CULTURAL MEMORY AND IMAGINATION: DREAMS AND
DREAMING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE
31 BC – AD 200

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis takes Assmann's theory of cultural memory and applies it to an exploration of conceptualisations of dreams and dreaming in the early Roman Empire (31 BC – AD 200). Background information on dreams in different cultures, especially those closest to Rome (the ancient Near East, Egypt and Greece) is provided, and dream reports in Greco-Roman historical and imaginative literature are analysed. The thesis concludes that dreams were considered to offer a possible connection with the divine within the cultural imagination in the early Empire, but that the people of the second century AD, which has sometimes been called an 'age of anxiety', were no more interested in dreams or dream revelation than Greeks and Romans of other periods.

This thesis outlines, defines and applies the newly developed concept of *cultural imagination*, developed from cultural memory, to its examination of dreams and dream reports in Greco-Roman literature. Using the concept of cultural imagination in preference to discussing 'belief' is shown to have advantages for the study of ancient religion, as it allows the historian to discuss religious ideas that may or may not have been widely 'believed' but which were present within the imagination of the members of a particular society.

DEDICATION

For Mum, Dad and Ed: I couldn't have done it without you

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

οὗτος γὰρ ἐν μὲν ταῖς τῶν πέλας κατηγορίαις πολλὴν ἐπιφαίνει δεινότητα καὶ τόλμαν, ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἰδίαις ἀποφάσεσιν ἐνυπνίων καὶ τεράτων καὶ μύθων ἀπιθάνων καὶ συλλήβδην δεισιδαιμονίας ἀγεννοῦς καὶ τερατείας γυναικώδους ἐστὶ πλήρης.

'In attacking others he shows cleverness and courage; when it comes to his own writing, he is full of dreams and wonders and improbable myths; in short, full of superstition and old wives' tales.'

Polybius on Timaeus, 12.24.5.

These few lines of Polybius encapsulate two radically different approaches to dreams from ancient writers. On the one hand, we have Timaeus, who supposedly filled his works with dreams and other 'irrational' elements, and on the other, we have Polybius, who claims to shun such things entirely. Why were writers like Timaeus interested in dreams and what did they think was worthy of remembrance in dream reports? How much of the attitude of Greeks and Romans to dreams was unique to their own cultural heritage and how far were they influenced by others around them?

This study explores the place of dream reports, and indeed dreams themselves, within the cultural memory and imagination of the Roman Empire. There have been a number of studies on ancient dreams in recent years, most notably W. V. Harris' important volume *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity* (see below), but the application of the theory of cultural memory, as developed by Maurice Halbwachs and Jan Assman, to this quintessentially 'remembered' topic has yet to be exploited. The period of the Roman Empire (and in Chapter Five, the second century AD) has been chosen because this is a period during which, scholars have sometimes asserted, there

was an increased feeling of religiosity among a disenfranchised people.[1] This is the period of deified emperors, messiahs, magicians and imperial bans on witchcraft and divination. As far as dreams are concerned, this period saw active use of incubatory shrines, large numbers of inscriptions claiming to have been set up on order received through a dream, numerous dream reports appearing in historical works and the appearance of Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi*, Artemidorus' *Onirocritica* (*Dream Interpretation-book*) and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. This is quite possibly the most fruitful period for the study of ancient dream reports.

Memory and Imagination: Aims of this Study

This study poses two central questions about the relationship of dreams and dreaming to memory and imagination in the Roman Empire.

First, for what reasons did Greco-Roman writers record dreams in their histories and fiction? (How and why did certain dream reports enter into the cultural memory of an event and stay there? To what extent did earlier treatments of dreams survive into the Roman period? How did people in the ancient Near East, Egypt and Greece conceptualise dreams and dreaming? To what extent did their ideas survive into the Roman period? To what extent might ideas about dreams be transmitted through migration, and trade, and to what extent do differing cultures come to similar conclusions independently? What was the significance of dreams for the cultural memory?)

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[1] See Dodds 1965: 3.

Secondly, did people living in the Roman Empire imagine that dreams presented an opportunity for communication with the divine? By answering this question, we may attempt to define the place of dreams within the cultural imagination – asking not just whether or not people 'believed' that dreams might open up a communication with something divine, but whether this idea, believed in or not, was stronger within the Roman Empire, particularly in the second century AD, than it is now or was in other cultures.

This study is divided into three parts. Part One provides terminological, classificatory, literary and historical contexts for the material studied. Chapter One will explore the language and classification of dreams. This chapter opens with an overview of ideas about dreaming from many different places and cultures. This overview will act as a control of sorts, allowing us to identify ideas about dreams that are common to many unconnected societies. This chapter will then define the parameters of this study, discussing various ways of classifying dreams and dream reports and explaining the categories adopted in the rest of the study.

Chapter Two will establish the historical context of dream reports under the Roman Empire. Focussing on those areas which had the greatest impact on the Greco-Roman world – Egypt, the Near East and, of course, classical Greece – this chapter will briefly establish the place of dreams within cultural memory and imagination in these areas, in order to trace ideas that might have been transmitted through migration, trade, and so on. In order to answer the question of how far earlier approaches to dream reports survived into the Roman period, it will first be necessary to establish the place of dream reports in earlier literature.

Part Two of the study aims to answer the first of our two questions and explain why Greek and Roman writers of historical and imaginative literature included dream reports in their writing. Dream reports have an enduring popularity in imaginative writing to this day, but are not usually included in modern literature of record, though in Greco-Roman historical writing, especially during the Imperial period, they appear quite frequently. Chapter Three focuses on literature of record, and on the place of dreams within Greco-Roman cultural memory. It is important to note here that this formulation is for convenience only. Naturally, there was never a single 'Greco-Roman cultural memory' which applied to all people across the Roman world over two centuries. However, since this study covers a wide range of material, it is necessary to adopt terms with which to discuss the issues at hand and to generalise to some extent. The term 'Greco-Roman cultural memory and imagination' refers to the core of cultural memory and imagination shared by a majority of people within the period; future studies may examine smaller areas within a tighter chronological scope. By laying out the ways in which dreams are used in literature of record and investigating some particularly frequently reported dreams, this chapter will establish some of the reasons why dreams were used so much more often in historical literature of this period than they are in modern historical writing, both academic and popular.

Chapter Four looks at imaginative literature and asks how the dream stories reported in imaginative literature fit into the cultural imagination. Dream stories are popular in the literature of many different cultures, but the nature and use of dream stories within Greco-Roman imaginative literature in particular may reveal something about the place they held within the Greco-Roman imagination. This chapter will also start to explore what will become a central theme of Chapter Five – the imagined source

of dreams. Imaginative literature gives us a unique insight into this issue because the author can choose whether or not definitively to reveal the source of a dream, and this choice will give a hint as to the place of dreams within the author's, and their audience's, imagination.

Part Three provides a synthesis, a summing up of the place of dreams within Greco-Roman memory and imagination. Chapter Five looks specifically at the second century AD, the era that produced some of the most prolific ancient writers on dreams, including Aelius Aristides, Artemidorus and Apuleius. This chapter questions how far we can build up a picture of genuine dream 'belief' in the second century AD and asks whether Greco-Romans of the second century AD imagined that dreams might be a conduit for communication with the divine or the dead.

The methodology used in this study varies slightly from chapter to chapter. Chapters One and Two (Part One) are wide-ranging and diachronic. They look at a wide range of evidence, in order to gain entry into dreams and conceptualisations of dreams in a variety of times and places, to explore how unique or otherwise any one culture's ideas may be. Chapter One incorporates anthropological material on conceptualisations of dreaming in various cultures as well as etymological material concerning Greece and Rome, in its wide overview of thought on dreams and dreaming. Chapter Two is more historical, drawing on recent work on Egyptian and Near Eastern dreams, and moving into more philological territory with its look at dreams around the Mediterranean in the ancient world.

Chapters Three and Four (Part Two) are textually based. They explore the nature and functions of dream reports in Greek and Latin literature of the early Imperial period.

Chapter Five (Part Three) comprises a more synchronic approach, utilising material from previous chapters, as well as looking at other aspects and other sources of evidence, such as inscriptions, to build up a picture of dreams and dreaming in the second century AD. In discussing the nature of 'belief', Chapter Five draws briefly on anthropological and sociological theory. The bulk of the chapter is concerned with the history of religion, and with the history of religion in the Greco-Roman world in the second century AD in particular.

Literature of Record and Imaginative Literature

Del Corno suggests that there are two types of writing about dreams – that which discusses their nature, origin and divinatory function, and that which discusses their interpretation.[2] However, his second category bears some further division. There are works such as Artemidorus *Onirocritica*, which are devoted to the nature of dream interpretation as a skill and the to process of interpreting dreams, and, quite differently, there are works which report that so-and-so had a dream, and afterwards, such-and-such a thing happened, which might loosely be called interpretation. It is these dream reports which are the focus of this study.

A dream report that has been recorded as accurately as possible from memory and written down is clearly not the same as a dream that has been invented by an author and given to a fictional character. However, the boundaries between history and fiction in ancient

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[2] Del Corno 1978: 1605.

literature are so blurred that it is impossible for any scholar to simply separate history

from fiction. Plutarch's biographies are all written as historical works, but the dreams

included in his *Theseus* or *Romulus* can hardly be historical; on the other hand, the dream

of Pompey from Lucan's *Bellum Civile* has an historical origin, but has been altered for

the fictionalised epic poem. Epic poems are often viewed by ancient scholars as

historical, while historical works include much mythical material, as well as various

additions invented by the author, especially speeches.

Bowersock has suggested that the category of 'fiction' must include not only

'overt works of the imagination' but also 'the rewriting of the mythic and legendary past

as part of the creation of the new and miraculous present'.[3] He has identified four types

of fiction in the Roman empire (fantastic tales, Homeric revisionism, tragic/romantic

novels and comic/satiric novels) and argues that the 'explosion of fiction' in the empire

began during the reign of Nero.[4]

However, extending the label of 'fiction' to historical works in the ancient world

sometimes creates more problems than it solves. In his first chapter, Bowersock discusses

various sources, including Lucian's *True Story* and the Christian Gospels, and he

suggests that the fictional narratives which have survived from this period must be seen

'within this larger context of fabrication and rewriting'. Bowersock acknowledges that

the novels 'do not purport to be a historical record of facts in the same way' as the

Gospels, but emphasises the links between them.[5] It is certainly true that there are links

between the Gospels and the novels, and the comparison is often a helpful one.[6]

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[3] Bowersock 1994: 13.
[4] Bowersock 1994: 21-22.
[5] Bowersock 1994: 13.
[6] This extends beyond just the Christian Gospels; for example, Pelling has suggested that Plutarch used a number of overtly literary techniques in his biographies, including conflation of material, chronological

However, for the purposes of this study, the essential difference between deliberate, overt fiction and historical works cannot be ignored. It is entirely possible that some historical works contain deliberately fictionalised, false elements; others may be entirely composed of orally transmitted stories that the author either believed to be true or considered vaguely possible and included in the absence of any alternative. Without the ability to cross-examine the author, we can only examine the work according to its intended purpose, whether this be to record something for posterity, or to entertain and move its readers through artistic writing.

It is for these reasons that this study adopts the terms 'literature of record' and 'imaginative literature'. 'Literature of record' refers to accounts which aim to record valuable information, usually information which purports to be history, even if it is unreliable history. 'Imaginative literature' refers to stories invented or, in the case of mythic or historically-based stories, re-imagined by the author. Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, because it is an epic poem in which the artistic requirements of the poem take precedence over historical accuracy and a certain amount of poetic licence is to be expected, is literature of imagination. Plutarch's *Lives* of *Theseus* and *Romulus* and the early sections of Livy's *History of Rome*, despite their mythological subject matter and known authorial interpolations, are literature of record, because the underlying aim of these works is to record Greek and Roman history for posterity.

The division between literature of record and imaginative literature places the emphasis on the nature of the work in which the dream report is found. Whether the dream really happened or not is largely irrelevant. Dream reports play a very different role in literature of record, in which the purpose is to create a lasting record of a people or

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compression and dislocation and fabrication of circumstantial detail, and it is certainly helpful to recognise and acknowledge these techniques when analysing Plutarch; Pelling 1980: 127.

of a period, than they do in imaginative literature, in which the primary purpose is to create a work of artistic merit. These categories are not exhaustive or exclusive; many ancient historians were very keen to ensure that they wrote works of artistic merit and many imaginative works, especially epic poems, are designed to encapsulate the nature of a people or of a period. However, the use of the terms 'record' and 'imagination' is designed to reflect the chief *raison d'être* of each work; is it intended primarily as a record of something, or is its primary purpose as an imaginative work of art? If it is a work of record, its use of dream reports will be concerned with what memories they encapsulate relating to the people concerned, with what they say about these people at that time and their effect on later developments. Dream reports in imaginative literature have many different functions, but overall will be more concerned with deepening the imaginative world the author has created. They may be described in more detail, and reveal more about the way the writer perceives the world and the relationship between the mortal and the divine, as the imaginative author can describe the invented process in much more detail than is possible for the author who records memories of an historical event.

Cultural Memory and Cultural Imagination

We owe the term 'cultural memory' (*kulturelle Gedächtnis*) to Jan Assmann. The term was inspired by Maurice Halbwachs' 'collective memory' (*la mémoire collective*) and later developed by Assmann to refer to historical stories shared by members of a

culturally distinct group of people.[7] These may be orally transmitted, or commemorated via historical writing, inscriptions, visual art or other media. The collective, cultural memory of a group establishes and reinforces that group's sense of identity. As Assmann puts it,

> Cultural memory has... fixed points [which] are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation... and institutional communication... We call these "figures of memory".[8]

Autobiographical memory, as defined by Halbwachs, is a person's own memory of events that occurred in their own lives, as opposed to collective memory.[9]

Collective memory was not entirely abandoned in the years between Halbwachs' and Assmann's work. Nora's work on 'les lieux de mémoire' discussed the importance of studying the memory as itself, rather than as a source for the original event.[10] Connerton explored performative and bodily 'social memory', focussing on ritual performances and arguing that social memory is most often found in commemorative performances.[11] Psychoanalyst Spence's work focussed on the ways in which the individual reconstructs events to produce a new, narrative memory, but has clear implications for recorded, especially autobiographical, history.[12] More recently, Carruthers has drawn on the

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[7] See Assmann 2000: 11. On Halbwach's theory of collective memory, see Coser's introduction to his edited volume of Halbwachs' work; Halbwachs 1992: 21-28. On the development of Halbwach's ideas concerning *la mémoire collective*, see also Dechaux 1998: 624-625.
[8] Assman 1995: 129.
[9] See Halbwachs 1992: 24.
[10] Nora 1989: 23-24.
[11] Connerton 1989: 4-5.
[12] Spence 1982: 166-168.

concepts of collective and cultural memory to explore the idea of *memoria rerum*, using 'things' (which can be objects, texts or buildings) to inform memory.[13]

However, it was Jan Assmann who revived and reinvigorated the study of collective memory, developing from Halbwach's 'collective memory' his own theory of 'cultural memory'.[14] Assmann distinguished various types of social memory. 'Communicative memory' (*kommunikativen Gedächtnis*) is the social aspect of individual memory, by which individual, autobiographical memories are transmitted between individuals.[15] 'Collective memory' (*Kollektivgedächtnis*) refers to shared memories whose task is to transmit a collective identity, and this is particularly susceptible to political interference.[16] 'Cultural memory' (*kulturelle Gedächtnis*) is a step beyond collective memory, and refers to shared memories which become part of a tradition, beyond the three-generation cycle of communicative memory.[17] Assmann describes communicative memory as characterised by its proximity to the everyday, and cultural memory as characterised by its distance from the everyday.[18]

The process of remembering a dream has several stages. First, there is the personal memory of the dream itself; an autobiographical memory that Assmann would term 'scenic', being episodic and incoherent.[19] Then there is the relation of the dream to a third party, in which the memory is transformed into a narrative and becomes what

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[13] Carruthers 1998: 35.
[14] The term 'collective memory' or *mémoire collective* is also still in use, but is not always so clearly defined; for example, Van Mal-Maeder uses it in reference to the influence of Homer on later writers and artists; Van Mal-Maeder 2004-2005: 311.
[15] Assmann 2000: 13 (see also Assmann 2006: 3).
[16] Assmann 2000: 17 (see also Assmann 2006: 6-7).
[17] Assmann 2000: 18-19 (see also Assmann 2006: 8).
[18] Assmann 1995: 128-129.
[19] Assmann 2006: 2.

Assmann terms a 'communicative' memory.[20] The dream may then be recorded in written form in a document intended for publication and wide dissemination, becoming a collective memory. Finally, a particularly significant dream report, such as that of Calpurnia before the assassination of Caesar, may become part of the politicised, deliberate public remembrance of an event which contributes to the formation of a cultural identity, and so becomes a cultural memory.[21]

We may divide this process into three major stages: the 'real' dream (which we cannot access), the 'recalled' dream (remembered by the dreamer and reported to a third party), and the 'culturally remembered' dream (reported and widely disseminated). Mentally layering the dream report into these three stages elides Assmann's carefully drawn distinction between 'collective memory' and 'cultural memory'. For the purposes of this study, this distinction is not particularly important or meaningful. Most dream reports in ancient literature of record are written down long after the event, often outside of the three-generation cycle of memory, and those that are written down sooner are recorded with the specific purpose of ensuring that people continue to remember them and that they enter the tradition. In dealing with ancient historians, we are always dealing with a tradition, and, therefore, in Assmann's terms, with cultural memory.

The term 'cultural imagination' has appeared from time to time in a wide variety of work. The term can be used in subtly different ways in very different fields of study and a number of scholarly studies have used it, but generally they have not defined or

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[20] Assmann 2006: 3. Although Nora suggests that memory and history are fundamentally opposed to each other, the history that ancient writers wrote, designed to preserve the memory of the most important people and events so that future generations would remember them, is, inherently, a product and vehicle of memory; Nora 1989: 8-9.

[21] See Assmann 2006: 8.

questioned it.[22] It is a term that has become particularly popular in recent years, especially in the USA, and is strongly related to the formation of identity, whether political or social.

I am using the term 'cultural imagination' in this study as an extension of cultural memory into the realm of the imagination and of imaginative literature. Just as certain memories of events or people survive in the cultural memory and form part of a tradition, certain stories, characters and concepts become increasingly important within the cultural imagination and become equally entrenched in a tradition. Miller subtitled her work on *Dreams in Late Antiquity* as *Studies in the Imagination of a Culture*. She described Part One of her book as focussing on 'how a culture imagines for itself one of its own processes of imagining'.[23] However, although Miller focuses particularly on the relationship between dreams and the creative imagination, she is not actually formalising a position by using these words. In this study, just as cultural memory refers to historical stories shared by a group of people, cultural imagination refers to ideas (these may be stories, or concepts, or conceptualisations) shared by a group of people. Shared, but not necessarily commonly 'believed' in, as will be discussed in Chapter Five.

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[22] For example, *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination* explores the ways in which white Americans defined themselves in stories about interaction with Native Americans and is highly concerned with memory, identity and the creation of tradition; Huhndorf 2001: 23. *Eccentricity and the Cultural Imagination in Nineteenth Century Paris* asks what it meant to call someone 'eccentric' and includes discussion of what it meant to deliberately subvert a collective norm; Gill 2009: 23. Similarly, *Sideshow USA: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination* explores what it means to define oneself as a freak and place oneself outside of the cultural norm; Adams 2001: 10. *Teacher Education and the Cultural Imagination* questions the nature of 'culture' and explores, through teachers' book clubs, cultural and ethnic issues affecting teachers and their students, as well as in autobiographical literature; Florio-Ruane and DeTar 2001: xxiii. *Space and the Irish Cultural Imagination* is more interested in the 'space' (as in spatial analysis, not the final frontier) aspect of its title than the 'cultural imagination' side, the term being used to identify that particular group whose approach to space is under investigation; Smyth 2001: 1. A poster presentation on images of climate change suggests that 'The cultural imagination of disaster is a collective repertoire of images that give meaning to the brutal meaninglessness of disasters'; Holm 2009: 1.
[23] Miller 1994: 12.

Literature of record (historical literature) engages chiefly with cultural memory. Its function is to aid in preserving the memory of the past, and so its chief concern is with collective memories, and with actively creating stories that will become cultural memories. Dreams that appear in literature of record have been transmitted from one person's autobiographical memory to a medium intended for wider cultural dissemination. Very rarely, a dream in a diary or similar record may originally have been intended only for private use, but once something has been edited and prepared for publication, it is deliberately made a candidate for the cultural record and is therefore considered to have significance for others, as well as for the dreamer.[24] This is also true of diaries and letters, especially when the diarist and both the writer and recipient of the letter are still alive and agree to the publication. In works which purport to record history, this is especially important. Dreams in historical works are included because the author feels that they have a wider significance, and should be maintained as part of the cultural memory of the events to which they are attached.

Imaginative literature, however, is more concerned with reflecting the ideas of the present. Cultural memory remains significant in dealing with imaginative literature, because the scenarios presented in the literature will be drawn from both the autobiographical and collective memories of the author. However, the function of imaginative literature is not only to reflect memories of the past, but to hold a mirror up to the present. In this way, literature of imagination engages more strongly with ideas current in the cultural imagination than with cultural memories.

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[24] Anne Frank's diary, for example, mentions dreams that were particularly important to her; see Frank 1995: 115.

Dreams that appear in imaginative literature are fundamentally different from those in literature of record because they have not been 'remembered' at all, but invented by the author. These may draw on the author's memories of his or her own dreams, but the specific dream itself is usually a deliberate invention.[25] The other, even more important difference is that these dreams are not intended to become part of the cultural memory of the events described, even if these events have a historical basis. This is what separates, for example, Lucan's *Bellum Civile* from Appian's *Bellum Civile*; when Appian records a dream of Pompey, he intends it to be viewed as part of the cultural memory of the war (and, indeed, has taken the record from earlier sources); whereas, when Lucan gives Pompey a dream, he is using that dream for his own narratological purposes and does not intend it to become part of the cultural memory of the war, only to add to the artistry of his poem (and, indeed, Lucan's version of Pompey's dream before the battle of Pharsalus is different from those recorded by Plutarch and Appian; Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 7.1-25; Plutarch, *Pompey*, 68; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 42; Appian, *Bellum Civile*, 2.10.68).

Dream stories in imaginative literature do, however, reflect the place held by dreams with the cultural imagination. If a dream within a story is designed to be viewed in a different way to the way in which dreams are normally viewed within the culture of the author, then this new set of rules must be explained by the author. For example, a young couple living some distance from each other in a recent fantasy novel meet each other in dreams, a phenomenon explained by the characters as part of the peculiar magic

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[25] The word 'usually' is used here because it is not impossible for an author to give one of his or her own dreams to a character in a story, as J. R. R. Tolkien did in *The Lord of the Rings* (Carpenter 1981: 213); historical fiction may also include dreams taken from literature of record and attributed to the real person who inspired the fictionalised character. However, this is rare and, for the most part, will not be considered in this study.

of a specific region and material from the fantasy world.[26] Similarly, in modern fantasy television and graphic novels, the character Buffy Summers experiences prophetic dreams because she is a Vampire Slayer and the dreams are part of her special powers.[27] Because many people in our culture do not tend to think that dreams can be symbolically prophetic, this has to be explained within the narrative.

Ancient imaginative literature, by and large, does not tend to do this. Dreams are used in certain ways within ancient literature by convention and without special explanation. We can assume, therefore, that the use of dreams in this way may reflect commonly held ideas about dreams. This is not intended to suggest that all members of a particular culture 'believed' such ideas to be literally true. However, it does suggest that even those who did not literally believe dreams to have the properties they are given in imaginative literature would, nevertheless, recognise the usage and understand the way in which the dreams were being used. When we see longer explanations of the mechanisms of prophetic dreaming, this may indicate that a less universally recognised set of ideas are being used.

It can, of course, be argued that many of the dreams which appear in literature of record in the Greco-Roman world are, in fact, imaginative inventions of the author. However, it is the purpose of the work in which they are included that is significant here. Even if the author has invented a dream, once it enters a work of record, it becomes part of the cultural memory of the recorded event, and may be repeated without qualification by later historical authors. It may lack the original, autobiographical memory as its

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[26] Hobb 1998: 511. Several of the characters profess ignorance of this particular magic, and have to have it explained to them.
[27] See Whedon 2007: 2.6.

source, but it becomes part of the cultural memory in a way that is specific to literature of record, regardless of the actual truth value of the literature.

What is a Dream?

