FROM THE BYZANTINE MANUSCRIPTS

# The Sibyl's Dream Book

*What your dreams foretell*



*Love · wealth · journeys · the future*

THE SIBYL · THE PROPHET DANIEL · COMPLETE TRANSLATION

BOOKS OF WISDOM

# The Sibyl's Dream Book

*What your dreams foretell: love, wealth, journeys and the future*

The dream verses of the Sibyl and the Dream Book of the Prophet Daniel — more than 580 dreams and their meanings, as Byzantium read them. Complete translation from the Greek with notes, a preface, an index of wishes and a commentary

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Modern English text, notes, foreword, index and commentary © 2026 SIA "Blusa Entertainment".

Sources: «The Dream Book of the Sibyl» (Ὀνειροκριτικὸν τῆς Σιβύλλης) after the manuscript BnF Supplément grec 654, ff. 221v–223r (a copy by Minoides Mynas, 19th century), compared with the Dream Book of Astrampsychus in the edition of N. Rigault (Paris, 1603); «The Dream Book of the Prophet Daniel» after the edition by F. Drexl from the manuscript Vat. Pal. gr. 319 (Byzantinische Zeitschrift 26, 1926); texts in the public domain. No manuscript or print images are reproduced. A historical source: dream interpretations and statements on health reflect Byzantine belief, not advice or a promise.

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# PREFACE

What did your dream foretell? In Byzantium this question was answered not by guesswork but by books. A dream was a message to be read: did gain or loss lie ahead, honour or shame, love or parting, a long journey or danger from an enemy? To find out, people looked up the night's image in a dream book, as in a dictionary. This book holds two such "keys", long kept in Greek manuscripts: the dream verses of the prophetess Sibyl and the dream book of the Prophet Daniel. Together they give more than 580 dreams and their meanings.

**The Dream Book of the Sibyl.** In the ancient world the Sibyls were prophetesses who spoke for the gods; their oracles were honoured by Greeks, Romans and later by Christian Byzantium. Our first part is called "The Sibyl's Interpreter of Dreams, in iambic verse". Each dream is a single line of poetry: the image and its meaning. The text survives in a manuscript now in the National Library of France in Paris (Supplément grec 654, folios 221v–223r). The volume was copied in the nineteenth century by the Greek scholar Minoides Mynas. The scribe counted the verses and noted "99 verses" at the end; we read 98.

In translating we found that almost all the Sibyl's verses, 97 of the 98, are the same as those of the "Dream Book of Astrampsychus", which we have already published in our series in "The Byzantine Oracle of Dreams and Fate". The order is different: there the verses run in alphabetical order, while the Sibyl arranges them by theme (what you do in the dream, your body and love, garments, the heavens, water and wine, beasts, the sea). Some meanings differ too. The most striking example: for Astrampsychus a purple robe foretells a long illness, for the Sibyl it brings power. The thematic headings over the groups of verses are our own. Short, easily remembered verses were copied again and again and credited to

different sages. The same lines also appear under the name of the Patriarch Nikephoros, and were even inserted into the dream book of Daniel.

**The Dream Book of the Prophet Daniel.** The second and larger part is a dream book that the manuscripts ascribe to the Prophet Daniel. In the Bible he interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Daniel, chapters 2 and 4), and so his name became the very sign of a dream interpreter. In the Middle Ages dream books of Daniel spread across all of Europe, in Greek, Latin and other languages. Our series already includes a Latin "Dream Book of Daniel" with 143 dreams, in "The Power of Stones and the Meaning of Dreams". This is a much fuller Greek version: 486 dreams in the order of the Greek alphabet, from angels and lightning to fish, rings, weddings, bath-houses and the emperor.

**Sources.** We translated the Sibyl's verses directly from Mynas's copy. Where his hand cannot be read with certainty, we compared the verses of Astrampsychus in the edition of Nicolas Rigault (Paris, 1603), and every such place is marked in a note. The Dream Book of Daniel is translated from the edition of the German Byzantinist Franz Drexl (1885–1951) in the journal "Byzantinische Zeitschrift" (1926). Drexl published the text from the Vatican Library manuscript Palatinus graecus 319, written around 1500. In the manuscript 101 verses of Nikephoros and Astrampsychus were inserted among Daniel's dreams; Drexl left them out, and so does our translation. All the texts are in the public domain. No manuscript or print images are reproduced in this book.

