

Physiognomy and Geosophy of Pergamon according to Aelius Aristeides

Murat TOZAN*


All human activities take place in a certain space and time. Historical geography deals with these two dimensions of human activities. Since it deals with the interaction of humans with the environment in the past, the results obtained by many natural and social sciences from geology to archaeology are valuable and important in this sense. Nevertheless, when it comes to historical geography in the classical sense, two disciplines are decisive: history and geography. Texts are the main source of history as a discipline. Expressions of geographic phenomena of a certain place in historical texts constitute first-hand sources of the historical geography about there. Ancient Graeco-Roman literary sources provide valuable information about the historical geography of the ancient Mediterranean and its surroundings. The authors such as Strabo, Pausanias, and Ptolemy wrote directly about geography. However, many other ancient authors who did not write for this purpose, whether consciously or not, mention the geographical features and physical environments as well. What these authors wrote about geography, as in many other subjects, is often personal, biased, subjective, and sometimes imaginative.

At this point, the concept of geosophy, which was coined by J. Kirtland Wright, is very important in terms of examining the perception of terrestrial space in historical texts. According to him geosophy “is the study of geographical knowledge from any or all points of view” and

covers the geographical ideas, both true and false, of all manner of people – not only geographers, but farmers and fishermen, business executives and poets, novelists and painters, Bedouins and Hottentots – and for this reason it necessarily has to do in large degree with subjective conceptions¹.

It follows that it has necessarily to deal with subjective conceptions. Thus, he emphasized that intuitive, imaginative, and subjective expressions are also valuable in geographical perception and they should be taken into consideration. Innes N. Keighren extends this:

For Wright ... the creation of geographical knowledge was dependent upon the interplay of ‘real’ and ‘perceived’ worlds – dissimilar realms bound by the imagination and moulded by non-geographical factors. The individual and highly personal character of this interaction rendered the resultant knowledge subjective, personal, and, ultimately, humanistic².

* Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murat Tozan, Ege University, Bergama Vocational School of Higher Education, Dept. of Artifact Protection, 35700 Bergama/İzmir (murat.tozan@ege.edu.tr;  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5709-9318>).

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¹ Wright 1947, 12.

² Keighren 2005, 553.

Accordingly, the examination of expressions of geographical knowledge in the texts from the past to the present brings the Wrightian concept of geosophy closer to history as an academic discipline at the center of humanities. In this paper, an ancient settlement is considered through descriptions, interpretations, and representations in the texts of an ancient author. The aim is to assess to what extent the physiognomic description of a settlement and its immediate surroundings by an ancient author coincides with the concept of geosophy.

Pergamon being located at the southern end of Mysia was bordered to the west by the coastal region of Aiolis and to the south by Lydia in antiquity. The settlement was established about 25 km inland from the Aegean Sea on a hill overlooking the Kaikos (modern Bakırçay) plain³. Having pre-Hellenistic roots, the city gained its importance in the Hellenistic period (323 – 30 BCE). Pergamon was one of the important cultural centers of the Hellenistic world as well as being a royal capital. With the beginning of the Roman rule in Asia Minor towards the end of the 2nd century BCE, the city was located within the borders of the Asian province. With the wealth and prosperity of the *pax Romana* (Roman peace) a comprehensive public building activity was conducted in the city from the beginning of the 2nd century CE⁴. During the periods of emperors Trajan (98-117 CE) and Hadrian (117-138 CE), monumental buildings on the city hill were erected (temple of Roman imperial cult) or renovated (e.g. Hellenistic gymnasium); the city expanded towards the plain, where new public buildings were constructed as well, e.g. a temple dedicated to the Egyptian Gods, a stadium, a theatre, an amphitheater, and a sanctuary of Asklepios, so-called Asklepieion.



Fig. 1) Overview map showing Pergamon and the routes of the different journeys of Aelius Aristeides (by courtesy of D. Knitter)

³ See Figs. 1-2.

⁴ On the building activity in the city at this period, see Radt 1999, 113-134, 200-242, 262-266; Halfmann 2001, 45-62; Zimmermann 2011, 63-66.