It is widely accepted that we cannot survive without sleep, and it seems likely that dreaming is also essential to our health.[28] The universality of dreaming among human beings is undisputed, but our perception of what dreaming is, what it means to dream and why we dream has changed enormously over the past 100-150 years. The enormous impact of psychoanalysis will be discussed below, but first it is important to look briefly at what we currently understand dreams to be in medical and physiological terms, though of course, the elusive nature of the subject matter means that scientific thinking on the subject is in a constant state of flux. We do not *know* anything about dreams, but in the last few decades we have made some informed guesses. Some scientists have begun to talk confidently about what we now 'know' about dreams, chiefly because of the shift in research from work in the earlier part of the twentieth century, which was dominated by psychoanalysis and by the study of what dreams *mean*, to the study of what dreams, physiologically speaking, *are*, that is, what the brain is doing when a person is dreaming.[29]

In 1953, Eugene Aserinsky and Nathaniel Kleitman published a short technical paper on '*Regularly Occurring Periods of Eye Motility… During Sleep*', the phenomenon

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[28] Sleep deprivation in rats appears to cause death more quickly than food deprivation; see Siegal et al. 1998: 1148. On dreaming and mental health, see Foulkes and Pivik 1966: 1284, though they find it necessary to refer to Freudian theory when turning to the impact on health of the intense dreams they observed in people who had recently been deprived of REM sleep. More recently, Lewin and Singer have explored possible links between depression and REM-sleep deprivation (Lewin and Singer 1991: 411).
[29] See Hobson 2002: 1.

that would come to be know as REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep.[30] This discovery has dominated research into sleep and dreaming ever since. At first, it was thought that dreaming only occurred during REM sleep, but this was quickly revised.[31] Research over the years has looked into a variety of related issues, such as the type of dreams experienced during REM and NREM (Non-Rapid Eye Movement) sleep; for example, most, but not all, nightmares occur during REM sleep.[32] It has been suggested that 'common anxiety dreams' occur during REM sleep, while 'rare night terrors' occur during the deepest, dreamless part of sleep, though such conclusions are somewhat tentative.[33] A third category exists in 'hypnagogic' dreams, which occur at the onset of sleep and incorporate the highest degree of, mostly recent, memory, with a low degree of 'high dream affect', or, one might say, weirdness.[34]

There are some fundamental difficulties with scientific research into the nature of dreams. No matter how long neurologists spend watching the REM or NREM activity of a sleeping subject, they cannot see what the person is dreaming. The study of dreams still relies upon the memory of the dreamer when they awake. The memory, or lack thereof, of dreams is possibly the only human experience that is more confusing than the dream itself.

Memory also plays an essential role in the process of dreaming itself. Some recent research has indicated that dreams, especially 'hypnagogic' dreams, which occur early in the night, can be manipulated by having the subjects engage in certain activities, such as playing Tetris, before they go to sleep; this will sound familiar to anyone who has spent

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[30] Aserinsky and Kleitman 1953: 273.
[31] See further Foulkes 1978: 90.
[32] See Wiedemann 1987: 87.
[33] See Safer 1987: 70.
[34] See Stickgold et al. 2001: 1056.

all day at a dull and repetitive job, only to dream about it at night.[35] However, the situation is not as simple as it might seem; the Tetris-related experiments revealed that amnesiacs who could not remember playing the game still experienced images of it during hypnagogic sleep (the published paper notes that amnesiacs 'are capable of reporting dream experiences').[36] Current neurobiological theories concerning the nature of dreaming tend to focus on dreams as a way of sorting recent brain activity, in an attempt to explain this phenomenon.[37]

Even those cultures which prize dreams for their connection with other worlds usually recognize that many, if not most, dreams reflect the recent memories of the dreamer[38]. Freud noted that the manifest content of dreams was often related to the events of the previous day, or the 'immediately preceding days'.[39] Hobson argues that 'recent memory enters into dreaming very little', but this is perhaps because he understands rather more than might be expected by 'memories'. He states that 'fragments of episodic memory… are incorporated, but whole recollections are never reproduced as such'.[40] However, in general speech, it is likely that 'memories of the day before' refer to these 'fragments', rather than to reproductions of entire incidents, so the phrase will be liberally used throughout this work, on the assumption that it is self-evident from our own experiences that many dreams concern recent memories. It should be noted, however, that there is no evidence that dreams provide access to older, weaker memories;

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[35] See Stickgold et al. 2001: 1056.
[36] Stickgold et al. 2000: 350.
[37] See Bentley 1999: 71.
[38] This is true of most of the societies discussed in Chapter One.
[39] Freud 1976: 247.
[40] Hobson 2002: 114.

they are reflections of the very recent past, but do not provide access to the more distant past.[41]

Modern attempts to explain the meaning or significance of dreams, as opposed to their physiological functions, often approach the subject via psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic theory. As Wiedemann has noted, physiological and psychological approaches to the study of dreams tend to diverge away from each other and continue down their own paths.[42] Hobson has suggested that, thanks to modern scientific research (largely dependant on technological equipment, used to measure brain activity, that was unavailable until recently), we no longer need to interpret dreams. He has provided a table comparing psychoanalysis to activation-synthesis theory, and suggests that, since the content of dreams can now be explained by brain activity during sleep, accompanied by the activation of higher visual centres, the loss of working memory, hyperassociative synthesis, activation of the limbic system and physical amnesia, the meaning of dreams is now 'transparent' and interpretation is 'not needed'.[43]

However, the discovery that dreaming is related to healthy brain functioning does not answer all the questions people have about dreams, as even Hobson has been forced to admit.[44] Why, for example, do we have nightmares? Hobson is satisfied simply to state that the 'emotional systems of the brain' relating to unpleasant emotions need 'maintenance', which is achieved through nightmares.[45] Some other hypotheses have been suggested; Wiedemann, for example, suggests that increased alertness during or

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[41] See Brainerd and Reyna 2005: 397.
[42] Wiedemann 1987: 94-95.
[43] Hobson 2002: 16. See also von Grunebaum, who suggests that 'we have less need of our dreams than had... our forefathers'; von Grunebaum 1966: 20.
[44] Hobson 2002: 30.
[45] Hobson 2002: 81.

immediately after nightmares indicates that they may originally have had a protective function for the sleeper.[46] Similarly, Hobson's explanation for sexual dreams is that the brain needs to 'refresh' certain 'movement programmes' – this may explain some aspects of these dreams, but it fails where Freud succeeds – it cannot explain the particular content of these dreams.[47] Hobson's suggestion that dreams in which one is in an exam and cannot remember anything are not necessarily directly related to anxiety about exams may be particularly unconvincing.[48] There are many people who remain unsatisfied by purely physiological explanations for various dream phenomena, and who continue to turn to the psychoanalysts for answers.

Since the year 1900, the psychological study of dreams has been dominated by the work of Sigmund Freud. Whether the individual scholar agrees with Freud's conclusions or not, it is imperative that Freudian theory is addressed, because of the enormously strong hold it still has over the way many of us think about dreams and dreaming.

Some aspects of Freudian theory have long been disproved. Hobson described two 'fatal scientific defects' in Freud's work; the 'absence of relevant brain science', which was due to the constricts of the time, and the limited nature of the 'data' – Freud used mostly his own dream reports, together with a limited number from his patients.[49] Criticism of Freud is sometimes as extreme as the original theory – Hobson suggests that he was inadvertently creating a new religion, with himself as high priest.[50] Freud's 'wish-fulfilment' theory is also flawed, particularly in the case of nightmares. Freud intended to

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[46] Wiedemann 1987: 92.
[47] Hobson 2002: 28.
[48] Hobson 2002: 111.
[49] Hobson 2002: 26. See further Crews 1986: 18-111, especially 98-99 and 105-106 on Freud's dream theory.
[50] Hobson 2002: 29.

explain why dreams are often unpleasant or unsettling, and he argued that there was a latent dream content hidden behind manifest content. As Buirski has pointed out, this theory does not account for post-traumatic dreams/nightmares, where a person relives a real traumatic experience.[51] Freud acknowledged this, and argued that these dreams exist independently of the pleasure principle.[52] Buirski notes that the explanation offered by 'Ego Psychology' is that reliving the traumatic experience helps the mature ego to overcome an event which overwhelmed the immature ego through repeating it until it becomes less shocking and produces less anxiety.[53]

However, Freudian psychoanalysis is by no means dead.[54] Articles such as Hanlon's, on nightmares as expressions of conflict, move on from strictly Freudian preoccupations with wish fulfilment and sexual desire, while continuing to explore the Freudian subconscious, composed of the ego and the id.[55] Shapiro has summed up late twentieth century psychoanalytic dream theory as conceiving of the dream as a compromise between the id, the ego and the superego, centred on inner conflict.[56] Most usefully, Eggan has suggested that dreams are a 'triangular production' composed of, firstly, 'latent content that is said to appear in universal symbols, and represents material not accessible to consciousness', secondly, the dreamer's personality and personal situation and thirdly, the 'relation of dreams to cultural provision'.[57] Although the first,

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[51] Buirski 1987: 9.
[52] Freud 1922: 37-38.
[53] Buirski 1987: 9.
[54] Modern dream interpretation, as practised by psychoanalysts, is still in widespread use and can have severe consequences. Brainerd and Reyna, for example, have discussed some cases in which psychotherapists were able to convince patients that they had suffered years of sexual abuse by interpreting their dreams; either interpreting nightmares as literal memories, or interpreting other bad dreams as the sorts of dreams abuse victims have. In one case, a therapist was able to convince a young woman that she had suffered years of intense abuse, only for her to discover several years later, having re-established contact with her parents, that in fact, she was physically still a virgin; Brainerd and Reyna 2005: 369-398.
[55] See Hanlon 1987: 31.
[56] Shapiro 1987: 177.
[57] Eggan 1966: 238.

very Freudian/Jungian category is, perhaps somewhat doubtful (and will not concern us here), the distinction between the second and third categories may be more useful.

How Universal are Dreams?

Halbwachs and Assmann, the two foremost scholars on collective and cultural memory, both referred to dreams in their work, but neither explored the connection between dream images and memories, and general social conditions. Halbwachs argued that a dream is 'based only upon itself' and that, in dreams, the mind is furthest removed from society.[58] Assmann agrees with Halbwachs that in dreams, 'the social world relaxes its... grip' on our 'inner life'.[59] However, both scientific and historical research on dreams suggests that this is not entirely the case.

Although dreaming is universal, dreams are not, and we do not all dream alike. Not only do different people dream different things, but different cultures produce different 'typical' or recurring dreams as well. Dreams are, to some extent, culturally determined experiences. This is, of course difficult to prove; indeed, Dodds changed his mind on this issue between writing *The Greeks and the Irrational* and *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*. In the earlier book, Dodds suggested that, while some dreams were universal, others were 'culture-pattern' dreams and were culturally defined.[60] In the later work, he noted that Gorer had pointed out to him that people remember what they think is worth remembering from dreams, and had therefore convinced him that it was the memory of the dream that differed between cultures, not

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[58] Halbwachs 1992: 42.
[59] Assmann 2006: 2.
[60] Dodds 1951: 103.

the dream itself.[61] Halbwachs, on the other hand, argued that, while a person is asleep and dreaming, they have no contact with and do not rely on collective memory.[62] Although Dodds' later argument, that one remembers what one thinks worth remembering and it is the memory that changes, may have some validity, it does not seem sufficient to explain all the differences between dreams in different cultures.

Since dreams are connected with recent memories, people with different everyday experiences will dream different dreams, so the manifest content of dreams varies between different cultures. For example, an attempt from the 1950s to discover whether Japanese and Americans experienced the same 'typical' dreams found that substantially more Americans dreamed of public nudity, while more Japanese people dreamed of being attacked or pursued.[63] To take a different sort of study, when Burke tried to apply the categories Eggan used in her analysis of Hopi dreams to his study of the dreams of four seventeenth century gentlemen, he found that her categories simply did not fit, and created his own.[64] Burke's categories included 'the church' (meaning chiefly the building) and 'politics', categories which clearly only apply to a culture dominated by the (Christian) Church and to people personally concerned with politics.

Freud identified some dreams as 'typical' dreams, found frequently among different people in different places, and he based much of his dream theory on these.[65] 'Typical' dreams do sometimes appear within more than one culture – Butler has found evidence of the common teeth-falling-out motif and the public nudity motif in Akkadian

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[61] Dodds 1965: 39.
[62] Halbwachs 1992: 39.
[63] Griffith, Miyagi and Tago 1958: 1177. Speculation on why Japanese citizens might dream of being attacked at this point in history will be best left for another study.
[64] Burke 1997: 31-32 (see also Eggan 1966: 238).
[65] See Freud 1976: 100-101.

texts.[66] Most importantly for classical scholars, dreams in which a man dreams that he

has sex with his mother, although apparently not common among modern Western men,

are relatively frequently attested in antiquity.[67] Bremmer has suggested a possible reason

for this; that changes in the relationships between men and women, with sons brought up

by their mothers until puberty and then taken away, in both fifth century BC Athens and

late nineteenth century AD Western Europe led to this dream being experienced by men

who had enjoyed a close relationship with their mother, but no other women.[68] We

cannot, then, assume that 'typical' dreams, although common, are universal and must

proceed to explore conceptualisations of dreaming in full awareness that members of

different cultures are likely to dream different things. Evans-Pritchard also noted that,

when he interviewed Azande people, several claimed to have dreamt the same dream,

which Evans-Pritchard explained as meaning that the dreams were about common

themes.[69]

Having said that, it seems likely that some sorts of dreams, (such as dreams of

people who have died, for example) are relatively common, or at least occur with some

frequency, in many cultures. It is impossible to be certain that these dreams are universal,

and indeed, individuals within a culture which values these dreams may never have

experienced this particular type of dream for themselves. Burke, in his study of four

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[66] Butler 1998: 48-49. Note that Weinstein et al. have noted that these 'typical' dreams – they refer to loss of teeth, death and nudity – may not be as common as popularly believed: Weinstein et al. 1991: 175.
[67] Most famously referred to by Jocasta in *Oedipus Tyrannus* (Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 981) and Plato also mentions these dreams (Plato, *Republic*, 571c). According to Herodotus, Hippias dreamed that he slept with his mother (Herodotus 6.107-108), Caesar dreamed of violating his mother (Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 7; Dio Cassius 41.24.2) and Pausanias relates a story about a man called Comon who dreamed he lay with his late mother and she came to life, which Pausanias informs us indicated the recovery of Mycenae (Pausanias 4.26.3). Artemidorus devotes a lengthy section to the possible interpretations of these dreams, which can depend on the position adopted as well as the status of the dreamer or the nature of his relationship with his mother (Artemidorus, 1.79).
[68] Bremmer 1987: 54-55.
[69] Evans-Pritchard 1937: 381.

particular dreamers, found the theme of death and burial of themselves or of someone

still living quite strong, but does not refer to dreams of people who have died, which

clearly were not prominent in his sample.[70] However, it seems clear that people from

many, many cultures dream of those who have died, and that, while the nature of the

dream may vary between cultures, this particular 'typical' dream is, perhaps, one which

occurs more frequently than most other examples. It is also believed that nightmares are

'fairly ubiquitous', as they have been reported throughout history and across cultures,

though it is important to note that definitions of a 'nightmare' can differ.[71] It should also

be noted that dreams referred to as sent by malicious beings in other cultures may not be

'nightmares' in the sense that they are frightening; the dreamer may have another reason

for believing their origin to be hostile.

Harris has recently carried out a detailed study of the sort of dreams Greek and

Roman people may have experienced, much of it focussed on the question of whether and

how people may have experienced message dreams, which he refers to as 'epiphany

dreams'. Harris' method is based largely on looking for dream like qualities in ancient

dream reports, in particular, for bizarre or illogical qualities.[72] It is important to note that

'strangeness' is not agreed to be a universal quality of dreams; Weinstein et al. in 1991

observed that very few dream reports in Snyder's 1970 study were disjointed or chaotic

(though this is more likely to be a feature of dream reporting rather than the dream itself

– the dreamer gives the dream a narrative when they tell it to others).[73] Harris

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[70] Burke 1997: 32.
[71] Hanlon 1987: 16. Buirski has noted that the term 'nightmare' is often used to describe dreams including anxiety dreams, punishment dreams, post-traumatic dreams and night terrors, and various definitions exist (Buirski 1987: 3).
[72] See Harris 2009: 17 on the importance of the bizarre element.
[73] Weinstein et al. 1991: 175.

acknowledges and addresses this issue, but maintains the importance of the bizarre element in dream experiences.[74]

Del Corno has also shown some interest in this area, arguing that none of the dreams recorded by Artemidorus are real dreams, but that the dreams recorded by Aristides are genuine.[75] Weber suggests, based on literary dream reports, that ancient dreams, in particular, were more similar to waking life.[76] Harris' work is important because it draws our attention to the similarities and differences between ancient and modern dream experience – most importantly, he reminds us that we must not dismiss message dreams as false, just because they are not a common dream form now.[77] Similarly, Husser has argued that it is necessary to try to reach the real life dream experience lying behind the interpretation that the texts give of it, in order to avoid producing a commentary of literary forms.[78]

In some cases, the question of how far a dream report resembles a real dream experience is particularly important, and must be addressed, and this study will occasionally consider the question of whether a dream report relates to a 'real' dream, particularly in the case of Aelius Aristides. However, for the most part, this study will not explore in detail the issue of 'real' or 'lived' dreams. Ultimately, it is not possible to

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[74] Harris 2009: 18-19.
[75] Del Corno 1978: 1610 and 1616.
[76] Weber 2000: 536.
[77] See Harris 2009: 23ff. We must also avoid assuming deliberate falsehood in ancient dream reports in general. Many of the dream reports investigated here are recorded after an event that they appear to have predicted and in many cases, the dream report is entirely the work of a third party. However, in those cases in which the dreamer has been involved in the production of the dream report, we must beware of jumping to conclusions along the lines of 'they are making it all up'. Human memory is extremely unreliable. We remember events by telling stories about them, and the story of the event becomes centred around what Brainerd and Reyna have referred to as 'what we believe to have been the crux of experience', otherwise known as a 'gist memory', and this process can sometimes lead to the production of false memories; Brainerd and Reyna 2005: 5. Considering the difficulty of remembering dreams at all, we should bear in mind the possibility that, after an important event, someone involved might believe that they remember a dream in which something similar happened and they might fully believe that this dream predicted the event, with no desire or intent to deceive others.
[78] Husser 1999: 16.

'reach' the 'real life dream experience' behind the texts. In the first place, many of the dreams are, in all probability, entirely spurious or fictitious, and Harris devotes some pages to discussion of which reports he suggests are almost certainly false and which are true.[79] Secondly, it is difficult to remember a dream even a few hours after one has dreamt it, even worse trying to remember it weeks, months or years later. Although research in this area is certainly valuable – as Harris points out, much research into ancient history is dependant on unreliable resources – to prolong the discussion in this study would add little to Harris' work, other than to offer a few minor disagreements concerning which ancient dreams may or may not be genuine dream reports.[80]

Dream Reports

Rather than looking at dreams in a more general sense, as Harris has so successfully done, this study focuses on dream reports, that is, narrative accounts of specific dreams, dreamed by a specific person or persons at a specific time. Dream reports are distinct from other references to dreams – metaphorical uses of words for dreams, philosophical discussions of dreams and so on – in that they purport to be the record of a dream as it was remembered by the dreamer.

The processes by which we remember, or, more often, forget, dreams are not well understood. Subjects in sleep studies are more likely to remember their dreams if they have been woken during the night, though reporting their dreams when woken up during

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[79] Harris 2009: 112-120.
[80] Harris 2009: 93. I am more inclined than Harris to assume that Augustine is reporting something that originates in a real dream, and I am also more willing to give at least some of the dreams recorded as real life examples by Artemidorus the benefit of the doubt, not matter how 'gullible' Artemidorus may have been (Harris 2009: 114).

the night does not seem to affect dream recall.[81] A dream can never be studied actively, as it happens, so aside from occasional vocal sounds from the dreamer, the only way we can experience a dream is through the dreamer's (notoriously unreliable) memory, and this holds true for the dreamer themselves as well. This is further complicated by the fact that we are usually unaware that we are dreaming during the dream itself, and so cannot objectively examine the experience as a dream. A dream report, then, is a compilation of confused fragments of memory actively ordered into a narrative by the dreamer and reported at a later date.

It is because dream reports are deliberate acts of narration that it is so important to examine them as literary forms, as we do here in Part Two of this study. Sometimes, scholarly discussions of dreams in the ancient world draw evidence from a collection of texts which seem to offer some insight without including a discussion of the roles dreams play within those works – especially Artemidorus' *Onirocritica*, Aelius Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi*, and Cicero's *De Divinatione*. These works are sometimes mined for potential information concerning Greco-Roman views of dreams and dreaming, and this potential problem has been noted by some studies.[82] Scholarly works on dreams in literature often start by summarising dream interpretation in the period, discussing incubation, medicine, Artemidorus and so on, and then go on to analyse fictive or non-fictive literary material in the light of these observations.[83]

     The problem is that the arguments and view of dreaming they are summarising have often been developed, not just through reading Artemidorus and Galen, but also

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[81] Fagioli et al. 1989: 308; Cipolli et al. 1992: 385.
[82] See for example Kessels 1978: 2.
[83] See for example Gollnick 1999: 31-52.

through the old practice of taking passages from literary works and reading historical significance into them. This is not, in itself, inherently problematic, but in this study, I propose to look at dreams in the reverse order. By looking at dreams and their functions in both literature of record and literature of imagination first, I hope to eliminate examples that are not designed to refer to any 'realistic' scenario, but have a specific role to play within the narrative. Having explored these dreams, we can gain a better sense of why ancient authors include certain motifs and what this means from an historical point of view by examining their possible literary functions first.

Dream reports may be as brief as ἐκεῖνος [Tarquin] ἐξευρεῖν πρῶτος εἴτε κατὰ λογισμὸν εἴτε ὡς οἴονταί τινες ὀνείρῳ πειθόμενος, 'it is said he [Tarquin] first devised the punishments... being moved to do so either by his own judgment or, as some believe, in obedience to a dream' (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 3.67.3); or as lengthy as Silius Italicus' description of Hannibal's dream of the destruction of Italy (Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 3.196-221). The bulk of our evidence on dreams in the ancient world is drawn from these reports, but their function within the text in which they appear is often more closely related to the demands of the particular text, rather than bearing any strong relation to more general conceptualisations of dreaming. This is why, before exploring what dreams were believed to be, it is essential to establish what roles dreams play in the greater part of the literature.

This study does not include dream reports which appear only in fragments. This is not because fragments are not important; our only surviving dream reference from Sallust, for example, is from a fragment (in which a man, thinking he was being deceived, asked if treasure was being indicated either by extispicy or a dream) (Sallust,

Histories, Book 3, Frag. 109). However, this study focuses on dream reports that can be better contextualised, in order more easily to examine the place of dreams within literary works.

It is important to note that in some previous studies, a very wide view has been taken of what does or does not constitute a dream report. There are a number of ways of referring to a dream in Greek and Latin (see Chapter One pp53-61) and scholars often, from a desire not to exclude important evidence, include stories concerning communication with the gods that may refer to a dream or to a waking vision. For example, Leuci, in his study of 'dream-technical terms', includes all terms that might refer to a dream, including words for ordering, sight or warning.[84] It is a commonplace of works on dreams in the ancient world that ancient writers did not clearly distinguish between dreams and visions in the way modern writers do.[85] However, this study questions that assumption. The Greek and Latin languages both included words for sleep and dreaming. It is certainly true that an author might refer to a dream with a more vague term, but if they do so, they have made a deliberate choice to use a more ambiguous term, when more specific terms were available to them, and such a choice should be respected and considered when engaged in philological study of their work.

With this in mind, this study has been much more strict in choosing the reports it focuses on. Renberg pointed out, in his 2003 thesis, that with many of these terms, it is impossible absolutely to determine whether the text is referring to a dream or to another form of divination or vision.[86] Similarly, Weber has argued that ancient terminology for

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[84] See Leuci 1993: especially 10 and 131.
[85] See for example Weber 2000: 31-32.
[86] Renberg 2003: 17.

dreams and visions was much more blurred (*unschärfer*) than modern terminology, but, as he notes, some terms are generally used to refer to a dream, while others only occasionally refer to a dream, and more often refer to some other vision or apparition.[87] With this in mind, a deliberate decision has been taken to focus this study solely on those terms which refer unequivocally to a dream or to something experienced during sleep.

The evidence this study has been based on has been compiled from electronic searches on the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae and on the Diogenes PHI Latin Corpus. Rather than relying on morphological searches, textual searches for fractions of certain words were carried out. These fractions were ονειρ, ενύπ, υπν, οναρ, *som*, *dorm*, *sop*, and *quiet*, from the words and phrases ὄνειρος/ ὄναρ, ἐνύπνιον, κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους, *somnus/somnium/somno*, *dormo*, *sopor*, and *quies* (*per quietem*).[88] A number of terms usually included in dream studies were excluded, most notably *visus*/*visum*. This is because, although these terms can be associated with dreams, the presence of one of these terms without a word for 'sleep' or 'dream' does not necessarily indicate a dream.

There are plenty of studies available that take a wide view of what constitutes a dream in ancient writing, but this study assumes that ancient writers did, indeed, distinguish between a dream and a vision considers only those reports which have been specifically labelled as a dream. This is not intended as a denial that the other terms might refer to dreams and dream reports, but rather, as an attempt to focus on the most important terms for the period of particular interest, the second century AD.

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[87] Weber 2000: 32.
[88] Latin authors sometimes used phrases like *nocturni visus* to describe a nocturnal vision, which clearly refers to a dream (see for example Livy 8.6.11). Where these have come to my attention, they have been included. Initially, νυκτ and *noct* were also included in the textual searches, but, as the study progressed, it became clear that very few dreams were described in this way without being accompanied by one of the other words on the list, and that there would not be time to extend this search to all texts, due to the large number of occurrences of these words outside of dream contexts.

