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**DREAMING ABOUT ANIMALS: ANIMAL SYMBOLISM IN
ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL GREEK DREAMBOOKS**

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

Central European University

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(Serbia)

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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Abstract

The recent growing interest in the study of dreaming in general has also generated attention to Greek dreambooks. However, a small number of these studies deal with particular social-historical topics because of the complex nature of the oneirocritic sources. Dreams about animals and their interpretations play a significant part in dreambooks and the ubiquitous animal symbols offer a wider scope for the analysis of gender and social aspects in the Greek oneirocritic tradition in general. This study deals with four Greek dreambooks – Aremidorus, Daniel, Achmet, and Manuel - which were written over a period of more than a millennium, between the second century and the fifteenth century. The animal motifs are extracted from the dreambooks and examined in three chapters that deal with different cultural constructs of gender, society, and emotions. The focus of the study is the question how animal symbolism was used to convey gender, social, and emotional status of the dreamer depicted in these dreambooks.

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1. Introduction

Dream images that appeared to ancient and medieval men during sleep inevitably raised questions about their origin and their connection to the waking world. Ancient Greeks and Romans offered numerous explanations for the nature of dream experience which were deliberated in-depth, but not uniform. At one extreme, dreams were understood as manifestations of the dreamer's psycho-physical waking state and as "caused by indigestion or by the remnants of mundane sense process."¹ On the other hand, they were described as god-sent revelations. In the Middle Ages these two extremes, as Steven Kruger observes, were reconciled and dreams were predominantly viewed as both mundane and divine phenomena.²

From an ambivalent attitude towards the origin of dreams, an also ambivalent attitude towards their meaning arose. Greek dream interpreters, both ancient and medieval, shared the belief that dreams are manifestation of the past and present events.³ These dreams, however, were considered unworthy of their interpretation. The dreams that occupied interpreters' attention are those with predictive value. The interpretation of these dreams was seen as deciphering of a code that can reveal the waking future of the dreamer.

Dreams and their interpretations which contain animal motifs are an important part of the Greek dreambooks. The auspicious or inauspicious meaning of these animal dream symbols depends primarily on the cultural context in which they originated and the social strata to which

¹ Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, vol. 14. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 18.

² *Ibid.*, 19.

³ Generally see also, for instance, Daniel Pick, ed., *Dreams and History: The Interpretation of Dreams from Ancient Greece to Modern Psychoanalysis*; David Shulman and, Guy G. Stroumsa, eds., *Dream Cultures: Explorations in the Comparative History of Dreaming* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); William V. Harris, *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009); Jesse Keskiaho, *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages: The Reception and Use of Patristic Ideas, 400-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Christine Angelidi and George Calofonos, *Dreaming in Byzantium and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2016). For a more detailed bibliography on dreaming and Byzantine dream literature consult Steven M. Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium: Six Oneirocritica in Translation, with Commentary and Introduction* (Abingdon: Ashgate, 2008), 219-232.

their authors or readers belonged. Their interpretation is a specific construct the elements of which cannot be fully comprehended.⁴ The principles behind the interpretation could be various – from traditional literary *topoi* and puns to the author’s personal preferences or experience with a certain animal. The interpretation of animals in dreams is primarily based on the physical and behavioural traits of animals which were recognized as similar or different to certain human features or activities. The analogy could also be based on the animal’s function—beast of burden, for example—or the activities associated with the animal such as riding, chasing, or having sex with an animal; and these are but few of the multiple layers of animal symbolism that may or may not have been taken in consideration by the authors when interpreting dreams with animal imagery.

In the handbooks and dictionaries of ancient and medieval Greek history, dreambooks are presented and praised as sources rich in unique information about the culture and society in which they originated.⁵ The recent growing interest in the study of dreaming in general has generated attention to Greek oneirocritic works, but the challenges in dealing with this type of source still seem difficult to overcome.⁶ The difficulties include uncertain dating, authorship and the geographical scope of the works, problems with interpolations, and, particularly, the information devoid of contextualizing narrative. On the other hand, the extant oneirocritic material is abundant.

In this study I present one possible approach to examine this type of sources. I focus on animal related motifs in the dreambooks and examine how animal symbols are used to convey the notions of gender, social structure, and emotional modes.⁷ Dreams about animals play an

⁴ As example of an analysis of dreams and animals in the Western Middle Ages see László Sándor Chardonnes, “Do Anglo-Saxons Dream of Exotic Sheep?” in *Representing Beasts in Early Medieval England and Scandinavia*, ed. Michael D. J. Bintley and Thomas J. T. Williams (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2015, 2015, 131-50).

⁵ See, for example, Alexander Kazhdan, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1.526-27; G. Calofonos, “Dream Interpretation: A Byzantine Superstition?” in *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 9, 219-220.

⁶ ὄνειρος, ὄνειρος, ὄ, [oneiros] “dream.”

⁷ For a similar approach see Ingvild Saelid Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans* (London: Routledge, 2006).

important role in all of the dreambooks and the ubiquity of animal symbols is convenient for overcoming the impediments posed by the character of the sources. The three categories—gender, society, and emotions—provide a suitable frame for the examination of animal related dreams within which functions of animal symbolism can be traced consistently.

1.1. Sources

I will analyse four Greek dreambooks—Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*⁸ the *Oneirocriticon* of Daniel, the *Oneirocriticon* of Achmet, and the *Oneirocriticon* of Manuel II Palaeologus. The second-century work by Artemidorus from Ephesus is the only extant ancient Greek dreambook. It is comprised of five books and conceived as a combination of scientific treatise on dream interpretation and everyday manual for interpreting dreams.⁹

The origin of the *Oneirocriticon* of Daniel, according to Steven Oberhelman, is most accurately dated to the fourth century. Its place of origin is unknown and authorship is falsely attributed to Daniel the Prophet which was common practice for Byzantine dreambooks in order to imbue them with divine or imperial sanction. I include this dream text in the analysis because it is the oldest extant Byzantine dreambook and it is considered an authoritative source text for other Byzantine dream texts.¹⁰ The Daniel dreambook consists of 486 dream entries that are alphabetically organized and strikingly short. Namely, both the dream and its

⁸ The Greek term in plural for 'dreambooks'; sg. *oneirocriticon*.

⁹ Concise and clear overview of the Artemidorus' dream theory and methods of interpretation can be found in Michel Foucault's *The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 3, 1-36 (New York, 1986); for more detailed discussion see the introduction written by Harris-McCoy for *Artemidorus' Oneirocritica*, 1-43. For a study on dreams and animals in this source see Philippe Monbrun, "Quand on rêve d'animaux: Place de l'animal et bestiaire du rêve dans les Oneirokritika d'Artémidore," in *Artemidor von Daldis und die antike Traumdeutung: Texte – Kontexte – Lektüren*, ed. Gregor Weber (Berlin and Boston: DeGruyter, 2015), 127-160.

¹⁰ Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 2-6. Oberhelman presents the issues concerning the dating, authorship and manuscript tradition of the Daniel dreambook.

interpretation are expressed in a very laconic fashion, usually in one sentence. For example, “Dreaming of a running lion means a profitable business matter.”¹¹

The authorship, date, and place of origin seem to be equally spurious in case of the third oneirocritic source. According to Maria Mavroudi and Steven Oberhelman, the two scholars who dealt with the text most extensively, Achmet’s dreambook is a tenth-century Christian adaptation of Islamic Arabic oneirocritic material written for a king.¹² In addition to this, they strongly suggest that the evident similarities between Artemidorus’ and Achmet’s dreams and interpretations stem from Arabic sources which were greatly influenced by Artemidorus’ text before Achmet adapted them.¹³ Also, the author of the oneirocriticon seems to falsely appropriate the name “Achmet, son of Sereim,” that is the authority of the most famous Arabic dream interpreter Ibn Sīrīn.¹⁴

Perhaps the least questionable source regarding questions of authorship, dating, and origin of the oneirocriticon is the fourth work, attributed to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus.¹⁵ A number of scholars present strong arguments for the attribution of this dream text to the emperor or, at least, someone from an imperial circle and, therefore, date it to the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century.¹⁶ In addition to the imperial context, this dreambook is particularly interesting because the author occasionally places dreams in a narrative frame and explains the reasoning behind his interpretations.

¹¹ Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 98. “Λέοντα τρέχοντα ἰδεῖν ἐπικερδῆ πραγματίαν σημαίνει.”

¹² Maria Mavroudi, *A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation: The Oneirocriticon of Achmet and its Arabic Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) and Steven M. Oberhelman, *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet: A Medieval Greek and Arabic Treatise on the Interpretation of Dreams* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1991), 7-84.

¹³ Mavroudi, *A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation*, 1-59.

¹⁴ Oberhelman, *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet*, 13.

¹⁵ In the remaining text I will refer to the dreambooks as Artemidorus’, Daniel’s, Achmet’s and Manuel’s for the convenience.

¹⁶ For the authorship of the “Manuel” dreambook see: M. Mavroudi, “Byzantine and Islamic Dream Interpretation: A Comparative Approach to the Problem of ‘Reality’ vs. ‘Literary Tradition’” in *Dreaming in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. Christine Angelidi and George T. Calofonos (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2014), 161-186; G. Calofonos, “Manuel II Palaeologos: Interpreter of Dreams?” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 16 (1990): 447-55; S. Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 15-17.

The content of the dreambooks can best be described as an “encyclopedic maze.”¹⁷ A variety of abundant, but often isolated information about every aspect of human life can be observed in each dreambook. The sole outline of the contents of Artemidorus’ first book can help to grasp the richness and complexity of the oneirocritic source: birth/being raised, the body—its parts, their addition, subtraction, transformation,—the teaching of arts of all sorts and labours and pursuits, youth, exercises, contests, the bath/washing, food, perfume and garlands, sexual intercourse, and sleep.¹⁸ Moreover, the section on the body, for example, consists of thirty-four lengthy sub-sections that consider in detail the interpretation of symbols such as head, hair, baldness, forehead, ears, eyebrows, eyes, blindness, nose, cheeks, jaw, chin, beard, different types of teeth, tongue, shoulders, chest, arms and hands, belly, groins, genitals, knees, shins, and halves. Each of these, in turn, is interpreted in a variety of ways depending on the context in which they appear in a dream. Similar interpretative abundance and complexity can be observed in Achmet’s dreambook. Thus, for example, in addition to Artemidorus’ list relating to the body, Achmet’s also contains the interpretations of dreams about armpit and pubic hair, temples, eyelids, scapulae, ribs, or hips.

