

# The dreams of Aelius Aristides: A psychological interpretation

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**Summary.** The topic of this article is the religious experience of Aelius Aristides, a second century A.D. sophist. Aristides was a member of the cult of Asclepius, a Greco-Roman religious healing cult. Aristides recorded his experiences in this cult and this personal narrative includes detailed descriptions of many of Aristides' dreams. This unusual diary is called the *Sacred Tales*. Our psychological analysis of Aristides' religiosity will begin by assessing the numerical frequency of the dream images appearing in the manifest-contents of Aristides' dreams. Our identification of the predominant images in the manifest contents of Aristides' dreams will help us to decode the latent unconscious meaning of several of Aristides' dreams. Our goal is to identify the main source of Aristides' psychological problems.

**Keywords:** Ancient Greece, Aristides, Cult of Asclepius

## 1. Introduction

This article investigates the religious experience of the second century A.D. Greco-Roman sophist Aelius Aristides. It is a fortunate circumstance for students of ancient Mediterranean religious traditions and students of religion in general that Aristides has provided us with a vivid account of his religious experiences in his diary entitled the *Sacred Tales* (Behr, 1968). C.A. Behr has provided an excellent English translation of the Greek text in his book entitled *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales*. The existence of Aristides' dream diary presents a rare opportunity for us to witness the essential features of the religious consciousness in the life of one ancient individual and correlate them to collective elements within the Hellenistic world in general. Aristides' spiritual diary is divided into six books which form a unique literary record of his religiously significant dreams and waking experiences occurring over a period of seventeen years from 142A.D. to the time of his death in 180A.D. During these years, Aristides was an adherent of the cult of Asclepius, a popular healing cult of the Greco-Roman world. First and foremost among the rites practiced by cult members was the practice of incubation. Individuals suffering from various physical maladies would seek divine assistance by sleeping or "incubating" at night in the temple sanctuary. The most important sanctuaries of Asclepius were located in Epidaurus, Cos and Pergamum (Edelstein and Edelstein, 1975, vol. II, p.1-138).

## 2. Aristides' Biographers: Ancient and Modern

Excluding Aristides' own comments about himself, there are three major ancient biographical sources dealing with his life: Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*, the biography of Aristides recorded in the *Prolegomena*, and the *Suda* article

(Behr, 1968). From these sources, we learn that Aristides was a high-ranking sophist living near Smyrna in Asia Minor who was part of the "Second Sophistic", a literary movement of the time. Philostratus informs us that Aristides' father, Eudaemon, was a wealthy religious official and that Aristides was educated by a number of famous sophists. In regard to Aristides' sophisticated skills, Philostratus states that Aristides did not like to extemporize and that he sought total precision in his work. His rhetorical skills were employed in order to get Smyrna re-built after the town suffered a devastating earthquake. Apparently, when the emperor Marcus visited the town after the quake to survey the damage, Aristides' moving speech convinced Marcus to re-build the city. As a result, a statue of Aristides was erected in his honor.

Aristides' religious interests and health issues are noted by his ancient biographers. Both Philostratus and the *Prolegomena* mention Aristides' religious diary. Philostratus incorrectly calls the text "ἱερὰ βιβλία" whereas the *Prolegomena* knows the correct title. According to Philostratus, Aristides had poor health from the time he was a boy. The phrase "a shuddering of the muscles" is used to describe his ailment (Michenaud and Dierkens, 1972, p. 101). Likewise, the *Prolegomena* mentions the theory that Aristides was an epileptic (Lenz, 1959, p.112).

Philostratus mentions that Aristides traveled abroad to Italy, Greece and Egypt. In fact, it was during one of these lengthy journeys abroad that a series of events unfolded that led to his conversion to cult of Asclepius. Aristides himself provides us with an account of the events surrounding his conversion in book II of his diary. In 144 A.D., at the age of twenty-four, Aristides sets out on a sea voyage to Rome in the middle of the winter. Once in Rome, Aristides intended to publically perform as a rhetorician for the first time. However, Aristides' professional ambitions would suffer an unfortunate setback. At the start of the voyage, he was already sick with a cold. Paying no heed to his illness, he went on to Rome anyway. By the time he arrived at the Hellespont he states that his ears were giving him trouble. Gradually his condition worsened so that he suffered from shortness of breath and a bad fever. In Rome Aristides was unable to declaim as he had originally intended and was forced to return home. Once at home he had his first spiritual encounter with Asclepius in a dream. Although Aristides sought out the help of the local medical doctors, no human

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doctor was able to find the proper cure. As a result, a health crisis suddenly developed that was only resolved by finally turning to Asclepius for help. After Aristides gives his life over to the god, the god assumes a supreme role in his life. Once Aristides becomes a devotee of this cult he is ordered by the god to keep a record his dreams which form the basic contents of the *Sacred Tales*.

Even though Aristides' ancient biographers refrained from labeling him as "pathological" or an outright liar, such terms are used by a host of modern scholars. Beginning in 1798, with the publication of an article entitled "la Malittia Tredennale d'Aelius Aristides Sofista" written by the Italian physician Malacarne, the religious experience of Aristides has been the subject of intense scrutiny and criticism (Malacarne, 1798). According to Malacarne, Aristides had a personality problem consisting of a narcissistic urge to create vivid dreams about himself and the god Asclepius. Aristides' religious visions are explained away by supposing that the temple-priests must have drugged their patients; the patients subsequently mistook the priests, who donned the clothes of Asclepius, for the god. Of course, Malacarne's ideas are not based on any solid evidence, but rather reveal a blatant attempt to discredit Aristides' religiosity.

Other nineteenth century scholars, including Konig and Baumgart, have capitalized on the fact that Aristides indeed did suffer from a variety of psychosomatic ailments, including various breathing disturbances, headaches, insomnia, allergies and stomach problems (Baumgart, 1874; Konig, 1818). On this basis, they have reduced his religiosity to a product of his neurosis. Although Aristides' psychological problems no doubt had an impact on his religious life, it would be spurious to conclude that his spirituality is not genuine. In defense of Aristides, Peter Brown, the social historian of antiquity states that "the poor man has had to bear far too heavy a weight of odium psychologicum from modern scholars. He puzzles us; and it is this puzzlement which has forced so many scholars into precipitate psychiatric judgment on him" (Brown, 1978, p.41).