Occasionally, exceptions have been made for particularly interesting dream reports that do not feature these words, or for other reports which are *clearly* referring to dreams. For the most part, however, this rule has been strictly followed.

The State of Scholarship on Dreams

The popularity of dreams in the ancient world as a subject of study has risen and fallen over the years, but has rarely been wholly neglected, and is currently undergoing a resurgence. The oldest scholarly works on dreams, excluding ancient scholarship, are very old. Freud based his survey of dream interpretation throughout the ages on Büchsenschültz's *Traum und Traumdeutung im Altertum*, which Clay has described as 'then old and… now very aged'.[89] Bouché-Leclerq included a chapter on dream divination in his 1879 volume on divination on the ancient world, which has proved influential.[90] In 1939, Wikenhauser provided a short catalogue of some Greek and Roman dreams in his piece on dreams in the New Testament, in which he restricted himself to dreams of certain categories (see Chapter One).[91]

As Harris has observed, the book which has had the greatest effect on twentieth century studies of classical dreams is Dodd's *The Greeks and the Irrational*, which was first published two years before the 'turning-point' in modern dream studies, Aserinsky and Kleitman's 'Regularly Occurring Periods of Eye Motility, and Concomitant

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[89] Clay 1980: 342.
[90] Bouché-Leclerq 1975: 277-329.
[91] Wikenhauser 1939: 325.

Phenomena, During Sleep'.[92] Harris notes in particular that, although Dodds later revised his view of ancient dreams in *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, it is the earlier work that has remained the more influential.[93]

It was in *The Greeks and the Irrational* that Dodds discussed the possibility of dream-structures which were culturally specific (see above).[94] He follows this with a discussion of dreams in Homer, and then discusses dreams related to dedications.[95] He also discusses incubation, and notes that it was used either for medical purposes, or to provoke a mantic dream from the dead.[96] He also discusses Aristides for the first time here, and medical uses of dreams.[97] Finally, he turns to 'trace briefly the steps by which... Greek intellectuals attained a more rational to dream-experience'.[98] He claims that the 'religious' view of dreams was revived by the Stoics and continued into 'later antiquity' (his examples here come from the second and thirds centuries AD).[99]

In *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, Dodds noted that dreaming was the most widely practised mode of communication with the divine in antiquity, partly because it can be practised by anyone (and perhaps not surprisingly, since it cannot be avoided even if one wishes to).[100] It is here that he changes his mind about whether ancient people actually experienced 'divine' dreams (by which he means, roughly speaking, message dreams). Dodds then looks in more detail at Aelius Aristides.[101] He

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[92] Harris 2003: 19.
[93] Harris 2003: 19.
[94] Dodds 1951: 103-104.
[95] Dodds 1951: 104-109.
[96] Dodds 1951: 111.
[97] Dodds 1951: 112-117.
[98] Dodds 1951: 117-120.
[99] Dodds 1951: 121.
[100] Dodds 1965: 38.
[101] Dodds 1965: 40-45.

also noted that the Christian attitude to dreams was largely the same as the pagan attitude immediately preceding them and discusses the *Passion* of St Perpetua.[102]

The most important secondary study of dreams in ancient Mesopotamia is still Oppenheim's 'The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East. With a Translation of an Assyrian Dream-Book' (1956). Oppenheim's work focuses on the interpretation aspect of ancient dream belief, and particularly the interpretations offered by the dream book. More recently, Butler has written on conceptualisations of what a dream is and rituals designed to avoid bad dreams or to produce good dreams, while Zgoll has provided a comprehensive overview of dreaming in ancient Mesopotamia.[103] Mouton's recent volume on Hittite dreams is the first to focus on this area and includes a number of relevant texts.[104] Noegel has provided a comprehensive survey of scholarship on ancient Near Eastern dreams in the introduction to his 2007 volume *Nocturnal Ciphers*, and takes in some literature on Egyptian and Greco-Roman dreams as well.[105]

As far as pre-Ptolemaic Egypt is concerned, Szpakowska's *Behind Closed Eyes: Dreams and Nightmares in Ancient Egypt* is definitive, while her edited volume, *Through a Glass Darkly: Magic, Dreams and Prophecy in Ancient Egypt* also contains several useful articles. Szpakowska's book covers the first 2,000 years of recorded history in Egypt. Sauneron's brief but important study remains the most important resource for a general overview on dreams in ancient Egypt, while Ray's more recent work is the best

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[102] Dodds 1965: 46-53..
[103] Butler 1998; Zgoll 2006.
[104] Mouton 2007: 87-314.
[105] Noegel 2007: 4-9.

resource on Hellenistic dream interpretation in Egypt.[106] Husser's work on dreams in the

Biblical world also includes a section on Egypt.[107]

Several studies of dreams in the Greco-Roman world focus on philosophical theories

concerning dreaming. Van Lieshout's 1980 book *Greeks on Dreams* covers dreams in

literature quite generally but, as White noted in his review, the second chapter, on

philosophical works on dreams, is particularly useful.[108] Van Lieshout's chapter on

'Dreams in Literary Sources' suffers from conflating Greek literature from Homer to

Plutarch, and making little distinction between different time periods or different genres,

but his work on the philosophers remains influential.[109] Holowchak's 2002 work on

ancient oneirology is unfortunately limited by its attempt to focus on ancient 'science'.[110]

Näf's 2004 book *Traum und Traumdeutung im Altertum* is a fairly basic overview of the

evidence, but includes a section summarising philosophical views from the fifth and

fourth centuries BC.[111]

Most recently and most usefully, Harris has explored 'quasi-scientific' or

'naturalistic' theories concerning dreams in the ancient world, and the fourth chapter of

his 2009 book provides a succinct overview of the subject.[112] His third chapter, which

summarises Greek and Roman opinions about the truthfulness of dreams, also includes

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[106] Sauneron 1959; Ray 1981.
[107] Husser 1999: 59-72.
[108] White 1982: 318; see van Lieshout 1980: 136-141.
[109] Van Lieshout 1980: 6-63.
[110] Holowchak makes an interesting start when he declares himself to be studying oneirology 'from Classical Greece... to the Roman Republic in the fourth century AD'; Holowchak 2002: xiii. Holowchak is interested in oneirology as an ancient 'science', and focuses almost exclusively on philosophical and medical texts. The ancient authors he chooses to focus on are those whom he considers to be 'scientists' – he argues that 'real science begins with the Greeks', a not uncontroversial statement which there is not room to discuss fully here; Holowchak 2002: 2. The main problems with Holowchak's approach to dreams as 'science' have been summarised in Walde's online review of his book; Walde 2003.
[111] Näf 2004: 55-62. See further J. Davies' review of this book; Davies 2007: 551.
[112] Harris 2009: 229-278.

substantial philosophical material, this time focussing on whether or not ancient thinkers thought dreams might foretell the future.[113]

In the 'Introduction' to his 2003 thesis, Renberg declared that the role of dreams in literature had already been so thoroughly discussed in various works that there was no need to explore such 'well-trodden subjects' in his own dissertation.[114] However, many of these studies do not spend much time on the other evidence available, in particular, the epigraphical evidence.

The most important recent work on dreams in historical literature is Weber's 2000 study *Kaiser, Träume und Visionen in Prizipat und Spätantike*, described by Banchich in his online review as 'excellent in virtually every respect'.[115] Weber's study provides a detailed examination of recorded imperial dreams throughout the empire and into late antiquity. His bibliography also includes a number of works on dreams in late antiquity.[116] Weber argues that there is no distinction between an account of an actual dream and a dream as a literary construct, because, once written down, the dream becomes text.[117] While this study does not stray as far from Weber's approach as Harris, who looks for evidence of actual dreams behind the literary dreams, it will be assumed that there is a significant difference between a dream that is written purely as a literary construct and a dream that purports to be a record of an actual dream.

The stated aim of Kessels' 1978 work *Studies on the Dream in Greek Literature* is,

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[113] Harris 2009: 123-228.
[114] Renberg 2003: 1.
[115] Banchich 2001.
[116] Weber 2000: 524-531.
[117] Weber 2000: 11.

'to investigate to what extent early Greek (especially Homeric) conceptions about dreams differ from ours, and in what way dreams are used as a literary motif'.[118]

Kessels aimed to supplement the earlier work of Hundt, whose *Der Traumglaube bei Homer* had focused on dream belief in the Homeric poems, but had neglected the literary function of Homeric dreams.[119] Kessels argues for an understanding of these dreams in their literary context, but also suggests they are 'conscious imitations' of actual dreams.[120] His emphasis on the importance of treating the dream as a literary motif has been invaluable to future studies. Particularly useful is the last chapter, in which Kessels traces the evolution of the Greek vocabulary for dreams and dreaming.[121]

Miller, in her work on dreams in late antiquity, highlights divination and divinatory dreams as part of a system of ancient semiotics, rather than focussing on divination as prediction. Miller has focused on how writers in late antiquity imagined the process of imagination in dreams, and how certain dreamers found personal meaning in dreams.[122] As Pearcy has observed, Miller does not distinguish between narrative-like psychological states, dream reports, literary dreams and dreamlike texts.[123]

MacAlister has examined the dream sequences in the major Greek novels from the different stand-points of Artemidorus, Durkheim, Bakhtin and the Byzantine novelists.[124] This produces an interesting exercise in literary criticism, but is less helpful from an historical point of view. As van Hooff noted in his review, MacAlister's study is

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[118] Kessels 1978: 1.
[119] Kessels 1978: 2.
[120] Kessels 1978: 2.
[121] Kessels 1978: 174-254.
[122] Miller 1994: 12-13.
[123] Pearcy 1997: 117-118.
[124] MacAlister 1996: 3-4.

'a confusing book about a well-chosen theme'.[125] Van Hooff was, at the time of writing the review, particularly well placed to judge MacAlister's work on suicide, but the same judgement can equally apply to her work on dreams.

Extensive work on individual imaginative works containing dreams has been carried out over the past three decades by Patrick Kragelund. Kragelund's studies include *Prophecy, Populism and Propaganda in the Octavia* (1982) and *Dream and Prediction in the Aeneid* (1976), and a 1989 article on dreams in Petronius. Kragelund's main arguments in the 1976 work have been neatly refuted by Crabbe in her review; the most important thing to note here is that Kragelund's division between Latin and Greek appearances of the dead in dreams.[126] On the other hand, Kragelund is right to insist that we should not interpret Aeneas' question to Hector's ghost as an indication that Aeneas has forgotten what has happened to Hector. Kragelund's work on the *Octavia* was particularly useful at the time of publication, as it contributed to the dating of the play after the reign of Nero, as Griffin noted in her review.[127] Most recently, Walde's *Die Traumdarstellungen in der griechisch-römischen Dichtung* provides analysis of poetic dreams**,** and some useful notes on classification.

There has been a recent resurgence of interest in Aelius Aristides, most notably in the 2008 edited volume, *Aelius Aristides Between Greece, Rome and the Gods*, edited by Harris and Holmes. This collection includes several important essays on Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi*, which are discussed in the relevant parts of this study. Artemidorus is not quite so popular; *L'Année Philologique* lists no work focussed on Artemidorus since Van Hooff's

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[125] Van Hooff 1999: 335.
[126] Crabbe 1978: 250.
[127] Griffin 1983: 322.

2006 article published in *Land of Dreams: Studies in Honour of A. H. M. Kessels*.[128] Del Corno provides a useful introduction to both in his contribution to *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*.[129] The standard translations of Aelius Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi* and Artemidorus' *Onirocritica* are still those of C. A. Behr and R. White respectively.[130] I have found both invaluable in preparing this thesis.

The most important work on the inscriptions at the incubatory shrine at Epidaurus is found in the collection and interpretation of inscriptions relating to Asclepius assembled by the Edelsteins, recently re-published in an updated edition as *Asclepius: Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*.[131] A smaller edition of the texts from Epidaurus itself, with translation and commentary, has been put together by LiDonnici, including valuable work on thematic issues and linguistic features.[132]

Two otherwise unpublished PhD theses from the United States offer the most comprehensive recent treatments of epigraphical evidence. Leuci's study of dream-technical terms contains a wealth of useful information and statistics. The most important recent study of the epigraphical evidence, in particular the inscriptions put up in obedience to divine orders, is that of Renberg, whose 2003 doctoral thesis includes, in addition to extensive analysis, a complete catalogue of the 1300 dedicatory inscriptions studied.[133]

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[128] Van Hooff 2006: 32-42.
[129] Del Corno 1978: 1607-1618.
[130] Behr 1968; White 1975.
[131] Edelstein and Edelstein 1998.
[132] LiDonnici 1995: especially 22-23.
[133] Renberg 2003: 363-756.

One popular approach to the study of dreams in history is to apply modern

psychoanalytical theory, especially Freudian theory, to the study of historical dreams.[134]

For example, in Devereux's *Dreams in Greek Tragedy*, Devereux, a clinical psychologist

of the psycho-analytic school, analyses various dreams from the Greek tragedies, hoping

to show whether or not each dream could actually have been dreamed by a person in

ancient Greece.[135] This method is particularly appealing if we hope that this can reveal

something to us about the dreamer. A recent article by Ray does exactly that; he describes

the dreams recorded by a selection of people from Deir-el Medina and draws conclusions

about their lives and personalities from the dream reports.[136] Pelling has noted that

modern readers often read modern psychological understandings in dreams, where

ancients looked for prophecy in the same dream.[137]

However, as tempting as it is to analyse the dreams of ancient people, it seems

ultimately unhelpful to the exploration of their own conceptualisations of dreaming. First,

modern psychoanalytic theories are vulnerable to being disproved by further research.

Secondly, the ancients themselves had no such theories, so however convinced we may

be that dreams proceed from our own subconscious, this will be of no use in articulating

how an ancient person who imagined that certain dreams come from the gods thought

about his or her dreams. Thirdly, any attempt to psychoanalyse a fictional character is

ultimately doomed, as these are not real people reacting to their situation, but puppets to

be manipulated by the author. Finally, as Butler has pointed out, the two approaches to

dreaming focus on different types of dream.[138] Both ancient and modern cultures have

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[134] On the problems of applying Freudian theory to the ancient world in general, see Lloyd-Jones 1985.
[135] See Devereux 1976: ix.
[136] Ray 2006: especially 195.
[137] Pelling 1997: 197.
[138] Butler 1998: 14.

produced reports of dreams which clearly reflect the dreamer's recent memories, and dreams which appear to predict the future. The difference is one of emphasis; while modern dream interpreters ignore apparently precognitive dreams, and many deny their existence, ancient dream interpreters dismissed those dreams which were obviously explicable by recent memories and focussed on those which appeared to provide clues to the future.[139] The result is that we do not have many records of these dreams that the ancients regarded as insignificant upon which to practise our own form of dream interpretation.

There is some confusion concerning the periodisation of Roman history, due to scholarly disagreement in this area, reflected in works on dreams. In addition to what is presumably an error in Holowchak's introduction (see above), MacAlister has referred to the second and third centuries AD as the 'late Hellenistic world' and Miller's work on 'Dreams in Late Antiquity' includes chapters on Aelius Aristides and St Perpetua.[140] In this study, 'Late Antiquity' will be presumed to date from the accession of Diocletian in AD 284, and will be outside the scope of this work. The 'early Empire', the focal period of this study, will cover the period from 31 BC to roughly AD 200 (taking Octavian's victory at the Battle of Actium as the beginning of the Empire). The term 'Roman period' will occasionally be used; this includes the first century BC, in addition to the focal period (as the source of important background information) and encompasses Greek writing and all ethnic groups and nationalities living in the Roman world, in addition to Latin writers living in Rome itself.

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[139] For a modern argument against the existence of precognitive dreams, see Hobson 2002: 18-19.
[140] MacAlister 1996: 8-9; Miller 1994: 148-204.

PART ONE: CONTEXT

CHAPTER ONE

Classifying Dreams

This chapter opens with a very broad overview of ideas about dreams and dreaming from around the world, in order to gain a sense of what features of dreams are most often held to be important, and to establish certain ideas that tend to recur in many different times and places. The rest of the chapter is concerned with how dreams were classified in the ancient world and how they are usually classified in modern studies of ancient dreams. This will enable us, at the end of the chapter, to establish a mode of communication and a classificatory system for discussing dreams in this study.

Conceptualising Dreams: Dreaming in Different Cultures

By exploring conceptualisations of dreaming in many different cultures, we may gain a greater sense of perspective concerning Greco-Roman dream reports. Looking at ideas that occur in similar ways in different cultures will indicate to us what sort of idea we might expect to find in classical sources, and will allow us to highlight any unique features of classical thinking on dreams.

This section summarises different opinions on dreams, chiefly using anthropological studies of contemporary (usually 20th century) communities. However, as Leach observed, 'anthropological theories often tell us more about the anthropologists

than about their subject matter'.[141] As regards dreams specifically, Charsley has observed

that, although African Christian churches appear to have a stronger tendency to attach

significance to dreams compared with Europe and America, this 'general impression'

must be 'severely qualified', partly because of the differences between different groups'

approaches and partly because negative instances, where dreams are not seen as

particularly significant, are often ignored.[142]

       Methological limitations are particularly acute in the case of Australian

Aboriginal 'Dreamtime', which has long been a cause of debate among anthropologists.

The concept is quite complex, and cannot simply be translated as 'dreaming' or

'Dreamtime' in the sense these words are understood in English, and, as Wolfe has

pointed out, it is actually an anthropological construct, rather than an Aboriginal one

(though it has been adopted as a symbol of Aboriginal culture).[143] Some anthropologists

maintain that, although the 'Dreamtime' does not refer to ordinary 'night dreaming', the

two are connected.[144] The prevailing mindset in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

had anthropologists such as Buffon, Bastian and Lang declaring that 'the brutes… cannot

distinguish their dreams from their actual sensations'.[145] In the twentieth century and

beyond, a more sophisticated approach has been taken; for example, Leach has argued

that, when Aborigines have said that a woman became pregnant because she dreamed that

a child was put inside her, this is not because they were ignorant of the necessity of

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[141] Leach 1966: 46.
[142] Some groups use dreams to legitimize cult membership, while others see certain dreams as remnants of pagan belief; Charsley 1992: 156.
[143] Wolfe 1991: 198; on definitions, see Berndt 1974: 7-8.
[144] See Price-Williams and Gaines 1994: 375.
[145] Buffon, quoted in Wolfe 1991: 204.

sexual intercourse for conception, but because a spiritual action was also required, and may in some context have been considered more important.[146]

Generally speaking, then, there are limitations to the reports summarised here. However, they can still provide a useful point of reference for later discussion of dreams, as these indicate what ideas about dreams are especially common and which, therefore, we might also expect to see in the classical world.

The most common reason for any culture to place value on dreams is that they imagine that dreams might foretell the future. Evans-Pritchard included a section on dream oracles in his book on witchcraft among the Azande, in which he noted that dreams held a relatively high status, compared to omens and minor oracles, but also that a person might go to a major oracle in order to check that their interpretation of the dream is correct.[147] The Yansi also place a relatively high value on dreams. According to the Yansi terminology for dreaming, they either 'sleep a dream' (*apwo ndoey*), or 'divine', 'guess' or 'foretell a dream' (*a lor ndoey*).[148] They have people who specialise in dream interpretation, but a person might also interpret their own dream in consultation with a friend.[149] Mpier has argued that for the Yansi, dreams are 'as important as, perhaps even in some circumstances more important than, …waking life', due to the prominence given to the discussion of dreams in Yansi culture.[150] However, the Yansi do not consider every dream to be significant.[151]

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[146] Leach 1966: 40.
[147] Evans-Pritchard 1937: 378.
[148] Mpier 1992: 102.
[149] Mpier 1992: 102, 108.
[150] Mpier 1992: 100.
[151] Mpier 1992: 104-5.

According to the South American Mehinaku, dreams provide symbols which indicate future events, and Gregor notes that the Mehinaku have a tendency to interpret these as negative predictions, of illness, injury or death.[152] Like the African Yansi, the Mehinaku recount their dreams to each other each morning.[153] In Papua New Guinea, Stephen has described Mekeo dream beliefs as 'similar to those widely reported for tribal societies in general' and claims that the Mekeo believe that dreams provide a point of contact with the spirit world and with dead relatives, that they reveal 'things hidden from ordinary perception' and provide 'omens' concerning future events.[154] The Mekeo see the dream as a riddle to be solved, often by the dreamer themselves, though elders or 'ritual experts' might be able to help if necessary, and not all dreams can be deciphered at all, as they may represent things happening in the 'dreamworld'.[155] The Mekeo do not always share their dreams, as they regard them as very private concerns, and they often view them in a negative light.

Dreams are sometimes divided into 'good' and 'bad', according to what sort of luck they signify for the dreamer; the Azande, for example, divided dreams in this way.[156] This is clearly related to the idea that dreams might foretell the future, but not necessarily the same (a dream might indicate good luck in general without specifying what form that good luck will take). This system is also found in the Egyptian dream book (see Chapter Two).

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[152] Gregor 1981: 354.
[153] Gregor 1981: 354 (on the Yansi, see Mpier 1992: 100).
[154] Stephen 1996: 466-467.
[155] Stephen 1996: 467.
[156] Evans-Pritchard 1937: 380-381.

One of the most important recurring ideas about dreams is that they provide some kind of connection with the dead or with the world of the dead. According to Evans-Pritchard, the Azande thought that, in dreams featuring the dead, one might discover what was happening among the dead.[157] The Cherokee also imagined that the dead visited the living in dreams, though they connected this belief strongly with sickness, particularly if a mother dreamed of a dead child. It was believed that the child would try to draw the mother away to the land of dead, and if the mother heeded these dreams, she would eventually die.[158]

In her memoirs, the mother of the current Dalai Lama describes an incident that worried her. A number of her children died in infancy, and she often used to have dreams about them. However, after the death of one in particular of her sons, she found that she did not dream about him. She worried that, because they had buried the child in a nailed box rather than destroying the body, his soul had been unable to leave his body, and this was why she was not dreaming about him, but was reassured by an older lama that the boy had already been reincarnated, and that when a person has been reborn, dreams of them do not reoccur. When the baby who was believed to be the reincarnation of the boy also died, Diki Tsering dreamed of the dead boy again.[159] This seems to reflect a conceptualisation of dreams in which the dream can be the vehicle for the soul of a dead person to visit; once the soul has entered another living body, it can no longer visit the living via a dream.

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[157] Evans-Pritchard 1937: 379.
[158] Irwin 1992: 244.
[159] Thondup 2000: 113-116.

Some people have imagined that the soul is able to leave the body while the body is unconscious, and that, in dreams, the soul is leaving the body behind and experiencing something somewhere else. The Berti, who have a system of dream interpretation but do not employ specialist dream interpreters, describe a variation of the 'wandering soul' idea in which, if one dreams of a dead person, it is because the soul has gone back to a time when the person was alive. The Berti also imagine that, if one does not remember a dream, there was no dream, emphasising the idea of the dream as some form of actual experience.[160] Similarly, the Mehinaku suggest that the soul, which normally resides in the iris of the eye, leaves its home at night and wanders through 'a nocturnal world peopled by spirits, monsters and the souls of other sleeping villagers'.[161] Pentony suggests that the Aborigines he worked with were subscribers to the 'wandering soul' idea; that they thought that the soul (or, as Pentony puts it, the 'spiritual part of the dreamer') could leave the body during sleep and roam, and might encounter the dead or 'great spiritual beings'.[162] This idea was also current in the second century AD and is known from a brief reference in Tertullian, though it does not appear very often in written sources from the Roman period (Tertullian, *De Anima*, 44).

It is sometimes thought that dreams leave the dreamer vulnerable to manipulation, by witchcraft, for example. Evans-Pritchard noted that in some dreams, a person might believe that they had experienced witchcraft through the dream.[163] The Ingessana suggest that certain dreams are the result of supernatural beings (*nengk*) 'impinging upon' the

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[160] Holy 1992: 87. Current scientific thinking suggests that all people dream every night, but from the Berti point of view, if no dream is remembered, then no dream has taken place. Holy has suggested that a comparison with language may be a useful way of explaining Berti dream interpretation; like semiotics, the 'rules' governing the interpretation of dreams are 'unconscious'; Holy 1992: 98.
[161] Gregor 1981: 354.
[162] Pentony 1961: 145.
[163] Evans-Pritchard 1937: 379.

dreamer and may go to a 'doctor-diviner', who can interpret the dream due to their 'second sight', with which they can see things hidden to other waking people.[164] The Ingessana talk about seeing things 'in dreams', and they may see ghosts, unpleasant supernatural beings (*nengk*), ancestors (*meithet*) or the god (*tel*), who may issue warnings, make demands or instruct – the job of the doctor-diviner being to interpret these messages.[165] Among the Rarámuri Indians, the focus is often on the negative nature of dreams. If a person does not dream, that is good, as the soul has been resting peacefully. Dreaming indicates the possibility of attack by malevolent beings. However, although the people, when interviewed, talked a lot about the negative potential of dreams, Merrill notes that the dream accounts he collected were split about 50/50 between those perceived as threatening, and pleasant dreams.[166] In Papua New Guinea, Stephen has claimed that dreams play a 'highly important' role in 'magical' ritual, though she does not elaborate further.[167]

Pentony connected the potential for the dreamer to be magically affected through dreams with a 'confusion' between dream and waking experience, but he provides no evidence to support his contestation that 'the native mind' experienced such a confusion.[168] This suggestion seems to come from the idea that a person can be attacked by black magic through their dreams, but the Aboriginal testimonies he quotes display no confusion between dream and waking life. Although the dream can be used as a conduit

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[164] Jędrej 1992: 111-112.
[165] Jędrej 1992: 113, 121. The word *tel*, Jędrej notes, is used to refer to a being similar to the Muslim Allah or the Christian God (Jędrej 1992: 117). I have used brackets here, to ensure that the Ingessana (G)od, though a similar concept, is not confused with the long history and multiple associations of the Judeo-Christian God.
[166] Merrill 1987: 195.
[167] Stephen 1996: 466.
[168] Pentony 1961: 149.

for a person to be attacked by black magic, the dream and waking life remain separate, and the magic may manifest itself in quite different ways in each sphere.