Daniel’s dreambook, on the other hand, presents a sharp contrast to this perplexing richness of the oneirocritic material found in Artemidorus’ and Achmet’s texts. As suggested by the total number of dream entries in Daniel’s dreambook (486), the range of dream symbols is not narrow. However, the simplicity and decontextualization of both dream symbols and their interpretations pushes the analysis of its contents in a different direction from that in Artemidorus’ and Achmet’s case. For example, the author interprets various body parts in no particular order and scattered throughout the dreambook. But the symbol of a head is

¹⁷ Huda Lutfi, “The Construction of Gender Symbolism in Ibn Sīrīn’s and Ibn Shāhīn’s Medieval Arabic Dream Texts,” in *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (2005): 123-162. Lutfi coined this phrase to describe the variety of motifs that can be found in the Arabic medieval dream text.

¹⁸ The outline of the first two books of Artemidorus’ *Oneirocritica* is given by Daniel E. Harris-McCoy in the commentary on his English translation of Artemidorus’ *Oneirocritica*, 433.

interpreted in seven dreams, the four of them are about the dreamer being beheaded which is interpreted in simplistic terms as loss, oppression, death of the dreamer's sperm, and loss again. In terms of the variety of the symbolic contents and the narrative context it provides, Manuel's dreambook occupies a place between the two aforementioned opposites. The symbols that he enumerates in the headers of different passages are miscellaneous—one section, for instance, focuses solely on the symbolism of hats, the other groups together the interpretations of dreams about “hot and cold pita bread, white bread, and coarse bread;”¹⁹ there are no sections on the body itself, head, teeth, or hands, but under separate headings Manuel discusses dreams about nose, eyes, penis, head hair and beards. Manuel does not present interpretations as elaborate as those of Artemidorus or Achmet, nor as concise as those of Daniel.

Animal symbols occupy a considerable and important place in the structural maze of each dreambook. In Artemidorus' text dreams about animals are discussed in the series of chapters (11-22) within the section on hunting, fishing, sailing, and farming. Within these chapters dreams about animals are organized according to their habitat – land, marine, and flying animals with insects.²⁰ Animal and animal-related symbols are also discussed in separate chapters scattered throughout all five books. For example, in the section on the head in which Artemidorus presents possible interpretations of dreams about having the head of lion or a dog, or in the section on bestiality which he mentions in the series of chapters on sexual intercourse.

Animal symbols are regularly used to illustrate general principles of dream interpretation as in the example of the dream about a camel, which Artemidorus uses to demonstrate the interpretative rule according to which few things can be interpreted through many.²¹ Furthermore, symbols that are omitted or considered by the author to be insufficiently

¹⁹ Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 198. “θ’. Περὶ πῆτας ζεύσης καὶ ψυχρὰς ἄρτου καθαροῦ καὶ κυβαροῦ.”

²⁰ Harris-McCoy, *Artemidorus' Oneirocritica*, 473.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 57-59.

discussed in the general section on animals, are inserted or revisited in the third book in no particular order. Thus, animals such as crocodile and cat and their symbolic value are discussed together in chapter eleven, mosquitos and bedbugs in chapter eight, mice and weasels in chapter twenty-eight, and nocturnal birds – the bat included – in chapter sixty-five.²²

The structure of the Daniel dreambook is different.²³ The concise, one-sentence dreams and their interpretations are alphabetically organized.²⁴ The dreams are usually arranged alphabetically according to the first letter of the symbol that is interpreted within a certain entry, but also, occasionally, according to the first letter of the word with which the dream entry begins. Therefore, animal symbols in Daniel dreambook are not discussed in any thematical manner.

The structural principle of the dreambook of Achmet is particularly interesting. Namely, the interpretations of the majority of symbols in the dreambook are divided into the following sections: interpretation according to Indian, Persian, and Egyptian sources. The meaning of one dream image is thus usually presented under two headings: one that contains the interpretation according to the Indians [Christians], and the other that contains joint Persian and Egyptian interpretations of the same symbol. According to Maria Mavroudi, this structural organization is not a result of the author using and compiling three respective sources, but is rather a structure that the Greek compiler found in Arabic sources and retained it as they were with his contribution being to “Christianize Muslim chapters and label them ‘Indian’.”²⁵

²² Invaluable collection of essays and surveys on different aspects of animals in antiquity with lists of further reading can be found in Gordon L. Campbell, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

²³ Considering the issues with interpolations, conflation of manuscripts, and probable millennium gap between the date of origin of the text and the date of the extant text, it cannot be excluded that the original text was structured in a different way. See more on the manuscript tradition of the Daniel text in Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 2-5.

²⁴ For more on the topic of the type of extant dreambooks see Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages*, 7-9; specifically about the extant prose and versed alphabetical Byzantine dreambooks see Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 1-19.

²⁵ Mavroudi, *A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation*, 59.

The division of chapters in this manner appears to be more precise and consistent in the first part of the dreambook. In the final sections, this structure becomes more irregular and in the closing chapters of the dreambook the author completely abandons the division. In the light of the inconsistent and unclear division according to Achmet's above mentioned sources, I will not pay special attention to this particular division.

Achmet's dreambook contains 301 chapters in total. The animal dream images are interpreted in chapters 230 to 240 and 267 to 300 that specifically relate to animal symbols. However, animals are regularly mentioned throughout the dreambook in chapters interpreting various dreams including eating heads, sex with an animal, flying, mute animals or things speaking.

The interpretations in Manuel dreambook are grouped under 44 headings. 12 are concerned with interpretations of animal symbols. The chapters relating to animal dream imagery are the following: fish; shellfish; mice; dogs and asses; eagles, partridges, doves, swallows, nightingales, and sparrows; horses, donkeys, and mules; snakes, dragons, lizards, and frogs; hunting rabbits; wolves; bees, and sheep. In addition to these there are also several chapters on animal related products such as different types of meat, cheese, or eggs. The length of these sections is not uniform and interpretations can vary in length from several lines to several passages.

The interpretation of dreams with animal imagery adheres to the same principles in all dreambooks. Namely, the auspicious or inauspicious predictive value of a dream about a particular animal depends on the animal's cultural context, the social status of the interpreter or the writer of the interpretations, or, perhaps, the intended audience of the dreambooks. The basic principle of dream interpretation is the principle of similarity, whereby the interpretation of dreams about animals rests on the physical, behavioral, and social traits of the animals which are perceived as similar to humans. Animal symbols do not possess an absolute meaning – they

are constructs conditioned by the idiosyncratic characteristics of individual dreamers and, in addition to this, by the context in which they appear in a dream. Another principle for interpreting dreams about animals is the linguistic similarity of words—for example, Artemidorus builds the meaning of a ram upon the similarity of the words denoting the animal (*krios*) and the verb “to rule” (*kreiein*). Thus, a ram in a dream is interpreted as the signifier of a master, someone who rules, or a king.²⁶ Occasionally the interpretation may be rooted in the myth or a legend or it can simply be a result of the author’s preferences or personal experience with a certain animal. Therefore, interpreters can construct the meaning of an animal dream image by drawing from a variety of possible interpretative principles.

1.2. Methodology

In order to comprehend the function of animal symbolism in the ancient and medieval Greek dreambooks, I analyse the four oneirocritic sources discussed before. The selection of the four dreambooks is based on their prominent status among the extant oneirocritic sources. For the purposes of this study I extract animal-related motifs from the four texts and chose to consider them on the basis of three aspects—gender, society, and emotions. The ubiquity of animal symbols and the important role of animal imagery in each dreambook allow me to overcome the impediments posed by the encyclopedic and often decontextualized character of the sources. In each of the three research chapters I discuss the sources in chronological order and consider animal symbols in each dreambook under a separate subchapter. In the final subchapters I present comparative remarks in which I summarize similarities and differences in the way animal symbols are used to convey the notion of female gender and to depict social structure and emotional modes.

²⁶ Artemidorus’ *Oneirocritica*, 173.

2. Women and animals

The intended audience of Greek dreambooks is male readers. The dream imagery is indicative of their future social position, economic status, marital status, circumstances relating to family, or health. In the analysis of the sections of the dreambook that examine sexual intercourse as dream symbol, Foucault describes the image of Artemidorus' typical dreamer as "generally a man" and "an 'ordinary' individual" who has a family and household, business, and slaves.²⁷ Female dreamers are rarely mentioned, but the notions of "woman" and "female" are regularly used to define and depict the waking world of men. In this chapter I will analyse dreams about animals and discuss the particular role a female gender plays in the interpretation of these dreams.

2.1. Artemidorus

In relation to animal dream imagery the gender constructs can be examined in the context of dreams in which a female dreamer is giving birth to an animal, and dreams in which animal traits are used to convey positive and negative female roles.²⁸ In the dreams about animals Artemidorus rarely considers the female dreamer and, when he does, he regularly assigns woman the single role of the one who is giving birth. Namely, in these dreams he does not associate her further with motherly love and care, or any other quality or attribute that describes

²⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Care of The Self*, trans. R. Hurley (New York, 1992), 7.

