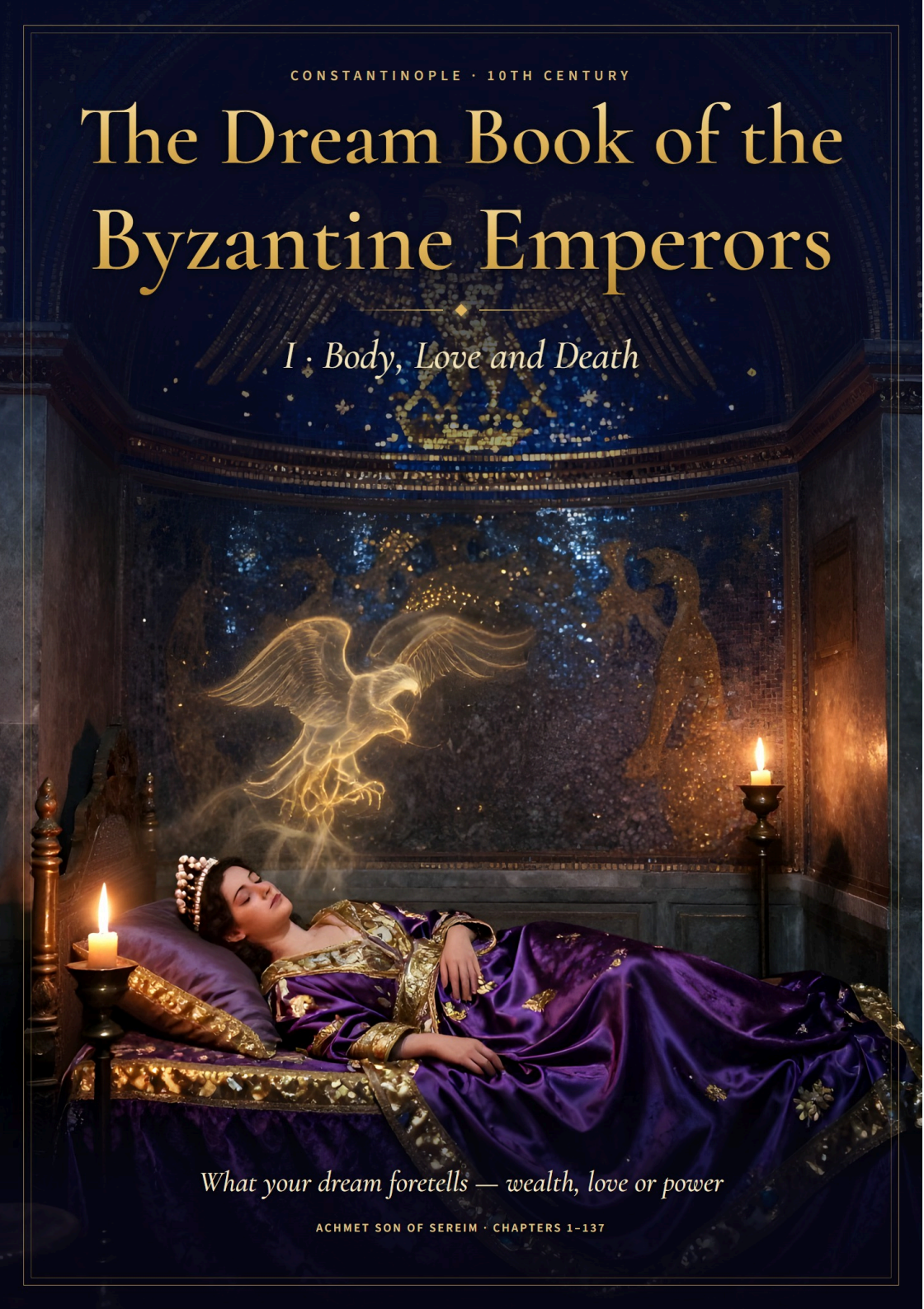
CONSTANTINOPLE · 10TH CENTURY

The Dream Book of the Byzantine Emperors

I : Body, Love and Death



What your dream foretells — wealth, love or power

ACHMET SON OF SEREIM · CHAPTERS 1–137

BOOKS OF WISDOM · NO. 102

The Dream Book of the Byzantine Emperors

I. Body, Love and Death

The Byzantine dream book of Achmet, son of Sereim — what dreams foretell of wealth, love, power and death. Book I of three: Chapters 1–137. Complete translation from the Greek after the Paris edition of 1603, with notes, a foreword and commentary

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that they should be believed as wholly certain and tested predictions of truth, but so that men may understand the divine warnings given through dreams, and, being warned by them, may not scorn God but turn back from their errors.

The wisdom of understanding, by which the outcome of what is to come is known beforehand.

