In his wide-ranging discussion of pilgrimage in Greek antiquity, Matthew Dillon remarks that one of the primary motives for sacred travel was the quest for healing (*Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in Ancient Greece*, 1997, 73). In this paper, I would like to explore the role that travel by sea played in ancient healing cults, especially that of Asklepios, whose sanctuaries spread across the Greco-Roman world and flourished for about a millennium, beginning in the fifth century BCE.

For Asklepios, travel by sea served multiple functions. We do have abundant evidence that worshippers travelled by sea to be healed, including inscribed *iamata* that narrate healing experiences (e.g., *IG IV 1.121-124*); likewise, the topography and architecture of some of his sanctuaries, located on or near water, speak to the importance of sea travel (e.g., Lissos on Crete, where recent investigation suggests that the site was designed to receive visitors primarily by sea; C. Kanellopoulos, *ΛΙΣΟΣ, AURA* suppl. 2, 2019). But there are other roles that sea travel played. For instance, we have inscribed requests to the god for safe sea voyage, seemingly apart from any request for healing (e.g., *IvP* 8.3.63). And there is much literary and material evidence, from poems and historical narratives to inscribed texts and reliefs, documenting the god’s transit by sea in order to establish new cult sites around the Mediterranean (a topic investigated in depth by E. Gephard, “The Gods in Transit: Narratives of Cult Transfer,” in *Antiquity and Humanity*, eds. A.D. Collins and M.M. Mitchell, 2001, 451-76). All of this points to a prominence of sea travel within the cult, as well as a marked tendency to memorialize this aspect of it. This paper will explore not only the range of reasons for sea travel in the cult of Asklepios and the accompanying wealth of data for it, but will also posit some explanations for the significance of this phenomenon.

Moreover, I would like to position the centrality of sea voyage for sacred healing within a larger context of medical tourism in Greek and Roman antiquity, a topic that is beginning to receive greater attention from scholars. Travel by sea enabled the spread of medical knowledge, of goods and services, of practitioners and patients. Many Greek and Roman physicians were itinerant, transporting their practices, sometimes by sea, to various towns (e.g., Hipp. *Epid.*, which includes a visit to the island Thasos). Physicians also traveled to acquire ingredients and techniques for their therapies (e.g., Galen went to Egypt to study and sailed to Syria, Cyprus, and Lemnos to acquire lithics, soil, and metals; *Ther.Pis.*, *Simp.Med.*). And traders moved spices and herbs across vast watery distances, to be used in compound pharmaceuticals like theriac (*Ther.Pis.*). The strong ties of the cult of Asklepios to the sea, then, should be viewed not only in relation to sacred travel per se, but also to a larger medical marketplace that relied increasingly throughout antiquity on watery networks of communication and transport.