The ancient author targeted here is Aelius Aristides, the famous orator and sophist of the 2nd century CE was born in 117 CE in Mysia, northeast of Pergamon⁵. His father was quite rich, and he inherited from his father vast estates throughout Mysia. Like many children of wealthy families of that period, he began taking lessons in literature, rhetoric, and philosophy starting from an early age. Thanks to his wealth and talent, he attended the lectures of the best teachers in the major intellectual centers of the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Pergamon, Smyrna, and Athens. After training himself as an orator, he went on a journey to Egypt, a very common phenomenon among the intellectuals of that time⁶. His first diseases appeared during this trip in the early 140s. To crown his shining career in 143 CE he went to Rome, the capital of the empire. He became, however, seriously ill during this trip and returned without doing anything. In the winter of 144/145 while he was in Smyrna and waiting for his death in a physical and psychological collapse, he experienced an event that changed the rest of his life. Asklepios, the god of health and healing in the Graeco-Roman world, told him in a dream to go to the Asklepieion in Pergamon⁷. He did as he was told and spent the next two years there. These two years between 145 and 147 CE may be termed the period of incubation in the Asklepieion⁸. After this period of incubation, the psychological state of Aristides almost completely improved and he actively returned to oratory, which he had previously given up. The rest of his life passed between Smyrna, where he owned a house and was a citizen, Pergamon, and his estates in Mysia. During this period, he continued an active career as an orator and gave speeches in many cities. His physical health, however, never recovered. Due to various physical and psychosomatic diseases, he was neurotic, superstitious, and obsessive. Like before, he associated his dreams and many events in daily life with the god Asklepios and perceived them as signs sent by the God to restore his health. As a result, Aristides was described by many authors as a hypochondriac and an eccentric figure and thus received the doubtful prestige of being called the most famous patient of antiquity.



Fig. 2) Pergamon (modern Bergama) as viewed from southeast (by courtesy of D. Knitter)

⁵ For his life and works, see Behr 1968, 1-115; 1986, 1-4; Swain 1996, 254-297; Trapp 2016, 3-22.

⁶ Foertmeyer 1989, 159-207.

⁷ Aristeid. 48.7, cf. 48.70.

⁸ Aristides himself, however, describes this period as “kathedra”, see Aristeid. 48.70, 49.44. The word *kathedra* has a twofold meaning: “sitting/inactivity” and “professorial chair”, see e.g. LSJ 851, s.v. *kathedra*. Even if this term can be translated as “period of resting/inactivity”, it seems more appropriate to understand it in the sense of “professorial/sophistic chair”; this was used by orators and other intellectuals, since in this period, Aristides actively returned to oratory, which he had previously ceded, see Behr 1968, 28 with n. 20; Petsalis-Diomidis 2010, 141; Israelowich 2012, 109-111.

Aristeides traveled a lot like other sophists and orators of the period⁹. He describes many physiognomic and topographic aspects of both rural and urban landscapes and mentions various geographical phenomena in connection with his travels. As an orator, he often uses figures of speech in his writings and often includes his imagining. Aristeides frequently writes about his dreams in his works and he is quite exceptional in this regard among ancient writers whose writings have survived to the present day¹⁰. Therefore, his writings often contain elements of imagining, subjectivity, and his subconscious. Pergamon and its surroundings, on the route between the Mysia and Smyrna, were undoubtedly the city and region that he was quite familiar with. However, what made Pergamon special in his eyes was undoubtedly the sanctuary of Asklepios in the city¹¹. According to him, many geographic phenomena like other things in Pergamon and its surroundings were divine. Thus, since the literary narratives of Aristeides about geographical features in Pergamon and its environment contain intense subjectivity and imagination, this puts most of his narratives in the category of geosophical knowledge. Accordingly, it is quite appropriate to evaluate Aristeides' narratives on Pergamon and its surroundings in terms of the geosophical categorizations of Wright.

More than fifty works of Aristeides have survived¹². Many of these works are his speeches in various cities and the rhetorical works he wrote on some artificial subjects. Among his extant writings, the most interesting one in terms of our subject is his six-book work, which he called the Sacred Tales¹³. The work, the first five of its six books have survived almost completely, was written by Aristeides in the 170s CE when he retired to his estates in Mysia. In this work, Aristeides describes what he did, rationally or irrationally, to recover his health with the help of the god Asklepios. The narratives about Pergamon in this work generally belong to his incubation period in Asklepieion. It should be noted that during this period the construction program both in Asklepieion and in the city, which was mentioned above, has now been largely completed and the city has gained its new appearance outside the Hellenistic walls.

It should also be emphasized that there was not any place for accommodation in the Pergamene Asklepieion and the incubants there have lodgings in the city¹⁴. For instance, during his incubation period, Aristeides stayed in the house of Asklepiakos, one of the officials of the Asklepieion, which was outside of the sanctuary¹⁵. Again, in one of his later visits to the Asklepieion, Aristeides stayed at an inn in the city¹⁶. Moreover, although it was possible to visit the Asklepieion at night, the *cellae* in the sanctuary were locked after dark¹⁷. Thus, the evidence in the works of Aristeides shows that the incubants who committed themselves to the God in the Pergamene Asklepieion

⁹ Galli 2005, 253-290.

¹⁰ Harris 2009, 65-66, 118-122.

¹¹ Petsalis-Diomidis 2010, 132-150.

¹² See Behr 1981; 1986.

¹³ Behr 1968.

¹⁴ Behr 1968, 30 with n. 39.

¹⁵ Aristeid. 48.35, 48.46.

¹⁶ Aristeid. 51.28.