Dreams are also often connected with medicine. In particular, studies of Native American conceptualisations of dreams have often focussed on their connection with medicine, and with healing. For example, 19th century Cherokee shamans interpreted the dreams of sick people in order to discover the cause of the illness, as, once the negative agency causing the illness had been identified, it could sometimes be countered with certain plants.[169] Pentony noted that dreams which included illness or injury tended to be felt the most significant among the tribes he studied (the Ungarinyin, Worora and Wunambal tribes, in a study carried out in 1938).[170]

These ideas are not mutually contradictory, and many cultures have several different ideas about what a dream is or might signify. For example, the Rarámuri Indians conceptualise dreams as being concerned with the activity of the soul during sleep and dreams can allow them to communicate with deities, diagnose illness and foretell the future.[171] The Rarámuri have no noun for 'dream', just the verb *rimúna*, 'to dream', focusing on the dream as an event.[172] Merrill also claims that the Rarámuri attribute equal 'reality' to waking life and dreams, while still clearly differentiating between the two, noting that some described events to him in detail, without mentioning that they took place in a dream until he asked.[173]

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[169] Irwin 1992: 247, 249.
[170] Pentony 1961: 149.
[171] Merrill 1987: 194.
[172] Merrill 1987: 199.
[173] Merrill 1987: 201.

In some cultures, dreams can perform an essential social or religious function. For example, among the Igbo, dreams, along with omens and prophecies, are often cited by rival candidates for religious office, though Ray notes that the succession process validates and offers a reinterpretation of the dream, omen or prophecy, rather than the divinatory phenomenon being used to decide in favour of one candidate over another.[174] In many cases, the call to office is first heard through a dream, carried by a messenger who is often either the previous incumbent, or a manifestation of the spirit the office is devoted to.[175] This messenger places symbols of the office into the dreamer's hands (this may be a dream brought about by expectation – a person who wants the office is thinking about these traditional dreams, and so experiences one – or invented by an ambitious person).

These examples have mostly been drawn from twentieth-century studies that show little awareness of historical change. McKenzie, however, has used the records of Christian missionaries to examine dreams and visions in Yoruba religion in the mid-nineteenth century AD.[176] McKenzie suggests that dreams were used to articulate the social and religious changes taking place, as dreams of Yoruba gods gave way to dreams and visions of Jesus.[177] Similarly, Lohmann has investigated the role of dreams in the process of conversion to Christianity among the Asabano in Papua New Guinea. The Asabano perceive dreams as, as Lohmann puts it, 'real experiences of the soul' – that is, not as the same as waking life but as a possible vehicle for a genuine meeting with a supernatural

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[174] See Ray 1992: 55-56.
[175] Ray 1992: 67.
[176] McKenzie 1992: 126.
[177] McKenzie 1992: 127, 133.

being.[178] Lohmann argues that dreams played a significant role in the conversion of the Asabano, dreams of angels and other experiences acting as a source of 'supplementary information' on the new religion.[179]

There is some evidence for similar conceptualisations of dreaming in other parts of the ancient world. In ancient China, the written vocabulary used for dreaming was focused on dreams as what a person sees while asleep.[180] The *Shu-jing* (*Book of Documents*), from the early Zhou period (from c1100 BC), contains a reference to dreams which agree with oracle bone-cracking, making the divinatory sign doubly auspicious.[181] The Sanskrit *Atharva Veda* 4.9 includes a recommendation for an eye ointment to protect the sleeper from bad dreams, and the Tibetan Tangyur recommends an ointment for a sleeper looking for a propitious dream.[182] In North Africa, Herodotus notes that, among the Auschisae, who lived not far from Cyrene, the divinatory practice was to go to the grave of their ancestors, say prayers and sleep there, and whatever they saw in their dreams was taken to be prophetic (Herodotus, 4.172).

We can see that certain ideas recur within the cultural imaginations of many different peoples; most notably, the idea that dreams can foretell the future, the idea that dreams allow for communication with the dead, the idea that a person might be magically attacked through dreams and the idea that dreams may be of some medicinal value. However, within each culture, the process is imagined differently and with different

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[178] Lohmann 2000: 75.
[179] Lohmann 2000: 78.
[180] See Lin 1992: 79.
[181] See Bulkeley 2008: 55.
[182] Young 1999: 9.

nuances. Some embrace all these ideas, some only one or two of them. There are also peoples who do not hold any of these ideas at all. Herodotus even claims that the Atlantes, who lived near the Atlas Mountains, did not dream (though this is scientifically unlikely) (Herodotus, 4.184). In our study of the place of dreams within the Greco-Roman cultural imagination, we will be looking out for these frequently appearing ideas, whilst ensuring that we do not lose sight of those elements that are distinctly Greek or Roman.

Dream Terminology

Dreams, then, can be viewed in many different ways; as a method for communication with non-mortal beings, as a vulnerability by which the sleeper may be attacked, as a state of rest for the body during which the soul is absent, as a divinatory sign, as a symbol of good or bad luck or as tool in the art of medicine. We will turn now to the Greco-Roman world, where the terminology used by writers of Greek or Latin to describe dreams will provide a first step in establishing Greco-Roman dream categories.

As explained in the Introduction, the material explored in this study is largely generated from a small number of words relating to dreams and sleep; ὄνειρος/ ὄναρ, ἐνύπνιον, κατὰ τὸν ὕπνον/τοὺς ὕπνους, *somnus/somnium/somno*, *dormio*, *sopor*, and *quies* (*per quietem*). Renberg has pointed out that scholars often collate a number of terms which might loosely refer to dreaming together, although not all these terms specifically refer to

dreams.[183] Various scholars have privileged different selections of ancient terms. Weber suggests that ὄνειρος, ὄναρ, *somnium*, φάντασμα, εἴδωλον, φαντᾶσία, ἐπιφάνεια, ὀπτᾶσία, ἀποκάλυψις and *visus* may all refer to dreams, though only the first three *usually* refer to dreams.[184]

There certainly are other ways in which an ancient writer might describe a dream, and these have been included in previous studies. The most notable omission from this study is *visus*/*visum*, 'vision', which can refer to either a waking vision or a dream. Any experience described as a vision in sleep has been included, and some exceptions have been made for 'nocturnal visions', but anything described simply as a 'vision' has not been included here.

There is no doubt that some descriptions labelled *visus*/*visum* refer to a dream, and several scholars have discussed the use of these terms with reference to dreaming. Miller, for example, has suggested that *visio* was a 'technical onirological term' for a prophetic dream.[185] However, she relied on the work of Dodds on Greek dream terminology, and on her equation of certain Latin terms with Greek terms used by Artemidorus.[186] Miller equates *visio* with ὅραμα in Artemidorus, and says that Artemidorus describes three types of meaningful dream, the *somnium*/ ὄνειρος, an 'enigmatic' dream that needs to be interpreted, the *visio*/ ὅραμα, a prophetic vision that comes true, and the *oraculum*/χρηματισμός, an oracle (i.e. a message dream; see below).[187] However, Artemidorus mentions ὅραμα, 'vision', only once; he is explaining

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[183] Renberg 2003: 17.
[184] Weber 2000: 32. For a detailed study of ὄνειρος/ ὄναρ, ὕπνος and ἐνύπνιον, see Kessels 1978: 174-193. See also Vinagre 1996: 257-282, who discusses a particularly wide selection of terms relating to dreams.
[185] Miller 1994: 151.
[186] Dodds 1951: 105.
[187] Miller 1986: 158.

what waking phenomena correspond to the two main dream types, and says that apparitions (φαντάσματα) correspond to ἐνύπνιον, while ὅραμα and oracular responses correspond to ὄνειρος; this clearly separates the dream terms ὄνειρος and ἐνύπνιον from the non-dream-specific φαντάσματα and ὅραμα.

Leuci states that *visus* and *visum* were used to refer to dreams in Latin literature from the Late Republic onwards.[188] However, in the first passage he cites from Cicero, the word relating to 'vision' is used because Cicero is explicitly questioning why a god would send visions while one is asleep, rather than while one is awake, and the word is combined with a word for sleep, albeit one rarely associated with significant dreams – *dormientibus* (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.61.126). In the second passage, he explicitly refers to 'visions in dreams', *visis somniorum*; *visus* by itself does not stand for 'dream' (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 1.41.97). Livy introduces the dream of the consuls with the phrase *in quiete utrique consuli eadem dicitur visa*, 'it is said that each consul saw the same (i.e. visions) in their sleep' and later refers to these *nocturnos visus*, nocturnal visions – again, *visus* by itself does not mean 'dream', but must be accompanied by a word for night, sleep or something similar (Livy, 8.6.11). Similarly, the reference in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, which is the only example the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* cites of *visio* referring to a dream, refers to *nocturnae visiones* (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 4.27).[189] Leuci notes that Suetonius needs to use *nocturnus* to indicate whether a *visus* was a dream or not, but argues that this is due to the demands of the medium (history rather than inscription), rather than to a difference in meaning.[190]

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[188] Leuci 1993: 168. He refers to Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.126, and *Tusculan Disputations*, 1.41.97, and to Livy 8.6.11 – but he also notes that Virgil and 'other authors' use *visus* to describe a sight, whether real or in a dream, which causes fear.
[189] See further Renberg 2003: 56.
[190] Leuci 1993: 198.

There are, of course, many instances where *visus/visum/visio* clearly do refer to dreams. Among the inscriptions studied by Leuci, the Greek terms can be divided into four groups; words relating to orders, to dreams/sleep, to sight, and words relating to oracular terms or descriptions of epiphanies.[191] The Latin can also be divided into four similar but not quite identical groups; words relating to commands, to sight, to warnings and to dreams/sleep (on dream terminology in inscriptions, see Chapter Five pp246-251).[192] However, these terms were extremely flexible and, in cases where we lack context, we cannot be entirely sure whether they refer to a dream or a waking vision. It is for this reason that they have been excluded from this study.

The other notable omission is *coniector* (and the feminine *coniectrix*), which the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defines as 'interpreter of dreams, soothsayer'. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* gives a very small number of references, mostly from Cicero and Plautus, though there is one example from Suetonius (*Divus Julius* 7.2). As will be seen in Chapters Three and Four, dream interpreters do not appear in literature of record or imaginative literature as often as one might expect, so we do not lose anything by excluding this particular term.

In the introduction to the *Onirocritica*, Artemidorus explains his own use of the available terminology of dreams. It is tempting to assume that all ancient authors used dream vocabulary in the same way as Artemidorus, to accept him at his word, and move on. However, an investigation of other authors' use of the same terms reveals that not every ancient writer used dream terminology in the same way as Artemidorus, so unfortunately his system of reference is not as useful as we might have hoped.

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[191] Leuci 1993: 10.
[192] Leuci 1993: 131.

For Artemidorus, an ἐνύπνιον depicts the present state of affairs and is the result of recent experiences running through the mind while asleep, whilst an ὄνειρος is a prediction of future events (Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, 1.1). He notes that the terms themselves are significant; although both sorts of dream occur when the person is asleep (and Artemidorus makes a clear distinction between a dream and a waking vision), the ἐνύπνιον ceases to have any effect or relevance once the sleeper wakes up, while the ὄνειρος has an effect on the soul after the dreamer has woken up, affecting his or her actions, and Artemidorus suggests that the word comes from telling what is real.

Artemidorus provides a lengthy explanation of the meaning of ὄνειρος, to counter hostile critics. He says it refers to a condition of the mind that takes many shapes and indicates good or bad things that may happen in the future, and relates it to visions and oracular responses (as seen above).[193] Some scholars follow Artemidorus' dream categories and assume that all Greek writers used the same terminology in the same way; Holowchak, for example, states that 'the ancient Greeks' used ὄνειρος for 'any kind of prophetic dream' and ἐνύπνιον for 'a nonprophetic dream'.[194]

However, most other authors do not seem to place any special emphasis on the distinction between ὄνειρος and ἐνύπνιον. Aristides, for example, uses ἐνύπνιον for both god-sent and predictive dreams, while Lucian uses ἐνύπνιον for the dream which supposedly led him to his career, but ὄνειρος for the parabolic story of Micyllus and the cock.[195] We will take Plutarch as an example, as he includes more dreams in his works than any other Greek writer, with the possible exception of Aristides (chiefly due to the

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[193] On Artemidorus' use of other technical terms, see further Leuci 1993: 5-7.
[194] Holowchak 2002: xv.
[195] On Aristides, see further Leuci 1993: 71.

enormous volume of his work that survives). As he was writing within a hundred years of Artemidorus, if Artemidorus' use of this terminology reflects long term widespread usage, we might expect to see it in Plutarch's work.

Plutarch uses both terms almost interchangeably and he does not seem to attach any special significance to either word over the other. Many of the dream reports in the *Lives* use the phrase 'it is said that' (λέγεται), which protects Plutarch from committing to the truth of the story himself. Sometimes, this phrase is combined with the phrase ὄναρ εἶδεν, and the use of ὄναρ may give the dream more strongly prophetic connotations.

Plutarch usually prefers to use the phrase ἔδοξε κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους (the exact word order varies, but the phrase has the same meaning). Dodds has pointed out the importance of verbs of seeing in dream terminology, where dream-experiences are often described as ὄναρ ἰδεῖν or ἐνύπνιον ἰδεῖν.[196] Plutarch, however, prefers to describe dreams as something imagined, rather than something seen. There does not seem to be a definite pattern to where Plutarch uses ὄναρ or ὄνειρον; he uses ὄναρ εἶδεν for Caesar's dream of having sex with his mother (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 32), as well as for more obviously prophetic dreams like that of Ptolemy in the *De Iside et Osiride* (Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 28). Similarly, κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους is used, both for prophetic dreams like that of Alexander at Tyre (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 24) and for an unnamed man's dreams about a courtesan he liked (Plutarch, *Demetrius*, 27). It seems that Plutarch did not intend to make some dreams appear more reliable or significant than others; his language casts doubt on them all.

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[196] Dodds 1951: 105.

Some other authors do use these terms in a similar way to Artemidorus. Galen, for example, uses ἐνύπνιον in preference to ὄνειρος throughout his treatise *On Diagnosis in Dreams*, in which he chiefly discusses dreams as an internal product of the soul, but refers to his father's dream which led to his choice of career with ὄνειρος (Galen, *De Dignotione ex Insomniis*, 1; *De Methodo Medendi*, 10.609).

Similarly, Josephus, in the *Contra Apionem*, criticises Chaeremon for inventing a dream in his history of Egypt, which he refers to as an ἐνύπνιον, rather than his more usual ὄνειρος, and does so again at 1.299 and 1.312 (Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 1.289, 1.294-295). He uses the same word to refer to Agatharcides' telling of the dream of Seleucia, who did not sail away because she was told not to in a dream, and was put to death (Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 1.207-208). This story is told by someone not sympathetic to the Jews, who uses it as an example of superstitious behaviour and of a Jewish belief in dreams that others have discarded (Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 1.211). However, when telling the story of Pharaoh and Joseph, he uses both terms to refer to the same dreams, within the same sentence, so this may be a coincidence, and Gray has observed that, 'on the whole', Josephus does not distinguish between the various dream terms (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 2.75).[197] Since each author distinguishes the terms in a different way, it is not especially helpful to try to distinguish between the two in general terms.

Whereas in Greek ὄνειρος and ὄναρ εἶδεν refer primarily to dreams, the Latin *somnus* can mean either 'dream' or simply 'sleep'. Leuci has noted that Suetonius uses *somnium* to refer absolutely to a dream, *somnus* (usually) to mean dreamless sleep, and *quies* in the

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[197] Gray 1993: 59.

form *per quietem* to mean sleep as it relates to dreaming.[198] The Latin terminology is very flexible, much more so than the Greek. Phrases describing a *visus/visum* seen *per quietem* are particularly common, and clearly refer to dreams (which is why *quiet-* was included in the search terms for this study).

Some scholars have suggested that the personification of Dream ('Oneiros') was an important figure in Greek literature. For example, van Lieshout has noted that there are very few message dreams (which he terms passive dreams) in Greek tragedy, but argues that they are underscored by the idea of Oneiros, the personification of Dream, which is a significant factor in his work on the subject.[199] Dodds has also suggested that, in the Homeric poems, the word ὄνειρος tends to mean dream-figure, rather than dream experience.[200]

However, there was no cult of Oneiros in ancient Greece, and Nilsson has suggested that figures like Oneiros should be considered simply as literary fictions, though Kessels argues that this does not mean that they were entirely removed from religious thought.[201] Burkert has explored some Near Eastern and Egyptian personifications and linked them with those in early Greek literature; however, Dream is not among them, as Egyptian and Near Eastern texts do not usually personify the concept.[202] Hesiod personifies 'the tribe of dreams', but, after Homer and Hesiod, 'Dream' appears relatively rarely in classical Greece, for divine dreams are usually sent by a particular god for one purpose or another, without the medium of Dream (Hesiod,

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[198] Leuci 1993: 190.
[199] Van Lieshout 1980: 16.
[200] Dodds 1951: 104.
[201] Nilsson 1925: 172; Kessels 1978: 8.
[202] Burkert 2005: 14-17.

Theogony, 211-212). Epic poetry in the Roman period, on the other hand, personifies both Sleep and Dream (see Chapter Four).

Terminology, of course, changes over time, though it is easier to trace changes in Greek than in Latin, as the evidence covers a wider time span. Artemidorus notes that Homer used ἐνύπνιον where he would use ὄνειρος, and Van Straten has noted that 4th-1st century BC votive inscriptions tend to use ἐνύπνιον, whereas later inscriptions use ὄνειρος or ὄναρ.[203] Similarly, although Kessels noted that ὅραμα is found in connection with dreams as early as the third century BC, it is more popular in later sources.[204] In earlier sources, it is not usually specific to dreams, meaning a 'vision' that can refer to a dream if the vision is seen in sleep, and Plutarch uses the word in describing a vision or apparition seen by a number of waking people (Plutarch, *Aratus*, 32).

Dreams as Metaphor

Just as modern literature uses dreams and dreaming in a metaphorical sense, ancients who wrote in Greek often used terms for dreams and dreaming as similes or metaphors, rather than to refer literally to dreams.

Taking some examples from Plutarch again; in the *Pericles*, he refers to those who 'dreamed' of conquering Tuscany and Carthage (the word used is ὄνειρος). He seems to be referring to dreaming of something impossible in the same metaphorical sense that an English writer might, though it is possible that this is intended to reveal

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[203] Van Straten 1976: 13.
[204] Kessels 1969: 394.

something occupying people's thoughts so much that they dreamt about it (Plutarch, *Pericles*, 20). The hopes of the Athenians when defeated are described as 'dreams', ὀνειροπολεῖν, in *Alcibiades* (Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 38), and earlier Alcibiades is described as 'dreaming' of Carthage and Libya (ὀνειροπολῶν) (Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, 17). In the *Caesar*, he describes an army which disappears quickly as disappearing 'like a phantom or a dream', ὥσπερ εἴδωλον ἢ ὄνειρον (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 27). In a mini-treatise at the end of Marius, Plutarch refers to those who 'dream' of the future (ὀνειρώττουσιν) (Plutarch, *Marius*, 46). This could refer literally to dreams about the future, but it seems more likely that he is using the word metaphorically.

In the *Cicero*, Plutarch refers to a 'phantom' (φάσμα) which told Cicero's nurse that the infant would be a great blessing to Romans, and notes that although this and other signs were thought to be 'dreams' and fancies (ὀνείρατα), he soon showed them to be true prophecies (Plutarch, *Cicero*, 2). Similarly, the Sullan veterans who joined Catiline are described as 'dreaming' of plunder (ὀνειροπολοῦντες) (Plutarch, *Cicero*, 14). The opposition of a true prophecy with a dream is particularly interesting, suggesting a strong sense of scepticism where dreams are concerned. At one point in *Cato Minor* the word ὀνειροπολοῦντα is used to describe forebodings (Plutarch, *Cato Minor*, 49). In the *De Capienda ex Inimicis Utilitate*, Plutarch observes that curiosity about enemies almost makes a person try to pry into their dreams; it is unclear whether he is speaking metaphorically, or whether this is a reference to a literal attempt to access another person's dreams, but the metaphorical explanation seems more likely (Plutarch, *De Capienda ex Inimicis Utilitate*, 3).

Josephus also sometimes uses 'dream' (ὄνειρος) as a metaphor or simile; for example, he describes the rebels' last hope of escape as 'but a dream' (Josephus, *De Bello Judaico*, 6.371), treasure as greater than people had ever dreamed of (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 9.85) and one person as never having dreamed of something happening (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 17.238). In one case, he is reporting an earlier text; in the *Contra Apionem*, he quotes Clearchus, and the passage relates a story that Clearchus has Aristotle narrate, which the philosopher claims will seem as wonderful as a dream (Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 1.177). This suggests that the use of dreams in a metaphorical sense was a common and well established practice.

Latin writers are less inclined regularly to use dream terminology metaphorically, possibly because, out of context, it would not be clear whether they meant 'dream' or 'sleep'. There are a very few examples of dreaming used as a simile. Livy has Postumius, in a speech, describe the Samnites as deluded by a delightful dream (Livy, *History of Rome*, 9.9.14). He also describes the reaction of the spectators, hearing that various Greek states were to be free, as gazing in wonderment, as if it were an empty dream (Livy, *History of Rome*, 33.32.7). Appian says that the Romans never even dreamed that Africa would invade Italy (Appian, *Iberica*, 53.14). Quintus Curtius Rufus notes that, when Abdalonymus was made king, it was like a dream to him (Quintus Curtius Rufus, 4.1.23). The Chorus in Seneca's *Troades* say that stories about what happens after death, such as the underworld and Cerberus, are just empty words and a *fabula* as shaky as a dream (Seneca, *Troades*, 405-6).

Plautus and Terence, because their use of Latin in some ways greatly resembles Greek, sometimes use dreaming in a metaphorical sense. For example, when Theuropides

tries to ask Simo about the deposit, Simo asks what he has been dreaming about (Plautus, *Mostellaria*, 1013), Tranio says the old man has been dreaming of building certain things (Plautus, *Mostellaria*, 757), Sagaristio says he never dreamed he would have this opportunity (Plautus, *Persa*, 257). Several characters demand to know what another character has been dreaming about, when engaged in a comic dispute; Charinus asks Simo and Ballio, Ampelisca asks Trachalio, Sagarinus asks Stichus (Plautus, *Pseudolus*, 1187; *Rudens*, 343; *Rudens*, 666). Gripus tells Labrax he is dreaming and another character tells Charmides he is dreaming (Plautus, *Rudens*, 1327; *Trinummus*, 981). One character prefaces a statement by saying 'unless I have been walking in my sleep…' (Plautus, *Miles Gloriosus*, 272). Dorio, disbelieving something, dismisses it as dreams (Terence, *Phormio*, 494). Phormio later similarly insists that something must be a dream, as a woman could not be so ignorant of her own father (Terence, *Phormio*, 874). Sannio says getting the money is a dream (Terence, *Adelphoe*, 204). Syrus says Demea's brother is a dreamer (Terence, *Adelphoe*, 395). When Demea thinks Micio has misunderstood, he says he is dreaming, thinking he is talking about the music girl (Terence, *Adelphoe*, 724). In some translations, Phormio notes that something happened that Nausistrata never dreamed of, but Terence's use of *dormio* rather than *somnio* here suggests the connotation should be closer to 'while you sleep' (*dum tu dormis*); not in a literal sense, but in a figurative sense, as in 'while you are/were sleeping, drowsy, not paying attention' (Terence, *Phormio*, 1007).

Harris has suggested that the use of dreams as a metaphor for that which is weak and insubstantial tells us something about what the writer thought of dreams – in particular, Euripides compares useless old men to dreams, which Harris infers means that Euripides

thought dreams as useless as the old men (Euripides, *Heracles*, 113; Euripides, *Phoenician Women*, 1543-1545).[205] It is true that the metaphorical use of dreams can be illuminating concerning opinions of dreams in general, though the use of dreams in this case does not emphasise the uselessness of the characters – rather it refers to their physical frailty, just as ghosts are sometimes referred to as being insubstantial as a dream (Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.207; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 2.794). Generally speaking, the use of dreams as metaphors in Greek writing is much the same as similar uses in English.

