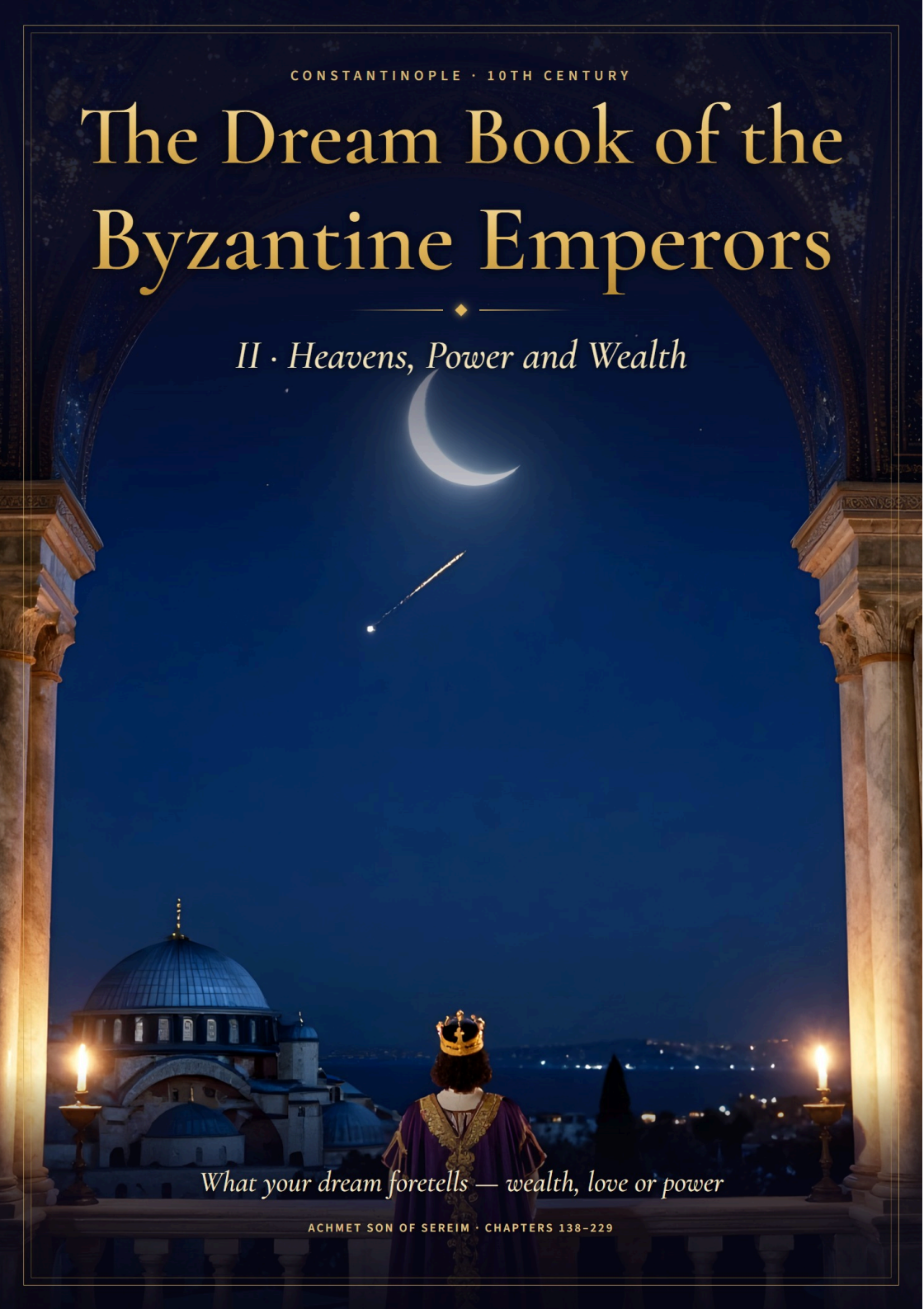
CONSTANTINOPLE · 10TH CENTURY

# The Dream Book of the Byzantine Emperors

## *II · Heavens, Power and Wealth*



*What your dream foretells — wealth, love or power*

ACHMET SON OF SEREIM · CHAPTERS 138–229

BOOKS OF WISDOM · NO. 102

# The Dream Book of the Byzantine Emperors

## *II. Heavens, Power and Wealth*

The Byzantine dream book of Achmet, son of Sereim — what dreams foretell of wealth, love, power and death. Book II of three: Chapters 138–229. Complete translation from the Greek after the Paris edition of 1603, with notes, a foreword and commentary

BlusaBooks · MMXXVI

© 2026 BlusaBooks (SIA "Blusa Entertainment"). Modern English text, notes, foreword and commentary.
Source: Achmet son of Sereim, «Oneirocriticon» (Byzantine, c. 10th century), after N. Rigault's edition «Artemidori Daldiani et Achmetis Sereimi f. Oneirocritica», Paris, 1603 (Duke University copy, archive.org); Greek text with J. Leunclavius's Latin translation; text in the public domain. Translated from the Greek; no images of the printed edition are reproduced. A historical source: statements on health or other matters reflect medieval belief, not medical or any other advice.