¹⁷ See Aristeid. 47.11, 48.80, 49.22, 51.28; Edelstein – Edelstein 1945, 2:193; Behr 1968, 32.

were no isolated patients; rather, they were active in city life¹⁸. For instance, when a bullfighting spectacle was held in the city, everyone in the sanctuary went down to the city to enjoy the spectacle¹⁹. The bullfight probably took place in the amphitheater located about one-kilometer north-east of the sanctuary²⁰. Accordingly, it is obvious that Aristeides' impressions and representations about Pergamon are based on his own experiences.

As the sanctuary became closer to the urban area with the expansion of the city to the west of the acropolis, it was linked to the city by a covered road (*via tecta*). The road passing through a gate (today known as the Viran Kapı/Ruined Gate) adjacent to the newly built theatre and its last 130 meters to the sanctuary was designed as a colonnaded street during its remodeling²¹. Although Aristeides did not write about this road directly, he spoke of "going down" from the sanctuary to the city²². Here, surely, he refers to this hilly road from the lower city to the sanctuary. In one of his dreams Aristeides and some of his friends "reached the postern gate, where the turn off the temple is, they went straight to the temple" but he went somewhere else²³. The gate is very likely the so-called Viran Kapı, which was mentioned earlier, and even today it is one of the landmarks of the city²⁴. Aristeides refers to almost all architectural and physical elements of the Asklepieion. It should be noted that, however, Aristeides refers to the Hellenistic buildings, which were located in the courtyard during the Hadrianic re-modeling when talking about health and cures but when he touches upon oratorical and philosophical subjects, he always refers to the sanctuary's newly added parts²⁵. This may indicate there are different meanings of the different parts of the sanctuary in the subconscious of Aristeides that I will later refer to a Wrightian term, geographical psychoanalysis.

A speech given by Aristeides to representatives of the general assembly of the province in the council hall of Pergamon in 167 CE provides valuable information about the topographic and urban physiognomy of the city. In this speech, which is concerning Concord, i.e. an agreeing together harmoniously, of Pergamon, Smyrna, and Ephesus, the three major metropoleis of the province, Aristeides opens with the following statements about Pergamon:

*I shall begin with the city which now receive us and which provides the Council Chamber for the speeches on this topic. I think that I shall omit mention of how it once ruled the neighboring regions, and how later there rites in which we take pride had their origin from here. But as to what immediately strikes the eye, there is the acropolis, of such magnitude, splendid from afar on every side, as it were, a sort of common summit of the province*²⁶. (Transl. by C. A. Behr)

¹⁸ Tozan forthcoming.

¹⁹ Aristeid. 50.16.

²⁰ See Jones 1998, 73.

²¹ Habicht 1969, 8, 154-155; Radt 1999, 225-226; Halfmann 2001, 47; Petsalis-Diomidis 2010, 172-174.

²² Aristeid. 50.90.

²³ Aristeid. 50.66. See also Jones 1998, 67-68.

²⁴ Jones 1998, 68.

²⁵ Tozan forthcoming.

²⁶ Aristeid. 23.13.

It is quite understandable why Aristeides starts from the acropolis when describing the physical appearance of Pergamon. Both in the antiquity and today, the acropolis rises like a background beyond the city. When approaching the city from a distance, the acropolis is the first prominent landmark²⁷.