In the twentieth century the *Sacred Tales* continued to attract a certain amount of attention from the scholarly community and some of this attention is of a positive nature. In his 1954 Sather classical lectures entitled *Personal Religion among the Greeks*, A. J. Festugiere dedicates an entire chapter to discussing the *Sacred Tales*. Festugiere praises the *Sacred Tales* by calling it "a unique document and one of the most remarkable of antiquity." (Festugiere, p. 85). E.R. Dodds makes a few comments and observations on the religiosity of Aristides in two seminal works, namely, *The Greeks and the Irrational* and *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Dodds, 1951; 1970). Aristides' dreams are understood by Dodds to be psychologically authentic examples of the culture-pattern dream; that is, the structure of the dream is derived from materials culturally transmitted in the ancient world. Further, Dodds states that "his dreams themselves deserve the attention of a professional psychologist, which I hope they will one day get." (Dodds, 1970, p.41). Recently, in his 2009 book entitled *Among the Gentiles*, Luke Timothy Johnson briefly discusses the *Sacred Tales* and refers to Aristides as exemplifying a particular type of religiosity which Johnson calls "participation in divine benefits" (Johnson, 2009, p.51f). In some limited sense, Aristides helps us understand the Greco-Roman religious mind set. For this reason, his piety has significance for Biblical scholars. There is no doubt that a study of Aristides'

religiosity could further our understanding of certain popular religious trends of the era; it may have relevance for extending our knowledge about why Christianity caught on among the pagans living in the Roman world.

For Aristides, it was the world of his dreams where he was able to develop a spiritual relationship with Asclepius, the Greek healer god. As Patricia Cox Miller states in her recent study entitled *Dreams in Late Antiquity*, for many ancient dreams served "as one of the modes of the production of meaning ...and formed a distinctive pattern of imagination which brought visual presence and tangibility to such abstract ideas as time, cosmic history, the soul and the identity of one's self. What unites this disparate material is the way in which late-antique dreamers used dreams to find meaning in their world (Miller, 1994, p.3).

The existence of Aristides' dream diary poses some interesting scholarly questions. For example, are the dreams recorded in this diary based upon actual genuine dream experiences or are they merely the product of literary invention? If indeed Aristides' dreams are authentic, then to what extent can modern dream theories including Freudian psychoanalysis shed light on the meaning of the dreams and the religious piety recorded in the text? In his recent study of ancient dreams entitled *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity*, William Harris argues that in spite of his egotism, Aristides "emerges as a rare and relatively convincing informant" (Harris, 2009, p.118). Based upon his analysis of Aristides' dreams, Harris concludes that in comparison to other ancient dream accounts Aristides' dreams are for the most part genuine (Harris, 2009, p.118). His conclusion is based upon the following fact: there is a preponderance of strange dream-like images in many of Aristides' dream-reports; the dream-like quality to the narrative is characterized by frequent, unexplained changes in location. We shall assume that unless there is some other reason to the contrary we shall assume Harris is correct in his conclusion.

In the present article, we will conduct a psychological examination of Aristides' dreams. Our first task is to examine the manifest contents of his dreams, that is, the actual dream images and symbols embedded in Aristides' personal unconscious and described with a dash of secondary elaboration and embellishment in the *Sacred Tales*. Next, we will examine the latent meaning of many of these same dreams (the unconscious level). Our chief concern will be to identify the predominant patterns and typical themes of his dream life as they appear at the level pre-conscious level of experience. This will serve as our starting point for and exploration of Aristides' unconscious life.

Our interest in examining Aristides' dreams implies a steadfast belief that the *Sacred Tales* contains somewhat accurate accounts of actual authentic dream experiences. What are the grounds for making such a judgment call? Usually, the overarching presence of stereotypical religious motifs and imagery in a dream account would be evidence that the process of secondary elaboration and editing is at work. For example, we are willing to admit that some of the dream epiphanies of the god Asclepius described in the text may reflect a certain degree of embellishment by the author. Likewise, when discussing the subject of miraculous healings, Aristides does so by employing a number of the literary motifs and stylistic devices which are also found in ancient miracle literature (Van Der Horst, 1980).

It was the French scholar Andre Boulanger who was the first to classify the *Sacred Tales* as an example of the popular

aretalogical works dealing with the subject matter of Providence, miracles, and apparitions, as exemplified by treatises written by Aelian and others (Boulanger, 1923, p. 163). The *Sacred Tales* can be fruitfully studied as an example of religious aretalogy since it has unmistakable similarities both in language and content to many of the miracle stories found in Graeco-Roman and early Christian literature. Just as Aristides' "dream language" has similarities to the vocabulary found elsewhere in ancient dream literature, likewise Aristides' literary style in the *Sacred Tales* appears to reflect influences from ancient miracle literature. An aretalogy may be defined as a collection of miracle stories (Nilsson 1961, vol II, p. 228). In this type of ancient religious literature, various miraculous deeds of the god are reported. In this sense, by means of enumerating the miraculous interventions of the god, the religious aretalogist establishes the reality of the god's wondrous powers as well as bears witness to their faith in the god.

When we read Aristides' dream accounts, it is difficult to determine where the actual psychological experiences begin and the literary embellishment ends and we will not try to draw any clear distinctions in this regard. However, we must not categorically assume that the manifest-contents of Aristides' personal unconscious are absent from his dream accounts. In fact, it is this personal psychological dimension of the *Sacred Tales* that we are most interested in examining in this article. Genuine dream material would most likely reveal the contents of an individual's personal unconscious and as we will see a good deal of this personal psychological dimension is what is found in the *Sacred Tales*.

If our acceptance of the genuineness of the dreams described in this text is incorrect, this would imply that Aristides simply made up these stories. This is undoubtedly not true. Furthermore, if we categorically deny the psychological authenticity of any of the dreams recorded by Aristides, then there would be no reason for us to conduct an analysis of Aristides' dreams from a psychological perspective since they would most likely be merely elaborate fairytales. On the contrary, Aristides' personal narrative possesses a realistic quality about it which convinces us that it was not merely the product of a pathological liar but simply a religious visionary. Furthermore, many of the dreams recorded in the text are filled with surrealistic, dreamlike imagery and so it makes sense for us to accept the majority of them as authentic descriptions of actual dream experiences possessing only a slight amount of editorial distortion.