BLUSABOOKS · MMXXVI

# CONTENTS


Preface ..... 7

Dream Interpretations ..... 9

138. On the Priest, that is, on a Woman Who Prays ..... 9
139. On the Purgative Medicine, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 9
140. On the Purgative Medicine, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 10
141. On the Ownership of Land and Dwellings, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 11
142. On the Ownership of Land and Dwellings, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 14
143. On a Vision ..... 17
144. On Earthquake, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 17
145. On Buildings, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 18
146. Question about a Vision ..... 19
147. On Migration, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 19
148. On Buildings, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 20
149. On the Interpretation of the Dreams of Priests ..... 22
150. On Holy Images, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 23
151. On Trees and Plants, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 25
152. On Horses, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 29
153. On Horses, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 30
154. Question about a Vision ..... 31
155. On the Ball, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 31
156. On Weapons and Armor, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 32
157. On Garments, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 33
158. On Garments, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 36
159. On Fire, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 38
160. On Fire, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 40
161. On Flying, Leaping and Running, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 43
162. On Flying, Leaping and Running, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 44
163. On Clouds, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 45
164. On Clouds, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 45
165. On Winds, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 46

166. On Winds, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 46
167. On the Sun, Moon and Stars, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 47
168. On the Sun, Moon and Stars, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 51
169. On the Sun, Moon and Stars, from the Teaching of the Persians ..... 53
170. On Stars, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 53
171. On Rain, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 54
172. On Rain, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 55
173. On Mud, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 55
174. On the Ravines of the Earth and Rain, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 56
175. On Rivers, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 57
176. On Rivers, from the Teaching of the Egyptians ..... 59
177. Question about Visions ..... 60
178. On the Sea, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 60
179. On Ships, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 62
180. On Ships, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 63
181. On Royal Ships, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 63
182. On Wells, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 64
183. On Spring Waters, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 65
184. On Hot Waters, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 65
185. On the Bath, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 66
186. On Drawing Water in Linen Garments and in Vessels Not Meant for Holding Water, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 66
187. On Drinking Water from a Cup ..... 67
188. On Sprinkling Water in the House and on Plastering, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 68
189. On the Brick, from the Teaching of the Egyptians ..... 68
190. On the Wetting of Garments, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 69
191. On Snow, Hail and Frost, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 69
192. On Water Dripping from the Roof Tiles without Rain, from the Teaching of the Persians ..... 71
193. Question about a Dream ..... 71
194. On the Mill and Grinding, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 72
195. On the Mill and Grinding, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 72
196. On Wine and Drinks, from the Teaching of the Indians ..... 73
197. On Wine and Drinks, from the Teaching of the Persians and Egyptians ..... 75
198. On Waters, from the Teaching of the Egyptians ..... 75
199. On Palm Trees^[Greek «phoinix» — the date palm; its fruit is the date.] and Their Fruits ..... 77
200. On Trees, from the Teaching of the Indians, Persians and Egyptians ..... 78

# PREFACE

A king dreams not of himself but of the sun. A woman sees an eagle on her roof. A man rides his own noble horse, and it means a beautiful wife. In this book the heavens, the earth and the waters are the language of the royal court. The Dream Book of Achmet, son of Sereim, is one of the largest Byzantine books of dreams, composed around the tenth century and written for the court. It has roots in Arab tradition, and it gathers explanations from three "teachings": Indian, Persian and Egyptian. They are given by the interpreters Syrbacham, Baram and Tarphan, while Sereim and the caliph Mamun appear in the stories that carry names. Here a dream is never the same for everyone: it is read one way for a king, another for a rich man, a poor man, a woman.

We give the whole work, about 300 chapters, in three books. This is the second of the three, chapters 138 to 229. The first book spoke of the person himself; here the gaze lifts and widens: land, houses and trees, horses, garments and fire, flying, the Sun, Moon and stars, sea, rivers and ships, wine, the garden and the wardrobe.

**What you will find here.** This is a book of power and wealth. Whoever sees himself ruling over all the stars will rule over all the nations. The Sun is the king, the Moon a second ruler, Venus the empress, Hermes the chief scribe. The sea is the great king, and sea water drunk or poured into vessels brings a king's wealth. A well of clear water promises a treasure of gold and an heir. A beautiful, obedient horse promises honour, followers and power, and riding his own noble horse, a man gains a noble and very beautiful wife. Clothing shows rank and marriage: a new garment means a new wife, white a beautiful one, green a pious one. The river of wine can be seen only by a king or a nobleman, and it promises still greater power and victory. And near the end of the book the colour and leather of sandals "foretell" the wife to come.

weak in whatever he undertakes.

If someone sees that he has taken a remedy to drive out a poison, and it worked, then through the mediation and intercession of another he will be freed from his difficulty; if not, the outcome will be mixed.

## 141. On the Ownership of Land and Dwellings, from the Teaching of the Indians

If someone sees in a dream that he is master of a land that is well known and enclosed within its own boundaries, he will find himself a handsome wife, in proportion to the beauty of the land.