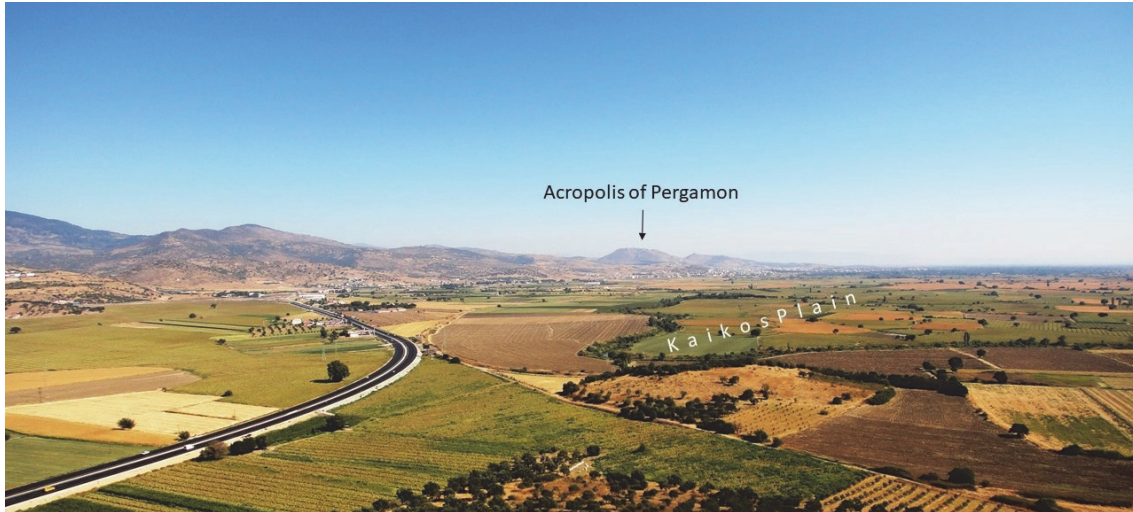


Fig. 3) Acropolis of Pergamon from the Southwest

The reference to the rites of Pergamene origin can be related to the acropolis as well but not only due to its exceptional topographic location²⁸. Aristeides here clearly mentions the cult of Roman emperors that the white marble of the sanctuary of Trajan, which is built for this cult, shined with all its glory over the acropolis (even today after a partial restoration)²⁹. He also mentions the temple of this cult dedicated to Zeus Philios in a work he wrote about the arrival of a new water source to the city³⁰. The building of this temple was partly financed by C. Antius Aulus Iulius Quadratus the founder of the family of the Quadrati with which Aristeides had close relations and the Zeus Philios, or the cult of Friendly Zeus, referred to the friendship between the Quadratus and the emperor Trajan³¹. Therefore, Aristeides' mention of this temple must not only be related to its prominent location in the landscape of the city but also to his close relationship with the Quadrati family which has close ties with the temple. Perhaps the Quadrati also contributed to the arrival of a new water source to the city mentioned above³². In another speech, Aristeides emphasizes the importance of the Quadratus and the Quadrati for the city with the following words:

But when Quadratus had been summoned by the god to restore this city which had deteriorated through age, he created everything which now exists, so that in the future

²⁷ See Figs. 2-3.

²⁸ The first Roman imperial cult in the Greek world was dedicated in Pergamon in 29 BC, see Cass. Dio 51.20.6-9; Price 1984, 56, 133, 252; Burrell 2004, 17-21.

²⁹ For the sanctuary of Trajan and the cult of Roman emperors therein, see Radt 1999, 208-218; Halfmann 2001, 49-51, 54-56; Price 1984, 67, 137, 156, 157, 252; Burrell 2004, 23-30.

³⁰ Aristeid. 53.2; see also Jones 1991.

³¹ Radt 1999, 212; Halfmann 2001, 50; Zimmermann 2011, 63-65.

³² Note that Aulus Iulius Quadratus, the founder of the family, must have been involved in bringing a new water source to the city, see Weisser 2005, 139, cf. Jones 1991.

*the other families could claim that they belong to the city, but the city that it belongs to this family*³³. (Transl. by C. A. Behr)

Aristeides' use of the phrase "going down" to the city reveals that in the 2nd century CE, the city center or the actual city was its section towards the plain outside the Hellenistic walls surrounding the acropolis³⁴. At that time, the acropolis was rather a kind of "Altstadt" (historical city), which mostly contained political and religious public structures; the acropolis, however, continued to exist as a residential district of the city as well. The available epigraphic and archaeological evidence reveals that during the Roman imperial period, there were dwellings on the acropolis, and the dwellers in this district were called "the inhabitants on the acropolis"³⁵. It is generally believed that the wealthy population of the city mainly resides at the acropolis during the Roman imperial period. For example, the fourth-century Pergamene physician Oreibasios, quoting Galen, states that the wealthy section of Pergamene society lived on the hill rather than in the crowded streets below³⁶. The evidence in Aristeides, however, indicates a different situation. When Aristeides needed a goose egg for an offering during his incubation period, he obtained it from a certain Meilates from the acropolis³⁷. The fact that Meilates was an ordinary goose seller indicates that in the 2nd century CE not only wealthy families but also ordinary people lived on the acropolis. Perhaps with the expansion of the city towards the plain since the early 2nd century, some wealthy families had built houses in its newly developing parts. A process that could be compared to the suburbanization of modern centers³⁸.

Aristides ultimately described the Pergamene acropolis as the "common summit of the province", emphasizing its political and religious significance for the entire province of Asia³⁹. Of course, however, the acropolis of Pergamon with an altitude of about 330 m from the sea level is not the highest peak in Western Asia Minor, which covered much of the Asian province. Even in its immediate vicinity, there are mountains much higher than the hill where the Pergamene acropolis is located⁴⁰. Aristeides uses a metaphorical expression here which highlights again the strong influence of subjective motives in the description of places or landscapes. The concepts of subjectivity and imagination in geographical studies stand out in Wright's famous article on the geosophy. According to him in addition to "strictly impersonal objectivity", there are two kinds of subjectivity: "illusory subjectivity" and "realistic, or one might even say, objective, subjectivity"⁴¹. These two types of subjectivity play a role in imaginative processes and there are three types of imagining based on subjectivity: promotional, intuitive, and aesthetic imagining⁴².

³³ Aristeid. 30.9.

³⁴ See Radt 1999, 262-266; Halfmann 2001, 51-55, 85.

³⁵ IGR IV 330 = IvPergamon 394; IGR IV 424 = IvPergamon 434.

³⁶ See Oreib. coll. med. 9.10 (CMG 6.1.2.11-12); Nutton 2004, 27, 213, 324 n. 77.

³⁷ Aristeid. 49.44.

³⁸ See Kühne 2018, 116-120.

³⁹ Aristeid. 23.13.

⁴⁰ See Figs. 2-3.