²⁸ For further discussion on gender roles and gender construction in Artemidorus' dreambook see the essay by M. Mavroudi, "Byzantine and Islamic Dream Interpretation: A Comparative Approach to the Problem of 'Reality' vs. 'Literary Tradition'." In *Dreaming in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. Christine Angelidi and George T. Calofonos (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2014), 161-186, in which she compares dreams about sexual intercourse in Artemidorus' and Achmet's dreambook in the context of intertwined Byzantine-Islamic oneirocritic tradition; also eadem, "Women, Gender, and Representation of Sexualities and Gender-Dream Literature," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*. Vol. 5, ed. Suad Joseph (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 406-410. MacAlister, S. 1992. "Gender as Sign and Symbolism in Artemidoros' *Oneirokritika*: Social Aspirations and Anxieties," *Helios*, 19: 140-60.

her role more closely. The woman as a dreamer is in the most cases defined solely by her ability to give birth and the dreams she has are reduced to formulaic wording such as “should a woman suppose that she has a fish in her womb and give birth to a fish [...] she will give birth to a mute child”²⁹ Moreover, the interpretations of the woman’s dreams do not relate to *her* future, occupations, successes, or economic status, but to the future of her child. The behavioral traits and physical characteristics of the animal she is giving birth to in a dream are associated with and predictive of the child’s future, and thus

if a woman supposes she is giving birth to an eagle, she will give birth to a son, who, if he is poor, will go to a war and will lead a[n entire] regiment of foot soldiers [just as the eagle rules over birds]. For in fact an eagle precedes every regiment of foot-soldiers. And if he is of moderate means, he will compete as an athlete and will become known [to a king]. And if he is rich, he will rule over many men or even become a king himself.³⁰

An interesting exception is the dream in which the female dreamer is assigned a variety of traits. Artemidorus gives the account of this dream as an example of the flexible meaning of the dream image and the importance of the interdependence of the dream symbol and the personal circumstances of the dreamer for the interpretation. The dream is presented simply and matter-of-factly: “A woman who was pregnant imagined that she gave birth to a serpent.”³¹ Artemidorus then proceeds to give eight different outcomes of this dream, the rationale behind which is primarily based on the animal’s traits, but the interpretation is confirmed by the attributes that the female dreamer shares with the animal. Thus, for example, one child became an orator because of the serpent’s forked tongue, the other became a prophet because the

²⁹ References will be made to the English translation by Daniel E. Harris-McCoy in *Artemidorus’ Oneirocritica: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). The original Greek text printed in this edition is the Artemidorus, *Artemidori Daldiani Oneirocriticon libri V*, ed. Roger Pack (Leipzig: 1963). The original text will be consulted where additional explanations are needed. 185. “καὶ ἦν γυνὴ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἰχθύν, ὑπολάβη τεκεῖν, [...], ἀφωνον γενήσει...”

³⁰ *Artemidorus’ Oneirocritica*, 187. “γυνὴ δὲ ἐὰν ὑπολάβῃ αἰτὸν τεκεῖν, υἱὸν γεννήσει, ὃς ἐὰν μὲν ᾗ πένης, στρατεύεται καὶ στρατοπέδου ἀρξεί [παντὸς ὡς αἰτὸς τῶν ὀρνίθων]. καὶ γὰρ στρατοπέδου παντὸς πρόεισιν ὁ αἰτὸς. ἐὰν δὲ μέτριος ᾗ, ἀθλήσει καὶ [βασιλεῖ] γνώριμος ἔσται. ἐὰν δὲ πλούσιος, ἀρξεί πολλῶν ἢ καὶ βασιλεύσει.”

³¹ *Ibid.*, 359. “γυνὴ ἔδοξεν ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα δράκοντα γεννηκέναι.”

serpent is a sacred animal to Apollo, the third became licentious and had many affairs with women in the city because of the serpent's creeping and "slipping through the tightest holes, attempts to escape those who are looking for it."³² The range of the possible serpent's traits is narrowed down by the specific circumstances of the dreamer. Thus, the woman who gave birth to an orator "was likewise wealthy, and wealth enables education", the mother of the prophet was the daughter of the prophet, and the mother of the promiscuous son was "likewise rather lewd and whorish."³³ Other qualities associated with a female dreamer in this instance are that she is a wife of a priest, not good at all, slave, and sick. Again, the outcome of the dream does not relate to the future of the female dreamer, but rather to that of her son. In addition to this, the only positive characteristic of the woman in these eight interpretations that is not associated with her husband or father, is her richness. In the remaining variants the features of the female dreamer that are considered relevant for the interpretation of the dream are negatively charged.

It seems that in Artemidorus' dreams and their interpretation animal motifs predominantly describe women in negative terms. The inferior symbolic significance of the female animals is axiomatically expressed when he explains that a dream about a lioness has the same predictive meaning as a dream about a lion but in a lesser degree.³⁴ Perhaps the most expressive dream in this regard that could even be perceived as openly misogynistic is the one about a wild boar. Specifically, the wild boar is a symbol of extremely negative masculinity: it represents storm and other natural disasters for travelers, it is a powerful, brutish, and violent legal opponent with a foul mouth, and a bad omen for farmers. According to Artemidorus, it is therefore *not surprising* that this kind of animal also represents women.³⁵

The most common negative traits associated with women in the dreams about animals are sexual nature, disobedience, and deceitfulness. For example, if a man dreams about falling

³² *Ibid.*, 359. "διὰ γὰρ τῶν στενωτάτων χηραμῶν διαδύμενος ὁ δράκων τοὺς ἐπιτηροῦντας πειράται λανθάνειν."

³³ *Ibid.*, 359. "ἦν δὲ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ πλουσία, ἐφόδιον δὲ παιδείας οὐ πλοῦτος," "μαχλοτέρα καὶ ἔταιρική."

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 175.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 179.

off the ram, it signifies “that his wife would prostitute herself and that, as the saying goes, she would ‘make horns’ for him.” Ring-doves are “total whores;” cormorants and sea-gulls symbolise courtesans and quarrelsome women; foxes represent rapacious and deviant female enemies that secretly plot; weasels signify “villainous and mischievous” women and, finally, untameable and savage martens symbolise “devious and treacherous” women.³⁶ On the other hand, fertile, obedient, and well-disposed women represent the feminine qualities perceived as positive and auspicious. Thus, in a dream they are associated with red mullet because this fish spawns three times,³⁷ or with bats because they “give birth to live young and have milk in their breasts and raise their own nestlings,”³⁸ and pigeons are significant of women connected to the domestic space, but they are also indicative of the pleasurable activities due to their association with Aphrodite.³⁹ In comparison to the aforementioned negative traits in which woman is simply ascribed negative meaning in association to behavioral or physical characteristics of the animal, the positive qualities appear to be more context-bound and their meaning more nuanced according to the circumstances in which they appear. Therefore, the house-dog that signifies the dreamer’s wife is an auspicious sign if it is associated with the positive activities such as simpering, and an inauspicious sign if it is seen barking or biting in a dream.⁴⁰ Similarly, asses represent women, but in Artemidorus’ text the positive meaning of the animal is related to the activity of bearing load, obeying the driver, walking swiftly, and being healthy, for only that kind of animal signifies that “a wealthy wife ... will obey willingly and that she will be well-disposed.”⁴¹

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 173; 189; 185; 275; 267.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 295. “... ζῳτοκεῖ καὶ γάλα ἐν μαζοῖς ἔχει καὶ τοὺς ἰδίους ἐκτρέφειν νεοττούς.”

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 175. “...πρὸς γὰρ τῷ μὴ εἶναι πολυτελεῖν τὴν γυναῖκα... καὶ προθύμος ὑπακούσασθαι σημαίνουσι καὶ εὐνοήσειν.”

The interpretation of the horse symbol in a dream in relation to women is very concise, but rather interesting. Namely, the horse signifies a woman because “it also pays a great deal attention to its beauty and supports a rider.”⁴² The dream about this animal stands out in Artemidorus’ text as the male dream in which a woman is presented as the agent and the one in power. Namely, the dream image itself is indicative of a woman in the inferior, “bottom” position in sexual intercourse, that is, the position of male sexual dominance. However, according to Artemidorus, the meaning of the dream depends on the manner the horse bears the dreamer. Therefore, Artemidorus assigns women sexual power and dominance over men, which is in contrast to the dominant sexual position of men.

In the separate section in which Artemidorus discusses dreams about a variety of sexual acts, the dream about sex with animals is mentioned as the dream that is contrary to the nature. Interestingly, women or gender in general play no part in the interpretation of these dreams. Namely, the interpretation of the sexual dream and its positive or negative predictive value in Artemidorus’ text rest primarily on the position of the dreamer in the sexual act. Being on top of the wild animal means benefits, whereas being on the bottom means violent and grievous misfortune for the dreamer, perhaps even death.⁴³ The act itself has no predictive value. What matters is the interplay of superiority and inferiority, being active or passive, and the question of who is performing the act of penetration—the man or the animal.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 113. “...ὅτι καὶ ἐπὶ κάλλει μέγα φρονεῖ καὶ τὸν ἔλατ ἥρα βαστάζει.”

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 151.

2.2. Daniel

Out of the hundred and thirteen dream entries in Daniel's dreambook that relate to animals only one makes reference to women:

“395. If someone dreams that he brings a snake into his house, it means that he will bring a woman into his house.”⁴⁴

Even though sporadically and rarely, Daniel mentions women in the rest of the dreambook, specifically in the context of the various sexual acts. Namely, Oberhelman notes that the dreambook “has 17 dreams involving specific forms of sexual activity, all (except one) performed by men upon social inferiors like wives, other men's wives, sisters, concubines, old women, prostitutes, and slave girls.”⁴⁵ Moreover, Daniel does not shy from presenting and interpreting explicit sexual acts such as necrophilia, men being phallically penetrated by other men, having sex with one's own mother, or the dreamer's mother becoming a prostitute.⁴⁶ Thus, textual silence about a woman in the context of dreams about animals which make up a quarter of the entire text, is hard to explain.⁴⁷ A possible explanation might be that female traits and characteristics were not considered as important qualities in the world Daniel presented in his dreambook through the animal dreams – the world of men mainly concerned with profit gain and acquisition of the position of power.

⁴⁴ Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 106. “ὄφεις εἰς οἶκον ἄγειν γυναῖκα τῷ οἴκῳ σου εἰσιέναι (σημαίνει).” References will be made to the English translation by Steven M. Oberhelman in *Dreambooks in Byzantium* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2008); the translation is based on the following edition: F. Drexel, “Das Traumbuch des Propheten Daniel nach dem cod. Vatic. Palat. gr. 319,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 26 (1926): 290–314. The original text is consulted where additional explanations are needed.