Classifying Dreams

Ancient Classifications of Dreams

The first and most important point to make is that nearly all ancient writers acknowledged that the vast majority of dreams were not significant. They were aware that dreams are sometimes made up of scattered memories of the day's events, or reflect subjects close to the dreamer's heart, and that these dreams are internal, coming from the dreamer themselves, and have no wider relevance (see for example Aristotle, *On Divination in Sleep*, 1.463a-2.463b). This aspect of ancient thinking about dreams is sometimes overlooked or denied. Pack states broadly that 'most men considered their dream experiences significant and prophetic', while Clay has claimed that medical dream theorists were unique in their conception that dreams might have an internal source.[206]

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[205] Harris 2009: 140.
[206] Pack 1955: 280; Clay 1980: 342.

It has sometimes been suggested (partly because of the flexible nature of the terminology for dreams in both Greek and Latin) that ancient writers did not distinguish between dreams and waking visions or between dreams and reality. Kessels, for example, opened his article on ancient classifications of dreams by suggesting that ancient people considered a dream to be a real event.[207] Pelling has argued that ancient literature does not tend to distinguish between a dream and a waking night-vision, while Oberhelman has claimed that, in the Greco-Roman world, 'the reality of the waking world was extended to the dream world'.[208] Oberhelman's statement is based on his studies of Greco-Roman medicine, in which dreams were sometimes considered as a possible source of information about the present state of the body (see Chapter Five pp269-274).

Oberhelman's claim that a dream was considered to be 'a valid indicator of present and future events' by 'nearly everyone' is unsubstantiated. One need only read a few passages of Cicero, Lucretius or Petronius to know that not everyone considered dreams to be a valid indicator of anything (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.72.148; Lucretius 4.962ff; Petronius, Frag. 30). Even if we were to assume that Cicero's stance in *De Divinatione* and Lucretius and Petronius' Epicurean scepticism were not representative of the majority, the place of dreams within the ancient cultural imagination is more complex than such a statement might lead one to believe.

When they felt it was important, ancient writers were quite specific about whether an experience was a waking vision or a dream, usually with the implication that a waking vision is more real, more reliable. Pausanias refers to a woman who thought she saw Asclepius at Epidauros in a dream, but it turned out to be a waking vision (Pausanias, 10.38.13); Pindar describes a dream that suddenly became a waking reality (Pindar,

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[207] Kessels 1969: 389-390.
[208] Pelling 1997: 197, Oberhelman 1993: 122

Olympian Ode, 13.66); Cicero's *De Divinatione* says that if one does not trust the false

visions of waking men, one should not trust dreams either (Cicero, *De Divinatione*,

2.58.120). In Statius' *Thebaid*, Thiodamus describes an experience which he specifically

states was *non vanae monstra quietis / nec somno comperta*, 'no vain image in the night

nor vision in sleep' (Statius, *Thebaid*, 10.205-206). In the waking vision, Amphiaraus

came and spoke to him. The vision sounds very much like a dream, but Thiodamus

specifically maintains that it is not a dream. Whether or not the reader is intended to

believe him is beside the point; a clear line is drawn between a dream and a waking

vision.

At other times, the distinction seems to be less important to the writer. When

Arrian describes an island that is sacred to Achilles, he reports both dreams and waking

visions that occur there together (Arrian, *Periplus Ponti Euxini*, 23). Philo describes how

waking fantasies are just like dreams, suggesting that he acknowledges a difference

between them, but considers them closely related (Philo, *De Josepho*, 22.125-126).

Polybius notes that many believed that Scipio had communicated with the gods in his

sleep and in a waking vision (Polybius, 10.5). Ancient writers did not always feel the

need to specify whether they were discussing a dream or not, but when they wanted to

they did draw a distinction between a waking vision and a dream.

Here we will discuss just a few ancient ideas about how to classify dreams as examples of

some of the major schools of thought.[209] Van Lieshout has discussed Plato's (substantial)

work on dreams at length and observes that Plato 'offers a striking variety of theories on

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[209] On ancient classifications of dreams, see further Kessels 1969 and Schrijvers 1977.

the mechanism of... dreaming'.[210] Aristotle wrote a treatise, *De Insomniis* (although the Latin title might refer to 'nightmares', the Greek, Περὶ ἐνυπνίων, means *On Dreams*) and a separate treatise, *De Divinatione per Somnum* (*On Divination in Sleep*). His conclusions in both treatises are that dreams never come from the divine. He concludes, in his treatise on dreams, that dreaming belongs to the sensitive faculty, through the imagination (Aristotle, *De Insomniis*, 1.459a). In his treatise concerning divination in sleep, he compares explaining dreams to detecting likenesses, because the images in dreams are like reflections in water; the dream is a reflection of things seen and heard during the day (Aristotle, *De Divinatione per Somnum*, 2.464b). He offers no classification as such, because he sees all dreams as being ultimately the same, from the same origins.

Ancient classifications are often focussed on whether a dream shows something that will happen, or something that will not happen (whether it is 'true' or 'false' in Virgil's terminology), most famously, in the descriptions of the Gates of Dreams provided by Homer and Virgil (Homer, *Odyssey*, 19.559-569; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.893-898) (see further Chapters Two and Four).

Dreams could also be classified according to whether they came from the gods, or from the dreamer's own mind or body. MacAlister has argued that the ancients tended to see dreams as both external entities and internal processes 'at one and the same time', and as both significant and insignificant; the fact that some dreams might come under one heading does not prevent other dreams from coming under the other.[211] This perhaps over-complicates the issue; one dream is not thought of as insignificant and divine, rather, there is more than one possible source for dreams, and they might be divine, or

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[210] Van Lieshout 1980: 134.
[211] MacAlister 1996: 4.

they might not. A significant dream is usually divine and prophetic and an insignificant dream internal and non-prophetic, but this is not always the case. Some philosophers argued that some dreams might come from the prophetic part of the soul; for example, according to Posidonius, there are three ways by which dreams come to men from the gods; first, the soul itself has prophetic power due to closeness with the gods, secondly, from the immortal souls in the air, and thirdly, the gods speak with the dreamer in person while they are asleep (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.30.64).

The majority of ancient writers, however, divided dreams into prophetic divine dreams and non-prophetic internal dreams. For example, the writer of the Hippocratic treatise on dreams noted that the same interpreters who interpret god-given dreams also interpret dreams which give signs relating to the state of the body and soul (Hippocrates, *De Diaeta*, 4.87). Similarly, Pseudo-Galen cites Herophilus, who apparently divided dreams in a similar way – some are god-sent, some are images made by the soul of things that will happen, while some are images produced when we see what we wish (Galen, *De Historia Philosophia*, 106). It seems clear from Artemidorus' explanation of the difference between a (meaningless) ἐνύπνιον, which he says results from the fact that 'it is in the nature of some experiences to run their course in proximity to the mind… in sleep', and an ὄνειρος, which is a 'prediction of future events', that, by his time, it was not especially uncommon to demonstrate awareness that some dreams have an internal source, and the way he presents the explanation does not suggest that he expected many to disagree (Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, 1.1). Not all dreams are in need of interpretation; as van Lieshout has noted, the records we have are records of exceptional dreams, those which were so strange or otherwise noteworthy that they seemed to require an

explanation beyond the internal.[212] The most important job for a dream interpreter like Artemidorus was to establish whether the dream was divine or not, before going on to interpret its meaning more specifically if necessary.

Philo's typology of dreams, on the other hand, suggests that all dreams come from the divine, but in different ways. He opens his treatise on dreams by explaining that there are two types; the first, dreams which are sent by God for His own reasons, he has discussed already, in a passage unfortunately lost (Philo, *De somniis*, 1.1). This type would seem to conform more or less to the category of a message dream (see below). The second type of dreams occurs when the human mind comes under the influence of divine forces, and is (presumably temporarily) able to see future events (Philo, *De somniis*, 1.2). At the beginning of Book 2, Philo reiterates his division of dreams, declaring that there are three kinds of dreams which are sent from God. He repeats his definition of the first and second, adding that the second can be characterised by being neither very clear nor very obscure; they are enigmatic, but can be interpreted without great difficulty (Philo, *De somnis*, 2.1-2.3). The third type are dreams which are so enigmatic, they can only be interpreted by a specialist dream interpreter; he suggests the dreams of Joseph, the Pharaoh, the baker and cup-bearer from the Biblical story of Joseph in Genesis as examples (Philo, *De somnis*, 2.4; *Genesis* 37.2-47.12).

As Kessels has noted, the differences in ancient dream classifications are the result of asking different questions.[213] In Artemidorus' case the most important question is, are the things one sees in a dream signs of future events or not? In Posidonius' case it is, how is it possible that human beings get knowledge of the future through dreams?[214]

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[212] Van Lieshout 1980: 6.
[213] Kessels 1969: 399.
[214] Kessels 1969: 400.

One could add, in the case of the Hippocratic corpus, how might dreams help with medical diagnosis and treatment? And, in the case of Philo, why are some divine dreams more straightforward than others? We should also note that significant dreams may offer an opportunity for communication with a divine being or dead person without actually predicting the future, so the divinatory potential of dreams was not always considered to be their most significant feature.

Although Artemidorus is of limited use in aiding our understanding of other authors' works on dreams (see further Chapter Five pp282-288), his detailed classification system outlined at the beginning of his *Onirocritica* is worth summarising briefly here, for as Brenk has observed, Artemidorus' classifications may not be universally applicable, but can provide 'useful descriptions'.[215] His work may not be typical of most writers of his era, but he obviously expected his system of classification to sound sensible and practical to his readers. For Artemidorus, the first and most important distinction to be made is between an ἐνύπνιον, which shows a present state of affairs, and an ὄνειρος, which shows the future, as discussed above (Artemidorus, 1.1). An ἐνύπνιον might indicate the present state of the body, or of the mind, or both. An ὄνειρος might be direct or allegorical (θεωρηματικοὶ or ἀλληγορικοί), that is, it might literally show what will happen in the future, or it might show one thing by means of another – when the soul is obscurely conveying something by physical means (Artemidorus, 1.2).

Artemidorus explains that some have further divided allegorical dreams into five classes; personal/private, alien, common, public and cosmic (ἴδιος, ἀλλότριος, κοινός, δημόσιος, κοσμικός) (Artemidorus, 1.2). These are, broadly speaking, dreams when the

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[215] Brenk 1975: 337.

dreamer sees themselves doing or experiencing something, dreams where they see other people, dreams in which the dreamer appears together with a number of other people, dreams that involve public places or buildings and dreams that depict unusual astrological phenomena. However, Artemidorus himself notes that such a simple division is impossible as, for example, 'personal' dreams do not always come true for the dreamer themselves and 'alien' dreams sometimes come true for the dreamer themselves. Artemidorus prefers to classify dreams by the number of things they foretell and the number of ways in which they foretell them (Artemidorus, 1.4). He also divides dreams according to those which are good in both the dream and the fulfilment, those which are bad in both, and those which are good in one and bad in the other (Artemidorus, 1.5). He acknowledges the existence of anxiety dreams and 'petitionary dreams', that is, dreams which are experienced following fervent prayer, which he classes with ἐνύπνιον dreams (Artemidorus 1.6).

Modern Scholarly Classifications of Dreams

Most modern scholarly works on dreams will start by categorising ancient dream reports in order to analyse them more easily. However, every modern scholar has a slightly different idea about how best to categorise the reports, and the classification they choose affects their analysis. No system, of course, is perfect; here, we will look at the various ways of categorising dreams before outlining the classification system followed in the rest of this study, which is adapted from these earlier methods.

One of the most important and influential scholarly classifications of dreams was Oppenheim's division of ancient dreams into 'message dreams' and 'symbolic dreams', dividing the sort of dream in which a god (or a dead person) delivers a message to the dreamer from the sort of dream in which the dreamer experiences a series of events or images that signify something else that will happen in the future.[216] This basic division reflects the two main types of dream reported in ancient sources and has often been adopted by others (sometimes with minor modifications).[217] 'Message dreams' (by whatever name they are known) have been defined in various different ways, and other types of dream, often referred to as 'symbolic', are defined against message dreams. The division is complicated by two main factors: first, because scholars frequently use different terms to describe the same categories, and secondly, because ancient dream reports do not easily divide into these categories. A number of dream reports feature combinations, or other qualities all together.

Harris refers to the dream-type commonly known as the 'message dream' as an 'epiphany dream', and his definition of the term has some important differences from other studies. By using the word 'epiphany' in preference to 'message', Harris focuses on the figures seen in the dream, rather than the way information is conveyed within the dream. This allows him to include dreams such as Penelope's goose dream, usually considered a symbolic dream as a 'hybrid' of the two types of dream, on the grounds that the 'epiphany' is of Odysseus, in the form of an eagle.[218] Harris defines an epiphany dream as a dream focussed on a visit from a single, 'authoritative' (thought not necessarily divine) visitor who 'conveys an admonition or pronouncement' which may be

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[216] Oppenheim 1956: 185, 190.
[217] See for example West 1997; 185.
[218] Harris 2009: 50.

clear or become clear later.[219] Harris notes that the line dividing an epiphany dream from a symbolic dream is 'somewhat blurry' and gives several examples of dreams which are on the borderline.[220]

The great advantage of Harris' classification is that it draws attention to the experience of the visitation, rather than the nature of the information conveyed. This is a very important aspect of any ancient dream report; this study will refer repeatedly to the question of whether a dream report should be understood as representing a real visitation by a god or dead person, or not. By calling these dreams 'epiphany' dreams rather than 'message' dreams, Harris brings this question to the foreground, and his analysis, based on this classification, benefits greatly from including a number of different dream reports which are not usually considered together.

Harris refers to the dream type often known as 'symbolic' as 'episode' dreams, focussing on their nature as a sequence of events (as opposed to a single visitation).[221] He notes that, although his 'episode' dreams roughly correspond to Oppenheim's 'symbolic' dreams, they may or may not be symbolic, and often were not taken to be symbolic in antiquity.[222] This is a very important point to take in; although 'symbolic' is still the most commonly used term in opposition to 'message', it covers a broad spectrum of dreams which may or may not be 'symbolic' in the way we understand the term.

One of the main problems with attempts to categorise dreams is that scholars often use the same English word to describe categories in different ways to each other. For

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[219] Harris 2009: 36-37.
[220] Harris 2009: 41 (the examples are Plutarch, *Eumenes*, 6, which is not an epiphany dream; Aeschylus, *Persians*, 176-199, which is; and Sophocles, *Electra*, 417-423 and Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, 44.5, which might or might not be.
[221] Harris 2009: 23.
[222] Harris 2009: 49.

example, Oppenheim does not believe that Enkidu's dream of the gods represents actual soul-travel, but he does describe it as 'clairvoyance on a dream level' and adds that it might also be seen as an 'oracular' dream.[223] Butler picks up on this; for her, a 'clairvoyant' dream is one in which the soul actually travels to another location, and she mentions Enkidu's dream, and Oppenheim's opinion on it, in her section on 'clairvoyant' dreams.[224] Clearly, the two are using the word 'clairvoyant' to mean different things; the situation is further muddied when we consider that it is often impossible to tell whether a dream in an ancient text should be read as an example of soul-travel or not anyway. Butler refers to dreams in which the dreamer's soul actually leaves the body and travels elsewhere, either in the world or in the underworld, as 'clairvoyant' dreams, though she notes that not all dreams that appear to take place in a different location are clairvoyant.[225] In practice, it is often impossible to ascertain whether a dream in a ancient text should be read as 'clairvoyant' or not.

Butler prefers 'symbolic-message dreams' to Oppenheim's simple 'symbolic', because 'these dreams are really a sub-category of message dreams', and exist in order to send a message to the dreamer, but indirectly, through symbols, rather than directly, through words.[226] Although this is certainly a valid point, it should be noted that a symbolic dream assumes a very different type of relationship between the dreamer and the dream, to be explained in a different way – philosophers would explain a symbolic dream differently to a message dream, and the 'message' is often lost or misunderstood.

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[223] Oppenheim 1956: 196.
[224] Butler 1998: 22.
[225] Butler 1998: 20-22.
[226] Butler 1998: 18.

Sometimes, scholars classify dreams according to an ancient system, but, since modern

scholars are usually asking different questions concerning dream reports than ancient

scholars were, this is not always entirely successful. For example, Brenk has noted that

few scholars can resist the temptation 'to oversimplified classification' and suggests that

scholars often follow the 'ancient authorities' and divide dreams into vision dreams and

oracular dreams.[227] By this, he presumably means the categories more frequently referred

to as 'symbolic dreams' and 'message dreams'.[228] Noegel has preferred 'enigmatic' to

'symbolic', arguing that ancient Near Eastern peoples did not necessarily differentiate

between symbolic and non-symbolic discourse in the way that we do.[229] He attributes the

common categorisation of dreams into the two main categories of 'message dreams' and

'symbolic dreams' to Artemidorus.[230]

There are other ways of categorising dreams. Walde divides them into dreams as a

psychological phenomenon (*spontaner Traum*) and dreams as a literary device

(*literarischer Traum*).[231] Her categories deal with the issue of the difference between real

and literary dreams rather than with the classification of literary dream reports.

MacAlister does not offer a lengthy categorisation, but refers the sorts of dreams which

'predominate in earlier literature' (that is, earlier than the second century AD) as

'prognostic, external, god-sent, allegorical and admonitary' (MacAlister 1996: 8).

Van Lieshout also described his typology of dreams in slightly different terms to

other scholars, though essentially, he also divides dreams into message dreams and

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[227] Brenk 1975: 337.
[228] Brenk himself prefers the terms 'oracular' and 'symbolic'; Brenk 1975: 337-8.
[229] Noegel 2007: 7.
[230] Noegel 2007: 6.
[231] Walde 2001: 1.

symbolic dreams. He divides dreams into those in which it is assumed that a real contact is made between the dreamer and something else, and those in which no outside contact is made, but something is communicated through words, images, symbols or other means. He further subdivided the first category into 'passive' dreams, in which the dreamer is visited by someone else (those which most scholars refer to as message dreams), and 'active' dreams, in which the soul visits someone or something else.[232] This is similar to Oppenheim's description of a special and 'atypical' type of message dream, in which the dreamer is witness to a conversation between gods, as Enkidu is in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, or Nectanebo, and he also includes Jacob's dream of the ladder in this category.[233]

Husser argues that, while the distinction between message dreams and allegorical or symbolic dreams may be appropriate for literary studies, it is inadequate for defining and classifying the wide range of dream reports from the ancient world.[234] Husser adds the categories of prophetic dreams, in which the message is intended for someone other than the dreamer, dreams which are symbolic but not enigmatic (meaning that they have some significance but are not prophecies), dreams which are a mixture of allegory and speech, and non-divine nightmares.[235] Husser has described message dreams as a type 'essentially found in royal inscriptions' and has noted that they are very unevenly distributed in Mesopotamian history.[236]

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[232] Van Lieshout 1980: 12-13.
[233] Oppenheim 1956: 196.
[234] Husser 1999: 23-24.
[235] Husser 1999: 24.
[236] Husser 1999: 38.

Wikenhauser, in his brief catalogue of some Greek and Roman dreams from historical works, explained that he had to limit himself to certain categories of dream.[237] The first is lucky or unlucky symbolic dreams, which require an explanation as they use symbols to represent reality, but are often easy to understand once interpreted. He suggests the dreams of Joseph and Pharoah in the Bible as examples.[238] The second is dreams which are lucky or unlucky, but not symbolic.[239] Thirdly, Wikenhauser suggests dreams which show the future importance of an historical character as a separate category in itself. Next, Wikenhauser provides examples of dreams in which gods appear to promote their cult and threaten punishment if they are neglected.[240] He then discusses more generally dreams in which gods appear.[241] He also separates into categories dreams in which dead people appear, bad dreams, dreams in which gods encourage people or provide instructions for their favourites, and dreams which prove that God gives and in which He reveals His will (Christian dreams only).[242]

Goodenough, in his review of the volume Wikenhauser's article appeared in, noted briefly that Wikenhauser has presented a valuable, classified collection of dreams from ancient literature, but no interpretation of the phenomenon.[243]
Gnuse suggests that Wikenhauser's categories are 'good', but too complex, and can be reduced to the categories of auditory message and visual symbolic dreams.[244] Gnuse himself suggests the following categories for Greek dream reports: an auditory voice of a deity without a vision; a dream image which delivers an auditory message; symbolic

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[237] Wikenhauser 1939: 325.
[238] Wikenhauser 1939: 326.
[239] Wikenhauser 1939: 328.
[240] Wikenhauser 1939: 329.
[241] Wikenhauser 1939: 330.
[242] Wikenhauser 1939: 331-332.
[243] Goodenough 1940: 407.
[244] Gnuse 1996: 103. Gnuse counts eight categories of dream from Wikenhauser (he misses out dreams which show the future importance of historical characters).

visions (which he notes are comparable to ancient Near Eastern reports); the appearance of a healing deity to an incubant, and finally, 'true dream-like images, or psychological status dreams'.[245] This last category is certainly worth considering separately, but Gnuse's other categories are variations on the usual two themes, a message delivered through a clear instruction, or a symbolic dream (the only difference between an incubation dream and a dream of either category experienced elsewhere is that an incubation dream is deliberately sought). It is unclear how helpful it is to separate auditory and auditory-visual messages; for the most part, these dreams function in the same way, though some texts include the visual image as a matter of course, and others do not.

Finally, writing about ancient dreams for the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Price suggested two basic divisions, which sub-divide into five smaller classes. His two basic divisions are 'significant' and 'non-significant', which he equates to Homer and Virgil's 'true' and 'false' dreams. In further subdividing these categories, he assumes significant/true dreams to be 'predictive dreams', subdivided into ὄνειροι (those requiring symbolic interpretation), ὁράματα (prophetic visions) and χρηματισμα (advice from a god). He assumes non-significant/false dreams to be non-predictive and subdivides them into ἐνύπνια (those caused by the day's residue) and φάντασματα (distorted visions between sleeping and waking). The only reference he provides is from Macrobius (*In Somniis*, 1.3) and relates to the χρηματισμα.[246] We have already seen that χρηματισμός and φάντασμα do not necessarily correspond to dreams. The question of significance is also more complicated than a simple case of whether a dream is predictive

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[245] Gnuse 1996: 104.
[246] Price 2003: 496.

or not; a message dream may not be a prediction, but will be considered significant, and dreams relating to health may be diagnostic and significant, but not predictive.

To Classify or not To Classify?

It might be argued that the classification of ancient dreams is a rather fruitless endeavour. Most ancient people, including writers, as Artemidorus notes, did not draw a firm distinction between the different terms, and, outside of philosophy and technical texts, there is no evidence for a widespread interest in the categorisation of dreams (Artemidorus, 4.proem.). Any classification system imposed by a modern scholar is alien to the ancients themselves.

However, the analysis carried out in this study is based largely on the popular division of dream reports into message dreams and symbolic dreams, because analysing dreams in this way may help us to answer the second of our two questions; did people living in the Roman Empire imagine that dreams allowed for communication with the divine? This is because they represent two very different forms of communication with the divine. A message dream is a visitation from the god or deceased person in which a clear message is conveyed to the dreamer. The implication is usually that this is in some way a 'real' experience; the god or ghost has come from beyond the mortal world to convey a vital instruction or piece of information to the dreamer that the dreamer themselves did not already know. Message dreams usually issue an order, or sometimes give advice, which the dreamer must then act on in order to avoid negative consequences.

A symbolic dream, on the other hand, often requires interpretation, and it is unclear whether the dream comes from the divine, or whether it comes from within the dreamer. Even if the dream is clearly prophetic, it may not come from a god, as some ancient theories concerning dreams focussed on the inherent potential for prophecy in the soul (see for example Aristotle, *On Divination in Sleep*, 1.463a, or Philo, *De vita contemplativa*, 3.27). These dreams are also much more difficult for the dreamer, as they are often indistinguishable from insignificant, everyday dreams. Whereas message dreams offer a clear course of action for the dreamer to take, symbolic dreams, often present the dreamer with a prediction of a fate they cannot avoid, no matter how hard they try. If this fate appears to be negative, the dreamer might react to the dream in various ways; it is these dreams that might prompt someone to go to a dream interpreter, perform a sacrifice or visit an oracle to confirm the dream, or consult a text such the Artemidorus' dream book. However, in many cases, such reactions are ultimately fruitless.

Not all ancient dream reports can be easily and simply categorised as 'message' or 'symbolic, and there are two possible solutions to this problem; either create one or two very broad categories, as Harris has done, or break dreams down into a large number of tightly defined categories. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. The great advantage of the first approach is that it prevents the modern author from imposing a large number of categories on ancient dream reports that would be unintelligible to an ancient writer. It is perhaps unlikely that an ancient writer would have considered deeply whether to give their character an auditory-message dream or an auditory-visual message dream (though they might give some thought as to whether to give them a message dream

or a symbolic dream). Using fewer categories ensures that we do not impose false divisions where none existed in the ancient world.