### 3. Analysis of the Manifest Contents of Aristides' Dreams

In the recent times, anthropologists have begun to become interested in exploring methods employed by psychologists and psychiatrists for studying personality. Such an interest has grown out of a concern among anthropologists for understanding the culture-personality dynamic (Singer, 1961). Similar concerns are shared by students of the historical sciences. Given this anthropological interest in culture/personality matters, there has been an interest in developing suitable conceptual schema designed to describe and explain in an unbiased fashion the data gathered regarding how culture impacts personality (Eggan, 1961). For the purposes of our study, we are interested in appropriating some of the methods used in cross-cultural dream research. The anthropologist Dorothy Eggan has noted that little attention

has been directed to the dream" that most profoundly subjective of all personality productions---to further these ends." (Eggan, 1961, p. 551). What has intrigued Eggan and others is the systematic study and analysis of the manifest content of dreams coming from primitive culture as a means of expanding our knowledge about the role of culture in personality development (Eggan, 1954). In her anthropological dream research, Eggan has developed a methodology for identifying patterns and structural relationships in the dream world of the individual. The essential feature of this research method involves an assessment of the relative numerical frequency of particular dream-images as they appear in the manifest content of the dreams of a Hopi Indian. By means of tabulating the frequency of dream images in a person's dream life, the goal is to discover dream patterns and correlate them to individual personality traits and issues. Certainly, Eggan's approach can be applied to the manifest contents of the dreams of individuals from not only different cultures but also different historical eras. An application of the methodology to the dreams of Aristides yields some interesting results. In analyzing the manifest-content of the dream imagery recorded in the *Sacred Tales* we note a prevalence of medical and religious images as well as rhetorical themes, and material dealing with temple life and incubation, etc. On the surface, most of the dreams recorded in the text consist of imagery derived from Aristides' conscious experience occurring in the waking state. Aristides' dreams vary in length from brief casual remarks of a few words to several paragraphs. On occasion, Aristides merely alludes to a particular dream without offering any detailed information about its contents. Frequently, Aristides groups together in his narrative dream episodes that are closely related in terms of their occurrence as well as their thematic content (Behr, p. 193). Likewise, he often mentions seeing one thing or being in one place and at the same time somehow seeing another thing or being in another place. (Behr, p. 117) Again, such phrases underscores the dreamlike quality of the narrative and would seem to indicate that we are dealing with an authentic dream narrative.

Generally, in those dreams of Aristides which do not have epiphanies of the gods, mortals often appear in the scenario. Frequently, Aristides' friends such as Zosimus, appear in his dreams along with his servants, his foster fathers, fellow orators, government officials, temple priests, and doctors, all of whom play a significant role in his waking life. Usually, Aristides' "narcissistic" dreams involve the receipt of praise for his rhetorical accomplishments; these dreams are heavily populated with various prestigious figures such as emperors, especially Antoninus, as well as foreign rulers such as Volgases. We must not forget that Aristides occupied a prominent position in his society and regularly dealt with Roman emperors and other political figures of the day. Hence, their appearance in Aristides' dreams is not really surprising or necessarily indicative of a narcissistic personality. Instead they are simply fanciful reflections of events occurring in his waking life. Not only does Aristides receive praise in his dreams from politicians, but he is also lauded by archetypal literary figures such as Plato and Sophocles who occupy a central place in his mind as models of professionalism. There is a preponderance of male figures and few females throughout of the narrative.

The most prominent figure in Aristides' dreams, other than himself, of course, is the god Asclepius. A few other deities, including Isis, Athena, Sarapis, and Telesphorus also make



infrequently appearances. From a psychological standpoint, one could say Asclepius functions primarily as an authority figure in Aristides' dreams, since he regularly gives commands and advice concerning Aristides' life, especially regarding medical and therapeutic matters. Other deities, and even mortals, also serve in this capacity, especially Zosimus, his close companion, and various unidentified priests, doctors, and acquaintances. Further, a persistent image in his preconscious mind is the image of bathing, which is discussed profusely in the text.

In studying the manifest-contents of dreams, particular attention should be paid to any emotional response occurring in the dream state, since this factor weighs heavily in assessing the overall psychological profile of the individual. We would expect to find that a healthy individual's dreams would emit more positive emotional responses as opposed to negative responses. In the case of Aristides, there are a disproportionately greater number of positive emotional responses in comparison to negative emotional responses. Such a state of affairs serves as one explanation why Aristides enjoyed recalling and re-telling many of his dreams. Further, and more importantly, it strongly suggests that many commentators of the *Sacred Tales* are wrong; apparently Aristides' psychic constitution was not as pathological as past commentators have been willing to admit. Most of Aristides' positive emotional responses occur in the context of religious experience and include feelings of religious happiness, wonder, and joy. Positive emotions are also expressed in connection with worship, prayer and the consolation of grief over the death of his companion Zosimus. On the negative side, Aristides records a few anxiety dreams involving feelings of distress. Usually, these dreams features Aristides being chased, attacked, or persecuted by various hostile forces. Undoubtedly, these dreams have latent significance, which will be discussed in the next section. What needs to be stressed now is that the existence of anxiety-type dreams in the *Sacred Tales* is another good indication that we are dealing with a genuine record of Aristides' dreams. Analogous types of dreams involving anxiety, being chased by hostile forces, and the like are regularly experienced by many (Freud, p.267). Even Homer has something to say concerning the image of being chased in a dream, for he writes, "As in a dream a man is not able to follow one who runs from him, nor can the runner escape, nor the other pursue him..." (*Illiad*, 22, 199-200). Physical pain and discomfort appear to be reported in Aristides' dreams more frequently than feelings of physical pleasure, which can be explained by virtue of the fact that in his waking experience physical pain as opposed to pleasure was a more conspicuous element. Another theme in his dreams involves Aristides being situated in a dangerous place where there is a potential threat of harm to his physical well-being. Of course, other images appear in his dreams, although they are far too numerous to catalogue. Numerous references are made to ladders, animals, food, astronomical phenomena, etc. In some dreams, Aristides travels abroad; most of the dreams present Aristides in in the context of the surroundings of the temple, the countryside near his home, or in the home.

The following charts (Tables 1 to 3) presents the evidence regarding the numerical frequency of selected dream-images as they appear in the *Sacred Tales*. A numerical approach to the manifest-content of Aristides' dreams enables the investigator to objectively assess the relative frequency of particular

dream-images in the text, as well as observe significant relationships and patterns in the dream life of Aristides (Eggan, 1952). Although the majority of the dreams recorded in the *Sacred Tales* have been included in our numerical analysis, we should note that not all of his dreams have been included. A significant number of Aristides' dreams lack any symbolic import; they are either too vague or insignificant to be included in the study. As a result, these dreams have not been included.