⁴⁵ Oberhelman, *Dreaming in Byzantium and Beyond*, 156.

⁴⁶ Bronwen Neil, “Dream Interpretation and Christian Identity in Late Antique Rome and Byzantium,” in *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae: Texts and Studies of Early Christian Life and Language* 132, ed. Geoffrey D. Dunn and Wendy Mayer (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 332.

⁴⁷ Lutfi, “The Construction of Gender Symbolism,” 160.

2.3. Achmet

The female dreamer in Achmet's dreambook is again a pregnant or fertile woman who is defined by her ability to give birth.⁴⁸ Out of five instances in which the female dreamer is associated with dreams about animals, two relate to her becoming pregnant through fornication if she dreams about having worms in her stomach. One predicts that she will give birth to an illustrious son, if she dreams about possessing a kite or falcon, and two predict that she will give birth to a daughter if she dreams about a pigeon, partridge, ring-or turtle-dove.⁴⁹ The position of the female dreamer in Achmet's text thus seems to be downgraded in comparison to that presented in Artemidorus' dreambook. Namely, all dreams (except the aforementioned about falcon or a kite) that predict the birth of a son are associated with a male dreamer who is presented as an agent and the one who begets a son. For example, if the king dreams about hunting with a tame eagle or having a tame peacock, it predicts that he will beget a son.⁵⁰ Therefore, the role of ensuring a male successor in Achmet's text is assigned to the male dreamer.

The most complex symbol of a woman in the dream of the male dreamer is the symbol of a horse. The horse is generally a symbol of a woman, but the interpretation of this dream depends on the elaborated interplay of the animal's various characteristics and the social status of the dreamer. The predictive meaning of a dream is not only determined by the content of the dream image, but also by the social power dynamics reflected in the dream symbols. For example, this is most clearly reflected in the dream about a common horse that represents a female slave for a noble dreamer, but a wife for a common dreamer. Or, similarly, saddled and noble horses are likened to a powerful and rich woman and a

⁴⁸ References will be made to the English translation by Steven M. Oberhelman in *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet: A Medieval Greek and Arabic Treatise on the Interpretation of Dreams* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1991); the translation is based on the following edition: F. Drexler, ed., *Achmetis Oneirocriticon* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925). The original text is consulted where additional explanations are needed.

⁴⁹ Oberhelman, *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet*, 117; 239-40; 243.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 239-240.

royal and untrained steed signifies a young and noble virgin. A female steed signifies a noble woman, but a common mare is interpreted as a woman of lower social standing.⁵¹

A variety of interpretations that relate to sexuality or sexual activity in Achmet's dreambook are scattered throughout the text: various activities that involve the dreamer and an animal are interpreted as symbolic representations of the future sexual activity in the waking state. Thus, to dream about chasing a rabbit and hitting it with a stick is interpreted as sex with a prostitute; throwing a stick at a rabbit and missing it signifies frustration for a dreamer.⁵² To spear a hyena means that a dreamer will perform a forceful sexual act on the type of women represented by hyena; but just sitting on a hyena means that the sex will be consensual.⁵³ To ride a royal horse is understood as sex with a royal woman,⁵⁴ whereas to eat a partridge for a king signifies sex with a desirable woman.⁵⁵

Concerning the separate chapter on bestiality, Achmet, like Artemidorus, passes no moral judgement on the act itself, but builds his interpretation on whether the animal is familiar or unfamiliar to the dreamer, and whether it is wild or tame. Interestingly, to perform an act of penetration on a wild animal means that the dreamer will subject himself to a very powerful enemy but to be penetrated by a wild animal means that the dreamer will receive great goodness from an enemy. In contrast to Artemidorus' construct of sexual dynamics, here the passive sexual position is interpreted as auspicious and the active one as inauspicious. Generally, in Achmet's interpretation dreaming about having sex with anyone or anything apart from wild animals is auspicious for both the dreamer who will perform an act of kindness for someone and for the person who will be the receiver of that act.⁵⁶

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 156-159.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 234.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 205-6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁵⁶ *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet*, 142.

2.4. Manuel

In Manuel's dreambook only two types of birds, partridges and crows, signify women and both are representatives of negative femininity. A partridge is a dream symbol that predicts much-talked-about and tumultuous affairs of a noble woman because it sings excessively, whereas the crow signifies the words and disturbing actions of evil women who gossip.⁵⁷ In both instances verbal (vocal) excessiveness is designated in negative terms as a solely feminine trait. It seems that there is also a construction of social hierarchy by which noble women (partridge) are the ones whose activities start the gossip and women in general (crows) are the ones who gossip.

2.5. Are women important?

The value judgement of men and women on which Artemidorus bases his interpretations is that female animals have the same symbolic value, only in a lesser degree. Though rarely, women appear to represent the future of men. A female role is presented as dominant in relation to birth and the household; the qualities most often associated with animals that signify women in a dream are obedience, fertility, and health. On the other hand, negative traits that Artemidorus regularly assigns women are disobedience, deceitfulness, and lewdness. Also, beauty and support of the rider are presented as relevant female qualities that affect the man's future in relation to the symbol of a horse. The majority of animal symbols in Daniel's dreambook, however, relate to the dreamer's profit or loss, and enemies. The single mention of a woman in the text suggests that Daniel's intended dreamer was not that preoccupied with

⁵⁷ *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 199. References will be made to the English translation by Oberhelman in *Dreambooks in Byzantium*. The translation is based on the following edition: Armande Delatte, *Anecdota Atheniensia*, 2 vols, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège 36; Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège 99 (Liege: H. Vaillant-Carmanne and Paris: É. Champion, 1927–39). The original text is consulted where additional explanations are needed.

future relating to women in his life. Even though the dream about a snake is concise and formulaic, it can be noted that Daniel positions woman in a domestic setting away from the public sphere.

In Achmet's dreambook one again encounters dreams about animals in which the role of a female is limited to giving birth, and her positive or negative qualities and characteristics are being viewed within the limits of domestic space or the sexual domain. Although, in several instances, Achmet mentions a woman that is powerful and wealthy in her own right, the female role is in most cases conditioned by the social standing of the dreamer. Further, in the animal-related dreams that predict sexual intercourse Achmet's omnipresent social power structure that is crucial for his interpretations seems less defined. Namely, dreams predict sexual acts with women of the highest and the lowest social order, as well as with beautiful women and those that are of questionable morals. Like Artemidorus, Achmet shows no moral judgement regarding these dreams, and goes perhaps even further than Artemidorus in valuing the sexual act with an animal. Namely, he interprets a sexual intercourse with an animal as auspicious and useful for a dreamer regardless of the type of animal in question or the position of the dreamer during the sexual act. Finally, Manuel is as concise as Daniel regarding the animals that signify women in dreams. However, it can be noted that Manuel ascribes partridges and crows negative femininity associating them with gossip, affairs, and disturbances caused by excessive words. In contrast to the other three sources, Manuel does not associate femininity, fertility, sweet-temperedness, or erotic pleasures with birds, but rather primarily associates them with vocal excessiveness.

3. Society, success and failure

The predictive meaning of certain animals in dreams is not determined only by their character, appearance or gender, but also by their “social life.” In the interpretation of animal dreams, it is likewise taken into account whether the animal is solitary or it lives in a group, whether it dwells in the city or outside its walls or whether it belongs to native or non-native species.⁵⁸ Success and failure in the dreamer’s activities are generally important interpretations of dream symbols also with regard to animals and they are inseparably linked to the dreamer’s social success.

3.1. Artemidorus

Animals that are recognized as having socially desirable behaviour – such as living in the group and having an obedient attitude – signify partners and sociable men. Thus, Artemidorus interprets sheep as men and he considers them a good dream image for the dreamer’s future because they live in a compact community and because they obey the shepherd.⁵⁹ In comparison to the auspicious sheep symbol, birds such as starlings and jackdaws are somewhat negatively defined as symbols of a crowd, poor men, and useless confusion.⁶⁰ In Artemidorus’ text, birds that are assigned this meaning of tumultuous crowds are not perceived as a threat to the established social order and power structure. More than thousand years later, however, in the Manuel dreambook, a tumultuous flock of birds (sparrows) is represented as a danger to those in position of power.⁶¹ In Artemidorus’ interpretation, it is the farm animals (bulls, cattle,

⁵⁸ For animals as human exemplars see Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Best Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994). In particular, about the animal symbols and social hierarchy, 117-120.

⁵⁹ *Artemidorus’ Oneirocritica*, 173.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 200.

horses, mules, and asses) that pose internal threat to the established social hierarchy and order. Namely, when these animals are not yoked, they represent disobedient and arrogant men.⁶² Likewise, the disruptive and unruly behaviour of mules or asses in a dream predicts the violation of social boundaries in a waking state, such as the uprising of the subordinates against their superiors. The dichotomy between obedient, subordinate, controlled individual and unruly, hard-to-control, tumultuous crowds is clearly expressed in the interpretation of the oxen: draught oxen are interpreted as universally good sign as it is *good for all* to dream of them, but oxen that belong to a herd are symbolic predictions of a rebellion and scandal.⁶³

Animal traits such as size and strength, their individuality and gregariousness, the spaces they occupy, their position in the food chain, or a specific physical and behavioural quality are used as markers of different categories and relations within human society. Thus, Artemidorus interprets that large and dominant animals signify powerful and authoritative figures. A lion, elephant, large serpent (δράκων), and eagle signify a king.⁶⁴ Artemidorus makes the rationale behind the interpretation clear—they are the strongest of all animals. However, unlike a bear or a wild boar which are equally strong but also rapacious and savage, these animals are assigned a royal combination of traits—power and nobility. All of these animals are consequently associated with violence, punishments or harm. It seems that here again the distinction can be made between the demonstration of power by a royal and non-royal type - controlled, justifiable, and corrective on one side, and wild, uncontrollable and destructive on the other.