⁴¹ Wright 1947, 5.

⁴² Wright 1947, 5-7.

If Aristeides' description of the Pergamene acropolis as the "common summit of the province" is to be explained in terms of Wrightian categories, it is undoubtedly subjective. This subjectivity includes both realistic and illusory elements accordingly. It is realistic because there is a lofty acropolis in the city of Pergamon. It is illusory, however, because this acropolis is not high enough to be a common summit of the entire province. It should be noted here that Aristeides as a rhetorician and orator frequently uses hyperbole among the figures of speech in his works. His aim here is, of course, not to drag the reader into illusion, but to strengthen the meaning of an element that he emphasizes in his narrative. Therefore, this expression of Aristeides can also be interpreted as "aesthetic imagining" according to Wright.

While Aristeides was a rhetorician and orator, Strabo was a geographer. Accordingly, his definition of the Pergamene acropolis falls within the scope of "impersonal objectivity". Strabo writes about the physical appearance of the Pergamene acropolis: "and its people are settled on the very summit of the mountain; the mountain is pinecone-like and ends in a sharp peak"⁴³. (Transl. by H. L. Jones) The difference in style and context between Aristeides and Strabo becomes evident and is according to Wright depicted in the core-periphery dichotomy in the geographical knowledge:

the realm of geography –geography in the sense of all that has been written and depicted and conceived on the subject– consists of a relatively small core area ... and a much broader peripheral zone. The core comprises formal studies in geography as such; the periphery includes all of the informal geography contained in non-scientific works – in books of travel, in magazines and newspapers, in many a page of fiction and poetry, and on many a canvas ... The peripheral zone also includes another even more informal type of geography; that of the subjective geographical conceptions of the world about them which exist in the minds of countless ordinary folk⁴⁴.

Thus, the geosophy "extends beyond the core area of scientific geographical knowledge or of geographical knowledge as otherwise systematized by geographers. Taking into account the whole peripheral realm, it covers the geographical ideas, both true and false"⁴⁵. Accordingly, when the definitions of Strabo and Aristeides on the Pergamene acropolis are considered in terms of the Wrightian core-periphery dichotomy, it is clear that Strabo takes place in the core, while Aristeides is located in the periphery.

In his discourse of Concord, Aristeides continues his account of the physical appearance of Pergamon as follows. "Beneath it (i.e. the acropolis) the rest of the city is different at each location and is variously sited and formed... There are adornments, both ancient and new, which cover the whole city, any one of which is enough to be an adornment even for an entire city"⁴⁶. (Transl. by C. A. Behr) Here, he definitely refers to the sections of the city that developed outside the Hellenistic walls during the Roman period, and the public and religious structures built in there.

⁴³ Strab. 13.4.1.

⁴⁴ Wright 1947, 10.

⁴⁵ Wright 1947, 12.

⁴⁶ Aristeid. 23.13.

Eventually, he refers to the Asklepieion, which is undoubtedly the most important component of the city according to him:

I mean the final segment of the city, which has been consecrated to the Savior [Asklepios] for the common good fortune of all mankind. For when it was fated for the god also to cross over to this continent, first he crossed over to here and made the city a starting point for his association with the whole continent. And in point of time, this colony, as it were, sent hither from Greece is second to that of those who came with Telephos from Arkadia but in point of rank and importance it is by far the first of all colonies. For here in Asia was founded the hearth of Asklepios, and here friendly beacons are raised for all mankind by the god who calls men to him and holds aloft a true light⁴⁷. (Transl. by C. A. Behr)

The first thing that stands out in this narrative is Aristeides' emphasis on the mythological past of Pergamon. According to legend, Telephos, the son of Herakles, one of the Greek mythological heroes, came from Arkadia to find his mother in the region and eventually became the king of Mysia with its capital Teuthrania⁴⁸. The Attalids, the royal dynasty of Pergamon in the Hellenistic period, adopted this mythological account and accepted Telephos as the founder of both Pergamon and their dynasty. Thus, they both legalized their sovereignty in the region and attached their origins to Greece and the gods⁴⁹. It is important that this mythological narrative was still valid in the time of Aristeides even after centuries. When Aristeides consulted the famous oracle of Apollo at Klaros, in the territory of Kolophon, concerning his health just after the two-year incubation period, the answer was as follows:

*Asklepios will cure and heal your disease
In honor of the famous city of Telephos
Not far from the streams of the Kaikos⁵⁰. (Transl. by C. A. Behr)*

The geographer Pausanias, a contemporary of Aristeides, also states that Telephos was the founder of Pergamon, and he referred to Teuthrania as the forerunner of Pergamon⁵¹. Aristeides in his speech on the mythical story of *the Sons of Asklepios* mentions their capture of Teuthrania⁵². Teuthrania in this story seems to mean not only a settlement but also the western part of the Kaikos plain, including Pergamon⁵³. It is important to recognize that, this mythological narrative is related to the landscape of Pergamon. The lofty hill where Teuthrania was located is situated in

⁴⁷ Aristeid. 23.14-15.