**How to use this book.** Every dream has a number: "S" for a verse of the Sibyl, "D" for a dream of Daniel. Daniel's dreams follow the Greek alphabet, so at the end of the book there is an index. In it you can find a dream in two ways: by the wish you want to know about (love, wealth, honour, journeys, health) and by the image of the dream from A to Z. Often the meaning is the opposite of the image: whoever weeps in a dream will rejoice, and whoever laughs will grieve. Sometimes the meaning comes from the sound of Greek words; such puns cannot be imitated in English, so they are explained in the notes.

# THE DREAM BOOK OF THE SIBYL



*Modern illustration*

*The Sibyl's Interpreter of Dreams, in iambic verse*[1].

## What You Do in the Dream

S1 If you speak in your sleep, this dream is true.

S2 To move sluggishly makes your paths unlucky.

S3 To fly is good: it is the sign of a good deed.

S4 Whoever laughs in sleep will have a heavy spirit.

S5 Whoever weeps in sleep will surely be full of joy.

1 The iamb is an ancient Greek metre; each verse here is a single twelve-syllable line (an iambic trimeter). The translation renders the verses as prose.

S6 To eat with your enemies leads to reconciliation.

S7 Whoever dies in sleep will have a heavy spirit.

S8 If someone burns incense over you, this dream is bitter.

S9 If you see yourself an old man, you will have honour[1].

S10 To run in sleep makes fortune strong.

## The Body and Love

S11 To wash your hands shows release from cares.

S12 To wash your feet shows release from cares.

S13 To clean a mortar[2] shows release from cares.

S14 To have your hair cut off shows loss in your affairs.

S15 But if your hair falls out, it brings great danger.

S16 To see your flesh white is most favourable.

S17 If the flesh turns black, it is not good for children.

S19 It is very good to be entwined in embrace with a beloved man.

S20 But all carnal unions bring long toils.

S21 To kiss and to gaze[3] stirs up battles with your enemies.

S22 If your feet are broad, it betokens sorrows.

S23 If your feet are cut off, begin no journey at all.

S24 If your body swells, you will be very ill-famed[4].

## The Mind, Garments and the Road

S25 If your mind is lifted up, know that you will dwell in a foreign land.

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1 A Greek pun: γέρων, "old man" — γέρας, "gift of honour".

2 A wooden or stone vessel in which grain was pounded with a pestle.

3 The Greek φιλεῖν means both "to kiss" and "to love". Another copy (the book of Astrampsychus) has only "to kiss".

4 The scribe explains the rare word πρήθω in the margin: "to blow up, to swell".

# THE DREAM BOOK OF THE PROPHET DANIEL



*Modern illustration*

*With holy God — the dream interpreter of the holy prophet Daniel*[1]*, in alphabetical order.*

## A — alpha

D1 To see statues betokens friends and beloved ones.

D2 To see silver or gold shows a hindrance in one's affairs.

1 In the Bible the prophet Daniel interpreted the dreams of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon; for this reason several dream books were ascribed to him in Byzantium.

D3 To see cloudy skies shows a hindrance in one's affairs.

D4 To see vessels of silver or gold, or to touch them, betokens losses.

D5 To go up in any place betokens good.

D6 To ride up swiftly to a height with horses betokens freedom for slaves, and for all others good.

D7 To see oneself beheaded signifies the casting off of a great toil.

D8 To leap from a ship onto dry land signifies moving from one's own place.

D9 To look down from a height shows a union of friendship, and a strong one.

D10 To come down from a height is dreadful for all.

D11 To see a child become an old man betokens the loss of goods held in trust.

D12 To see lightning betokens unexpected gain.

D13 To see oneself unshod shows loss.

D14 To undress is good for the sick[1], but evil for the rest.

D15 To see a brother or a sister, or any of one's own kin, dead shows an increase of life.

D16 To sacrifice a cock is good, only not a strangled one[2].

D17 To see cocks crowing: something dearly loved will come to pass for you.

D18 To see stars betokens a joyful contest.

D19 To see oneself ungirded shows heaviness of heart.

D20 To see someone fallen sick without cause betokens heaviness of heart.

D21 To break one's own word is good for those engaged in business, but unprofitable for the rest.

D22 To see oneself dumb betokens great joy.

D23 A thorn sprouting anew shows a rising of enemies.

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1 A medieval belief; not medical advice.

2 The flesh of a strangled animal was forbidden to Christians from the time of the apostles (Acts 15:29).