But if he sees that the land was not enclosed within boundaries, but wide and hard to cross, he will find wealth in proportion, and a realm.

Yet even in the enclosed land, if he sees meadows growing green, it signifies greater adornment and the faithfulness of his wife.

If he sees in the same land a field of white, ripened barley, this signifies wealth and health.

If the land is sown with wheat alone, it signifies money of his own, with care and toil, because the wheat must pass through the mill, the fire and the rest before it becomes bread.

If it is sown with pulse, it signifies affliction and punishment.

If with sesame and millet, it signifies inexpressible wealth, with the greatest difficulty.

If he has built houses upon it, it signifies an increase of wealth and good management.

If the one who sees it is among those who own nothing and live in solitude,[1] it signifies wealth of the soul.

1 Anchorites — hermits who leave the world and their possessions and live in the wilderness.

If he sees that on the same day he went in and came out and saw everything, the one who sees it will come to repentance and to care for the things of that world, and will be saved.

If the house, the building, the place and the soil are familiar, it signifies worldly joy and wealth of the house, in proportion to the condition of the buildings and the skill of their making.

And if the building is of clay, brick and wood, he will find wealth and joy without sin.

If of marble or stone, the one who sees it will live long, and his wealth will be invincible.

If the building is of costly brick, he will find joy and glory in it also, but with toil, because of the firing of the materials in the flames.

### 146. Question about a Vision

A woman asked the dream interpreter Sereim: "I saw in a dream that the upper doorpost of my house fell upon the lower one, and of the two doors, one fell inward and the other outward." Sereim asked the woman: "Have you a husband and children?" She answered: "I have. My husband is abroad with my son, but my daughter is with me." And Sereim replied: "He will soon come to you. For toward the outside one door fell; and your husband with the upper doorpost, together with his son and the son's bride, because of the fall toward the inside. But your daughter will be joined to another man and will go abroad." And as Sereim interpreted, so it came to pass.

### 147. On Migration, from the Teaching of the Indians

If someone sees that he moves from his dwellings to another, then, if the other ones are finer, he will come to greater glory and joy.

If he had affliction and sickness, it will turn to joy and health.

If one of the common people sees this, he will find wealth in proportion from the magnates.

If someone sees that he had a myrtle tree, he will make friends with a noble man, but cling to a poor man, because of the fragrance of the tree, and live with him.

If someone sees that he acquired new vineyards, he will find wealth and authority through wine.

If someone sees that he gathered the harvest of the vineyards in part, he will find legitimate children.

And if the clusters are ripe, they will be for his service; if not, the opposite.

If a king sees this, he will find joy among his concubines,[1] and perhaps one of them will become queen, through the power of the wine.

If a poor man sees this, he will find joy and authority through wine.

All fruit-bearing trees stand in proportion to their fruit: the sour and astringent in proportion to the fruit, and for the bad; but the sweet and pleasant for the good and the beautiful.

## 152. On Horses, from the Teaching of the Indians

Horses are interpreted in relation to various persons.

If someone sees that he is riding a mare and that she carries him in good order through some place, the horse yielding to him, he will find high rank and the greatest renown, in proportion to the horse and its obedience.

If someone sees that he is riding such a horse, one with a great, thick and long tail, he will find followers and attendants for his power, according to the thickness and length of the tail.

If the horse had two tails or more, the multitude of his followers will increase still further.

1 Concubine (pallakis) — a king's woman without the status of lawful wife.

If he was burned by flame, he will be punished by authority, or will die in war with enemies, or will fall into an acute illness of the groin[1], or into some other.

If he was burned by flameless fire, he will be punished through a demand for gold.

If someone sees that he lifted ashes, that is, lye, he will be a liar and a slanderer.

If he was set aflame by an oven or a furnace fire, he will be punished by a great man, a nourisher of the people.

If someone sees that fire is kindled beneath a pot, a quarrel will arise over work with a master, in whose presence he saw it; for it was judged thus because the eyes of the household are on the pot.

And if the fire is kindled with wood, there will be a quarrel in words with them.

If someone sees that he warms bread or foods at the fire in order to eat them, he will eat his own things under another's authority, or will eat them with fear and trembling.

If someone sees that he holds a torch of fire, he will find power in proportion to the fire of the torch.

And if others took a light from the torch, he too will give authority to others. Fire that was without smoke and flame signifies a sign of injustice; but that which has flame and smoke refers to power, war and sickness, as has been said.

If someone sees that, groping in the dark, he lights a torch in order to see: if he lit it and saw, he will strive to attain joy, power and success, in proportion to the lighting of the torch; if not, the opposite.

If a king sees this, he will search how to be glorified more, and it will turn out for him in proportion, in his faith.

Likewise, if someone appears to another as a light, he will glorify him.

If someone sees that he kindles a fire in order to warm himself: if, having kindled it, he was warmed, he will need a man of authority, and will grow rich in

1 Greek "boubon" — the groin; here a swelling of the groin.