By tabulating the various dream-imagery appearing in Aristides' manifest dream content, it becomes evident that his dreams were dominated by persons and gods, all of whom are very close and important to Aristides. In examining the manifest-content of these dreams, we are also able to notice the presence of a number of features that are also present in other dream accounts in ancient religious literature. We must remember that although there may exist stylistic parallels between the dreams in the *Sacred Tales* and other ancient dream texts, we are dealing with something more than mere literary motifs; in the case of Aristides we are most likely dealing an individual who recorded genuine dreams. E.R.Dodds is correct when he maintained that the dreams recorded the *Sacred Tales* are examples of culture-pattern dreams, that is , the structure of the dream is derive from materials culturally transmitted in the ancient world Aristides god-sent nocturnal visions are not simply the product of literary invention but rather actual psychological experiences informed by the categories of ancient religious knowledge(Dodds,1951).

Table 1: Frequency of Dream Images in the Sacred Tales

Dream-Image	Number of Appearances
People	88 Total
Friends	8
Zosimus	5
Servants	12
Foster Fathers	2
Emperor	6
Rosander the philosopher	1
Plato	1
Orators	5
Herodorus the poet	1
Sophocles	1
Young men	3
Boys	2
Athenians	1
Foster brother	1
Foreigners	2
Government and political officials	2
Rufinus	1
Temple priests	5
Temple Servants	1
Children	1
Aristides' teachers	2
Aristides' doctors	7
Nurses	2

Table 2: Frequency of Dream Images in the Sacred Tales

Dream-Image	Number of Appearances
Emotional response in dreams	45 Total
Positive	33 Total
Feeling of relief	2
Being pleased	3
Greeting a friend	3
Gladness	1
Marvelous feeling	7
Praising the god	1
Prayer	4
The god jokes	2
Feeling of religious wonder	7
Worship of a statue	1
Joy	4
Consolation of grief	2
Negative	12 Total
Anxiety	2
Anger	3
Distrust	1
Distress	3
Fear	1
Feeling of annoyance	2

4. Psychological Analysis of the Latent Contents of Aristides' Dreams

Now that we have examined the manifest contents of Aristides' dreams, we are in a better position to consider to latent meaning of Aristides' dreams. In this section we will seek to discover the latent, hidden meaning of several of Aristides' dreams. We will enlist the tools of modern psychology and psychoanalysis in order to help us uncover the meaning of the disguised symbolism contained in Aristides' dreams.

The first point that needs to be made is that there are certain aspects of Aristides' waking life that reflect particular neurotic tendencies which have drawn to attention of historians and psychologists alike. Perhaps this is most reflected in his performance of painful "divine prescriptions". Often, the god Asclepius would order Aristides to perform certain remedies such as running barefoot around the temple in the middle of the night or swimming in a river in the winter. E.R. Dodds sees the performance of these irrational paradoxical and often violent divine prescriptions as an expression of a deep-seated desire for self-punishment (Dodds,1951, p.116). Dodds believes that the unconscious manifests itself in Aristides' nocturnal visions in a decidedly negative and recalcitrant way. In general, Dodds sees little psychological value in such a religious system since the individual is "at the mercy of his own unconscious impulse, disguised as divine monitions..." (Dodds,1951,p.116).

The rituals associated with the cult of Asclepius are ancient religious rites and are not based upon the principles of modern medicine; as a result, these rituals can only be appreciated if they are viewed in their proper cultural context,

namely, Greco-Roman religion and culture. However, from the standpoint of a modern person, it is quite natural for us to be puzzled about the performance of these "paradoxical prescriptions"; they do not appear to make much sense and have led some modern scholars to inquire into their psychological meaning.

If Dodds is correct in his assertion that Aristides is manifesting unconscious self-hatred by performing the paradoxical commands of Asclepius, it would be appropriate to identify the reasons for such masochistic tendencies. Unfortunately, Dodds nor any other commentator has provided us with any psychological explanation regarding the source of Aristides' frustration.

One important twentieth century psychological study of the religiosity of Aristides is entitled *Les Reves dans les "Discours Sacres"* d'Aelius Aristides, by Gabriel Michenaud and Jean Dierkins. These scholars employ the methods of Freudian psychoanalysis in order to analyze the sophist's dreams. These authors diagnose Aristides in the following way: Aristides believed that he had a physically inferior body, even though he did not suffer from any acute physical illness, as is illustrated by his generally good vascular reactions upon taking his warm baths. Due to the fact that he was a hypochondriac, Aristides was unable to enjoy any physical satisfaction. Thus, the sophist turned to non-ma-

Table 3: Frequency of Dream Images in the Sacred Tales

Dream-Image	Number of Appearances
Praise for Aristides	14 Total
Feeling of Physical Pleasure	1 Total
Physical Hazard	15 Total
Accidents, danger	11
Violence	1
Attack, persecution	3
Physical Pain and Discomfort	6 Total
Divine Epiphanies	13 Total
Asclepius	5
Athena	1
Sarapis	2
Phoebus Apollo	1
Isis	1
Hermes	1
Telephorus	1
Gods of the underworld	1
Medical Commands and Prescriptions	49 Total
Asclepius	29
Zosimus	3
Priest	3
Doctor	2
Mortals	5
Unidentified	6
Aristides	1
Other Types of Commands	15 Total
Order to Journey	9
Order to Write a Speech	6
Therapeutic Bathing	21 Total

terial pursuits such as rhetoric which freed him from any social responsibility. Developing out of his repression and detachment from the world, an all-encompassing narcissistic tendency arose. As a result, Aristides derived more satisfaction from a supernatural being than from his earthly companions. These scholars classify Aristides as a masochistic exhibitionist; he is also an example of the anal-retentive personality which is defined as an individual who orients himself towards the equilibrium of his various psycho-biological tendencies and functions.

Michenaud and Dierkens argue that Aristides' hostility towards others, his narcissism, his single-minded devotion to the god Asclepius, and his ever-present concern for his digestive problems all indicate that he displays many of the features of the anal-retentive personality. Furthermore, he is a hypochondriac of the first order: his symptoms are of the psychosomatic variety and are frequently encountered in hypochondria. He is totally preoccupied with himself and his health (Michenaud and Dierkens, 1972).