However, including a number of more tightly defined categories may enable us to see patterns emerging across the very wide temporal and geographical span covered by this project. The other categories used in this study are designed to allow for all the grey areas in between the two main categories, because in some cases it may be significant that the dream forms are combined, or that a dead person appears rather than a god.

The classification system used in this study is organised according to the perceived source of the dream. It has been designed to allow each dream to fit neatly within its category, though it has also been necessary to include a 'mixed' category. It has also been designed to fit the categories that appear most often in Greek and Roman dream reports; so, for example, there are a number of sub-divisions of message dreams because these are very common, but there is no separate category for dreams in which the dreamer seems to travel to another place because, although some dream reports include such activity, it is not a common or important enough feature in Greek and Roman sources to warrant its own section. This classification system forms the basis for the tables and graphs which can be found in Appendix One, and which show the frequency of the various dream types in the works of different authors. Each table in Appendix One is accompanied by two graphs; one showing all the various subcategories and one showing only the three most important categories of message dreams, symbolic dreams and mixed dreams. The categories are:

- Message dreams featuring a divine being
- Message dreams featuring a dead person

- Message dreams featuring a semi-divine or deified person

- Message dreams from an unknown source

- 'Symbolic' dreams

- Literal prophecy dreams

- Anxiety dreams/wish-fulfilment dreams

- Lying message dreams (i.e. definitely no real dream)

- Lying symbolic dreams

- Mixed

'Message dreams from an unknown source' includes dreams in which a clear message is delivered by a mysterious voice. 'Literal prophecy dreams' are dreams in which the dreamer literally sees or experiences something that will later happen in the same way as it did in the dream (as opposed to episodes or images that represent later events symbolically). 'Lying message/symbolic dreams' are dreams which the narrator specifically informs us were invented by the supposed dreamer to fool others. The categories are still not entirely separable; a number of dreams in which an unknown but very beautiful figure delivers a message have been included as 'Message dream featuring a divine being', on the understanding that excessive beauty or size indicates a divine being of some description.

According to this scheme, dreams in which the dreamer sees a god performing an action are symbolic dreams, not message dreams. Harris included this sort of dream among variations of epiphany dreams, and discussed some examples which were difficult

to classify.[247] In the context of his discussion, some of these dreams could be considered 'epiphany dreams', because the appearance of a divine figure in the dream was of particular interest, rather than the nature of their interaction. However, the scheme followed here separates these dreams due to the different way in which the dreamer and the divine figure interact. Just like dreams of someone who has died, there is a difference between a dream in which the dreamer sees a series of episodes or images featuring someone they know who died ('last night I dreamed my old mother-in-law came and told me off for having a dusty mantelpiece', for example) and dreams in which a dead person brings a message the dreamer could not have known about themselves, and the dreamer is left with the impression that the ghost has actually come from the underworld to deliver the message (for example, 'last night I dreamed that my mother-in-law told me there was gold buried under the mantelpiece, and this morning I dug it up'). The first dream is the product of the dreamer's own memory and imagination, while the second may or may not have been a real communication with a dead spirit.

A final category which will be referred to occasionally is that of the omen dream. This refers to dreams, most often found in Roman period texts, that fulfil the literary function of an omen, usually a birth or death omen and are often found among a list of other omens relating to the same event.

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[247] See Harris 2009: 41.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical context: Dreams in the Near East, Egypt and Greece

Divination in the Ancient World

As we have seen in the previous chapter, one of the most important ideas about dreams held in many different cultures is that they might provide foreknowledge of the future, and this was true in the ancient Mediterranean as well. It will be helpful, therefore, to look briefly at divination in the ancient world as a whole, so that we can see where dreams fit in to the wider picture.

As regards the ancient Near East, Bottéro has noted that, to the ancient Mesopotamians, '*everything* in the world was divinatory' (his emphasis).[248] He noted that inspired divination, in which the gods spontaneously reveal their will, was less common than deductive divination, which was based around the system of writing, as interpreters would decode the message.[249] Lists of omens decoded divine signs and warnings about what was to come as one would read a written text, and written works explaining how to interpret omens often used binary oppositions to establish meaning.[250] Sweek has described the *bārû* as the 'major figure of Mesopotamian divination', a seer of relatively high social standing.[251] The *bārû* was an extispicist, the most important form of

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[248] Bottéro 1992: 105.
[249] Bottéro 1992: 106.
[250] Maul 2007: 362-363; Guinan 2004: 375.
[251] Sweek compares the standing of the *bārû* to that of Greek diviners; Sweek 2002: 45-46. On the nature of incubation as a Greek practice, see Harrisson 2009 (forthcoming).

divination.[252] Extispicy was performed for both private citizens and rulers in the Old

Babylonian period, but was applied chiefly to public matters by the Neo-Assyrian

period.[253]

Egyptian divination was, in its earliest stages, quite different from Near Eastern

divination. Assmann has characterised Mesopotamian religion as 'preoccupied' with

divination, whereas Egyptian observations of these phenomena were more concerned

with daily ritual designed to maintain the regular order of the world.[254] Kákosy divided

the ways of gaining knowledge of the future in ancient Egypt into three categories, those

of prophecy, oracles and divination.[255] There are several literary references to prophecies,

and Kákosy included the dream of Thutmosis IV among them.[256] Oracles, such as that of

Amun, were more often consulted to discover the will of the gods than to discover the

future.[257] There is evidence for some other forms of divination, including astrology, but it

is very limited; Kákosy focused on dream divination, which he suggested was important

'during the pharaonic epochs as a whole' (this conclusion should perhaps be slightly

modified in light of Szpakowska's important study, which suggests that dream divination

was less significant during the earliest periods of Egyptian history (see below).[258]

Divination was an important part of ancient Greek religion. Burkert has suggested

that, because ancient Greek religion had no 'revealed' scriptures, signs (and their

interpretation) became 'the pre-eminent form of contact' between human beings and the

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[252] On the meaning of *bārû*, see Oppenheim et. al. 1965: 121. Extispicy was particularly important as a royal tool for legitimizing political decisions; see Maul 2007: 364.
[253] Butler 1998: 4.
[254] Assmann 2007: 18-19.
[255] Kákosy 2004: 371.
[256] Kákosy 2004: 371.
[257] Kákosy 2004: 372.
[258] Kákosy 2004: 373; Szpakowska 2003: 3-4.

gods.[259] Burkert notes that, although anything that is not routine (even a sneeze) may be a sign, observing the flight of birds was particularly important, though, unlike Roman augurs, the Greeks did not develop a fixed system of interpretation in this case.[260] Similarly, we know that the Greeks sacrificed animals and inspected their entrails for divinatory purposes, but we do not know of a Greek counterpart to the inspection of the liver carried out by Etruscans, Assyrians and others.[261] Some elements of Greek divination may have originated in the Ancient Near East, and West and Burkert have provided a number of examples.[262]

We can get some idea of which forms of divination were particularly popular in Greece from Xenophon, who notes that Socrates claimed to be guided by 'the divine' (τὸ δαιμόνιον), and that this was no more strange than others who rely on divination (μαντικὴν) through consulting oracles (χρῶνται), from prophetic voices (φήμαις), omens (συμβόλοις) or sacrifices (θυσίαις) (Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 1.1.2-3). This seems to imply that these were the most frequently used forms of divination in Greece. 'Prophetic voices' may refer to voices heard in dreams, but dreams and oneirology are not specifically mentioned. However, in his *Symposium*, Xenophon does specifically mention dreams as one of the ways the gods give messages to men (Xenophon, *Symposium*, 4.48). According to Herodotus divination by entrails was a 'Greek' method (though in fact we know of several ancient cultures who used this method) (Herodotus, 9.37).

One of the most important forms of divination in ancient Greece was oracular divination. There were many oracles in Greece, of which that of Apollo at Delphi is the

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[259] Burkert 1985: 111.
[260] Burkert 1985: 112.
[261] Burkert 1985: 113.
[262] West includes divination by dreams in this summary; West 1997: 46-51, Burkert 1992: 79-81.

most famous, and we know from Herodotus that the oracle might be consulted concerning extremely important political matters as well as private ones (see for example Herodotus 7.139.6). Sophocles depicts a challenge to oracles as a challenge to religion itself (Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, 897-910).[263] Parker has identified five main ways in which the will of the gods might be revealed in Greece, described by Xenophon in various works: oracular response, dream interpretation, observation of the flight of birds, sacrifice and 'chance' omens (where the sneeze comes in).[264] Seers, including dream interpreters, could hold a relatively high position within Greek society, though undoubtedly there were also seers of much lower social standing.

At Rome, as Bouché-Leclercq explained, divination was controlled by legal prescriptions and incorporated into public cult.[265] The state employed three groups of official diviners; augurs, the *quindecemviri*, who looked after the Sibylline books, and *haruspices*; the first two groups were official state priests, while the *haruspices* were called on as needed.[266] Augury, in Late Republican Rome, was used more often to establish whether an action had divine approval than to see the future, though it had once had that function (see Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.33.70).[267] The *haruspices* had their roots in Etruscan religion.[268] The state did not employ astrologers or dream interpreters, and these held a much lower place within Roman society than they had in Classical Greece (see Chapter Five pp283-285).

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[263] See Parker 2003: 487.
[264] Parker 2003: 488.
[265] Bouché-Leclercq 1975: 320.
[266] See Linderski 2003: 488.
[267] See Beard 1986: 41.
[268] See de Cazanove 2007: 221.

The Ancient Near East

Several Greco-Roman ideas concerning dreams and dreaming can be traced back to the ancient Near East, so it is important to establish the place of dreams within ancient Near Eastern imagination here. The 'ancient Near East' covers a vast span both chronologically and geographically and this summary can only hope to skim the surface.[269]

The Sumerian word for 'dream', *máš.gi₆*, literally translates as 'goat of the night', that is, night-extispicy (a goat being one of the animals that might be sacrificed in extispicy).[270] This seems to imply that the divinatory potential of dreams was considered to be their most important quality. Oppenheim suggested that dreams existed on three 'planes' for people in ancient Mesopotamia: as revelations from a deity that might require interpretation, as reflections of the state of the dreamer (which he notes were not recorded), and as divinatory signs of the future.[271] A number of the rituals published by Butler, many of which relate to the dream content itself rather than to the supposed outcome of the dream, may fall under Oppenheim's second 'plane', which implies a certain level of interest in the dream for its own sake, but the two aspects are not mutually exclusive.[272] A dream might be a divinatory sign or omen, or it might be the work of a malevolent force that needs to be propitiated. If the dream is a prophetic sign, then any bad thing that it foretells might need to be averted through ritual (referred to in the story

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[269] The work of A. L. Oppenheim, S. A. L. Butler and S. Noegel has been invaluable in this area and interested readers are advised to consult their major works (Oppenheim 1956, Butler 1998 and Noegel 2007).

[270] Pers. comm. A. Livingstone and B. Haskamp.

[271] Oppenheim 1956: 184.

[272] The rituals are intended to avert nightmares, or prevent ghosts from appearing in dreams, and so on; see for example Butler 1998: 61.

of Dumuzi's dream, when Geshtinanna says this is not possible in his case, lines 41-42).[273] A person who had experienced a troubling dream could turn to the dream book to find out what it meant, and if still uncertain, perform a ritual to ensure that it did no harm.

The Politics of Dreaming

Divination in the ancient Near East was often linked with royal decisions and matters of national and international importance, and this was true of dream divination as well.[274] Dream reports that found their way into the cultural memory of an event through inscriptions were inextricably linked with power and, often, the seizure of power; the dream report would legitimate the new ruler.

The category of 'message dreams' was first identified by Oppenheim in his authoritative study of dream divination in the ancient Near East and the Assyrian dream book.[275] The quintessential message dream appears most often in literature of record from the ancient Near East, where it plays a vital political role.

Message dreams in the ancient Near East most commonly appear as a divine statement confirming the power of a king or ruler or at a time of crisis.[276] DeJong Ellis has noted that various divinatory signs, including oracles, omens and dreams, were used to legitimate a king or ruler, as they could claim that their power was given to them by a god.[277] They often claimed to have had a dream in which the god spoke to them directly. The directness and clarity of the message was important for their purpose; it was

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[273] For these lines from Dumuzi's dream, see Jacobsen 1987: 31.
[274] On divination and politics, see Sweek 2002 and Holloway 2002: 411.
[275] Oppenheim 1956: 185.
[276] See further Butler 1998: 17; Oppenheim 1956: 185.
[277] deJong Ellis 1989: 178, 179.

necessary that there be no room for interpretation or questioning, as this would defeat the purpose of the dream, which was to remove any doubt as to the rightfulness of the dreamer's actions. The earliest example of a royal message dream is probably the Stele of the Vultures, in which a god reassures the king concerning the outcome of a war.[278] There are numerous examples of kings such as the Hittite Hattushili III or the Babylonian Nabonidus, who had usurped the former ruler and needed to legitimate their power.[279]

The *Annals* of the Neo-Assyrian king Assurbanipal include several references to dreams which fall under this category, though none of the dreams come to Assurbanipal himself.[280] In one message dream from Ishtar, the message is for Assurbanipal, but the goddess has sent it through a professional dream interpreter, to pass on to the king. The dream occurs during the war against Elam, while Assurbanipal is praying, presumably in the temple. While Assurbanipal prays, and indeed receives comforting words from the goddess himself, apparently while awake, the goddess sends a dream to a *šabrû* (a male dream interpreter) with specific instructions concerning what Assurbanipal should do.[281] The dream is unsolicited – Assurbanipal prays for help, but not specifically for a dream, and it comes to someone else – but related to Assurbanipal's prayer, as the dream is essentially the answer to his prayer. This sort of connection is not uncommon, and may have led to the later, Greek, development of incubation in temples (as discussed in my forthcoming paper). It should also be noted, of course, that it is very possible, if not likely, that the whole incident is an invention of Assurbanipal's, to justify his own actions

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[278] Husser 1999: 38.
[279] Husser 1999: 40. See also Oppenheim, who argues that the dreams sent by the goddess Ishtar to Hattushili's enemies were the forerunners of the dream of Gyges of Lydia recorded in the *Annals* of Assurbanipal; Oppenheim 1956: 199.
[280] See further Butler 1998: 17.
[281] Streck 1916: 117-119.

and emphasise his divine right to rule over not only his own land, but several other peoples' as well; Butler interprets the dreams as 'propaganda'.[282]

Message dreams also appear in the Old Testament performing a similar function, but legitimating a prophet rather than a secular leader (though these are sometimes one and the same person). In describing Yahweh's call to Samuel at 1 *Samuel* 3, the writer notes that at the time, Yahweh spoke rarely and visions were uncommon. However, the Old Testament contains several references to the idea that God speaks to prophets through dreams; Yahweh Himself states that He does so, though He explains this in order to demonstrate that Moses is different, as Yahweh speaks to him directly (*Numbers* 12.6-8). There are also numerous references to false prophets who tell lying dreams, and *Jeremiah* 23 contains a long invective from Yahweh against false prophets, including those who tell false dreams (see *Zechariah* 10.2; *Jeremiah* 27.9; *Deuteronomy* 13.2-6). This suggests that dream divination was well attested at the time when *Jeremiah* was written (in the sixth century BC or later), as it would not be worth taking the trouble to criticise something that was not happening with some frequency.[283] Leglay has suggested that, before the appearance of the Prophets, dreams were the 'principal moyen de communication' between God and human beings.[284]

Husser has noted that, of the Old Testament dreams, the dream of Solomon at Gibeon most closely resembles the various other message dreams recorded in Near Eastern sources.[285] Some scholars have linked the story of Solomon with the minor Egyptian literary genre of the *Königsnovelle*, narratives in which the Pharaoh or his

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[282] Butler 1998: 17. See also Mouton, who notes that message dreams are by far the best documented dream type in Hittite evidence; Mouton 2007: 30.

[283] This section also refers to people who forget Yahweh because they are too busy telling each other their dreams; this suggests that more commonplace dream divination, such as that found in dream-books, was also popular (*Jeremiah* 23.26-27).

[284] Leglay 1966: 342.

[285] Husser 1999: 124.

officers take part in a memorable deed to be commemorated; Husser notes that this

analogy is based chiefly on a perceived similarity between Solomon's dream and that of

Thutmosis IV (see below).[286] However, as Husser has observed, there is no particularly

striking similarity between the two dreams. Although Jacob's dreams have sometimes

been referred to as examples of incubation, they are actually message dreams (*Genesis*

28.10-22; *Genesis* 46.1-5; *Genesis* 31.10-13). The dream is usually described as a spoken

message from Yahweh, and this is borne out by the description in *Job* of how God opens

the ears of men while they are asleep at night (*Job* 33.15-16).

Message dreams can also be used to justify other major decisions or political actions. For

example, the dream of Gudea, which is recorded on an inscription on a cylinder, explains

the motivation behind building a temple (Gudea Cylindar A). Having received an

unsolicited dream from the god Ningirsu, Gudea, seeking further help, offers bread and

water to the goddess Gatumdug, then sets up a bed next to her statue and sleeps there,

having prayed to Gatumdug for a sign and calling on the goddess Nanše, the interpreter

of dreams, to interpret it for him.[287] All the dreams relate to the building of the temple.

On the other hand, the dreams recorded in the Mari letters are highly concerned with

politics, but contain few references to message dreams.[288] This may be because, if these

letters represent genuine communications between people concerning their dreams, the

dreams recorded in these letters may be closer to 'real', lived dreams than the others

examined here. It is not impossible that people in the ancient world did experience

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[286] Husser 1999: 124-125.
[287] Edzard 1997: 69-70.
[288] On these dreams, see further Sasson, who suggests that at least one of the women who reported their dreams to the king in this way was staking a claim for herself as worthy of divine notice; Sasson 1984: 289.

message dreams; as we have noted, dreams can be culturally-specific and the message dream might be more likely to occur in ancient societies.[289] However, the presence of message dreams in texts that are less likely to represent 'real' dreams (such as the remarkably convenient dreams of usurpers) and their absence from those that possibly do, may indicate that they are, essentially, a literary form of dream report.

Bottéro has suggested that, although extraordinary message dreams, which he refers to as 'intuitive oneiromancy', may have been chiefly reserved for those in high social positions, 'deductive oneiromancy', in which more ordinary dreams were decoded to reveal anything they might have to say about the future, was available to more people.[290] There is no way to regulate what people actually dream about, so this division in the surviving dream reports further suggests that stories of divine message dreams were literary and political devices that were used only by those in power. It seems more likely that message dreams were used by leaders for political purposes, rather than that those in higher social positions had these dreams, while those in lower social positions did not. It should also be noted that, although the Near Eastern dream book refers to dreams in which one sees a god or a dead person, it does not refer to the vital aspect of the spoken message.[291]

Outside of their specific political context, message dreams are much rarer. They appear in the imaginative *Poem of the Righteous Sufferer*, though even there, they relate to the Sufferer's social and political rehabilitation as well as his physical healing.[292] The poem is a work of Babylonian wisdom literature, a group of works similar to Hebrew wisdom

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[289] See further Harris 2009: 57-62.
[290] Bottéro 1987: 113.
[291] See for example Oppenheim 1956: 262. See Szpakowska 2003: 80 for the Egyptian version.
[292] I have used W. G. Lambert's edition and translation of the poem; Lambert 1960a: 21-62.

books in subject matter, though 'wisdom' in this case refers to skill in cult and magical practices.[293] It reflects the idea that there existed a personal god, who, in exchange for offerings, could provide protection from demons and represent the person to the greater gods, which had increased through the early second millennium.[294] References to dreaming in the poem fall under two categories; references to dream-priests who have not been able to diagnose the Sufferer, or explain the nightmares that are terrifying him, and the three dreams the Sufferer sees before he is cured. At the beginning of the poem, the Sufferer complains of his political and social isolation (Tablet 1 lines 55-58). The end is unfortunately very fragmentary, but the Sufferer seems to have been fully restored in all aspects of his life, suggesting that he has been socially and politically restored as well as healed. The chief function of the dreams in this poem, however, is that of healing the Sufferer of his illness (Tablet 3, lines 9-44).

Most of the dreams in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* are symbolic, but there is one example of a message dream in the poem. The story of the Flood, as told in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, is presumed to have originated in another epic poem, the *Epic of Atra-hasis*.[295] Lambert has suggested that, originally, the god Ea told Atra-hasis about the Flood by whispering to him through the wall, so that it was the wall which actually conveyed the information, and he was not betraying the divine secret.[296] This is reflected in the Standard Version of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* when Ea seems to be addressing a wall. Later, when Ea is defending his actions, he claims that he did not tell the Flood hero, but simply caused him to have a dream through which he learned their plans. This is a

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[293] See Lambert 1960a: 1.
[294] Lambert 1960a: 7. On personal deities and dream rituals, see Butler 1998: 89-95.
[295] See Lambert 1960b: 114.
[296] Lambert 1960b: 119. Other versions of the Flood story also refer, directly or indirectly, to dreams and a version from Nippur has Ea promising to explain, using a word connected with the interpretation of dreams; see Lambert 1960b: 119. See also, more generally, Butler 1998: 231-232 and, on the importance of punning in this context, Noegel 2007: 66-70

particularly interesting defence, as it suggests that a god can allow a mortal to see something without directly telling them – this may explain the nature of Enkidu's dream in the epic poem, in which he was allowed to see the gods arguing but was not given a direct message (*Epic of Gilgamesh*, Standard Version, Tablet 7). It may also be inspired by the political use of dreams in literature of record.

Political message dreams are also found in Egypt, and have sometimes been seen as evidence of connections with the Near East. Three New Kingdom pharaohs left records of message dreams; Amenhotep II, Thutmosis IV and Merneptah.[297] It seems likely that the sudden appearance of message dreams in Egypt at this time is the direct result of the new foreign influences that came into Egypt following the migration of people from Asia into the Delta and the various political upheavals of the Second Intermediate Period. All three dream reports are quite different.

Amenhotep's dream is recorded in one of two records of his campaign against the Syrians, and is the earliest recorded appearance of a divine figure in an Egyptian dream.[298] The dream itself is not described in detail, but the special protection given to Amenhotep by Amun is emphasised. Szpakowska has noted two contributory factors to the sudden appearance of a divine message dream at this time; firstly, during the earlier reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmosis III, omens had started to play a significant role in Egyptian politics, and secondly, Egyptian pharaohs may have felt an increased need for divine sanction for their rule at this time, due to the various political and military wranglings accompanying the end of the Second Intermediate Period and beginning of

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[297] See Szpakowska 2003: 47.
[298] See Szpakowska 2003: 48-49. For the text, see Sethe 1930: 1306.11-1307.2.

the New Kingdom.[299] As has been seen, royal message dreams had been recorded in the Ancient Near East for some time, so it is unsurprising that Egyptian pharaohs adopted this literary *topos* and political tool.

The dream of Thutmosis IV is recorded on a stele between the front legs of the Sphinx at Giza. Although not specifically described as a 'dream', the visitation of the god takes place after Thutmosis has fallen asleep, so it can be safely identified as such. The god, who identifies himself as HoremAkhet-Khepri-Ra-Atum, gives Thutmosis kingship over the Two Lands and grants him long life.[300] Since Thutmosis was apparently sleeping under the Sphinx in the afternoon, it is possible that he really did have a dream involving the Sphinx; the benefits to himself of the message contained here, however, are obvious.

The third dream is that of the Pharaoh Merneptah, who dreamed a conversation with the god Ptah. This was a god Merneptah claimed a particularly close relationship with, as is clear from his name. Like the dream of Amenhotep, this dream is recorded in a narrative about a war. This is the first recorded instance in Egypt of a two-way conversation between Pharaoh and god, but unfortunately only a small fragment has survived, so we do not have a detailed record of the dream.[301] As Szpakowska has noted, all three of these dreams are immediately understood by the dreamer and do no require interpretation.[302]

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[299] See Szpakowska 2003: 49.
[300] See Szpakowska 2003: 189. For the text, see Zivie 1976: 128.
[301] See Szpakowska 2003: 196. For the text, see Davies 1997: 156-157.
[302] Szpakowska 2003: 55.

Forebodings of Death: *Gilgamesh* and Dumuzi

The idea that dreams may be connected with death and the world of the dead also appears to have been a part of the cultural imagination in some parts of the ancient Near East. This study focuses on two main elements to the connection; the question of whether and how dreams allow contact with the dead, and dreams as omens of death. There is little evidence in the form of dream reports from the ancient Near East concerning dreams as a means of contact with the souls of the dead, though the dream rituals collected by Butler do refer to the possibility of ghosts appearing in dreams.

Whereas the first relationship is connected to the perception of what a dream is and the nature of dreaming in general, the second is more directly related to the divinatory potential of dreams. Death, like any other event, is something that, if one assumes the reality of divination, may be predicted. A number of dreams from ancient Near Eastern imaginative literature take the form of death omens, such as that in a fragment of the Sumerian *Legend of Sargon*, which tells of a dream Sargon had while a cupbearer for the king, Urzababa, in which he saw the goddess Inanna drown Urzababa in a river of blood.[303] Sargon later usurped Urzababa, so this dream may have originated as a dream confirming Sargon's right to Urzababa's power, like the message dreams discussed above, though the form of the dream in the legend is more like a death omen. Dreams which are death omens can be in the form of message dreams or symbolic dreams.