The symbolic space in between those presented as the highest and lowest in terms of social standing is filled with a wide range of animals that signify various vocations of what can anachronically be called the ‘middle class.’ Musical and sweet-voiced birds and insects like

⁶² *Ibid.*, 175.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 175; 179-181; 187.

swallows, nightingales, wrens, and cicadas signify orators, those devoted to the Muses, and well-spoken men. The snake is also symbol of an orator because of its split tongue. Ravens, crows, and jays stand for polyglots and learned men because they make polyphonic sounds.⁶⁵

Artemidorus makes singular mentions of a wide array of professions and vocations related to animals. These include generals, priests, perfume and spice dealers, healers, philosophers, those involved in legal proceedings, athletes, farmers, fishermen, dyers, sailors, and hunters. These, often decontextualized and one-time mentioned images, depict a colourful mishmash of everyday life of Artemidorus' time – for example, perfume and spice dealers battling with dung beetles or cockchafers, or an innkeeper being concerned that his wine will turn into vinegar because he dreamt of gnats who delight in it.⁶⁶

The only animals in Artemidorus' dreambook that signify slaves—in both instances household slaves—are domestic dogs and mice.⁶⁷ In the interpretation of the household dog symbol slaves are presented as a part of the domestic imagery. Being associated with the dreamer's wife and property they are generally an auspicious dream symbol. A mouse is a more explicit dream signifier of a slave. A slave is represented here in relation to his master, the dreamer, and surprisingly there is no reference to the relationship of dominance and subordination. Likewise, there is no mention of the slave's usefulness or his duties. A mouse-slave is someone who shares the same space with the master of the house and is nourished by the same things as the latter, but is also notably assigned an attribute of being disagreeable.

Artemidorus makes similar observations regarding a number of activities and vocations that are perceived—at least in the author's point of view—as existing on the margins of society in spatial, temporal, moral or legal terms. Thus, the nocturnal animals—like owls, night-raven, and barn owl—signify adulterers and thieves that need the cover of darkness for their activities

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 347; 349.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 171; 275.

or those that work during the night. Vultures are used as social markers for those that live outside the city. They – both the signifier and the signified – are also assigned the attributes of being defiled and cursed.⁶⁸ Loafers and the lazy are depicted in a dream as vultures that do not hunt and that feed on the prey of others; vultures should also be interpreted as corpse-bearers, undertakers, tanners, or those driven out of the city. Frogs signify charlatans and altar-lurkers.⁶⁹ Poisonous spiders, scorpions, millipedes, scorpion-fish, depict deviant, villainous or unpleasant men. The transgressors of the legal boundaries are crocodile-murderers and pirates, open or secretive thieves like wolves, hawks, kites, foxes, and ravens. The animals that infringe the human-animal divide by imitating the humans – apes, blackbirds, jays – are negatively interpreted as humans that infringe on the loose boundary between the natural and supernatural or magic.⁷⁰

Animals regularly appear in dreams that predict positive or negative outcomes in one's activities. In Artemidorus' text the predictive meaning of dogs in this regard is based on their function as hunting dogs. Hunting dogs generally signify someone's deeds and, specifically, deeds and earnings from abroad. Their auspicious or inauspicious value as dream symbols depends on whether they are performing activities associated with them, and on the space in which they appear in a dream. Thus, to dream of a dog departing for a hunt, hunting or catching something is good concerning one's deeds and accomplishments in the waking state. But, if someone dreams of a hunting dog in an urban setting or not performing his function, this foretells unemployment and lack of success.⁷¹

The notion of being active or passive can also be observed in the dream about an eagle. Namely, regarding the notions of success and business ventures an eagle that is observed sitting in a high and elevated place is a good sign for those who set out to engage in some activity, but

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁷¹ *Artemidorus' Oneirocritica*, 173.

a grievous sign for those who are afraid.⁷² However, in a different context regarding one's career, an eagle is a very auspicious sign for everyone. Namely, if a woman dreams she is giving birth to an eagle, she will give birth to a son who will be very prosperous and most successful within the boundaries of his social category. Thus, if he is poor, he will be a military leader and successfully wage wars; if he is of moderate means, he will become a famous athlete and if he is rich, he will rule and become a king.⁷³ The boundaries of success do not appear so strict when one has the dream of having the head of a lion, wolf, leopard or an elephant. This dream signifies that the dreamer will have success in ventures that exceed his abilities and it foretells utmost success in his actions, financial status, relations with friends and enemies, and in gaining public or command position. On the other hand, to have a head of a dog, horse, ass or any other four-footed animal is significant of slavery and hard labour.⁷⁴ Artemidorus seems to place wild and domesticated animals in opposition here. In terms of power, dominance, and success and in relation to the symbolism of the head in general, domesticity is perceived as negative, and wildness as a positive trait.

Failures, setbacks, and loss play an important role in the interpretation of dreams of animals. Negative outcome regarding one's activities is defined by different behavioral and physical traits of the animals that are perceived as inauspicious. Thus, a dream of nocturnal birds is predictive of a lack of success in the dreamer's affairs because they are active during the night, which is generally considered as an inactive period.⁷⁵ Out of more than fifty types of fish that Artemidorus interprets, those that have no scales and those with particularly slippery body are assigned negative meaning in relation to one's efforts, as well as wealth. The traits associated with these fish – for example different types of eels – are futile efforts and lack of wealth: the former because they easily slip through the hands when caught, and the latter

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 91;93.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 295.

because they have no scales that cover the body just as wealth covers men.⁷⁶ Insects are generally assigned with a negative meaning, but they are depicted as particularly ominous signs with regard to some specific occupations. Their dominant quality in the context of one's business is destructiveness. Thus, Artemidorus states that grasshoppers, locusts, and 'chewers' signify destruction of the of farmer's crops.⁷⁷ Also, mosquitos and gnats are described as insects that like vinegar, and it is not good for tavern-keepers or wine-sellers to see them in their dreams because they foretell that their wine will turn into vinegar.⁷⁸ These insects are therefore perceived as harmful pests that destroy the hard work of man.

Artemidorus' ambivalent treatment of animal dream symbols is particularly apparent in the interpretations whose positive or negative value regarding one's success varies according to the occupation of the dreamer. Namely, the same animal-symbol can be generally perceived as negative, but it changes its charge when associated with a particular vocation. For example, to dream that ants are going into someone's ears, predicts death because they are associated with earth; but, it is an auspicious sign for sophists, because for them ants signify young listeners.⁷⁹ Similarly, it is bad for everyone to dream about having the ears of an ass, except for philosophers for whom this dream symbol predicts that they will have focused and concentrated thoughts.⁸⁰ However, generally inauspicious animal symbols are often positively interpreted in the context of negatively perceived occupations. Thus, a dream about vultures that foretell death is positively interpreted for potters and tanners who are, like vultures, associated with corpses and spaces outside the city. Likewise, dung beetles, cockchafers, and glow-worms who are assigned a general meaning of harm and unemployment, are useful symbols for those with "filthy and unholy" occupations. And for those involved in "filthy labors" a dream about animal

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

manure is significant of profit, but for everyone else it predicts bad tempers, harm, and illness for the dreamer.⁸¹

3.2. Daniel

In the Daniel dreambook animal symbols do not reflect the social structure of the Byzantine society. The whole text contains but a few mentions of the specific social groups or the socially sensitive interpretations. In two instances regarding the animal related dreams the author makes distinction between the meaning of the dream for the ‘slaves’ and for the ‘free’, that is the ‘others.’⁸²

Daniel’s particular interest in predicting the future regarding the profitable or unprofitable outcomes of the dreamer’s activities is illustrated by the great number of animal dream entries that relate to this aspect of the dreamer’s life. Namely, one quarter of all animal-related entries in the dreambook foretell positive or negative outcome of the dreamer’s business ventures or predict dreamer’s financial status. These dreams include animals such as birds, pigs, young goats, mice, and cats. The profit they predict for the dreamer can come unexpectedly—for example, if someone dreams about a pig; or it can come from a business with a stranger—foretold by a dream about mice and cats. Lucrative travel can be predicted by a dream about a nest of young birds, and profits may also be the result of a friendship as in a dream about beautiful cattle or cattle that is standing still.⁸³

The interpretations of these dreams are predominantly positive. Dreams about animals predict definite loss in only a few instances. In these few unfavorable dreams, the interpretations are still less negative and point to hindrances in the dreamer’s actions or

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 189; 191; 197.

⁸² Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 60.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 112; 109; 113; 67.

unemployment.⁸⁴ The dominant positive approach regarding profitable activities of the dreamer is particularly illustrated by the fact that the author interprets as auspicious even those dreams that in other dreambooks do not show any indication of auspiciousness. For example, dreams about screeching ravens and crows, running lions and ploughing donkeys, which are all represented as favourable symbols in the context of gaining profit.⁸⁵

3.3. Achmet

In the opening chapters of his dream text Achmet tends to deny the dreams their universal quality.⁸⁶ At times he specifically distinguishes dreams that can only be dreamt by emperors or nobles. This dream imagery of the privileged has no interpretative value in the dreams of the common men. In the later chapters of the dreambook, however, the distinction between the interpretation of the dream of the royal and the common dreamer is not as apparent. Closer to the end of the text a ‘royal dream’ dreamt by a common man means that he will become a king, thus

If someone dreams that he found or procured an eagle, if he is the king, he will seize another king; if a commoner, he will become a king.⁸⁷

Throughout the whole dreambook Achmet assigns different interpretations to the same dream image according to the social position of the dreamer. In a dream of a noble man a common horse is a symbol of a female slave, but in a dream of a common man the horse

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 67-69.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 91; 98; 105.

⁸⁶ A rich bibliography on Byzantine society can be found in Elizabeth Jeffreys ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); concerning the particular aspects of Byzantine social life see particularly the section on institutions and relationships, which include discussion on the social hierarchy, court life, administration structure, 505-938. On the social hierarchy and power structure in the Byzantine royal circles see an essay by Paul Magdalino, “Court Society and Aristocracy” and John Haldon “Social Elites, Wealth, and Power” in John Haldon, ed., *A Social History of Byzantium* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 212-232. See also Tamara Talbot Rice, *Everyday Life in Byzantium* (London and New York: Batsford LTD and Putnam’s Sons, 1967).

