouse 1902, 210–216; Lang 1977, 14–19 (votives from Corinth); van Straten 1981, 100–104, esp. the catalogue on pp. 105–151; Georgoulaki 1997. Miniature molded body parts have been found as early as Minoan Age Crete. Although their function has been disputed, they are widely seen as some kind of a dedication to gods with healing capacities (van Straten 1981, 146; Georgoulaki, *op. cit.*, 198–202). Anatomical votives begin to appear again in quantity with the rise of healing cults, particularly the cult of Asclepius, in the fourth century BCE, and they remain in use to this day in Greece. A representative corpus of inscriptions can be found in the testimonia gathered in Edelstein and Edelstein 1945 (e.g. T428, 432, 439–441). On other dedications to healing gods, see Rouse, *op. cit.*, 208–226; LiDonnici, *op. cit.*, 41–47.

⁴² τύπος ἔγμακτος, *IG*² II 1534.64; τύπος κατάμακτος, *IG*² II 1534.65, 67.

survival; like Aristides' ring, may have also been thought to enable it.⁴³ Their suitability for memorializing lies precisely in their resistance to change.

Fixity is also, of course, an attribute of writing.⁴⁴ Indeed, a second-century CE papyrus fragment in praise of Imouthes-Asclepius, the preface of which bears remarkable similarities to the *Hieroi Logoi*, heralds writing as the most suitable medium for committing Asclepius's deeds to memory, while placing votives on the side of (ephemeral) sacrifice:⁴⁵

[πᾶ]σα γὰρ [ἀ]να-
θήματος ἢ [θ]υσίας δ[ω]ρεὰ
τὸν παρὰυτ[ί]κα μ[ό]ν[ο]ν
ἀκμάζει κα[ί] τ[ω]ν, ἔφθαρ-
ται δὲ τὸν μέλλοντα, γρά-
φῃ δὲ ἀθάνατος χάρι[ς] κα-
τὰ καιρὸν ἀνηβάσκ[ο]υσα
τή[ν] μνήμην. (*P. Oxy* XI, 1381, Col. ix 191–198=T331)

For every gift of a votive offering or sacrifice lasts only for the immediate moment, and presently perishes, while a written record is an undying meed of gratitude, from time to time renewing its youth in memory.

Aristides' archive and the *Hieroi Logoi* similarly ensure that if each day and each night has a story, these stories are not lost by disappearing from the body.⁴⁶ Nor is the body compelled to remember them by becoming arrested in time. Thus, because inscriptions and texts stand

⁴³ For the dedication of anatomical ex-votos in the hope of a cure, see Aristid. *Or.* XLII.7; see also van Straten 1981, 72–74, 103; Georgoulaki 1997, 194. Cf. Rouse 1902, 210–211, asserting that the votives played no role, at least in the early centuries of the cult, in 'mystical substitution', although he is happy to see such substitution as part of a later mentality (citing *Or.* XLVIII.27). The success of such substitutions may have been related to a concept of the body as a collection of parts that could be exchanged, as Rynearson 2003 argues. On the votive as a μνήμα, see van Straten 1981, 76–77.

⁴⁴ Pl. *Phdr.* 275c, 277d, with Derrida 1980.

⁴⁵ On the diffusion of the cult of Asclepius Imouthes in Egypt, see Edelstein and Edelstein 1945 II, 252.

⁴⁶ On the *Hieroi Logoi* as a votive, see Quet 1993, 236–238. Aristides accepts the *topos* of writing and immortality: see e.g. *Or.* L.45–47 where he inscribes a dedication with a couplet that comes to him in a dream. The inscription inspires him to persist with his rhetorical career, 'as our name would live even among future men, since the god had called my speeches "everlasting"' (ὡς κὰν τοῖς ὑστερον ἀνθρώποις ὄνομα ἡμῶν ἐσόμενον, ἐπειδὴ γε ἀνάουσι τοὺς λόγους ὁ θεὸς ἔτυχεν προσειρηκώς). An epigram of Callimachus playfully turns the votive tablet (πίναξ) into a safeguard against *Asclepius*'s forgetfulness: τὸ χρέος ὡς ἀπέχεις, Ἄσκληπιέ, τὸ πρὸ γυναικὸς / Δημοδίκης Ἀκέσων ὠφελεν εὐξάμενος, / γινώσκειν. ἦν δ' ἄρα λάθη [πάλι] καὶ μιν ἀπαιτῆς, / φηοὶ παρῆξεσθαι μαρτυρῆν ὁ πίναξ. ('Know, Asclepius, that thou hast received the debt which Aceson

still, the patient can be recreated as a *tabula rasa* without the memory of Asclepius's deeds being erased.