The psychological portrait of Aristides that these French scholars paint is far too harsh. Certainly, these scholars are correct in their assertion that Aristides is a troubled individual yet they are incorrect to reduce Aristides' religiosity to a product of his neurosis. Even though psychoanalysis can be enlisted as an investigative tool to show that Aristides perhaps had a variety of neurotic tendencies, it does not follow that all of his religious behavior therefore should be classified purely as a pathological symptom and devoid of any spiritual significance. Undoubtedly, there is unconscious projective material in Aristides' religious experience, as is indicated by his faithful performance of many painful divine prescriptions. Likewise, some the contents of his dreams reveal deep-seated psychological conflicts yet these French scholars fail to mention any positive value associated with Aristides' religious behavior. Instead, they seem content in simply pointing to the pathological implications. It is worth noting that rather than viewing Aristides as a kind of marginal figure in the history of Greco-Roman religion, one could say that the cult of Asclepius, with its elaborate incubation practices, healing rituals and dream-experiences all served an important integrative function in Aristides' psyche. It provided a culturally sanctioned means for the promotion of psychic balance and the lessening of stress and anxiety. Even though he may not have been able to completely resolve his difficulties, as evidenced by his continued psychosomatic struggles, nevertheless he was able to function quite successfully as a noted sophist of his era. Without attempting to reduce Aristides' religious experience to a product of unconscious forces, we are interested in identifying the psychic forces that played a part in giving shape to the nature of his piety. To accomplish our goals, we will employ the conceptual tools of modern Freudian theory as a means to examine the unconscious meaning of Aristides' dreams. This involves making certain assumptions regarding the universal applicability of Freudian concepts.

Students of ancient society have been generally skeptical about the value of employing such methods (Price, 2004). Their main concern has to do with the universal applicability of Freudian theory to the study of history and culture. Ahistorical concepts such as the Oedipus complex, the Id and the Superego have never been shown to universal relevance. Recently, Brooke Holmes interpreted the *Sacred Tales* as a literary work and dismissed the "outdated" technique of Freudian psychoanalysis for understanding Aris-

tides' dreams (Holmes, 2008). The universal cross-cultural applicability of Freudian theory may appear questionable. On the other hand, it may seem unreasonable to contend that none of Freud's ideas have any relevance to historical research whatsoever. Our interest is not to validate Freudian theory. Instead, it is our contention that Freudian theories and concepts can help us to elucidate the unconscious motivations of a historical figure such as Aristides. It is important to remember that Freudian psychoanalysis provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding neurosis and hence they should be useful for understanding the motivations of an individual such as Aristides. We will demonstrate that modern social scientific concepts including those developed by Freud can provide a meaningful interpretive framework for understanding the dream material presented in the *Sacred Tales*.

If one examines these issues a little closer however, one can discern that there are good grounds for supposing at least in theory that many of Freud's central ideas have cross-cultural applicability for interpreting the dreams of persons from other cultures and times. If this is true, then they would certainly have applicability for interpreting the meaning of Aristides' dreams. Lincoln, a student of Freud, points out in his cross-cultural study of dreams that many of the so-called latent desires and wishes of the individual find themselves expressed in dreams containing certain types of stereotypical imagery and symbols, with the meaning of the imagery remaining somewhat constant in a variety of cultural contexts. In this regard Lincoln states "the same forms and symbols, however, do not arise not only in the dreams of persons undergoing analysis, but in dreams independently reported from all quarters of the world. Although the meanings may vary for different individuals, the same meanings for particular symbols and forms appear repeatedly in all parts." (Lincoln, 1935, p.17).

The ideas that tend to be expressed repeatedly throughout all cultures and times pertain to the physical body, the individual's relationship with the family, birth, sexuality, love and death. Numerous dreams recorded in the *Sacred Tales* make reference to the condition of Aristides' physical body. Dreams involving water in the *Sacred Tales* may have reference to intrauterine life and the trauma of birth. Furthermore, there are various images appearing in Aristides' dreams which have sexual significance. Of course, the manifest-content of dreams differ from one culture to another yet the latent significance of the dream symbols may have reference to similar psychological forms appearing in several cultural groups.

In discussing man's various drives, such as the drive for power, the desire for pleasure, and the drive for approval from one's parents, one must remember that all of these needs including hunger and sex "are not fixed as to form of expression and fulfillment---man's nature his passions and anxieties, his thoughts and acts are a cultural product." (Thompson, 1950, p.144). Whereas Freud claimed that the Oedipus complex is a universal biological phenomenon, modern anthropological research has shown that it is not universal but rather occurs primarily in specific cultural settings, namely in monogamous patriarchal social orders (Muensterberger, 1969, p.87). For example, Bronislaw Malinowski showed that the Trobriand islanders, a Melanesian matriarchal tribe of primitive peoples, were free from any of the aggressive feelings against the father that are usually associated with the Oedipus complex (Malinowski, 1927). Even

though one would be incorrect to claim the universal validity to Freud's theories, many Freudian concepts are useful for understanding Aristides' dreams. However, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to isolate Aristides' psychic problems with absolute certainty by means of employing any particular interpretative method including Freudian theory.

Admittedly, we are working in a grey area of uncertainty. Our starting-point is to seek thematic and symbolic connections between the manifest-contents and latent contents of Aristides' dreams. Our goal is to make sense out of disparate pieces of the puzzle of Aristides' waking and dream life. For example, the manifest-content of many of Aristides' dreams involve his parents and other significant others such as the god Asclepius and his friend Zosimus. These manifest contents of his dreams may serve as a kind of thread that leads us to related psychological issues existing on the unconscious level. It is rather obvious from a cursory glance at the manifest contents of Aristides' dreams that he derived an exaggerated amount of emotional gratification from his religious bond with Asclepius. It is tempting to consider the possibility that there was a time in his past when this need went unfulfilled. We can only speculate that perhaps in Aristides' childhood he may have suffered from a loss of instinctual satisfaction due to a disruption of his object-attachment to his parents. Taking this line of thinking to its logical conclusion, his psychological needs found their gratification as an adult by means of his close relationship to the god Asclepius. From a Freudian perspective, this gratification via Asclepius involves a the unconscious utilization of a defense mechanism called "sublimation" whereby an individual obtains pleasure through a non-sexual means and in this case by means of a religious relationship with the god Asclepius. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Aristides' religiosity represents a sublimated version of the struggle for instinctual pleasure occurring in the earliest years of childhood. In the Freudian scheme of things, his illnesses as an adult could be seen as a symbolic manifestation or recapitulation of the traumatic situation of object-loss in childhood. In this sense, the psychosomatic ailments function as an opportunity for Aristides to gain mastery of his fears and anxieties existing at the unconscious level.