⁴⁸ For the Telephos myth and Pergamon, see Radt 1999, 23-24; Zimmermann 2011, 15-16, 42-43; Williamson 2016, 73-74.

⁴⁹ See Zimmermann 2011, 16-17, 40-43; Williamson 2016, 70-79.

⁵⁰ Aristeid. 49.12.

⁵¹ Paus. 1.4.5-6, 1.11.2; cf. 8.4.8-9.

⁵² Aristeid. 38.11.

⁵³ Pergamon and its environments seems to again be referred as Teuthrania in an inscription which is found in the Asklepieion and associated with Aristeides, see Habicht 1969, 144-145 no. 145; cf. Edelstein – Edelstein 1945, 2.331-332 T. 596; Behr 1968, 52 n. 44; 1986, 425-426 no. 10.

a central spot of the Western Kaikos plain and is easily visible from many places of Pergamon⁵⁴. In this respect, the story of Telephos and Teuthrania: “provides a good angle for observing how Pergamon was progressively projected onto the symbolic, heroic, and mythological space of its surrounding landscape”⁵⁵. Especially for someone advancing from the coast to Pergamon, Teuthrania, rising with all its majesty in the middle of the plain, was and is without doubt impressive, subjectivity intended. When Martin Zimmermann writes about the mythological landscape of the region: “Such a landscape was considered by the ancient contemporaries in a very special way. If one reads the parts of Western Asia Minor in Strabo’s Geography, one gets the impression of traveling in spirit through a mythical land”⁵⁶. The same holds for Aristeides, an intellectual and frequent traveler who was familiar with the region. His reference to the myth of Telephos and Teuthrania was not only related to the mythological and historical identity of Pergamon but also to the fact that this myth had an important role in Pergamon’s landscape.



Fig. 4) Panorama showing Teuthrania on the left, overlooking the plain of the Kaikos river; The topographic situation aggravates the effect of weather phenomena, like in this case an approaching thunderstorm. (by courtesy of D. Knitter)

Aristeides, in his speech *on Concord*, devotes the largest part of his narrative on Pergamon to the Asklepieion. He referred to the founding myth of the sanctuary and called its foundation the second colonization from the Greek mainland to the city after the establishment of Telephos⁵⁷. Here, he certainly refers to the legendary story about bringing the cult of Asklepios to the city from Epidauros by Arkhias⁵⁸. He then mentions the membership to the cult, its officials, and his commitment to it, and continues:

*One would not even say that the region here was without 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 numbers of people and enjoys the greatest calm, where for all mankind the stern cables of safety have been fastened to Asklepios*⁵⁹. (Transl. by C. A. Behr)

Concerning Wrightian terminology, this expression of Aristides can be described as “illusory subjectivity”. Because there is no harbor in Pergamon as an inland settlement. Aristeides, however,

⁵⁴ See Williamson 2016, esp. 79-93.

⁵⁵ Williamson 2016, 72.

⁵⁶ Zimmermann 2011, 15: “Eine solche Landschaft wurde von den antiken Zeitgenossen auf ganz spezielle Weise betrachtet. Wenn man in der Geographie Strabons die Partien über das westliche Kleinasien liest, gewinnt man den Eindruck, im Geiste durch ein mythisches Land zu reisen”.

⁵⁷ Aristeid. 23.15.

⁵⁸ For introduction of the Asclepius cult by Arkhias to Pergamon, see Paus. 2.26.8. See also Edelstein – Edelstein 1945, 2:249; Behr 1968, 27 with n. 22; Habicht 1969, 1; Radt 1999, 25.

⁵⁹ Aristeid. 23.17.

did not intend to convince the reader (or listener) to believe it. His purpose was to emphasize that this sanctuary is a sheltered place that protects its incubants. In this respect, this metaphorical expression of Aristeides again can be interpreted within the scope of “aesthetic imagining”.

Aristeides again uses the harbor metaphor related to the Asklepieion in his *Address Regarding Asklepios*. He states that Asklepios grants his incubants to reach a calm harbor from a great sea of despair⁶⁰. This metaphor is again related to the protective power of Asklepios (note that his epithet was Soter, i.e. Savior). At the same time, this harbor metaphor can be related to water as well. When all the works of Aristeides are examined, it is clear that the references to water are mostly found in his narratives about Pergamon and its immediate surroundings. Aristeides, during his incubation period in Pergamon with the order of the God, bathed in order to heal, in the Selinos river flowing through the city and in the Kaikos which flows from south of the city⁶¹. Again, in this period, when he was told to wash in the sea in his dreams, he bathed twice in Elaia, the port city of Pergamon about 25 km southwest⁶². During the same period, again with the order of God, he went three times to Allianoi where thermal springs exist about 20 km northeast of Pergamon⁶³. He bathed in the thermal waters on the first two trips and drank from its cold waters on the third.