The case of Pandarus, found in the third-century BCE Epidaurian miracle tablets, suggests that the association between disease, corporeal inscription, and commemoration may have been part of the imaginative world of the Asclepius cult from an early point.⁴⁷ Pandarus arrives at Epidaurus bearing tattoos (στίγματα) on his forehead. In a dream vision, the god wraps a band (or fillet) around the marks, instructing him to remove it in the morning and dedicate it as an offering. Upon removing the band, Pandarus finds that his face is clean of the marks; he dedicates the band, which now bears the letters (γράμματα) that once appeared on his forehead. The votive, then, quite literally assumes the disease-letters as part of the patient's release, thereby becoming the memory of the marks' erasure.⁴⁸ The disease-inscription nexus is confirmed in the second part of the story.⁴⁹ Pandarus gives money to one Echedorus to dedicate to Asclepius, whose aid Echedorus is seeking in the removal of his own tattoos. But Echedorus fails to deliver the money, and goes on to lie about it in a dream; the quizzical Asclepius responds by fastening the old headband of Pandarus around the lying suppliant's marks.⁵⁰ Echedorus's discovery the following morning reverses his predecessor's: taking off the headband, he finds that *both* sets of letters are inscribed on his forehead, while the band itself is clean. The votive commemoration is erased, then, at the moment that the god applies signs to the body's surface.

owed thee by his vow for his wife Demodice. But if thou dost forget and demand payment again, the tablet says it will bear witness', Call. *Epigr.* 55=T522).

⁴⁷ *IG* IV².1 121 VI=T423.

⁴⁸ The anatomical ex-votos themselves, however, only rarely represent diseased body parts (Aleshire 1989, 41); I thank Christopher Jones for drawing my attention to this point. Note that 30.4, 30.5 in van Straten's catalogue are drawn from the problematic Meyer-Steineg collection. Some anatomical ex-votos are directly inscribed; others lacking inscriptions may have been placed on inscribed pedestals (van Straten 1992, 249–250).

⁴⁹ LiDonnici 1995, 26 reads the two episodes as parts of a single story, hypothesizing that the Pandarus element was a votive inscription to which a priest may have added the Echedorus component.

⁵⁰ For the punishment motif, see also e.g. *IG* IV².1 121 IV, V, VIII=T423, with the comments of LiDonnici 1995, 26 n. 9 and 40 n. 3. Compare the similar pattern of transgression and punishment in the form of disease in propitiatory inscriptions found in second and third-century CE Phrygia and Lydia, analyzed in Chaniotis 1995. On the whole, however, the cult's emphasis was primarily on cure, rather than on blame and expiation.

The tension between fixed memorials and corporeal renewal that I have been describing would have always been available to cult devotees for thematic elaboration.⁵¹ In Aristides' œuvre it becomes a major theme. Even cases where Aristides does actively engage the concept of the divine mark end up confirming his larger commitment to the body's capacity for renewal. Early in the first book of the *Hieroi Logoi*, for example, Aristides dreams that a bull bruises him on the knee (*Or.* XLVII.13). His most trusted physician, Theodotus, approaches and cleans (ἀνεκάθαρεν) the bruise with a lancet of some kind, and Aristides has the idea in his dream to tell Theodotus 'that you yourself made it a wound'.⁵² Upon waking, Aristides finds that his knee does indeed have a small wound. Rather than causing trouble, however, it seems to be beneficial for his upper body. Nevertheless, the cut disappears after the *katharsis* is completed.