⁸⁷ *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet*, 239. “ἐὰν ἴδῃ τις, ὅτι εὗρεν ἢ εὐπόρησεν ἀετόν, εἰ μὲν ἐστὶ βασιλεὺς, ἕτερον βασιλεία κατὰσχη, εἰ δὲ τοῦ κοινοῦ λαοῦ ὁ ἰδὼν, βασιλεύσει.”

symbolises his wife.⁸⁸ If a king dreams of killing a hawk or a falcon he will lose a man that holds a position second to the king's, but if a common man under someone's yoke has this dream it foretells that he will lose his master and that he will be oppressed and poor.⁸⁹

Compared to the Artemidorus text, Achmet uses more animal symbols to signify the king: elephant is no longer an explicit signifier of a king in Achmet's interpretation, but to Artemidorus' array of animal-kings (lion, dragon, eagle) he adds a leopard and a peacock.⁹⁰ Achmet, likewise, significantly increases a number of animals that signify powerful men and those that in a social hierarchy hold position close to the king – nobles, the wealthy, magistrates, officials, and very great and powerful men.

The strong association of animal symbols with social structures and their interactions can be observed in a wide range of animal body parts and products that are impregnated with the meaning of the animal they come from. Thus, to wear sandals made out of horse skin means that the dreamer will get a wife from a noble and powerful family. Horns are also the symbol of high status. Thus, bulls signify magistrates and rams very great men. A dream in which the dreamer is eating horse meat predicts that he will have a famous name and nobility.⁹¹ Somewhat more contextualized and perhaps more reality-bound seems the dream of riding in a royal carriage pulled by noble horses. To have this dream means the fulfilment of hopes and closeness to a king. If the carriage is pulled by oxen, the dreamer will rule over very powerful men because he will be appointed as a magistrate of a moderate.⁹² The dream of serving an eagle with food or something else predicts that the dreamer will get power, slaves, and luxury from the king.⁹³ To dream the same dream with an elephant is interpreted as a little more down the social scale—namely, the dream means that the dreamer will serve a great man from whom

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 205-06.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 233; 240.

⁹¹ *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet*, 202-03; 204-05.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 211-12.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 239-40.

he will profit.⁹⁴ In his interpretations Achmet pays more attention to the most powerful – kings, rulers, nobles, officers – and, by association to them, to the least authoritative social figures – slaves. The ‘middle class’ is noticeably disregarded in Achmet’s text.

In comparison with the proportionately numerous dreams that predict the dreamer’s profitable actions in Daniel’s dreambook, Achmet’s text contains but a few dreams and interpretations that relate to success or failure in such activities. The main manner of acquiring profit in Achmet’s dreambook is through social advancement, social contacts and networks, or by overpowering an enemy. Therefore, profit acquisition is presented mainly as a secondary outcome of a dream about an animal. This is also supported by the fact that the carriers of the meaning of profit, wealth, and gain are not animals themselves, but primarily animal-related products – for example, fur, leather, feathers, eggs, and animal body parts such as head or tail. Thus, for example, dreaming about eating the head of a ram predicts that the dreamer will receive profit from a high-ranking man who is symbolized by a ram.⁹⁵ Similarly, a dog is a symbol of a dishonorable enemy, and to eat his flesh in a dream signifies that the dreamer will get wealth from such type of enemy.⁹⁶

Therefore, in Achmet’s text animals are not directly associated with a particular business or profitable activity. Animals are symbols of men and positions that can be sources of profit. For example, an eagle and peacock signify a king. Therefore, dreaming about eating the flesh of a peacock or finding eagle feathers means that the dreamer will gain profit from a king.⁹⁷ In addition to the mentioned ways of gaining profit and wealth, Achmet includes women as an aside, but yet regular source of profit. Thus, products that come from animals that symbolize women, such as eggs of a partridge or a goose, signify wealth and profit that will

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 231-32.

⁹⁵ *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet*, 100.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 237; 240.

come from a beautiful or harmless woman. And, similarly, to find rabbit fur in a dream predicts that a dreamer will get profit from a prostitute.⁹⁸

3.4. Manuel

In Manuel's dreambook the meaning of a symbol is not related to a specific vocation or social position. Birds are generally presented as symbols of confusion. In the interpretation of dreams the author relates them to the Byzantine court: eagles represent tumults involving the emperor and other birds signify struggles involving emperor's magistrates; sparrows are predictive of confusion and distress related to the vulgar and uncouth crowds—the peasantry.⁹⁹ Common people are represented in a dream by sparrows, bees, and rabbits. Sparrows and bees are depicted as destructive symbols of crowds that have the potential to overthrow the emperor. Manuel appears to present them in a scornful as attacking, impeding, causing the demise for the dreamer, and predicting, among other interpretations, that “if the birds overpowered him, he will be overpowered by commoners and have a full measure of evil.”¹⁰⁰ Rabbits, on the other hand, signify men who are not threatening for the established power structure, and who can be managed or completely destroyed.¹⁰¹

In Manuel's dreambook animals are not used as symbols of business activities or profit. The interest in the future with regard to someone's profit appears to be almost completely absent in the dreambook. The only examples in which the author refers to the acquisition of profit are dreams about food. Fish, mutton, and pork are presented as auspicious symbols with regard to making profit. Fish and pork are generally positive, while the auspicious meaning of

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 243; 242-43; 234.

⁹⁹ Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 200.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, “εἰ δὲ κατεκυριεύθη, ἡττηθήσεται καὶ παρ’ αὐτῶν [τῶν κοινῶν λαῶν] ἐμπλησεται.”

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 216.

mutton is conditioned by the quality of the meat and limited to gain obtained through lawsuit.¹⁰²

This almost complete silence can perhaps be interpreted as author's or audiences' lack of interest in material gain.

3.5. Structures

Artemidorus depicts a very complex social structure. He describes and elaborately presents a social hierarchy from its highest point – the ruler that is signified by large and dominant animals, to the lowest position occupied by slaves that are signified by mice. In between, Artemidorus discusses a variety of occupations with particular mention of those on the margins of society. However, Artemidorus is not concerned with the social and power relations between the particular social groups or with the interplays of dominance and subordination between them. Between the rulers and slaves as the endpoints of the social scale, there are numerous animals that symbolize what is anachronistically called the middle class: orators, artists, scientists, generals, priests, perfumes and spices dealers, doctors, philosophers, lawyers, athletes, farmers, fishermen, sailors and hunters.

Unlike Artemidorus', in the dreambook of Daniel the social lineage of the Byzantine society is barely visible in the interpretation of dreams with animals. Most of the animal-related interpretations refer to the business of a dreamer and most often have an auspicious meaning that may indicate a kind of pondering of the interpreter to those he wrote the dream book for.

Achmet dedicated his dreambook to the king, which undoubtedly influenced his conception and content. In the early chapters, Ahmet had a tendency to distinguish dreams that can only be dreamt by kings and nobles and separated them from dreams of an ordinary dreamer. In the later text, the difference between the king's dream and the dream of ordinary

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 196; 212.

dreamers is not emphasized. When compared with Artemidorus, Achmet's dreambook almost doubled the number of animals symbolizing the king: it grew from four to seven, which was influenced by the royal addressee of the dreambook. Additionally, Ahmet significantly increases the number of animals that signify powerful people and those whose social position is close to the king. Interpretations also apply to slaves, but members of the "middle class" are excluded.

In Achmet's dreambook the outcomes of one's business activities are associated with parts of animals, but not the animals themselves. Even less interest in linking material gain with animals in dreams shows Manuel. This can be related to the fact that Manuel, as well as Achmet, was focused on the events at the court, but unlike Achmet, Manuel's interpretations of the events outside the court were also determined by his position in court. He is clearly focused on recognizing in a dream the threats to the court: the tumults and rebellions of the subordinates.

4. Emotions

Emotions play different roles in the interpretation of animal dreams in all four dreambooks and their interpretative significance varies in each dreambook. However, their presence is consistent throughout the dreams about animals and their interpretations. The range of human emotions presented in the dreams is narrow. I specifically focus on three basic emotions that are most frequently expressed in relation to animal imagery in dreams, namely, joy, sorrow, and fear.¹⁰³

4.1. Artemidorus

Emotions do not play an important role in Artemidorus' interpretations. Only few dreams about animals predict the future emotional life of the dreamer. In the interpretations of these dreams the scale of emotions is reduced to two states—the state of fear or grief and sorrow. The animal imagery is presented as either evoking emotions or freeing the dreamer from them.

In the dreams that are predictive of the dreamer's emotional state the interpretation of animal symbols is based on a variety of interpretive principles. Thus, Maltese dogs are characterised by their function as pleasure-dogs and to dream that they are suffering, foretells grief and sorrow for a dreamer.¹⁰⁴ The fearsome nature of a lion and leopard is an essential trait that Artemidorus uses to predict fear for a dreamer. Furthermore, elephants incite fear not only because of their frightening nature, but also because of the unfamiliarity that is associated with

¹⁰³ Generally about emotions see, for instance, Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006); emotions viewed in a particular, domestic context in Susan Broomhall ed., *Emotions in the Household 1200-1900* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

¹⁰⁴ *Artemidorus' Oneirocritica*, 173. For the comprehensive overview of the emotion of grief and sadness in Graeco-Roman antiquity see Thorsten Fögen ed., *Tears in Graeco-Roman World* (Berlin and New York: DeGruyter, 2009), particularly the essay by Douglas L. Cairns, *Weeping and Veiling: Grief, Display and Concealment in Ancient Greek Culture*, 37-58.

this animal.¹⁰⁵ On the other value spectrum are animals that predict freedom from fear or grief. Dreaming about nocturnal birds brings freedom from fears, presumably because of the ease with which they occupy night time not being hindered by the darkness.¹⁰⁶ Finally, even the dream about lice is put in the positive context in which getting rid of them represents release from grief and worry.¹⁰⁷

In two instances Artemidorus constructs an animal's emotional value based on the personal experience and preference. Namely, the author challenges the traditional interpretation of black sheep as grievous symbol and the swallow as bearer of death and grief by asserting positive values for these signs.¹⁰⁸ In Artemidorus text, thus, prominent traits that are considered as bearers of the negative emotion—the colour black and the swallow's dirge—are overpowered by the authors personal observations and given a positive interpretation. For example, even though “the old-timers maintained that of sheep [and goats], white ones are good, but black are grievous,” Artemidorus observes that “both white and black, are good.”¹⁰⁹ Finally, regardless of the multiple reasoning that Artemidorus uses for the emotional characterisation of a few animal symbols, they come down to only two emotions – that of fear and grief. But even though negative emotions dominate the dreams and interpretations that specifically relate to the dreamer's future emotional life, Artemidorus' animal text should not be characterised as emotionally negative but rather as unemotional.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 295.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 173 and 245.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 173. “ὡς μὲν οἱ παλαιοὶ συνέχεον, λευκὰ μὲν ἀγαθὰ, μέλανα δὲ πονηρά. ὡς δὲ ἐγὼ ἐτήρησα, προβατὰ καὶ λευκὰ καὶ μέλανα ἀγαθὰ.”