One salient point worth mentioning is that nowhere in the *Sacred Tales* is there any indication that Aristides had any strong romantic ties with any one of the opposite sex. This does not necessarily mean that he did not have any romantic inclinations towards women. However, it is an interesting fact when we also realize that females are rarely mentioned at all the *Sacred Tales* and seldom appear in his dreams. We already know that Aristides devoted a great deal of energy to his work as a sophist and his relationship to his god yet there are few details about his relations to other friends and associates. Zosimus, Aristides' family retainer, was Aristides' closest friend. Aristides' deep attachment to Zosimus is clearly demonstrated when Zosimus dies. Aristides grieved a good deal over Zosimus' death and it is at this time that Aristides turned his attention to the cult of Sarapis which unlike the cult of Asclepius had associated with it a strong belief in the doctrine of the afterlife. Immediately following Zosimus' death, Aristides found solace in his worship of the Egyptian gods of the dead (S.T.II.47). Given such strong ties to Zosimus, one can only speculate about whether or not Aristides had homosexual feelings towards Zosimus. However, there is no evidence of overt homosexuality in his waking life.

Undoubtedly, a large amount of psychic energy was channeled by Aristides into his work as a sophist and yet this activity was also "religious" in the sense that Aristides considered himself to be a divinely inspired writer and speaker. Certainly, the primary means by which Aristides received psychological support and attained a sense of well-being in the universe was through his participation in the rituals and religious activities of the cult of Asclepius; it is through his close association with this religious group that he developed a sense of trust enabling him to conquer the most negative feelings of anxiety, depression and withdrawal that are usually connected with psychosomatic illness.

We have already indicated that it is likely that Aristides experienced a significant disruption of some sort of the bond uniting him as an infant with either one or both of his parents. All of the evidence presented in the *Sacred Tales* suggests that Aristides was not raised by his parents. Zosimus and other servants of his family were given the task of raising the boy. Thus, we read in S.T.IV.54 that Epagathus, one of Aristides' foster fathers, was responsible for first raising the boy. It was Epagathus who first introduced Aristides to the art of divination.

Upper class Roman child-rearing practices during the Empire period tended to alienate the child from its mother. Tacitus informs us of the changed habits of the aristocracy in the upbringing of children. "In the old days, each Roman child born in wedlock was not brought up in the back-bedroom of some slave girl nurse, but in its mother's bosom... Now the new-born infant is handed over to some little Greek serving-maid who has the help of some other slave chosen from the rest of the household, usually the most worthless and totally unfitted for an important task." (Fyfe, 1908, p.29-30). Such child-rearing practices which routinely included a separation of the infant from his parents perhaps would produce difficulties for a child trying to develop a sense of "basic trust", to use the psychologist Erik Erikson's terminology, during the first stage of the life cycle (Erikson, 1963). In Aristides' later life, religious themes would again manifest the unresolved portions of this infantile psychosocial crisis. It is during the period when Aristides first fell ill and developed his attachment to Asclepius that we see the emergence of infantile patterns of experience in his quest for identity. These recapitulated infantile patterns of experience find their definition and organize themselves around Aristides' pervasive sense of abandonment from his parents and an overwhelming need to reestablish parental authority in his life.

Unfortunately, we do not have any direct reference made by Aristides to any early childhood trauma involving a severing of the bonds of affection and trust between himself and his parents. If such an event took place, it would be mostly covered up by the powerful repressive forces of the unconscious and so we are reduced to making inferences based upon an examination of his dreams, his waking behavior and psychosomatic illnesses. The situation is further complicated by the fact that when dealing with the subject of psychic trauma, it is necessary to distinguish between fact and fantasy. Any attempt to determine whether or not Aristides was abandoned by his parents must include consideration of whether or not Aristides perceived himself in those terms, regardless of what actually happened in objective terms.

In the *Sacred Tales*, Aristides displays a good deal of affection for his family retainers, especially Zosimus, while



he displays a complete indifference to his parents. Given the fact that his diary is written with a religious purpose in mind and is not a "history of the soul", there is little reason for him to mention his childhood, his parents and growing up. However, he does take the time to frequently mention Zosimus and his other servants while discussing his life at the temple. However, since Zosimus, Epagathus and others were given the duty of raising Aristides, therefore it should not come as a surprise that he transferred some of his frustrated feelings of affection for his parents to these individuals. To use Freudian terminology, Zosimus and Epagathus functioned as parental substitutes for Aristides.

Studies on the nature of separation anxiety have shown that after the initial separation from the mother the child has the experience of becoming transiently attached to a series of mother-substitutes (Bowlby, 1960). Investigators have discovered that femininity is not a prerequisite for playing the role of the mother-substitute. In order to function successfully as a mother-substitute, the individual must be a person that is very familiar and well acquainted with the child. If it is correct that Aristides was separated from his parents and that he interpreted his separation from them in traumatic terms, then it would follow that there would be a need for some sort of parental-substitute, a role which was fulfilled by Zosimus, upon whom Aristides greatly depended for emotional support for many years. Zosimus appears in several of Aristides' dreams. For example, in S.T.III.3 Aristides dreams that he is being carried alone on a raft in the middle of the Mediterranean off the coast of Egypt. As his raft drifts towards land, Aristides begins to experience a noticeable feeling of distress; suddenly the figure of Zosimus appears on dry land with a horse. Somehow Aristides is able to land his raft on the shore and accept the horse.

From the Freudian perspective, the dream-image of being alone on a raft in the middle of the sea could be interpreted symbolically as the withdrawal and isolation experienced by the ego when it is forced in early childhood to separate itself off its libidinal attachment to the mother. The raft symbolizes the ego riding on the sea of the unconscious; since Aristides' libidinal needs are no longer attached to their original object, this produces a feeling of distress which is expressed in the dream. The appearance of Zosimus and the horse represents the transference of psychic energy formerly directed towards Aristides' parents which is now directed to Zosimus. Frequently, the appearance of animals in dreams symbolizes the instincts (Gutheil, 1966). Thus, the horse in this dream further underscores the re-emergence of the instincts. In Aristides' adulthood, Zosimus functioned more of less as a friend than a guardian.