A longer-lived and more spectacular corporeal mark appears at the end of the first book. Aristides reports that a tumor suddenly appeared on his groin from no obvious source (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς οὐδεμιᾶς φανερωᾶς, *Or.* XLVII.62), as is true of so many of his diseases. Rather than telling Aristides to excise the tumor, however, the god commands him to endure it—indeed, he is to *nourish* it (τρέφειν τὸν ὄγκον, *Or.* XLVII.63). And this Aristides does for four months, quite contrary to the advice of his human doctors. The tumor brings with it an incredible burst of creativity that leads Aristides to declaim from his sickbed. The flourishing of his talents suggests that the presence of a localized disease gives rise to a more general *katharsis*, as in the bruising episode.

In the end, however, what Aristides chooses to stress in the story is the dramatic reversion of the marked body to unblemished surface at the point when Asclepius makes clear to him that the time has come to expel the tumor with 'some drug'. Naturally, the success of the drug in deflating the tumor causes the doctors to marvel at the god's *pronoia*. Yet they persist with their advice to Aristides, suggesting that he allow them to cut away the loose skin left by the tumor. Again, Aristides

⁵¹ Kee 1982 argues for a historical shift within the cult of Asclepius between the period of the Epidaurian inscriptions and the *Hieroi Logoi*. Yet it is the relationship to the god that changes in his analysis: Asclepius becomes more central to people's lives, rather than fulfilling a single role. The basic imaginary of the cult remains quite stable, although the motifs gather new associations.

⁵² See also *Or.* II.47, where Sarapis appears in a dream with a lancet and shaves around the face, 'as if removing and purging defilement and changing it to its proper state' (οἷον λύματ' ἀφαραῶν καὶ καθαίρων καὶ μεταβάλλων εἰς τὸ προσήκον).

perceives his physicians' strategy as divergent from that communicated to him by the god, who has ordered him to smear egg on the skin, and he ignores them. The result of this godsent remedy is the disappearance of every last trace of the tumor, 'so that after a few days had passed, no one was able to discover on which thigh the tumor had been, but both were entirely unscathed (pure, clean)' (ὥστε ὀλίγων ἡμερῶν παρελθουσῶν οὐδείς οἴός τ' ἦν εὐρεῖν ἐν ὀποτέρῳ μηρῷ τὸ φῦμα ἐκεῖνο ἐγένετο, ἀλλ' ἦσθη ἀμφοτέρῳ καθαρῷ τοῖς ἄπασιν, *Or.* XLVII.68).⁵³

The disappearance of the tumor dramatically demonstrates Asclepius's ability to return the body 'to its former state' (εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον, *Or.* XLVII.67) and to make everything the same as it once was (συνήγαγεν πάντα εἰς ταῦτόν, *Or.* XLVII.68; cf. *Or.* II.47). Throughout Aristides' writings, erasure turns out to be closely related to a concept of regeneration that seems to deny the passage of time so central to the archive and narration more generally. Health is an absence of scars, forgetting, a washing away. I close by briefly looking at Aristides' commitment to endless regeneration in light of both the incompatibility between the mark or sign and the body and the ways in which Aristides controls and circumscribes the public representation of his embodied experience.

Léthē and katharsis

The concept of being remade in the wake of illness runs as an undercurrent throughout the *Hieroi Logoi*. Aristides, we have seen, often casts the causes of his suffering as foreign elements that have breached the boundaries of the body. Although the elimination of a *materia peccans* played a key role in medical concepts of disease from the fifth century BCE onwards, the representation of disease as something foreign was counterbalanced by the belief that disease was a process by which constituent elements *within* the body grew dangerously powerful.⁵⁴ Indeed, the idea that disease developed inside an individual body could be used to buttress the 'care of the self' as an ethical imperative.⁵⁵ Moreover,

⁵³ See Pernot 2002, 375 for a reading of the tumor episode consistent with the one I offer here.