Death omens can be used in imaginative literature to create a particularly foreboding mood. Sumerian poems about the dream and death of the god

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[303] See Husser 1999: 39.

Tammuz/Dumuzi include long descriptions of the dream, which is a death omen, with its interpretation, and also of how some elements of the dream came to happen literally.[304] Oppenheim has compared this dream with that of Gudea to suggest that 'symbolic' dreams have two possible literary uses; they can be part of the story, as in the Gudea text (because the text is intended to represent all events connected with the building of the temple), or they can be used to create a mood, as in this poem (in which the dream does not have a direct bearing on the story, but creates a sense of foreboding).[305] However, it is important to note that a general sense of foreboding is, in fact, the reason that Dumuzi goes out into the desert, though the dream does not have a strong bearing of any of the characters' actions, so it does form part of the plot as well as adding to the foreboding atmosphere of the poem. The fact that Dumuzi is a god makes this divinatory dream particularly unusual; perhaps, in this case, the dream is envisaged as having no specific origin, or perhaps the intimation of the future comes from Dumuzi himself.[306]

There are also two examples from ancient Near Eastern literature of a dreamer visiting the land of the dead through a dream. The dream provides the vehicle for the journey to the underworld (as in the Greek tradition of *katabasis*, though in a Greco-Roman context, *katabasis* is usually a physical journey undertaken by someone when awake, such as those of Odysseus or Aeneas; Homer, *Odyssey*, 11, Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6). This is a popular theme throughout world literature (for example, the Japanese story of Izanagi, the Finnish hero Vainamoinen, featured in the *Kalevala*, or the Maori story of Maui), so it is not

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[304] Translated in Jacobsen 1987: 28-46.
[305] Oppenheim 1956: 212.
[306] See also Oppenheim 1956: 213.

surprising to find it in the epic, but it unusual for it to take the form of a dream and even more unusual for the hero to die shortly afterwards.

In the state archives of Assyria, an Assyrian prince is said to have had a dream in which he saw the underworld.[307] The story is not well preserved, but it seems that the prince entered the temple and, as in a Greek incubation ritual, prayed to the gods and then lay down to sleep in the temple. He seems to have done so with the specific intention of asking to be taken down into the underworld, as his prayer and dreams are preceded by a line saying he was 'planning to go down to the underworld', but the fragmentary nature of the text makes it very difficult to be sure.[308] If this is the case, it would suggest that it was thought that, through a dream, a person's soul might be able to gain access to the underworld.

The other, better preserved, dream-*katabasis* is that of Enkidu in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. His dream-visit to the underworld is the second of two dreams which function as death omens for Enkidu. In the first, he had seen the gods arguing over his fate.[309] Oppenheim has suggested that it is unlikely that Enkidu's soul actually travelled to the gods, because Enkidu would have reported such a journey to Gilgamesh; but the fragmentary nature of the evidence again makes it difficult to be sure.[310] However, Oppenheim argues that, in the second dream, Enkidu's spirit has actually travelled to the underworld.[311] It may be that, while the gods are out of reach of any human being, the underworld was thought to be accessible through dreams. Since Enkidu's dream is a

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[307] Livingstone 1989: 71-76.
[308] Livingstone 1989: 70.
[309] This dream is only preserved in Hittite fragments; see Butler 1998: 22; Stefanini 1969: 40.
[310] Oppenheim 1956: 196.
[311] Oppenheim argues that the reason the scribe of the underworld seems surprised to see Enkidu and asks who has brought him is that he has arrived too early; that is, Enkidu's soul has actually travelled down to the underworld a few days before his death, while asleep; Oppenheim 1956: 214.

death omen, it is also particularly appropriate that it takes the form of a journey to the underworld, allowing him a glimpse of what will soon happen to him.

Egypt

We might expect, given the later popularity of incubation in Greco-Roman Egypt (see Chapter Five pp266-267), that dreams were of great significance to the ancient Egyptians. However, as Oppenheim noted, dreams appear much later in Egyptian literature than they do in the literature of the ancient Near East.[312] The depiction of dreams in Egyptian literature varies; some royal texts use dreams to demonstrate the king's direct connection with the divine (discussed above), while other texts focus on the untrustworthy and potentially dangerous aspects of dreams.[313] Szpakowska has noted that dream interpretation does not appear to have been particularly common as a written tradition in ancient Egypt, and that Egyptians do not seem to have been particularly concerned with conceptualising dreams until well after the New Kingdom period.[314] There is some evidence for dream rituals from Egypt, and Szpakowska has noted that there is much more evidence for rituals to ward off bad dreams than for rituals connected with good dreams.[315]

The confusing nature of dreams is emphasised in one of the best-known Egyptian literary uses of the dream (though the text does not contain an actual dream report), the

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[312] Oppenheim 1956: 187.
[313] See Szpakowska 2003: 41.
[314] Szpakowska 2003: 3-4.
[315] Szpakowska 2003: 159.

Story of Sinuhe.[316] This text has been preserved in five Middle Kingdom papyri and about thirty New Kingdom ostraca, and is a narrative set in the framework of a funerary autobiography.[317] Although some scholars had believed it to be a genuine autobiography, it is now widely understood to be a work of fiction, as no trace has been found of a real Sinuhe and the development of the narrative and use of language is more suggestive of fiction.[318] The story is one of exile, and sets a prosperous life abroad against a quiet life in Egypt, and suggests that the quiet Egyptian life is preferable.[319]

As Baines has observed, the biggest problem for Sinuhe is to justify his flight abroad.[320] The reference to a dream is made as Sinuhe tries to justify himself in his reply to the king's letter, when he says the flight was like a dream where a man from the Delta sees himself in the marshes or in Nubia; as Szpakowska has observed, the dream is used as a metaphor for his anxious and confused state of mind as he flees Egypt.[321] Goedicke has translated this phrase in a text from the Ashmolean museum as reading 'I was like a dream-walker'.[322] Although his flight is initially described as his own decision, Sinuhe later refers to himself as being led into exile by a god; it is unclear whether the reference to a dream is intended to reinforce this idea – as if the god was moving him through a

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[316] The *Story* can be read in translation at Simpson 2003: 54-66.
[317] See Baines 1982: 32-33.
[318] On *Sinuhe* as a genuine autobiography, see for example Barns 1967: 13-14. On the story as fiction, see for example Simpson 2003: 54. Some have suggested that various Egyptian and Near Eastern stories of exile and reconciliation, including those of Sinuhe, Joseph, Idrimi, Hattushili, Esarhaddon, Nabonidus, Jacob, Moses and David, are all derived from the same type of 'hero tale'; see for example Robin King, who goes on to discuss this theory in conjunction with Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*; Robin King 1987: 578. Of these, the story of Idrimi contains no references to dreams, only to extispicy and augury, nor does the chronicle of Esarhaddon (who mentions dreams briefly but does not give details), nor the stories of Moses or David. The Hittite *Apology*, of Hattushili, on the other hand, contains what Oppenheim referred to as the most ample use of dream-stories in any ancient Near Eastern document and Oppenheim ascribes this chiefly to personal interest in dreams on the part of Hattushili; Oppenheim 1956: 187, 197. (The *Apology* of Hattushili III can be read in translation in Hallo 2003: 199-204). The other stories are, moreover, historical, in the sense that they appear in literature of record rather than of imagination. The *Story of Sinuhe* does not bear a particularly strong similarity to any of them.
[319] See Baines 1982: 36-37.
[320] Baines 1982: 39.
[321] See Lloyd 2006: 79 and Parkinson 2006: 166.
[322] Goedicke 1965: 42-43.

dream-like state – or whether it is a simple metaphor describing his inner confusion (though the latter seems more likely). Baines interprets references to this god, and to Sinuhe being moved by feelings in his heart, as a dramatisation of guilt and an attempt to exonerate the guilty person.[323] By this reading, the dream becomes an excuse for Sinuhe's actions; he was not in his right mind, but was confused, like a person unable to control their actions in a dream.[324]

Later Egyptian references to dreams and dreaming show the blending of Egyptian and Greek culture that resulted from the rule of the Ptolemies. A number of Ptolemaic imaginative stories contain references to dreams. The Ptolemaic Bentresh Stele preserves a story set during the reign of Rameses II, in which the prince of Bakhtan is keeping a god with him, but while he is asleep, he sees the god flying up towards Egypt out of his shrine in the form of a golden falcon. After this, the prince allowed the god to be taken to Egypt.[325] Most of the story is about a ghost, and it features various magical/religious rituals, and the dream is part of the supernatural subject matter of the story. The idea of the god showing someone through a dream where they (that is, the god) want to be occurs several times in later Greco-Roman literature (see for example Tacitus, *Historiae*, 4.83, Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 28, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15.641-662).

The Famine Stele, a Ptolemaic inscription set in the reign of Djoser, includes a dream in which Khnum tells Djoser the famine they are suffering under is over. This may bear some relation to the Near Eastern message dream, which, as we have seen, made its

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[323] Baines 1982: 41.
[324] M. Bommas has suggested that the reason Sinuhe flees is that he has accidentally overheard part of a conspiracy (pers. comm). This would suggest that Sinuhe is using the dream imagery to try to conceal the true reason for his flight, for fear of recrimination.
[325] Simpson 2003: 361-366.

way into Egypt earlier, though the message here is a message of comfort rather than an order. Although it purports to be historical, its very late date suggests that it is better considered as historical fiction.[326] The Demotic *Tale of Setna* also contains several references to dreams. Because only the Demotic version has survived, it is difficult to say whether any elements of the story are survivals from older versions. Much of the story has a Greek feel to it; there are references to the Greek practice of incubation (popular in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt). Some have identified the Stele of Taimhotep as an example of a dream report, but it is not clear whether this was a dream or a vision.[327] All of these late sources present stories that are not entirely Greek, and not entirely Egyptian.

The *Archive of Hor*, a very late source from Egypt (c170 BC), also contains several important references to dreams. Some are described in very brief fragments, such as the one in what J. D. Ray described as 'execrable' Greek, relating an oracle of Hermes given in a dream.[328] Most of the texts are in Demotic. In one dream which functions as an omen of death, Ray has suggested that the unidentified man speaking to Hor is a ghost; this suggests a close tie with the world of the dead, though it may be determined simply by the subject of the dream.[329] It should also be noted that the strange qualities of these two dreams are much more suggestive of real dreams than most accounts of message dreams tend to be. Ray has tentatively suggested that this may fall into the modern category of an anxiety dream.[330]

One final text must be mentioned; the Greek papyrus known as the *Dream of Nectanebus* or *Nectanebo's Dream*. The surviving versions of this story, which features a

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[326] Simpson 2003: 386-391.
[327] See Oppenheim 1956: 252.
[328] Ray 1976: 2-3.
[329] Ray 1976: 43.
[330] Ray 1976: 44.

dream which mixes symbolic elements with a spoken message, are all late and have sometimes been identified with the later genre of the novel, though it is likely that the story has a much earlier Egyptian source.

The Power of Dreams

There is also some very limited evidence from Egyptian sources for the ideas that dreams might leave the sleeper vulnerable to attack by supernatural forces, and that the soul might inhabit a different space from the body while dreaming. Egyptian writing does not refer to the dreamer as physically travelling to another place, or to the soul leaving the body.[331] However, Sauneron has suggested that, for Egyptians, someone sleeping had access to 'un univers différent'.[332]

The main evidence that suggests that the soul had access to a different world in dreaming, and that it could be vulnerable to attack (particularly from the dead) comes from the *Letters to the Dead*. These are a series of letters which range from the Old Kingdom to the New Kingdom (from 2686 BC to 1070 BC) and are addressed to deceased acquaintances, often with some kind of request. In Papyrus Nag ed-Deir 3737, Heni asks his late father to intervene with their late servant Seni, who is watching Heni in his dreams, presumably, Heni feels, with malicious intent. Referring to this letter, Simpson has suggested that a view of the afterworld in a dream might have been a common prompt for letters to the dead.[333] Similarly, in another letter, Merertifi asks his late wife, Nebetyotef, for help with an illness, saying he wants to see her 'fighting for

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[331] Szpakowska 2003: 27.
[332] Sauneron 1959: 19.
[333] See Simpson 1966: 45. For the text, see Simpson 1966: 41.

him in a dream'.[334] Several other letters, without referring specifically to dreams, include requests for the dead to rise up and fight for the living, and Gardiner and Sethe noted that these are quite formulaic.[335] It seems that, when a living person was asleep and dreaming, they were more vulnerable to the dead, and whatever space their soul was occupying was closer to the land of the dead, allowing the dead to observe the living in a manner not possible in the waking world. The living could be seen, and even adversely affected, by the dead, though neither could cross over, and so the dreamer needed to ask those who were already dead to help them.

A few Egyptian references to dreaming suggest a possible link between dreams and magic. The Middle Kingdom text *Instructions for King Merikare* includes a brief reference to the god having given people magic as a weapon to ward off (bad) things that might happen, and dreams by night as well as by day (lines 136-137, P. Carlsberg VI).[336] In the much later *Tale of Setna*, Horus-son-of-the-wolf, a character whom Ritner refers to as a 'magician', though he notes that the Demotic literally reads 'Chief (lector-priest)', goes to the temple of Hermopolis looking for a solution to a problem Pharaoh is having.[337] He offers burnt offerings and libations and prays to Thoth to let him learn the solution to Pharaoh's problem. He then lies down in the temple and has a dream in which he sees himself speaking with Thoth, who tells him how to help Pharaoh. in a clear reference to the Greek practice of incubation.

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[334] Szpakowska 2003: 185-186. See also Ray 1981: 179.
[335] Gardiner and Sethe 1928: 4.
[336] Volten 1945: 76.
[337] Ritner 2003: 482-483.

Dreams in the Greek World

New Beginnings? Homer

The heading 'New Beginnings' refers to Homer's position at the beginning of the history of Greek literature. The question mark refers to the ideas adopted and adapted by Homer which are strongly influenced by the ancient Near East. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were both written c700 BC by one or more persons who will be referred to as 'Homer'. It is assumed that, as Milman Parry suggested, they were transmitted orally for some considerable time before eventually reaching written form.[338] It is impossible to exaggerate the influence of Homer on later ancient writers, and so the two poems attributed to him can be seen as the beginnings of a new tradition, which was to be imitated and adapted for centuries to come. However, the Homeric poems did not spring into life from the ground, and the influence of the Near East on Homer, which has long been a topic of scholarly discourse, is particularly significant with respect to dreams.[339]

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[338] See the collected papers of Milman Parry, A. Parry 1971: especially 328.

[339] It may seem surprising that this section focuses only on Homer and not on Hesiod as well, but although he was roughly contemporary to Homer and also highly influential, Hesiod has very little to say about dreams. He describes how Night gave birth to Doom, Fate, Death, Sleep and the tribe of Dreams (Μόρος, Κῆρα, Θάνατος, Ὕπνος, φῦλον Ὀνείρων), and later refers to the 'awful gods', Sleep and Death, who live together (Hesiod, *Theogony*, 211-212; 756-759). However, beyond this, he says very little. This may itself be a point of interest, but as there is only so much space in a single study, it will have to be left for another work. Some writers in later antiquity interpreted Hesiod's encounter with the Muses as a dream, and West has suggested that it bears some similarity to message dreams, but Hesiod himself does not suggest that the experience is a dream; West 1997: 287.

Homer's use of dreams largely stands apart from Classical Greek literature of imagination. Whereas Greek tragedy uses symbolic dreams almost exclusively, nearly all the dreams in the Homeric poems are message dreams (with the important exception of Penelope's dreams in *Odyssey* Books 19 and 20). This means that Homeric dreams bear more direct resemblance to dreams in ancient Near Eastern literature of record than to Classical Greek literature of imagination.[340] Several of these follow a clear pattern, in which the god comes and stands at the head of the dreamer and delivers a spoken message (those that do not are usually described more briefly) (Homer, *Iliad*, 2.1-35; *Odyssey*, 4.795-809; *Odyssey*, 6.13-47). Patroclus also stands by Achilles' head when he visits via a dream (Homer, *Iliad*, 23.62-92). The detail that the god or person stands by the dreamer's head is probably a poetic epithet attached to this *topos*. Kessels has put together a scheme of the pattern Homeric dreams tend to take, though there are exceptions (in formulaic oral-derived poetry, it is not surprising that dream sequences should follow a similar pattern).[341]

However, whereas message dreams in the ancient Near East appear in literature of record because they are the clearest and most easily comprehensible form of dream, Homer sometimes uses them differently. A religious or secular leader using a prophetic dream to justify his actions needs the dream to be as clear-cut as possible, but the author of a work

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[340] Highbarger had attempted to draw links between Homer and the ancient Near East, but unfortunately his argument was not convincing. Amory has thoroughly refuted Highbarger's suggestions, noting that the eastern gate Highbarger equates the Gate of Ivory with has no connection with ivory, and cannot be related to the Gate of Olympus through white clouds, as Homer does not describe clouds as white; Amory 1966: 8-9. More convincingly, West has provided a useful summary of the major message dreams in Homer and examples of Near Eastern precedents for each one; West 1997: 186-188. See also Burkert 1992. Diodorus Siculus quotes Homer's description of the gates of the Sun and the land of Dreams during his explanation of how Orpheus brought mystic ceremonies and accounts of Hades to Greece from Egypt; Diodorus Siculus, 1.96.6.

[341] Kessels 1978: 134-135.

of imagination will often prefer to present dreams in a more complex way (which may be why they often prefer symbolic dreams). We have seen, for example, how Dumuzi was confused by his dream, although everything in the dream had a specific meaning. Most of the message dreams in Homer are reasonably straightforward, but the deceitful dream sent by Zeus to Agamemnon, and Penelope's dreams, may have partly inspired the later Greek emphasis on the difficulty of correctly interpreting dreams. All the characters in the Homeric poems show a keen awareness that dreams may be false or deceptive, and they only believe Agamemnon's false dream because he is 'the best of the Achaeans' (Homer, *Iliad*, 2.77-83).[342]

Message dreams in the Homeric poems are conceptualised as actual visitations from gods or deceased souls; Agamemnon's dream, for example, is specifically described as a visitation from the personified Dream, sent by Zeus (Homer, *Iliad*, 2.1-35). Sleep, Death and Dream are all personified in the *Iliad*. Kessels has noted that although Zeus, when he sends the dream to Agamemnon, addresses a personified figure called Oneiros, who then goes and addresses Agamemnon, there does not seem to be a dream-god in Homer.[343]

Achilles' dream-vision of Patroclus is more difficult to categorise. It has sometimes been categorised as a 'ghost-story', and it is impossible to say for sure whether the poet envisages Patroclus' soul actually making the journey to visit Achilles through a dream, or whether this vision is the product of Achilles' own mind (Homer, *Iliad*, 23.62-107). The similarity of the story to other stories in which a ghost asks for proper burial, a theme which was to recur throughout antiquity, suggests the former (see

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[342] On the use of this title in the Homeric poems, see Nagy 1999: especially 26-27.
[343] Kessels 1978: 37-38.

Chapter Four p198) (see Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.50-80; Tertullian, *De Anima*, 56; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.325-330).[344]

The influence of Near Eastern dream literature on Homer may illuminate one of the most-discussed passages in the *Odyssey*, Penelope's description of the Gates of Sleep (Homer, *Odyssey*, 19.560-569). The origin and meaning of the Gates of Sleep has been the cause of some debate. Although the possibility that the poet of the *Odyssey* invented the idea cannot be discounted, the equal possibility that it has an older source must be considered. The subject has been treated most fully by Amory, but more recent research into Near Eastern dream texts may allow us to offer a solution that was not available to her at the time of writing.[345]

Several theories concerning the Gates of Sleep take their cue from Eustathius. According to the 'allegorical' theory, the horn gate represents that which is seen through the eyes, which have a horny covering, and the ivory gate represents things spoken through the mouth, through ivory-coloured teeth, so Penelope believes only that which is seen, not that which is only spoken (Eustathius, *Commentarios in Homeri Iliadem et*

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[344] See further Johnston 1999: 14. For an overview of this theme in antiquity, see Felton 1999: 10-11. Oppenheim has noted that the motif of a dead person asking for proper burial through a dream does not appear until Homer's *Iliad*; Oppenheim 1956: 204. Although it is tempting to assume that this means that proper burial was less important to people in the ancient Near East, the absence of such stories from Egypt, where burial was certainly important, suggests that another explanation is needed, and this may simply result from a lack of surviving evidence.

[345] Prior to Amory's article, the most significant work on the meaning of the Gates of Sleep was that of Highbarger. Highbarger laid out some useful notes on the links between sleep, dreams and death in Homeric and Classical Greek literature, but his assumption that dreams are actually 'ghosts', or the souls of the dead, cannot be upheld, as it is based solely on the idea that dreams and ghosts 'live' in the same place; although there are links between dreams and the dead, a dream is an experience, not a personified thing; Highbarger 1940: 4-9. Amory argues that the difficulties with Highbarger's theory begin when he equates true dreams with ghosts, and continue with his identification of all the gates Homer mentions with the Gates of Horn and Ivory; Amory 1966: 7. Highbarger's theory concerning the Gates of Sleep, suggesting that the Gate of Ivory is the Gate of Olympus and that true dreams are really ghosts which come through the Gate of Horn, which is the Gate of Hades, has also been explained and thoroughly refuted by Amory, who describes Highbarger's argument concerning Penelope's geese-dream as 'so confused and circular that it is impossible even to summarize it'; Amory 1966: 10-11.

Odysseam, 1877.34-39). Amory notes that, because this explanation was preferred by Servius, it has remained popular (Servius, *Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, 6.893).[346] Another interpretation is that horn is true because one can see through horn, while ivory is false, that is, blurred or opaque, because one cannot see through ivory (Eustathius, *Commentarios in Homeri Iliadem et Odysseam*, 1877.33-35). Amory argues that this explanation 'comes closest' to what 'Homer intended', though its apparent simplicity led to scholarly neglect.[347] Amory has also rejected Carpenter's argument that the idea is connected with the end of the Scythian ivory trade, so ivory products now had to be made of horn, all of which is intended to support a date of the end of the seventh century for the *Odyssey*.[348]

The most interesting theory in light of more recent work is that concerning word play; that the nature of the Gates is based on puns. This theory also originates from Eustathius (Eustathius, *Commentarios in Homeri Iliadem et Odysseam*, 1877.26-30). Amory argued that, though the idea that words can be key to 'early myth-making' suggests that this word play is important, 'it contributes nothing to the problem of the origin of the notion' – whether word play suggested the idea of the gates, or the idea of the gates 'prompted' the word play.[349] Amory was forced to conclude that the origin of the motif was impossible to ascertain, though importantly she does note that it may simply be the product of Homer's imagination.[350]

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[346] Amory 1966: 6.
[347] Amory 1966: 6.
[348] Amory 1966: 12-13.
[349] Amory 1966: 5.
[350] Amory 1966: 14.

However, more recently, Noegel has argued that the punning hermeneutic found in Near Eastern oneirology can also be seen in Penelope's dream in the *Odyssey*.[351] (This is also, as Noegel has noted, a common method found in dream books; see below). He is particularly interested in Penelope's explanation of the significance of the Gates of Horn and ivory (horn, κερἀς, produces dreams which are fulfilled, κραίνω, while ivory, ἐλέφας, produces dreams which are harmful, ἐλεφαίρομαι) (Homer, *Odyssey*, 19.559-569).[352] Noegel has noted that Penelope's dream features an omen within an omen, as the flight of birds could also be considered divinatory.[353] It may be that Noegel has gone some way to solving the question of the origin of the Gates of Sleep. The word play suggested the idea of the gates, because word play was, in the cultural imagination, a recognised way of finding meaning in dreams and other semiotic systems. Amory had argued that paronomasia alone was an unlikely explanation, as the words are not obvious pairs.[354] She argues for the transparency theory, noting that neither substance is completely transparent, as all dreams are obscure.[355] However, with increased information from Noegel's study, we may tentatively suggest that paronomasia is, indeed, the source of the Gates of Dreams.

When Homer does use symbolic dreams, he exploits them for their maximum dramatic potential, particularly in the case of Penelope's second dream. One of the most difficult things about symbolic dreams for the characters is that it is very hard to tell whether they are significant or not and what they mean. Dodds described Penelope's dream concerning

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[351] Noegel argues that this link can also be seen in Agamemnon's dream in the *Iliad*; Noegel 2007: 193.
[352] See Noegel 2007: 206.
[353] Noegel 2007: 199.
[354] Amory 1966: 33.
[355] Amory 1966: 34.

her geese as a wish-fulfilment dream, but that label is better applied to the second of

Penelope's dreams, for, although she thinks that the dream of the geese is not prophetic, it

leads her to her famous description of the Gates of Dreams and is clearly symbolic and

prophetic to the reader or audience.[356] Her other dream, however, is more ambiguous.

Penelope dreams that Odysseus has returned, looking as he did twenty years ago

(*Odyssey*, 20.83-90). This dream works on several levels. Odysseus believes that it means

that Penelope has somehow sensed that he is near and is pleased (*Odyssey*, 20.91-94).