In a few of Aristides' dreams there is manifested a good deal of anxiety (Dodds, 1970, p.41). We have already noted that the psychological authenticity of Aristides' dream diary is supported by the presence in it of these anxiety dreams, including those appearing in S.T. I.9I.13 and I.22. The appearance of anxiety in these dreams could be seen as an attempt by Aristides' psyche to review certain anxiety-producing situations in his life for the purpose of finally coming to terms with certain unresolved issues in his life. In the post-traumatic anxiety dream, there is usually a confrontation with the overwhelming negative stimulus appearing either directly or in a symbolic form. In each of the previously noted anxiety-dreams there appears the image of some pointed object that is threatening to injure Aristides. Whereas in S.T.I.9 it is a finger, it is a horn of a bull in S.T.

S.T. I.13. In S.T. I.22 Aristides is threatened by a knife while in S.T. I.28 Aristides dreams that he is choking on a sharp bone caught in his throat. A Freudian interpretation of these dream images most likely would suggest that we are dealing with phallic imagery and there appearance indicates the existence of unconscious sexual conflicts.

In S.T. I.21f we read that Aristides dreamt that he was in a warm bath. Suddenly some men armed with daggers appear accompanied by other suspicious characters. These men approach Aristides and tell him that they were accused of some unknown thing by other men. After he is surrounded by these men, Aristides becomes anxious yet he does not want to show his feelings. Suddenly, he is travelling along some path where he encounters an enormous vault. Again he experiences fear because he thinks these men might attack him inside the vault. To his relief, he passes through the vault and emerges into his hometown of Smyrna.

From a Freudian perspective, the men equipped with daggers appear as an expression of unconscious hostility and perhaps fear of castration. On the one hand, they seem to be personifications of hostility and perhaps Aristides' unconscious fear of castration by his father. At the same time, these figures confide in Aristides, telling him that they have been accused of some unidentified thing. Hence, his feelings towards them are slightly ambivalent just as Aristides' feelings towards his aloof and distant father must have been ambivalent. These men force Aristides to leave the security of his bath, just as the fear of reprisal and even castration ultimately causes the child to give up the desire for union with the ultimate security, i.e., the mother. We must remember that castration-anxiety is a product of fantasy, yet as Freud has shown time and time again, fantasy sometimes has a far greater effect on the psyche than reality.

The fear of castration is present in another dream prescription. In a dream Aristides is commanded by Asclepius to cut off one of his fingers. Castration anxiety as it appears in Aristides' dreams can easily be related to the "Oedipus Complex" which implies that such a psychological phenomenon was not unknown in ancient Greek culture (Slater, 1968).

Aristides displays anxiety frequently while he is awake. For example, he tells us in S.T. I.7 that upon emerging from a bath he felt somewhat uncomfortable and his breathing became constricted. He interpreted this to be a sign that he should stop taking nourishment. Obviously, he believed that the bath was a place of security and he often experienced union with the god while he bathed. In the bath described above, upon its conclusion he once again experienced feelings of anxiety. It is possible that Aristides associated unconsciously the security of his ritual bathing with the security of his early childhood bond with his mother. Just as the disruption of the bath resulted in anxiety, likewise the severing of the ties to his mother produced massive anxiety.

Most likely, Aristides' illnesses performed the psychological function of permitting the ego to work out unconscious anxiety associated with certain early childhood events related to separation from his parents. Asclepius functions psychologically as an authority figure; it is the god who re-institutes parental authority and serves as the object of Aristides' affection. Although Aristides' experience of the divine is expressed through the imagery of the unconscious, this does not deny the validity of his religious experience, nor does it negate the idea of an objective realm of the spirit known by Aristides and other religiously inclined individu-



als throughout human history. However, our psychological contentions about Aristides represent an illustration of an important point: a human being's experience of the holy is conditioned by unconscious forces. It is through his worship and devotion to Asclepius that Aristides strives to return to the time before the infant experiences all of the dualities and loneliness produced by the development of ego-consciousness.

Several commentators of the *Sacred Tales* have noted a deep narcissistic tendency on the part of Aristides that is frequently reflected in his concern with his illnesses and in his dreams (Michanaud and Dierkens, p.102-104). For example, he is often comparing his symptoms with his friends and he is very convinced that no one suffered as greatly as he did. In S.T.I.46-49 he tells us that the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus paid him much attention. Throughout the text he repeatedly informs the reader about many of his rhetorical feats and the complements bestowed upon him by the god Asclepius. In one instance, Aristides describes an occasion when two household servants die during one of his illnesses and he tells us that the life of each servant was given up in exchange for his life. Aristides' narcissistic behavior can be understood as a consequence of separation not accepted, or to use Freud's terminology, as the result of an overstimulation of consciousness due to object loss: "When it happens that a person has to give up a sexual object, there quite often ensues a modification in his ego which can only be described as a reinstatement of the object within the ego.....Since the loss of the beloved object is not accepted, the human ego is able to redirect the human libido to itself only to be deluding the libido by representing itself as identical with the lost object." (Freud, 1924-1950, p.458).

Aristides' vain outlook on life may have been fostered by means of transferring his affection from the parental object to himself. The transformation of object-libido implies an abandonment of sexual aims, a process of desexualization, which characterizes his self-concept as well as his relationship to Asclepius. From a Freudian point of view, Aristides' egotism and the obsession with his gods are in many ways shadowy substitutes for the original sexual object. However, his narcissism is balanced by the religious function of his psyche. Asclepius combats the "inflation of the ego" since Aristides is aware that he alone cannot magically cure himself. The faculty of healing is given to Asclepius and it is not through any magical actions of his own that Aristides is healed of his various physical ailments. Besides Asclepius, there are a number of other symbols of authority that appear in Aristides' dreams. For example, in S.T. I.36 another narcissistic dream is recorded. In the dream Aristides is accompanied by two rulers, Antoninus and a younger unnamed emperor. Aristides is led by them on a walk around a drainage ditch surrounding the city. Aristides walks along in the middle between the two of them. Each time he tried to move to one side the younger emperor was able to do this before he could. As a result, Aristides remained in the same place, in the middle between two emperors.