⁵⁴ The classic account of 'ontological' versus 'physiological' concepts of disease is Temkin 1963. See also Niebyl 1969, 2–11 for the overlap of these concepts in Greek explanations of disease. For the medical idea of *katharsis* in the classical period, see von Staden 2007.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Galen's arguments against Erasistratus's concept of causality

the ethics of self-care eschews the idea of perfect unity: bodies naturally comprise opposed elements whose interaction must always be managed. Aristides, as we have seen, resists attempts to locate his symptoms within secular frameworks of interpretation. He thus implicitly rejects the premise that his suffering is the outcome of practices over which he might be held accountable.⁵⁶ His strategy works in tandem with his representation of disease as invasive and hidden and the corresponding emphasis on cathartic expulsion and rebirth.

Indeed, in his evacuation of the inner body, Aristides was often willing to go to extremes that expressly contradicted basic therapeutic principles of secular medicine, such as considering the strength of the patient when undertaking therapy.⁵⁷ When the noted physician and sophist Satyrus—a teacher of Galen’s—hears how many purges of blood Aristides has had, he orders him to stop immediately, lest he overwhelm and destroy his body (*Or.* II.8; cf. *Or.* XLVII.73; *Or.* XLVIII.34–35).⁵⁸ Aristides responds that he is not master (κύριος) of his own blood and that he will continue to obey the god’s directives.⁵⁹ Aristides’ ability to survive the body’s journey to the precipice of a void indicates his privileged relationship to Asclepius. Indeed, it is because he can endure the diseased body’s destruction that he is granted holistic renewal, an idea that bears some similarity to contemporary ideas of martyrdom and resurrection in early Christianity, with the notable difference that Aristides wants life after death in *this* life.⁶⁰ The myth of Asclepius, after

in *On Antecedent Causes* XV.187–196 (142,3–146,5 Hankinson) and Nutton 1983, 6–16 on resistance to ‘ontological’ concepts of disease on ethical grounds in the Greco-Roman period.

⁵⁶ Asclepius does, as we have seen, command him to avoid certain foods or activities, so that the central imperative of medicine, ‘watch out!’ (φύλαξον), remains in effect, as at *Or.* XLVII.71. The difference is that no dietetics handbook or physician can provide the information Aristides needs: the threats to his health are unpredictable and changeable.

⁵⁷ On the importance in imperial-age medicine of establishing the patient’s strength before letting blood, see Niebyl 1969, 68–76 (and pp. 26–38 on the origins of the concept in fifth and fourth-century BCE medicine).

⁵⁸ Both Aristides and Satyrus accept the effectiveness of venesection but they take different views of it. In medicine, bloodletting helps eliminate excess, rather than aiding in the expulsion of a foreign body (Niebyl 1969). Yet Aristides seems to think of bloodletting precisely in terms of expelling something foreign (e.g. *Or.* XLVII.28).

⁵⁹ Cf. *Or.* XLVII.4.

⁶⁰ Perkins (1992, 254, 262–266; 1995, 180–181, 189–192) draws the comparison between the martyr and Aristides; see also Dodds 1965, 42. In both cases, similarities arise from a shared cultural context rather than any direct claims of influence. Cf. Shaw 1996, 300 (‘the discourse in which Aristides is engaged...is distinctively his own, and is

all, made clear the dangers involved when philanthropic gods pursue more radical forms of resurrection.⁶¹

In *An Address Regarding Asclepius*, Aristides casts renewal precisely in the metaphorical terms of primeval creation.

ἀλλὰ καὶ μέλη τοῦ σώματος αἰτιῶνται τινες, καὶ ἄνδρες λέγω καὶ γυναῖκες, προνοία τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσθαι σφίσι, τῶν παρὰ τῆς φύσεως διαφθαρέντων, καὶ καταλέγουσιν ἄλλος ἄλλο τι, οἱ μὲν ἀπὸ στόματος οὕτωσὶ φράζοντες, οἱ δὲ ἐν τοῖς ἀναθήμασιν ἐξηγούμενοι· ἡμῖν τοίνυν οὐχὶ μέρος τοῦ σώματος, ἀλλ' ἅπαν τὸ σῶμα συνθεῖς τε καὶ συμπήξας αὐτὸς ἔδωκε δωρεάν, ὥσπερ Προμηθεὺς τὰρχαῖα λέγεται συμπλάσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. (*Or.* XLII.7=T317)

But some, I mean both men and women, even attribute to the providence of the god the existence of the limbs of their body, when their natural limbs had been destroyed; others list other things, some in oral accounts, some in the declarations of their votive offerings. For us it is not only a part of the body, but it is the whole body which he has formed and put together and given as a gift, just as Prometheus of old is said to have fashioned man.