2. From the Teaching of the Indians

Syrbacham[1], the dream interpreter of the king of the Indians, says: The greatest wisdom of the prophets is this, when the judgment and solution of dreams is offered to all as a gift from God, as it is written somewhere in the holy Gospels also: "To him who loves me, I and the Father will come, and we will make our dwelling with him." And this is fulfilled in visions. Joseph bears witness to it, he to whom Mary, the mother of the light, was entrusted, when it was made known to him through a vision. Likewise Daniel[2] and most of the prophets were taught what is divine through visions. Let all therefore be assured that the sight of dreams is a divine message to every people about all things, good and bad alike. And let no one suppose that there is one judgment and one solution for a single dream among different persons. For the dreams of kings have their own judgment and solution, and likewise those of rulers and the wealthy have their own, and those of the needy and the poor have their own. In the same way there is one judgment of the dreams of women and another of men; one in summer, and another in the season of winter. For this reason the interpreter of dreams ought all the more to be shrewd and well learned, and always to hold the fear of God. For them the judgment is the more secure, because it has been granted to them by God. And the divine dream is shown not only to the good, but also to the wicked and to sinners, and this because of the abundance of God's mercy, as he feeds even those who deny and blaspheme him. So now, in the power of the holy, beginningless and indivisible Trinity, I begin the interpretation.

1 The dream interpreter of the king of the Indians, on whose teaching Achmet draws.
2 An Old Testament prophet who interpreted dreams at the court of the king of Babylon.

If someone sees in a dream that he worships the idol of Aphrodite, he will win renown before the man of the Augusta[1]. Likewise for the other stars and the great men of the king, the same judgment.

If someone sees himself worshipping the fire that never dies in the temples: if he is a king, and sees that a foul smoke as it were came out of the fire, he will be warred upon by enemies and put to flight. If the smoke is sweet-smelling, he will win a far-famed victory over his enemies.

If one of the common people sees it, he will serve a king, and it will turn out for him in proportion to the stench.

If a woman sees it in relation to her husband, it will likewise turn out for her according to the scent.

If someone sees that he has built a temple and set fire in it for the people's worship: if he is a king, he will make a king in his council, and the people will accept him.

If a king sees that he has built a new wall, whether inside or outside the wall of his city, likewise he makes a king of his own ruling with him; provided, of course, that he has not pulled down an old wall. For if he has, his kingdom will be changed.

If it is one of the common people and the great men who sees this, doing it without the king's ordering, he will become a plotter against the king; and if he finished the building, his plot will prevail; if he did not finish, he will be defeated and destroyed by the king.

If a woman sees this in relation to the Augusta, matters will turn out likewise for her, accordingly.

14. On Faith, from the Teaching of the Egyptians

If someone sees in a dream that he is worshipping gods or idols, or animals, or trees, then he will find favor with Pharaoh and his great men, in proportion to the nobility of the idols, animals and trees.

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1 Here, the king's wife (Latin "augusta", an emperor's consort).

32. On Cupping and Bloodletting, from the Teaching of the Indians

If someone sees that he has been cupped[1], and the one who cupped him was a stranger, then against the one who was cupped someone will write and commit to paper grievous accusations; and as much blood as was drawn off, so much will be taken from his money. If the one who cupped him was known to him, the one cupped will undergo the same judgment and solution, either from the one he saw, or likewise from some other acquaintance.

If someone sees that he has himself cupped another, an acquaintance: if he has a fearful quarrel with him, he will overcome him and gain from him; if he has enmity with him, he will become fearless of him.

If the one who cupped him was a stranger and the one cupped was younger, then that man will be his enemy, and the dreamer will trample him down and take away his possessions.

If someone sees that he was cupped by an old man, or that he cupped an old man, then the old man is the fortune of the one who sees; if he cupped the old man, his fortune will be confirmed for the good; but if he was cupped by the old man, the one who sees this will be unfortunate.

If someone sees that a vein of his was opened by someone, because of illness or for the care of the body, he will come to a great outlay of his money, in proportion to the blood, and through this very outlay he will find a reward for his soul.

If he opened the vein of an acquaintance, by lawful judgment he will win the wealth of the one whose vein was opened. If the one whose vein was opened was a stranger and younger, then the one who opened it will trample down his enemy and win the greater part of his property.

1 An ancient medical practice: a heated cup or horn was set on the skin to draw blood to the surface; it was often combined with small incisions. A medieval notion; not medical advice.

If someone sees in a dream that his voice became short and thin, he will find a life full of pain and affliction; and if he has an adversary, he will be defeated by him.

If a ruler of the people sees this, he will be defeated in war.

51. On the Voice, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians

If someone sees in a dream that his voice became broad and great, his children will be made great and exalted, and his enemies will find fear.

If someone sees that he sings to the cithara[1], or hears one who sings to the cithara: if he is a king, he will prepare counsels against his enemies, and will be defeated.

If he sees that the strings were cut, the suffering will fall upon the rulers of his people.

If someone sees that he became hoarse, he will be despised by his servants.

If he was poor, he will die in his poverty.

52. On the Eyes, from the Teaching of the Indians

The eyes are faith, and glory, and the light of the soul.

If someone sees in a dream that he was completely blinded, he will lose his faith and will be short-lived.

If someone sees that of his two eyes one eye was blinded, he will lose half of his faith and will be put to shame in the midst of many.

If someone sees that his eyes were weakened, he will sin greatly, but will repent.

If someone sees that he appeared to men as one who does not see, yet in truth his sight remained unharmed, he will pretend uncleanly before the people, but before God he will be pure. As much of his light as was left him in the dream, so much will he be troubled about his faith. If someone sees that he heals his eyes of a sickness and it takes effect, he will come to repentance and will adorn his wealth.

1 An ancient stringed instrument, akin to the lyre.