In addition to these references to water in Aristeides’ Sacred Tales, his two works are entirely dedicated to water in Pergamon. In *Regarding the Well in the Temple of Asklepios* Aristeides mentions the beauty of the location of the sanctuary, the position of the well in it, and the benefits of its water⁶⁴. According to him, everything about this well is divine and miraculous. As a normal phenomenon, feeling the water of the well warmer in winter and colder in summer was also a miracle according to him⁶⁵. His other work on this subject is *A Panegyric on the Water in Pergamon*⁶⁶. Although only its beginning has survived, it is understood that this work was written to celebrate the arrival of a new water source to the city⁶⁷. According to him, this water is “the most abundant and fairest of all that any city ever received”⁶⁸. (Transl. by C. A. Behr)

These large amounts of references to water, directly and metaphorically, in the works of Aristeides can be explained in Wrightian terms with a “Geographical Psychoanalysis”⁶⁹. Although Wright refers to it very briefly and in a slightly different context, this term can also be considered as the psychoanalytic reasons behind a geographical narrative. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, states that water metaphorically symbolizes birth. He writes:

Birth is almost regularly represented by some reference to water; either one plunges into the water or climbs out of it, or rescues someone from the water, or is himself

⁶⁰ Aristeid. 42.1.

⁶¹ Aristeid. 48.27 (Selinos), 48.48-49 (Kaikos).

⁶² Aristeid. 48.54, 48.78-80.

⁶³ Aristeid. 49.1-6.

⁶⁴ Aristeid. 39.

⁶⁵ Aristeid. 39.12.

⁶⁶ Aristeid. 53.

⁶⁷ Jones 1991.

⁶⁸ Aristeid. 53.3.

⁶⁹ Wright 1947, 9.

*rescued from it, i.e., there is a mother-relation to the person and which means one gives birth to, or is born*⁷⁰.

This metaphor also had an evolutionary-historical background. Because like all other mammals, human beings evolved from water creatures at the beginning. Additionally “every human being, lived the first part of his existence in the water – namely, lived in the body of his mother as an embryo in the amniotic fluid and came out of the water at the time of his birth”⁷¹. In mythology too, the theme of coming out of water related to many figures also is associated with their births or origins. Alfred Adler, the founder of the school of individual psychology, also coined the term “water power”⁷². Although this term is related to tears, it appears that water symbolically represents the urge to power⁷³. These interpretations of water, both Freudian and Adlerian, may explain why Aristeides refers frequently to water concerning Pergamon. He probably subconsciously identified the Asklepieion, and therefore Pergamon, with starting a new life getting rid of his diseases, hence with rebirth, and also regaining the physical power which he had lost. This was the main reason for his coming to Pergamon, and even though his physical diseases did not end at the end of the incubation period, he was mentally restored and returned to his career as an orator. He states this in his speech *on Concord*. Referring to his incubation period in the Pergamene Asklepieion, he states that under the god’s protection, he has lived not twice, but many, various lives⁷⁴. In this statement, the theme of rebirth is obvious.

However, “aesthetic imagining” and “illusory subjectivity” can be taken too far, as becomes obvious in the description of a winter trip from Mysia to Pergamon by Aristeides:

*The winter was so violent that I couldn’t easily endure it, even when I stayed at home. And the most divine thing happened on the journey – for in the words of Homer it was clear that some of the gods guided me, whoever the god was. A very cold northwind was pressing from behind, and it drove along thick black clouds. On the right everything was covered with snow, on the left it was raining. And this was during the whole day travel. Through the whole sky, one zone, as it were, extended right over the road and led to the Temple, and provided both shelter and light*⁷⁵. (Transl. by C. A. Behr)

Aristeides was probably traveling on the most direct route between the inner Mysia and Pergamon, which advanced to the south through the valley of the Ilya River one of the tributaries of Kaikos where Allianoi also located⁷⁶. Aristeides wants to express that there was something extraordinary and supernatural related to the weather event he experienced. When investigating the route he took, however, it becomes obvious that this situation is rather common. While the road advances along the slopes of the high mountains in the west, particularly in its last sections, the

⁷⁰ Freud 1920, 125-126, cf. 132.

⁷¹ Freud 1920, 132.

⁷² Ansbacher – Ansbacher 1956, 288.

⁷³ See e.g. Behr 1968, 163.

⁷⁴ Aristeid. 23.16.

⁷⁵ Aristeid. 51.26-28.

⁷⁶ On this road and route, see Tozan 2017, 548-549 and map in 563. See also above Fig. 1.

Kaikos plain can be seen towards the east⁷⁷. The mountains in this region are mostly covered with snow during the winter months; while on the plain snow is quite rare. Therefore, it is not unusual that the mountains are still covered with snow when it rains towards the plain. And what about the light that comes from the sky and leads to the temple? It is common for sunrays to shine through cumulus clouds that are caused by evaporating water as a result of temperature differences and uplifting and that frequently appear in the region with its pronounced differences in elevation and its proximity to the sea⁷⁸. It is a good example of the fact that even simple natural events were seen as divine and miraculous in the eyes of Aristides. Referring to Wright, this narrative of Aristides appears to be beyond “the legitimate and desirable in aesthetic subjectivity”⁷⁹. Therefore, this narrative seems to be an example of “promotional imagining” rather than aesthetic. Here the aim is to define this weather event according to his desires and obsessions rather than to reflect it objectively and impersonally or to strengthen the meaning by making rhetorical hyperbole.