The appearance of animals in dreams can be readily associated as a symbolic expression of the instincts. In one of Aristides more vivid dreams, he is walking inside the temple of Asclepius. In S.T.1.12-13 Aristides describes an occasion in which he was walking and talking to some temple priests and one of his slippers fell off from one of his feet. A priest picked it up and gave it to him. As he was bending over to

receive it, a bull suddenly came up to him, causing him to be afraid. To his surprise, the bull did not hurt him, but rather pressed up against his right knee. Apparently upon waking from his dream, Aristides noticed a small sore beneath his right knee which eventually proved to be good for his upper digestive tract.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, the bull could be interpreted as a symbol of the instincts. In the dream the bull appears when Aristides is completely off-guard and yet instead of attacking, the bull merely presses against him in a soothing way. Hence, this dream could be interpreted as a message from the Aristides' unconscious telling him not to be afraid of the forces of the unconscious which may seem terrifying to Aristides but actually possess a healing, creative function.

As we have previously stated, Asclepius is the object of numerous psychic projections involving a transferring of libidinal energy that was previously attached to Aristides' parents that is now channeled to the healer god. In a sense, the god is projection of some of Aristides' deepest unconscious wishes. Hence, it is interesting to note that in a dream recorded in S.T.I.17-18 the following dream imagery appears. While Aristides is in Smyrna, he goes to the temple in the evening accompanied by his friend Zeno. While they pray to the god Aristides' eyes fall upon a statue of himself which right before his eyes turns into a statue of Asclepius.

Rather than interpreting this dream as another example of Aristides' narcissism, as other commentators have done, it is probably more to the point to realize that in this dream we are witnessing an attempt by Aristides' unconscious to tell him that there is an intimate bond uniting him to his god. More to the point, the dream image is trying to indicate to him that it is he who is the source of all of the positive virtues bestowed upon him by his god and his god is in many respects a reflection of the potentialities of his hidden self. A similar dream is recorded in S.T. IV.50f dealing with Asclepius' remark that Aristides is "The One", meaning the god. Likewise, "Theodorus" is the name given to Aristides by Asclepius. This name means "God given".

The last dream recorded in the *Sacred Tales* is highly illustrative of several of the key elements in Aristides' psychic life and we will conclude our psychological analysis of Aristides with a discussion of this dream. In the dream Aristides is walking in the direction of the Lyceum and observes a temple in the distance which he decides to enter. As he climbs the temple steps some men appear who are standing around the outside of the temple walls. These men are described by Aristides to seem like those who hold out olive boughs for sale in the market. Aristides continues ascending the steps of the temple and when he reaches the doors of the temple a little boy appears and offers to sell him three eggs. Suddenly Aristides experiences an uneasy feeling because he feels that he should have bought the eggs from the boy instead of refusing to purchase them. Therefore, he turns around and took the eggs. Then he went up the stairs and when he reached the top he gave the eggs to a man in charge of the sacred precinct standing by a pillar. This man desired to add one more egg to the other three.

The main image present in this dream is "an ascent". To be precise, Aristides is ascending the steps leading upwards to the temple doors. The historian of religion Mircea Eliade suggests that the image of the staircase and the ladder are pre-eminently symbols of the passage from the profane mode of being to the sacred mode of being. In archaic

religion, the ascent of a stairway is regarded as a rite of passage whereas in Freudian thought, the ascent of a stairway is a dream is described as a disguised expression of sexual desire. According to Eliade, Freud's interpretation is one-sided even though Eliade admits that the sexual significance of the ascent of the stairway, which was discovered by Freud, implies a kind of rite of passage. Eliade states, "to infer that the patient who is counting the staircase in a dream is thereby gratifying a sexual desire buried in the unconscious--- this is still a way of saying that in the depths of his being, the patient is struggling to get out of a situation in which he is stuck, a negative sterile situation." (Eliade, 1967).

The Freudian interpretation of the image of the staircase does not directly contradict the religious understanding of the image as it appears in myth and ritual. In this sense, Aristides' ascent of the temple steps symbolizes a transcendence which can be understood either in a religious or sexual framework of meaning. As Eliade points out, religious transcendence has sexual connotations just as human sexuality has religious overtones. To put it another way, Aristides' religious experiences have religious as well as sexual implications. Likewise, his ascent of the steps to the temple in his dream has a two-fold meaning. As an adult it is through his de-sexualized religious relationship that Aristides is able to come to terms with some of his unconscious problems associated with the disruption of the bonds uniting himself with his parents and especially his mother. Asclepius functions psychologically as the provider of security and protection that Aristides once had as a child yet was lost. In this particular dream, the sexual significance of Aristides' religious life is underscored by the presence of sexual symbolism, namely, the men standing by the temple holding something like olive boughs.

Psychoanalysis has shown the world that the unconscious speaks to us through the language of dream symbolism (Jung, 1964). In this particular dream, the unconscious is attempting to speak through the symbols of the ascent and the image of the "egg". We have discussed the significance of the "Ascent". What about the image of the egg? Obviously the egg symbolizes birth and/or re-birth. In the case of Aristides, the unconscious is attempting to turn his attention towards something unknown to his consciousness. It is significant that there is a fourth mysterious egg which is given to him by a temple official. What does this fourth egg symbolize? If we accept the notion that Aristides' worship of Asclepius a certain amount of repression and sublimated energy then it appears that these repressed elements have a tendency to return into consciousness. The symbol of the fourth egg may represent this movement towards conscious realization of the repressed past. Aristides' devotion and love of Asclepius represents a compromise between the forces of the unconscious: his relationship with the god satisfied aspects of his psyche that were damaged in childhood yet this religious gratification is attained in a manner that is still implicitly requires a definite amount of unconscious repression. The process of conscious awareness is never completed in his life as is evidenced by the fact that Aristides remains a hypochondriac throughout the remainder of his life. Although his problems lessen in magnitude, they do not dissolve once his religious relationship with his god develops. Rather, without his illnesses there would never have been a need for the god's cures and hence the religious relationship would have come to an end. Such a state of affairs implies that there is a negative side

of Aristides' religiosity since it feeds upon his physical maladies which were expressions of unconscious anxiety. Thus, many of the so-called painful remedies viewed by Dodds as expressions of unconscious hostility may in fact be a manifestation of anger originally directed at Aristides' father but are now re-directed towards Aristides himself.

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