4.2. Daniel

In Daniel's dreambook one again finds the prevalence of negative emotions. About a dozen animal dream entries are specifically associated with a certain emotion and more than half of these relate to fear or grief – red deer, snakes, and wild animals in general predict fear; bear, row meat, and honey predict grief for the dreamer.¹¹⁰ However, the state of fear here is not indefinite—it can be alleviated for example, a dream about a snake means that the dreamer will initially experience fear that will eventually change to honour;¹¹¹ in dreams about deer and wild animals the sense of fear is alleviated by the fact that it will be fear “without danger.”¹¹²

In Daniel's dreambook the range of emotional states is wider than in Artemidorus' text. The author predicts that the dreamer can also experience anxiety and displeasure if he dreams about snakes, eels, or beef.¹¹³ But to dream about running cattle predicts that the dreamer will experience joy.¹¹⁴ Also, emotions appear to be more expressive here than in Artemidorus. Namely, the feelings of joy and anxiety are accompanied by the attribute “great”. In addition to this, Daniel introduces the negatively charged emotion of hate. He specifically associates this feeling with the dog symbol and the dreamer's hatred is directed towards the enemy which is depicted as a dog in several more dream entries.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ For short overview of the history of emotions in Byzantium see Martin Hinterberger, “Emotions in Byzantium” in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Chichester: Malden, 2010), 123-34; on the phenomenon of fear see Radivoj Radić's extensive study “Страх у позној Византији, 1180-1453., I, II.” [*Fear in Late Byzantium, 1180-1453., I, II*] (Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2000). An interesting reading about sorrow in which the visual presentations of the emotion are analysed is the article by Henry Maguire, “The Depiction of Sorrow in Middle Byzantine Art,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 31 (1977): 122-174.

¹¹¹ Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 76.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 78; 85.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 107; 78; 91.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

4.3. Achmet

Achmet's dreambook reveals little interest in expanding the range of predicted emotions. Numerous interpretations of the dreams about animals that relate to the dreamer's future emotional states mainly refer to three emotions – joy, sorrow, and fear. However, Achmet constructs a very vivid dream context which evokes or frees from such emotions.

The special interpretative status of kings throughout the dreambook can also be observed in the interpretations that relate to human emotions. Royal emotions in this regard are the same as everyone else's—kings experience joy or sorrow too.¹¹⁶ However, their emotions are a result of royal concerns or royal actions. The king feels sorrow for his kingdom, people, army, and his relatives. If he dreams that “his horse slipped during this game [polo], he will become severely ill and grieve over his kingdom” or if he observes in a dream that “his sheep died from disease, [...] another person of power will cause him to grieve over his subjects.”¹¹⁷ In these dreams the animal imagery functions as a signifier of the things a king might feel sorrowful about, but they are not in themselves bearers of negative emotions. On the contrary, animals symbolise things that a king cherishes the most. Thus, the horse is interpreted as his kingdom, sheep as his people, asses as his relatives.¹¹⁸ The actions or circumstances associated with these animals are the bearers of the negative predictive meaning of the dream, that is, for example, a horse falling in the game of polo and sick sheep or asses dying both mean that the king will experience sorrow in the future. A kind of an exception to the mentioned interpretative rationale is the king's dream about flies and mosquitos in the sense that animals in this instance do not directly symbolise things important to the king, but a threat.¹¹⁹ Namely, this dream

¹¹⁶ I am taking the word *θλίψις* to mean “sorrow,” as S. Oberhelman has translated the term throughout the Achmet's dreambook. The more precise translation might be “oppression, affliction” according to the Liddell, H. and R. Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn. (Oxford, 1968), 798.

¹¹⁷ *The Oneirocriticon of Achmet*, 157; 214. “ἐὰν ἴδῃ ὁ βασιλεὺς, ὅτι ὁ ἵππος αὐτοῦ ὠλίσθησεν ἐν τῷ παιγνίῳ τούτῳ, εἰ μὲν ἔπεσεν, ὀξέως νοσήσει καὶ θλιβήσεται ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ;” “εἰ δὲ ἴδῃ, ὅτι νόσῳ ἀπέθανον τὰ πρόβατα αὐτοῦ, [...] θλιβήσεται ἀπὸ ἄλλου ἐξουσιάζοντος ἐν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ.”

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 206-07.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 243.

predicts the king's sorrow over his army because the appearance of these insects in a dream predicts the appearance of enemies, that is, bad news about the king's army and his subsequent sorrow.

In most instances, king's sorrow is associated with his failure to perform royal functions. The king's control over his horse in the game of polo is thus analogous to his control over the kingdom and the fall or slippage of the horse predicts the loss of control and royal authority. The dreams about king's sheep and flies and mosquitos can be observed in the same light, namely, as predicting the sorrow for the king because of the loss of authority. Thus, if the king dreams that his sheep died because of disease, he will feel sorrow over his subjects caused by other powerful person,¹²⁰ and if he dreams that flies and mosquitos appeared before him he will experience sorrow over his army because of the enemies.¹²¹ Thus, the king's sorrow is represented as a reaction to his loss of authority and control over his kingdom, subjects, and the army. In the dream context this is depicted through unskillful riding of the horse, loss of sheep due to disease, and loss of the army due to military defeat. The sorrow is therefore not represented as a feeling or a personal experience of the king, but rather as a reaction when different aspects of his power are threatened. Only in the dream about asses, royal sorrow is represented as a personal emotional response to the death of relatives.¹²²

Considerably more numerous are the dreams that predict the emotional state of joy for the king. Namely, a king's experience of joy is regularly connected to his enemies and the scenes of their subjugation and degradation. These scenes depict severed heads of rams being brought before the king,¹²³ wild and untamed cattle being tied, chained, and brought before the king,¹²⁴ or the king hunting and catching a deer or any other horned animal.¹²⁵ The violent

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 207.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 213-14.

scenes graphically predict that the king will overpower his enemies which are regularly signified by different horned animals. The severed heads of animals, hunted horned animals, or tethered wild animals are motifs that regularly appear as dream images that predict the feeling of joy for the king. The attributes such as “horned” and “wild” assign the enemies of the king an authority, a destructive trait, and a threatening character. Thus, the destruction of these animals in his dreams establishes or strengthens the king’s authority and dominance, and it is therefore represented as a source of his joy.

Dreaming about a horse is a display of a different type of royal power that is interpreted as future joy for the king. Namely, the king’s dream about sitting on “a steed that is erect and stamping the ground with its hoofs” predicts joy for the king “in both his *augusta* and kingdom.”¹²⁶ The royal power described in this dream is in opposition to the conquering and destructive military power from the previous examples exercised over the king’s enemies. Namely, the future joy of the king in this dream stems from his skillful and steady control over the horse, that is, from the steady and assertive rule over his kingdom. Thus, like sorrow, the joy of the king is associated with his enemies and his kingdom. It is represented more as a reaction to the successful exertion of power and assertion of royal authority, than the personal experience or affective state of the king himself.

Royal dreams about women, however, are ambiguous in this regard. Animals representing women in dreams, such as the aforementioned horse or partridges the king is hunting in his dream,¹²⁷ can be understood both as a source of sexual pleasure and as an object over which the king exercises his dominance. In addition to this, women indirectly elicit joy because they give birth to male heirs. For example, if the king dreams that he is raising a lioness and lion cubs in his palace,¹²⁸ or if he is hunting with a tame eagle both mean that he will beget

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 231.

a son in whom he will rejoice.¹²⁹ Thus, women can play a variety of roles in dreams that predict the joy of the king. They can be represented as empresses, beautiful women, or mothers. In each of these instances, the interpretation is based on the sexual power and dominance that the king exercises over them.

The feelings of sorrow and joy of the dreamers other than the king appear to be more mundane and relatable. In this case, the rationale behind the interpretation of animal dreams that are associated with future emotional states of the dreamer is not presented as a complex interplay between different symbols of power and a constant struggle to assert one's authority and dominance. The sorrows and joys of the non-royal dreamer are regularly evoked by dreams about animals that signify suffering loss or making profit. Therefore, the defining animal trait in this regard is its profitability and usefulness in gaining profit. Thus, sorrow is associated with worms which are interpreted as unprofitable and a dream about defecating them signifies the release from anxiety and sorrow.¹³⁰ Also, the image of losing an animal in a dream regularly associates the state of poverty and the feeling of sorrow. The animal in this case is depicted either as a symbol of wealth in itself or as a symbol of the source of wealth for the dreamer. Thus, on the one hand, to lose sheep in a dream predicts poverty and sorrow for the dreamer,¹³¹ on the other hand, to lose chickens predicts the loss of profitable slaves and sorrow.¹³² In addition to this, the feeling of sorrow for the dreamers other than the king is related not only to the future financial loss of the dreamer, but also to the loss of power and the position the dreamer occupies in the social hierarchy. In the dream, this loss of power is signified by the act of selling animals that are imbued with the meaning of power such as farm-oxen or rams. The intensity of sorrow over the loss of power in these instances is analogous to the amount of gold

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 242.

or silver gained from the sale.¹³³ Therefore, it can be inferred that the holding of a position of power is represented as more valuable than its financial equivalent. To conclude, in the non-royal dreams about animals in Achmet's dreambook the feeling of sorrow is represented by the loss or death of the animal that is perceived as profitable or powerful. In comparison to the king's transcendent sorrow over his kingdom, people, and the army, other dreamers are depicted as more self-absorbed and more concerned about their financial status and social standing.