The representation of Asclepius's work as the gifting of new body parts, rather than the salvaging of old ones, lends credence to the idea that the votive transforms permanent damage (the diseased body) into lasting memory and, as a result, gives the patient a fresh start. Never one to be outdone, Aristides declares that, in his case, his whole body has been destroyed and remade. In *On Concord*, Aristides' experience of renewal is extraordinary because it has happened so many times. 'I myself', Aristides declares, 'am one of those who under the god's protection, have lived not twice but many varied lives, and who on this account regard their disease as profitable' (ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ αὐτὸς εἰμι τῶν οὐ δις [βεβιωκότων] ὑπὸ τῷ θεῷ, ἀλλὰ πολλούς τε καὶ παντοδαπούς βίους βεβιωκότων καὶ τὴν νόσον κατὰ τοῦτο εἶναι λυσιτελεῖ νομιζόντων, *Or.* XXIII.16=T402; cf. *Or.* XLVIII.59).

located in a realm of ideas and rhetoric separate from that of the Christian ideologues⁶²). Shaw dates the dissemination of Christian interpretations of the endurance-pain (and torture)-virtue nexus in the elite Roman world to the first century CE (*op. cit.* 291–296). Thus while it is true that Aristides' stance incorporates motifs from the cult of Asclepius, we can also assume his exposure to contemporary concepts of, and debates about, suffering and healing, given his elite education, his travel, and the cosmopolitanism of the Antonine Age.

⁶¹ In most versions, Asclepius is struck dead by Zeus's thunderbolt for raising the dead (T66–85; T105–115). Notably, it is Sarapis who appears to Aristides in a dream about the afterlife (*Or.* II.48).

The logic of regeneration shows up in dramatic ways in the *Hieroi Logoi*. In addition to continual purgation and innumerable enemas and bloodlettings, Aristides boasts of being operated on more than any other suppliant in the history of the Pergamene temple of Asclepius.⁶² These literal acts of cutting and reassembling vividly express the process that Aristides imagines takes place in less violent treatments. In the third book, Neritus, one of his foster fathers, dreams that the god tells him it is necessary to remove Aristides' bones and put in tendons, since the existing ones have failed (*Or.* II.15). Seeing Neritus's alarm at the prospect of such a surgical operation, the god gives a less shocking command: no need, after all, to knock the bones out directly and cut out the tendons at present; rather what Aristides requires is a change (ἀλλοίωσις) of the existing tendons, a great and strange 'correction' (ἐπανόρθωσις).⁶³ To achieve this Aristides need only adopt the use of unsalted olive oil.

What is particularly striking in the Neritus dream is the idea that starting over involves, in the first formulation, not the replacement of bones and tendons with new bones and tendons, but the replacement of hard (i.e. σκληρός) bones with pliant tendons, as though the bones themselves were impediments to Aristides' reinvention (an idea that recalls the etymologies of Asclepius's name that we saw above). Despite the strong emphasis that Aristides appears to place on the foreign origins of disease, then, his belief in regeneration in fact exaggerates secular medicine's concept of a body complicit in the production of suffering. That is to say: it is not simply the invasive element that must be eliminated, but the damaged body itself. Purging the body's strangeness thus lays the groundwork for what is both a homecoming and a form of rebirth.

⁶² οἱ τε γὰρ νεωκόροι ἐν τούτῳ ὄντες ἡλικίας καὶ πάντες οἱ περὶ τὸν θεὸν θεραπευταὶ καὶ τάξεις ἔχοντες ὁμολογοῦν αἰεὶ δῆποτε μηδένα πω τῶν πάντων συνειδένα τσαυτὰ τιμηθέντα, πλὴν γε Ἰσχύρωνος, εἶναι δ' ἐν τοῖς παραδοξότατον τό γ' ἐκείνου, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ὑπερβάλλειν τὸ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀνευ τῶν ἄλλων παραδόξων... ('For the temple wardens, having reached such an age in that place, and all of those who served the god and held appointments in the temple agreed that they had never known anyone who had been cut up so many times, except for Ischuron, whose case was the most unbelievable, but that our case went beyond even this one, to say nothing of the other unbelievable things', *Or.* XLVIII.47).