Conclusions

Geosophy and the different notions of subjectivity and imagining are useful tools to decipher the motives and landscape experiences of ancient writers. In this respect, Aelius Aristides is one of the most suitable ancient writers because of his eccentric personality and his extensive use of figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and metonymy as an orator and rhetorician. His works provide many examples whose interpretation can be complemented by Wrightian concepts such as illusory and realistic subjectivity, promotional and aesthetic imagining, and core-periphery dichotomy. Because many narratives of Aristides about the perception of terrestrial space belong to the periphery, they can be considered geospherical knowledge.

It is evident that all historical texts, whether or not they claim to be objective, are largely subjective. Accordingly, while it is mainly intended for modern geographical research, geosophy is also applicable to geographical perceptions in ancient texts. Although there are many narratives in various ancient authors about the landscape of Pergamon and its surroundings, when viewed from a geospherical point of view it is obvious that there is much more data than the existing information on terrestrial space perception in the texts. In this data, the portion that remains in the periphery and constitutes geospherical information contains a great deal of subjectivity and imagination. As seen in the example of Pergamon as illustrated in the text of an ancient writer, there are data containing subjectivity and imagination that allow considering the writer as well as the geographical space from different perspectives. Thus, segmenting the narratives of ancient texts on terrestrial space according to geospherical subjectivity and imagination categories will undoubtedly enable ancient historians to deduce new inferences about ancient writers and places beyond the current perspectives. The outputs of new studies to be carried out in this direction will also enable further studies such as the modeling of geospherical maps of ancient spaces.

⁷⁷ See Tozan 2017, 548-549 and map in 563. See also above Fig. 1.

⁷⁸ See above Fig. 4.

⁷⁹ Wright 1947, 7-10.

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Aelius Aristeides'e Göre Pergamon'un Fیزیognomisi ve Jeosofisi

Özet

Antik metinlerdeki coğrafi tanımlamalar genellikle kişisel, önyargılı, öznel ve bazen de hayalidir. Bu nedenle J. Kirtland Wright tarafından ortaya atılan jeosofi (geosophy) kavramı, tarihsel metinlerdeki coğrafyaya dair anlatıların ve ifadelerin incelenmesi bakımından önemlidir. Ona göre jeosofi, coğrafi bilgilerin her bakımdan incelenmesidir ve her türden insanın hem doğru hem de yanlış coğrafi düşüncelerini kapsar. Dolayısıyla Wright, coğrafi algılamada sezgisel, imgesel ve öznel düşüncelerin de değerli olduğunu ve dikkate alınması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Böylelikle geçmişten günümüze metinlerdeki coğrafya algısına ilişkin her türlü bilginin irdelenmesi Wright'ın jeosofi kavramını tarih disiplinine yaklaştırmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, İS 2. yüzyıl hatip ve sofistlerinden Aelius Aristeides'in Kaikos Vadisi'nin en önemli antik yerleşimi olan Pergamon ve çevresi ile ilgili fیزیognomik ve coğrafi tanımlamaları, jeosofik öznellik ve imgelem kategorileri açısından ele alınmıştır. Böylece antik metinlerin yersel uzama ilişkin anlatılarının jeosofik açıdan incelenmesinin Eskiçağ tarihi ve tarihsel coğrafya çalışmalarına yeni bakış açıları sunabileceği ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Pergamon; Aelius Aristeides; jeosofi; tarihsel coğrafya; peyzaj arkeolojisi.

Physiognomy and Geosophy of Pergamon according to Aelius Aristeides

Abstract

Geographical depictions in ancient texts are often personal, biased, subjective, and sometimes imaginative. Therefore, the concept of geosophy coined by J. Kirtland Wright is important in terms of examining the geographical narratives and expressions in historical texts. According to him, geosophy is the study of geographical information in all respects and covers both true and false geographical ideas of all manner of people. Hence, Wright emphasizes that intuitive, imaginative and subjective thoughts are also valuable in geographical perception and should be taken into consideration. Examining all kinds of information related to the geographical perception in the texts from past to present brings the concept of geosophy closer to history as a discipline. In this study, physiognomic and geographical definitions of Aelius Aristeides, an orator and sophist of the 2nd century CE, about Pergamon, which is the most important ancient settlement of Kaikos Valley, and its surroundings are examined in terms of geosophysical subjectivity and imagining categories. Thus, it is revealed that the examination of the narratives of ancient texts on terrestrial space from the geosophysical point of view can offer new perspectives in studies on ancient history and historical geography.

Keywords: Pergamon; Aelius Aristeides; geosophy; historical geography; landscape archaeology.