The feeling of joy for dreamers other than the king is predominantly associated with the dreamer's household and increase in his financial status. Namely, in the dreams that signify joy for the dreamer animals are regularly placed either in a domestic dream setting or they are interpreted as relating to the domestic realm of the dreamer. For example, to skillfully ride a horse in the dream is interpreted as exercising power and control over one's household and is therefore associated with joy.¹³⁴ Also, to dream about bringing home useful and profitable animals such as asses or draught-oxen predicts good fortune, dominance, and joy in relation to the dreamer's domestic domain. In the majority of dreams about animals, however, the joy of non-royal dreamers is associated with wealth and acquisition of power. Thus, to find bird feathers or to consume animal products such as milk or meat is regularly interpreted as a financial gain or increase in one's wealth and power and, therefore, represented as a source of joy for the dreamer. This joy-bearing wealth can come, for example, through female slaves if one dreams about finding pigeon feathers,¹³⁵ or through very prominent and powerful man if one dreams about eating deer meat,¹³⁶ or through the king himself if one dreams about drinking lion milk.¹³⁷

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 231.

The basic emotion of fear in the interpretation of animal dreams in Achmet's dreambook is specifically represented as the fear of authority and powerful figures. It is generated and constantly reinforced in the hierarchical social environment as the one-way emotional reaction to the exertion of authority by those that occupy higher positions in the social power structure. This fear that the dreamer will experience in his future waking life in the dream is incited by animals that symbolise powerful and fearsome figures of authority, such as lions, leopards, or panthers.¹³⁸ In the dream they are presented as struggling or wrestling with the dreamer, attacking, chasing or wounding him. The regular outcome of such dreams for the dreamer is fear from rulers and various officials that is often accompanied by punishment. Thus, fear associated with animal imagery in Achmet's dreambook is a social fear and an emotional expression of the hierarchical social relations. Fear is never associated with the dreams of the king, it is presented as the emotion of the subordinates.

4.4. Manuel

The notion that the king does not experience fear appears to be expanded and made evident in the dreambook of Manuel. Namely, apart from one instance where fish are interpreted as fear because of their fearful nature and trembling,¹³⁹ the dreams that contain animal imagery and their interpretations throughout the dreambook do not associate the dreamer with the waking emotional states or expressions. The interpretations concerning the predicted enemy attacks, rebellion of common people, military successes, or financial gains, do not pertain to any

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 230-233. "The lion signifies a king" [Ὁ λέων εἰς πρόσωπον βασιλέως κρίνεται.]; "The panther is judged as an implacable enemy" [Ὁ πάρδος εἰς ἐχθρὸν ἀδιάλλακτον κρίνεται.]; "The leopard is interpreted as a noble and great enemy and as a king" [Ὁ λεοντόπαρδος εἰς ἐχθρὸν εὐγενῆ καὶ μέγαν καὶ εἰς βασιλέα κρίνεται].

¹³⁹ Oberhelman, *Dreambooks in Byzantium*, 195.

emotional expression of the dreamer who appears to be emotionally detached in comparison to the emotionally charged royal figure depicted in Achmet's dreambook.

4.5. Fear, sorrow, and joy

The range of emotions in Artemidorus' text is reduced to two emotional states – grief and fear. The particular prediction of the dreamer's future emotional state rarely occurs in Artemidorus' dreambook. The reason behind this could be the nature of the work which he conceived as a scientific treatise, or, perhaps, this can be viewed in the context of the idiosyncratic interpretative rule to which Artemidorus regularly complies, understanding the emotion as a dreamer's personal reaction to the predicted event.

Already Daniel expands this range by adding the feeling of hate and offering a far more nuanced view on the emotional experience. He also makes further distinction between fear incited by real danger and fear experienced with no particular danger. It appears that Daniel considers emotions a dynamic and, perhaps, inner phenomenon that does not require an outer incentive. Namely, in the dream about a snake Daniel presents an emotional state as changing by itself from negative (fear) to positive (honour) with no external cause to influence the change. This seems in contradiction to Artemidorus simple understanding that removing an external cause of the emotion such as lice means freedom from grief.

A great number of Achmet's interpretations that relate to the emotional state of the dreamer concern the king. The analysis of this part of the dreamer's life also reflects the distinguished status the royal dreamer has in Achmet's dreambook. The king's sorrow is depicted as a reaction to the dangers that pose threat to different domains of his power, but far more numerous are dreams which predict future joy for the king. The sorrow and joy of the common dreamer are signified by animals that symbolise loss or profit. The fear in Achmet's dreambook is a social emotion that is not experienced by the king; it is an emotion reserved for

those of lower social positions. Similarly, fear does not occur in the Manuel dreambook.¹⁴⁰ It appears that both in Achmet's and Manuel's dreambooks emotions or the lack of them served as socially distinguishing markers and that fear was deliberately removed from any royal context.

¹⁴⁰ “In spite of everything, basileis were men with weaknesses inherent to every man. They could also become victims of fear just as every common man among their subordinates. Basileis feared rebellions, death, illness and epidemics, and invasions of foreign armies.”, [“Упркос свему, и василевси су били људи са слабостима које су својствене сваком човеку. И они су могли да буду жртве страха не разликујући се притом од свих осталих обичних људи који су били њихови поданици. Цареви су се бојали преврата, зазирали су од смрти, страховали од болести и епидемија, стрепели од упада непријатељских војски.”], Радивој Радић, [Radivoj Radić], *Страх у позној Византији 1180-1453, I-II* [Fear in Late Byzantium 1180-1453, I-II] (Belgrade: Stubovi kulture, 2000), 252.

5. Conclusion

The Greek dreambooks which were written over a period of more than a millennium and whose authors, precise places and time of creation often cannot be determined, contain a significant part of complex and diverse animal symbolism. I researched four key Greek dreambooks in this respect: Artemidorus' dreambook, written in the ancient period, Daniel's dreambook, which dates back to the beginning of the Byzantine period, the dreambook of Achmet, which belongs to the middle Byzantine period, and Manuel's dreambook, from the very end of the Byzantine Empire.

The authors found the physical, psychological and social characteristics of certain animals similar to the characteristics of a man, his community and his situation. These similarities, to which the similarity of the names was often added, served as the basis for dream interpreters to analyse human dreams in certain periods of Greek history, in order to predict favorable or unfavorable future for the dreamer.

My research was focused on how animal symbols in the selected dreambooks convey the concepts of gender, social structure and emotional modes of the time in which they were created, and how much of patterns can be found in their form and content. By studying dreams in which animals symbolize gender relations, I found that in Artemidoros' dreambook a man is presented as dominant in relation to a woman. Inferiority of a woman is reflected through her peripheral social position and her social role reduced to giving birth and maintaining a household. Therefore, obedient, fertile, beautiful, but lewd animals are those signifying a woman in Artemidoros' dreambook.

In his only interpretation concerning women, Daniel, like his predecessor, designates the house as a place of a woman's social life. The symbol of a woman is a snake, but a snake that has neither a positive nor a negative connotation assigned to it.

Achmet shares his attitude toward a woman's place in society with Artemidorus and Daniel. It is interesting that he, considering the time when his dream book was written, has the same liberal view of sexual relations as Artemidorus. Ahmet does not take a moral attitude toward them; sexual intercourse with animals in dream he considers auspicious and useful for the dreamer regardless of the type of animal or the position of the dreamer in the intercourse. Manuel only mentions a couple of birds as symbols of women. Partridges and crows are attributed negative femininity by relating them to gossip, affairs, and distress caused by excessive words.

The second subject of my research was the image of a society transmitted by dreams with animals. The image contained in Artemidorus' dreambook can be seen as the most general and detailed. He presents in detail the social hierarchy of the time in which he lived. Small and inconspicuous mice, signifying slaves, are at the bottom of the hierarchy, large and dominant animals are at its top, while there are also many animals that symbolize what is anachronistically called the middle class – craftsmen, intellectuals, merchants, soldiers.

The abundance of Artemidorus' representation of society is completely omitted in Daniel's dreambook. Interpretation of dreams with animals in this text relates only to business activities.

Achmet's dreambook is less diversified regarding the number of social positions and occupations compared to Artemidorus', but more dedicated to the relationships between the social groups that he considers. Admittedly, in comparison to Artemidorus, Achmet increased the number of animals that symbolize powerful people and those who are close to the king and court. Also, he did not reduce the interpretations related to the slaves, but he completely left out members of the "middle class" who are the most picturesque layer of Artemidorus' view of society. Like Ahmet, Manuel is mostly focused on prediction of court events, but as an

insider, it seems that he devotes most of his attention to the prediction of what is potentially dangerous to the court and ruler.

Unlike the representation of society, Artemidorus' dreambook is poorer than Daniel's when it comes to emotions in the interpretation of dreams. While Artemidorus' contains only two emotional states – grief and fear, Daniel's also introduces hatred. In addition to this, Daniel presents emotions more graphically than Artemidorus. In Achmet's dreambook, the most dominant royal emotion is joy, although there is sadness in the interpretations that announce the threat to the ruling position. Sadness and joy in the dream of an ordinary dreamer are related to the animals that symbolize loss or profit. In Manuel's dreambook animal symbols are not associated with emotions such as fear, sadness, or joy, except in one case.

After researching the relationship between dreams and “reality” in Greek dream books in three fields: gender, society, and emotions, the conditionality of animal symbols is shown by the attitude towards animals in real life. However, rather than this “reality”, the meaning of animal symbols in dreams was stronger influenced by the social position of the interpreter and the group to which he intended the dreambook. In my opinion, it would be useful to research how much the structure and content of the dreambooks were influenced by “predecessors,” either as other written sources or as part of an oral tradition that previous generation had transmitted to popular use, and then returned from it in a written medium.

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