⁶³ In the last two orations, we find similar instances where what must be changed is the mind (*Or.* L.52) or 'the dead part of the soul' (τὸ τεθνηκός τῆς ψυχῆς, *Or.* LII.2). In both cases, change brings divine communion.

I have argued Aristides sees the lived body as resistant to both interpretation and the act of creating memory. The body is rather written into stories that are first staged in dreams then recorded in the archive. By interpreting these stories, Aristides is able to act on the body in such a way as to restore it to a primeval state of harmony in which the dissonance between an opaque interior harboring something foreign, on the one hand, and the person who suffers and seeks the meaning of that suffering, on the other, is eliminated, at least temporarily. The body is repeatedly released from death because, although it is recovered from obscurity through stories, it is never captured by any one story. At the same time, the slipperiness of the living body creates the need for a fixed text to memorialize the work of Asclepius.

Even the casual reader of the *Hieroi Logoi*, however, cannot help but notice that that text does not always feel stable and fixed. It is often jumpy, elliptical, and defiant of chronology.⁶⁴ Its disorder stages the breakdown in Aristides' understanding of what has happened, the moments when he is unsure how to match representation to reality; its lacunae recall the breaks in the archive. The tenuous grasp that Aristides has on his lived experiences in the *Hieroi Logoi* confirms the body's irrepressible strangeness that wells up in the gap between the dream and waking life, between the oneiric performance and the text.

At other moments, however, what escapes narration is precisely the glowing plenitude of well-being that rewards successful therapeutic action. This plenitude cannot be captured by the negative figure of the *tabula rasa*. For the feeling of being restored to wholeness that Aristides describes after events such as the dedication of the surrogate-ring to Telesphorus have a positive charge.⁶⁵ Such feelings are associated most strongly with 'the divine baths' that Aristides narrates, and indeed

⁶⁴ Castelli 1999, 198–202.

⁶⁵ See *Or.* XLVIII.28: τὸ δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο ἔξεστιν εἰκάζειν ὅπως διεκείμεθα, καὶ ὅποιαν τινὰ ἀρμονίαν πάλιν ἡμᾶς ἠμόσατο ὁ θεός ('After this it is impossible to imagine our condition, and into what kind of harmony the god again brought us'). As D. Gourevitch has observed, the word ὑγίεια is found only once, at *Or.* L.69 (1984, 49). What Aristides gains following the successful implementation of dream therapies is described as ὁρασώνη (*Or.* XLVIII.35; *Or.* II.13; *Or.* LI.38, 90). 'Physiquement', Gourevitch writes, 'ce bien-être obtenu grâce à la faveur divine, est un état bizarre, qui n'est pas particulièrement voluptueux, mais caractérisé par un sentiment de chaleur intérieure parfaite, et d'éloignement par rapport au monde extérieur' (*op. cit.*, 48); see also Brown 1978, 43; Miller 1994, 203–204. A kind of relaxation or sense of presence may also attend moments of inspired oratorical performance (e.g. *Or.* LI.39).

with all his encounters with sacred water.⁶⁶ Like other events that exchange the damaged past for a unified and all-consuming present, such as the healing of the tumor or tasting the water from Asclepius's sacred well, the baths are synonymous with *lêthê*: 'So let us turn to the divine baths, from which we digressed. Let the pains, the diseases, the threats, be forgotten' (νῦν δὲ ὄθεν ἐξέβημεν τρεπόμεθα πρὸς τὰ λουτρὰ τὰ θεῖα· ὀδύνας δὲ καὶ νόσοι καὶ κίνδυνοι πάντες ἐρρόντων, *Or.* XLVIII.71).⁶⁷

In bathing, the body is restored to the conscious, first-person subject as a singular entity suffused with warmth and oblivious of all that is strange or painful. One famous passage in particular goes to some lengths in its attempt to describe the phenomenology of starting over:

καὶ τὰ ἀπὸ τούτου τίς ἂν ἐνδείξασθαι δυνηθεῖ; ἅπαν γὰρ τὸ λοιπὸν τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ τῆς νυκτὸς τὸ εἰς εὐνὴν διεσώσάμην τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ λουτρῷ σχέσιν, καὶ οὔτε τι ξηροτέρου οὔτε ὑγροτέρου τοῦ σώματος ἠσθόμην, οὐ τῆς θερμῆς ἀνῆκεν οὐδέν, οὐ προσεγένετο, οὐδ' αὖ τοιοῦτον ἢ θερμὴ ἦν, οἷον ἂν τῷ καὶ ἀπ' ἀνθρωπίνης μηχανῆς ὑπάρξειεν, ἀλλὰ τις ἦν ἀλέα διηνεκῆς, δύναμιν φέρουσα ἴσην διὰ παντὸς τοῦ σώματός τε καὶ τοῦ χρόνου.⁶⁸ παραπλησίως δὲ καὶ τὰ τῆς γνώμης εἶχεν. οὔτε γὰρ οἷον ἠδονὴ περιφανῆς ἦν οὔτε κατ' ἀνθρωπίνην εὐφροσύνην ἔφησθα ἂν εἶναι αὐτό, ἀλλ' ἦν τις ἄρρητος εὐθυμία, πάντα δεύτερα τοῦ παρόντος καιροῦ τιθεμένη, ὥστε οὐδ' ὁρῶν τὰ ἄλλα ἐδόκουν ὁρᾶν· οὕτω πᾶς ἦν πρὸς τῷ θεῷ. (*Or.* XLVIII. 22–23)

And who would be able to relate what came after this? For the entire rest of the day and the night until it was time for bed I preserved the state following the bath, and I sensed no part of my body to be hotter or colder, nor did any of the heat dissipate, nor was any added, but the warmth was not of that kind that one could obtain by human means; it was a kind of continuous heat, producing the same effect throughout the entire body and during the whole time. And it was the same with my mind. For it was no obvious pleasure, nor would you say that it was in the manner of human joy, but it was an inexplicable wellbeing that made everything second to the present moment, with the result that I seemed to see other things without even really seeing them. In this way I was entirely with the god.

⁶⁶ The role of water in the cult of Asclepius (and in other healing cults in the Greco-Roman world) has long been recognized. For an overview of the different uses of water in the *Hieroi Logoi*, see Boudon 1994, 159–163.

⁶⁷ See *Or.* XXXIX.2, where Aristides compares the water in the sacred well to 'Homer's lotus'.

⁶⁸ Following χρόνου, MSS. Keil prints χροτός following Haury's emendation.

At such moments, the body becomes familiar without the mediation of the dreams, which are premised on self-estrangement in waking life. The outside world falls away, leaving only the divine embrace and a sense of inner unity.⁶⁹ It is this experience of self-sameness—no part of the body, for example, is warmer or colder than the others—that is shattered not only by the disease, but also by dreaming and writing, practices that, as we have seen, are premised on self-splitting. In focusing Aristides' attention wholly on the present, the baths stand outside of memory.

To the extent that the baths stand outside of time, they are in a strong sense extra- or anti-textual: private and eternally present. Nevertheless, Aristides wants to narrate the baths and other such moments within the *Hieroi Logoi*. The fact that he does so reminds us that 'the body' of which I have been speaking is always an effect of the *Hieroi Logoi*, however much body and text are uncoupled within that work. When Aristides writes about his fully embodied communion with the god, he treads a narrow path between opening that relationship up to public interpretation and protecting the inimitable intimacy that leaves no place to the watcher, and between timelessness and commemoration.⁷⁰ Following one outdoors bath, Aristides writes that 'the comfort and relaxation that followed this were perfectly easy for a god to comprehend, but for a person, not at all easy to imagine or demonstrate in language' (ἡ δὲ ἐπὶ τούτῳ κουφότης καὶ ἀναψυχή θεῶν μὲν καὶ μάλα ῥαδία γινῶναι, ἀνθρώπων δὲ ἢ νῶ λαβεῖν ἢ ἐνδείξασθαι λόγῳ οὐ πάνυ ῥάδιον, *Or.* XLVIII.49). The *Hieroi Logoi* are a testimonial to experiences that Aristides insists will always lie outside the public domain, experiences that nevertheless could not be celebrated as indications of divine favor without Aristides' willingness to speak and write about them.

Aristides' difficulty in sharing the comfort gained through the bath restages the singular nature of his original experience. Several compan-

⁶⁹ See also *Or.* XLVIII.53; *Or.* LI.55.

⁷⁰ On the tension between the public and the private, see Miller 1994, 184–204. This tension can be sensed even more strongly against the backdrop of Albert Henrichs' recent analysis (2003) of *hieroi logoi*, which were defined, Henrichs argues, by their commitment to the esoteric while also gaining fame, e.g. in the travelogues of Herodotus or Pausanias, as closed books. Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi*, named through—what else?—a dream (*Or.* XLVIII.9), are cited by Henrichs as an exception to the rule (230 n. 71; 240 n. 115), although on closer inspection they appear to be consistent with Henrichs' account of *hieroi logoi*.

ions, for example, once tried to imitate his fulfillment of the divine prescription only to find that their bodies could not tolerate the extreme conditions that it required (*Or.* XLVIII.76).⁷¹ As on other occasions where Aristides insists that only he is capable of understanding what the god says and fulfilling his commands, that capacity is confirmed through the failure of others.

On the other hand, Aristides' troubles as a narrator cue the impossibility of setting into time an experience that is defined by its resistance to narrative arcs that posit beginnings and endings.⁷² Of course, these experiences are not, in fact, unspeakable, despite Aristides' use of this literary *topos*. Indeed, Aristides addresses the crowd following his bath at *Or.* XLVIII.82 with a speech inspired by Asclepius. Still, experiences of inner unity lie outside the logic of interpretation that governs the experience of the body in its opacity, where opacity ensures there is always something hidden to be (potentially) known and explained via a boundless divine text. Moments of communion with the divine participate, rather, in an ongoing cycle by which Aristides has his stories purged and washed from him as a condition of the renewal of life.

Even Aristides, however, cannot remain with the god forever. However much time seems to stand still within his states of joy, pleasure ends, pain encroaches, and the body is again taken up as an object of interpretation and narration: story follows upon story. Thus, the body is Odyssean not only in its toils and its subterfuge, but in its refusal to stay at home in Penelope's embrace: no sooner has it become familiar than it is attracted into foreign territory once again, like Tennyson's Ulysses, for whom 'the deep / moans round with many voices', beckoning him back to the open sea with its waves, its strangeness. Unlike Odysseus,

⁷¹ Although barefoot runs and wintry baths were part of the usual repertoire of Asclepian cures, as Marcus Aurelius indicates (*Ad se ipsum* V.8=T407) and Aristides himself acknowledges (*Or.* XLVIII.55).

⁷² Aristides elsewhere uses the experience of drinking the sacred water to capture a sense of speech that would happen 'all at once': *τίς οὖν δὴ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀρχή, ἢ ὅσπερ ἡνίκα' ἂν ἅπ' αὐτοῦ πίνωμεν, προσθέντες τοῖς χεῖλεσι τὴν κύλικα οὐκέτι ἀφίσταμεν, ἀλλ' ἀθρόον εἰσεχεάμεθα, οὕτως καὶ ὁ λόγος ἀθρόα πάνθ' ἕξει λεγόμενα;* ('What, then, should be the beginning (of our speech), or, just as when we drink from the well, raising the cup to the lips we never stop again, but pour in the liquid all at once, so too should our speech everything all at once?' *Or.* XXXIX.4=T804). That the sentiment is a *topos* does not keep it from participating in a set of motifs central to Aristides' oeuvre. Water, he goes on to say in the same speech, is untouched by time (*χρόνος γοῦν αὐτοῦ οὐχ ἄπτεται, ibid.* 9).

however, this epic hero travels without a scar: the past belongs wholly to the god and the archive. By displacing writing from the lived self, Aristides manages to keep his distance from his stories and, hence, to survive them.⁷³

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