Penelope herself is distressed, thinking that the gods are mocking her by making her

dream of something that will never happen (Odysseus may never return; he certainly will

not look the same as he did when he left). The reader does not know whether this dream

is a significant, symbolic dream sent by a god to tell Penelope that Odysseus will soon

return, or simply a wish-fulfilment dream of Penelope's own making, which is made

particularly poignant by the detail that, in the dream, Odysseus still looked as young as he

did when he left. The poet leaves this up to the audience to decide for themselves.[357]

In Homer, we see dreams used chiefly as a means of communication between mortal and

divine, but Penelope's dreams are more complicated. It is Penelope's dreams that are

reflected in later works of Greek literature, in which the message dream becomes less and

less important and the symbolic dream takes precedence.

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[356] Dodds 1951: 106.

[357] Homer also makes occasional references to non-significant dreams, one of which, the description of Achilles and Hector chasing each other and unable to catch each other, as in a dream, was famously referenced by Virgil (Homer, *Iliad*, 22.199, Virgil, *Aeneid*, 12.908-914). Wiedhorn described the reference to a common form of bad dream as the anxiety dream entering Homer's work 'through the back door'; Wiedhorn 1967: 69.

The Tragedy of Dreams

Symbolic dreams, as a literary device, are very different from message dreams. A message dream contains a message that comes unequivocally from a god or divine figure and which, usually, the dreamer must act upon. The implication is that the dreamer will do well if they act on the dream (though this is not always the case, as Agamemnon discovered).

A symbolic dream, however, is quite different. First, the dreamer cannot be sure whether the dream came from the divine or not, as the great majority of non-divine dreams are symbolic dreams (that is to say, they are made up of a series of images, rather than containing a direct message). This can confuse characters in a work of imaginative literature, as they are uncertain of the provenance or accuracy of the dream. Secondly, although many message dreams provide clear actions which the dreamer can take to avoid misfortune, symbolic dreams usually offer a simple prediction of an unavoidable fate. Most recipients of symbolic dreams will be unable to react in any way to the dream, and those who try are doomed to failure (for example, see below on Croesus). Symbolic dreams are also less personal than message dreams; they provide an impersonal divine sign or omen of an event that is fated to take place, whereas message dreams often offer the dreamer a chance to communicate with a god, divine spirit or dead person.

With this in mind, it is perhaps unsurprising that the Greek tragedians, whose work makes up the bulk of our evidence for literary dreams in Classical Greece, preferred symbolic dreams to message dreams. In epic poetry, there is (usually) a divine machinery driving the plot and messages from the gods are used to tell the heroes what to do or to

accurately predict the eventual outcome of the story. However, in tragedy, the plot more often requires the heroes to misunderstand a message from the gods, and so the clear and usually unmistakeable message dream gives way to the symbolic dream. Symbolic dreams are even more prone to misunderstanding than oracular pronouncements and more likely to lead to a tragic (in the sense of sad) outcome, such as that narrowly averted in *Iphigenia in Tauris* (see below). Rather than offer tragic characters a chance to communicate with the gods, or a personal divine message, they provide a sign of inevitable fate that is often unpleasant for the dreamer.

Although Euripides' plays include a fairly large number of references to dreams, only three out of his nineteen surviving plays feature dreams in a significant role (*Hecuba*, *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Rhesus*, the last of which may be spurious). Of Sophocles' surviving plays, only *Electra* features dreams in a significant role, and the dreams in that play may be inspired by its intertextual relationship with Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*.[358] Jocasta's statement in *Oedipus Rex* concerning men dreaming of sleeping with their mothers has received much attention in later scholarship, thanks to Freud, but it is the only mention of dreams in the play, and is simply part of Jocasta's attempts to calm and reassure Oedipus. However, of the seven surviving plays of Aeschylus, dreams play a significant role in four plays; *Persians*, *Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*, and *Prometheus*

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[358] Devereux argued that Clytemnestra's dream in Sophocles' *Electra* does not perform any necessary dramatic function, but is included only as a reference to Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, one which Euripides drops; Devereux 1976: 251. Bowman, on the other hand, argues that the oracle of Apollo and the dream of Clytemnestra in Sophocles' *Electra* are both used to minimise the importance of Clytemnestra, and so to reduce the moral grey area surrounding her death, and that, although the dream in Sophocles' *Electra* mirrors that of *Libation Bearers* in terms of the dreamer and how it affects her, the content of the dream is more similar to the second dream of Astyages in Herodotus' *Histories*; Bowman 1997: 132, 138. Bowman argues that the similarity between the two dreams, in which a plant grows from the parent to overshadow the country which the offspring will usurp from the dreamer, 'is too striking to be coincidental'; Bowman 1997: 140. Pelling has also linked these two dreams, suggesting that the spreading tree is a particularly clear sign of future domination; Pelling 1996: 69.

Bound, in which dreams play an important role in a narrative within the play, the story of Io.

Comparing the number of surviving plays to the number of plays in which dreams are important, this would seem to suggest that Sophocles was not particularly interested in them, Euripides used them when he felt it necessary, and Aeschylus found them a particularly useful device; however, since these statistics may be the result of an accident of preservation, we cannot say so for sure (though the appearances of two ghosts in Aeschylus, one in Euripides and none in Sophocles suggests a similar level of interest in the supernatural in general). Oberhelman has observed that, except for the possibly spurious *Rhesus*, tragic dreams tend to be seen by women, whereas Iliadic dreams had been seen by men.[359] Harris has suggested that this may be because dreaming was associated with feminine excess of emotion, though he notes that this is unlikely to be the case concerning Hecuba.[360] The reason for the difference may simply be that there are more female characters in tragedy and more male characters in the *Iliad*. Cederstrom has suggested that very little faith is placed in prophetic dreaming in tragedy, and there is evidence to support this (chiefly from Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1234-1282) and yet all the dreams seen in tragedy do 'come true'.[361]

Dreams in Greek tragedy are often used to increase dramatic tension, though the question of the extent to which prophecies and predictions reduce or increase the tension has been the source of some debate.[362] Hamilton discusses how dreams and prophecies reduce dramatic tension by informing the audience of what is going to happen. As

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[359] Oberhelman 1993: 124.
[360] Harris 2009: 150.
[361] See Harris 2009: 150 (Cederstrom's 1971 work is, unfortunately, out of print and unavailable in the UK).
[362] See for example Hamilton 1978: 277-278.

Kamerbeek has pointed out, however, the stories of tragedies were fixed.[363] Although the tragedians do sometimes appear to have made changes to the stories they tell (Electra does not appear before *Libation Bearers*; Medea does not deliberately murder her children until *Medea*), for the most part, Greek tragedies were based on stories that everyone knew.[364] But we should not assume that this was a problem for them any more than it is for a modern audience watching Shakespeare, and dreams and prophecies may increase dramatic tension by increasing the general sense of foreboding and reminding the audience of the inevitable end of the story.[365]

Dreams in Greek tragedy are accurate prophecies, though they are often misinterpreted by the dreamer or interpreter. The dreams themselves do not tend to reveal anything about the character of the dreamer, because they are externally sent by the gods, though the character's reaction to the dream may be revealing. Even dreams which appear incorrect in their prophecies and which the characters believe to be false may be interpreted as true prophecies by the audience. For example, Iphigenia dreams that she is sleeping with her maids in Argos, when the earth shakes. She runs out of the house and sees the cornice, roof and pillars of the house fall. One pillar is left, with yellow hair on it, and it speaks in a human voice. Iphigenia gives it the rites given to strangers about to die in Tauris and weeps (Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 43-55). Iphigenia gives her own interpretation of this dream in the prologue; it was Orestes that she consecrated with these

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[363] Kamerbeek 1965: 30.
[364] On Medea, see Gantz 1993: 369. There are often different versions to choose from which produce different endings – the story of *Iphigenia at Aulis* could end with her death, or, as Euripides chooses, with her rescue by Artemis – so in some productions, the audience may not have known how the story would end.
[365] See further Brown 1977: 301, 308.

rites, and he is dead. She adds that now she wants to give libations for her brother (Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 55-62).

Iphigenia, understandably but wrongly, believes that the dream means that Orestes is already dead, thus increasing the suspense during the recognition scene. When the truth is revealed, Orestes immediately assumes that the dream was false after all, saying that those who are called wise divinities are no less false than dreams and that there is as much confusion in divine affairs as in human (Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 570-573).[366] However, the dream has, in fact, come true; although Orestes is still alive, he has come to Tauris and Iphigenia has performed the rites of consecration as she usually does before the sacrifice of a Greek man, though she recognises him in time and they escape together (Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 43-55).[367] Orestes does not know the content of Iphigenia's dream, and so is unaware that she may have misinterpreted it, and she does not correct him. From the audience's point of view, however, the dream can be seen to be accurate.

Later in the same play, Euripides tells a story which explains why dreams are no longer prophetic (Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1270-1282). It beings by describing the killing of the serpent at Delphi (Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1234-1259). When Apollo also sent Themis away, Earth, who had previously controlled Delphi, took revenge by taking the power of prophecy away from Apollo through her daughter (Dream here conceived as the daughter of Earth); she gave birth to dream-visions (φάσματ' ὀ<νείρων>) of the night that show cities of men the present and the future (Euripides,

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[366] Cropp has suggested that Orestes is referring bitterly to the earlier instruction from Apollo to kill his mother that has caused him so much trouble; Cropp 2000: 213. He may also be referring to the 'sacrifice' of Iphigenia to Artemis, which had just been alluded to a few lines earlier, Orestes referring to her death as a favour to a bad woman; Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 566.
[367] See further Cropp 2000: 34.

Iphigenia in Tauris, 1260-1269). Apollo went to Zeus and asked him to put things right, and Zeus took the truth that appears in darkness away from mortals and gave the privilege of prophesying to mortals back to Apollo (Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1270-1282). This may be why there are comparatively few dreams in Euripides' plays, and those that there are occur in stories set very long ago, during the time of the Trojan War, era of Homeric prophetic dreams. Prophetic dreams, for Euripides, belong long ago and far away.

Some arguments have been made for a Near Eastern influence on dreams in Greek tragedy. West, for example, has suggested that the 'motif' of a royal person worried by a symbolic dream, such as Atossa's dream in *Persians*, may be connected to Pharaoh's and Nebuchadnezzar's dreams in the Old Testament, and that the specific imagery of yoking comes from Hosea (though these may be considered rather tenuous links; Aeschylus, *Persians*, 176-227).[368] Sometimes a character in a tragedy carries out what appears to be a purificatory ritual after a disturbing dream, and West has suggested that this derives from ancient Near Eastern rituals to avert evil from a bad dream.[369] West has noted that the scholiast, discussing Clytemnestra telling her dream to the Sun in Sophocles' *Electra*, said that this was an ancient apotropaic custom and that the majority of the Bablylonian and Assyrian rituals to avert evil from a dream involved telling the dream to Shamash,

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[368] West 1997: 547-548.

[369] West 1997: 548, citing Oppenheim, Seux and Foster. Oppenheim records several rituals to ward off bad dreams, some involving throwing dust or dropping clay into water; Oppenheim 1956: 298-307. One of the prayers translated into French by Seux and English by Foster refers to a ritual to avoid negative consequences from a dream in which a clod of earth and dropped into water to dissolve (Seux 1976: 369-370; Foster 2005: 751-752), while the other is a prayer to Nusku, companion to Shamash/the sun, asking him to avert bad consequences from a dream (Seux 1976: 373; Foster 2005: 719). The ritual involving the water and the clod does appear to be designed to avert the evil of the dream, though it should be noted that washing is not involved. In the case of the other, it may be a coincidence that the prayer was addressed to this particular god, and we should note it is addressed to the sun god's companion, not the sun god himself.

the Sun god.[370] Cropp agrees, extending the Sun to 'the sky' and citing *Iphigenia in Tauris* and Sophocles' *Electra* as examples (Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 43-55; Sophocles, *Electra*, 424-425).[371] Mozley also suggests that people told dreams to the sun or to a river to avoid evil effect and refers to Atossa, Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, Propertius, *Elegies*, 3.10.3 and Persius 2.16 (on Propertius, see Chapter Five pp278-279).[372]

However, not all of these examples are convincing. Atossa does wash her hands in a stream and then make libations; the libations are clearly intended to ward off evil from the dream, but the purpose of washing her hands is less clear. Clytemnestra does refer to telling her dream to the sun god, but the main action she takes in order to avoid any evil consequences of the dream is to make libations at Agamemnon's tomb. It is the libations that are the main propitiatory act, rather than the actions relating to water or to telling the dreams to a deity. Harris has noted the importance of allowing for literary or theatrical behaviour, which might be less closely related to everyday reality.[373] Telling the dreams to the sky or a sky god seems to be a dramatic device, giving a reason for Iphigenia to tell her dreams to the audience and allowing Chrysothemis' friend to overhear Clytemnestra. The act of making libations to a suitable deity may be a remnant of a custom from the Near East which has survived into Classical Greece, but the evidence is slim. Overall, Classical Greek dreams are less strongly influenced by the Near East than Homeric dreams.

Our evidence for dreams in Classical Greek literature of record comes chiefly form Herodotus, as Thucydides includes none at all (an interesting point in itself, but there is

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[370] West 1997: 54, citing the same sources.
[371] Cropp 2000: 176.
[372] Mozley 1934: 268.
[373] Harris 2009: 133.

not room to discuss it here). Herodotus records a number of dreams, as well as many other omens, noting that some sort of sign is usually given before something very bad happens to a city or country (Herodotus, 6.27). Herodotus' use of dreams is determined partly by the tragic dimension he gives his history. Herodotus uses a combination of message dreams and symbolic dreams, and it is important to note that most of the message dreams – indeed, the majority of significant dreams in general – are attributed to Persians.[374] Like an oracle delivered in a tragedy, or indeed, in his *Histories*, Herodotean dreams are rarely straightforward; the tragic trope of the misleading prophecy holds a firmer place in his imagination than the older Near Eastern use of the message dream, though the message dream is still associated with Near Eastern royalty.

Dreams in Herodotus perform many of the same functions as they do in Greek tragedy. Herodotus records a number of dreams in which the dreamer is informed of a forthcoming event which will have a negative effect on him, but which he is unable to prevent, such as the dreams of Hipparchus and Croesus (Herodotus 1.34; 5.56).[375] Croesus' attempts to avert the dream prophecy are thwarted by an unforeseen accident and Herodotus specifically states that Croesus was the victim of divine anger, so the dream appears to have been sent by a vengeful god, essentially in order to 'rub it in' and increase Croesus' distress at his son's death, because he failed to prevent it (Herodotus, 1.43). Whereas a message dream would have offered him an opportunity to take action, this dream merely informs him of something unavoidable.

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[374] See further Mikalson 2003: 41-42.
[375] Croseus' dream occurs just before he tests the various oracles of Greece and is famously misled by the Delphic oracle, who tells him that, if he goes to war with the Persians, he will destroy a great empire, but fails to specify which one (Herodotus, 1.53).

In another example, Herodotus records two dreams relating to Cyrus, foretelling his rule of the Scythian kingdom (Herodotus, 1.107-108). The dreams are interpreted for the dreamer, Astyages, by the Magi. Their first interpretation is accurate, though they later make a mistake when asked to re-interpret the same dream in the light of Cyrus having been discovered alive, as they think that, because other children called Cyrus king, the prophecy has been fulfilled (Herodotus, 1.120). Again, Astyages attempts to prevent the omens from coming to fruition, but fails (Herodotus, 1.112-113). In fact, it is partly because of Astyages' actions that Cyrus eventually rebels against him (Herodotus, 1.124-125). Pelling has also noted that the second of Astyages' dreams is clearer in its meaning than the first, suggesting that the second presents a clearer threat of violent usurpation rather than succession.[376] However, it should be noted that the use of two dreams allows Herodotus to describe the failure of the Magi in their attempt at interpretation, and this may have been his chief motivation for recording both.

As in Athenian tragedy, divination in Herodotus often functions as a sign of the inevitability of fate and the will of the gods; no matter what measures human beings take to avoid a prophecy being fulfilled, they always fail. As Mikalson has observed, most of the dreams reported in Herodotus predict failure, and all are 'inescapable'.[377] Pelling has also picked up on this theme, observing that, often, the dreamer's actions are what make the dream come true, and that this is clearly related to the idea of a self-fulfilling oracle, and has related Herodotus' use of this pattern specifically to similar themes from tragedy, most notably characters whose actions have good intentions, but go very wrong, like

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[376] Pelling 1996: 73.
[377] Mikalson 2003: 141.

Deianeira.[378] Herodotus' use of dreams and oracles certainly seems to bear a close relation to their use in tragedy.

Herodotus' penchant for stories of misunderstood prophecies means that even message dreams are not straightforward in his account. Cambyses, for example, is said to have murdered his brother because of a message dream which told him Smerdis was sitting on the royal throne, but he later discovers that the person in question is a different Smerdis (Herodotus, 3.30, 3.64).

Herodotus also finds message dreams to be a good explanation for odd actions; describing Xerxes' behaviour in inviting Athenian exiles to sacrifice as they wished, Herodotus suggests that this may have been because Xerxes felt guilty about burning the Athenian sanctuary, or that perhaps Xerxes was told to do this in a dream (Herodotus, 8.54). Mikalson has also noted that Herodotus has a tendency to provide several explanations for the same event, sometimes including dreams (such as those of Xerxes and Artanabus).[379] It seems that, when faced with an odd event or decision, Herodotus felt that a dream offered a reasonable and convincing explanation. It is also important to note that Herodotus as narrator does not exclude stories which he does not believe, and therefore his inclusion of dream reports is not an indication of his feelings concerning divine dreams.[380]

Why did symbolic dreams take precedence over message dreams in Greek literature? One reason may be that they reflect 'real' dreams better. A symbolic dream allows the author to incorporate the sort of irrational, inexplicable elements and nonsensical segues that are

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[378] Pelling 1996: 75-76.
[379] Mikalson 2003: 42.
[380] See further de Jong 2004: 105.

a feature of 'real' dreams into fictional or fictionalised dream reports. A dream in which someone delivers a clear oral message is not impossible, especially considering the cultural differences between the ancient world and our own, but was, perhaps, less common.

Another reason is that message dreams were often used to legitimate religious or secular power. In Classical Greek literature, legitimation of a leader is rarely part of the requirements of the text. Literature of imagination in Classical Greece is often designed to mock those in power (comedy), to depict a threat to political and social norms, or criticise a political decision (tragedy). As for the surviving literature of record, Herodotus mostly gives dreams to the enemy and therefore feels no need to legitimate their power. Xenophon, writing slightly later, directly engages with the multiple possible meanings of symbolic dreams in interpreting his own dreams and ultimately relies on other forms of divination to actually make decisions (see Chapter Five pp276-277).

One reason that Classical Greek literature prefers symbolic dreams, then, is that Classical writers would prefer that dreams were not easy to understand. We have seen that, if a dream is used to legitimate a leader, or appears in a work of imaginative literature which uses dreams to relay commands from gods to living humans, that dream must be as clear as possible. In Greek tragedy, however, commands and prophecies which are intended to be understood as absolutely accurate are delivered through oracles (and even these may be misunderstood). Dreams are used in situations where the author wants the characters to be confused and uncertain, and often they are deliberately misleading. Dreams are used for their potential for confusion, so, even if they are accurate, they are presented as obscure and shrouded in symbolism.

Dreams could be perceived in different ways in the Classical Greek imagination. The idea that dreams might come from the divine is clearly still strong, though the idea that a god might personally deliver a verbal message tends to be associated with things that happened a long time ago (in the distant past, the setting of epic poetry) or far away (in Persia). Divine dreams are still acknowledged as a possibility, but they are confusing, complicated, and not necessarily reliable.

A History of Dream Books

Evidence for the professional interpretation of dreams in the ancient world is plentiful but scattered. Hughes has suggested that most dream interpreters in ancient Mesopotamia were women because, in literary texts, characters regularly turn to a mother or sister to interpret a dream for them, and some of the Mari letters were from women.[381] However, we should not too quickly conclude that this means that all dream interpreters were women. Several texts, such as the *Poem of the Righteous Sufferer*, refer to priests who interpret dreams. The characters who turn to their mothers or sisters for interpretations of dreams are divine or semi-divine (Gilgamesh and Dumuzi), so their divine relatives might be expected to have more expertise in dream interpretation that the average woman. Concerning Egypt, Szpakowska argues that the prevalence of dream interpretation before the Ptolemaic period has been greatly exaggerated. The main evidence for earlier dream interpretation in Egypt comes from Near Eastern sources and

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[381] Hughes 2000: 8. Asher-Greve has also argued that a seal from the beginning of the Akkadian Period or just before depicts a female dream interpreter; Asher-Greve 1987: 32.

reflects the Near Eastern practice of dream interpretation, which was well established.[382]

In Greece, Kessels suggests that official dream interpretation did not yet exist at the time

of Homer, because Agamemnon does not consult a dream interpreter, but interprets his

dream himself.[383] There are a number of references to dream interpreters in Classical

Greek literature, and these will be discussed briefly in Chapter Four.

Dream books are texts which list images that might typically appear in dreams and what

they signify for the dreamer (usually, but not always, a prophecy relating to their future).

We have surviving dream books from the ancient Near East, Egypt, Classical Greece and

the Roman Empire, and we know that more existed from references within those that

survive. They exist because dreams tend to be inherently strange things which require an

explanation; we all have odd dreams which do not seem to relate to recent memories and

for which we want to find an explanation.

　　We might be tempted to say that dream books deal with symbolic dreams,

providing an interpretive key to the symbols that appear in these dreams. However,

dream books deal with very different phenomena to the literary symbolic dream. Literary

symbolic dreams are one-off events. They feature a series of symbols with a very specific

meaning, usually (though not always) closely connected with the dreamer. The dream is

unique and is sent to the dreamer to predict a specific event.

　　The brief descriptions of dream images in dream books, on the other hand, are

designed to be as unspecific as possible.[384] A dream book which refers to a single event

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[382] The evidence comes from *Genesis*, some Akkadian sources and a list of craftsmen from the reign of Assurbanipal; Szpakowska 2003: 62-64.
[383] Kessels 1978: 26.
[384] Some, such as that of Artemidorus, give different meanings for people in different situations according to gender, social status and so on, but they cannot provide individual variations.

that will happen to one person is of no use to anyone. Whereas literary symbolic dreams are always written down after the event and are usually not reported unless the dream accurately predicted the future, dream books are attempting to predict an event that has yet to occur when the book is consulted. The function of dream books is to discover possible hidden meanings in ordinary dreams with no obvious special content and, because they need to apply to as many people as possible, the dreams in dream books may be expected to represent 'typical' dreams from the culture in which they were written.

The dreams in dream books are also (like incubation dreams) not confined to the topmost section of the upper classes. Anyone who can read can use a dream book. Artemidorus' inclusion of interpretations relating to all walks of life suggests that he expected people of all social classes to have access to his book; for example, he offers separate interpretations of a dream of being beheaded for defendants in court, bankers, slaves and those at sea (Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, 1.35). Finally, dream books are the most consistently enduring form of dream-interpretation; we have examples going back to Assyria, and they are still popular today.

There are a number of ways to deduce a meaning from a dream. The chief methods are metynomy, the principle of opposites, interpretations based on the perceived symbolic quality of the symbol and literal interpretation.[385] Metynomy refers to the use of a play on words or similarity in vocabulary to deduce meaning; for example, if a man sees

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[385] Metynomy holds a strange attraction even for some modern dream interpreters. Carrying out a scientific study of the manifest content of Jewish and Arab children's dreams in Israel, Yoram Bilu identifies a dream of crows (orvim) with Arabs (aravim), though he notes that if the dream had not also included the appearance of an Arab man, he would not have included it among his collection of dreams of the encounters with Arabs among Jewish children; Bilu 1989: 372.

himself weak (*gn*), it is good because he will find (*gm*) his enemies.[386] The principle of opposites simply substitutes the opposite value to an image; for example, if a man sees himself copulating with a woman, this is bad, as it indicates mourning.[387] Analogies drawn using the symbolic quality of the symbol are perhaps the most common, especially in later texts; for example, an oak tree symbolises a rich man, because of its nutritional value, an old man, because of its longevity, or time itself, for the same reason (Artemidorus, 2.25). Literal interpretation is, of course, rare, since too many literal interpretations would render the dream book unnecessary, but some interpretations are quite literal; for example, if a dreamer sees himself descend to the underworld, he will die but not be buried.[388] Two dream books show a particular interest in whether the dream is 'good' or 'bad'. Oppenheim has provided an extremely useful typology of dream books, noting that only an Indian dream book and the Egyptian dream book divide dreams according to whether they mean something good or bad for the dreamer (though this aspect is sometimes mentioned by other books, including Artemidorus; 1.5).[389]

The Assyrian dream book, now sometimes known as *Zaqīqu*, has been edited and translated by Oppenheim.[390] The book has been put together from various fragments, chiefly from the library of Assurbanipal.[391] Oppenheim notes that the Assyrian dream book, unlike that of Artemidorus, does not distinguish between people of different status, and being of a different social status does not change the meaning of the dream.[392] Butler has noted that there is only one reference to consultation of a dream book, in a

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[386] P Chester Beatty III r.6.19; Szpakowska 2003: 95.
[387] P Chester Beatty III r.7.17; see Szpakowska 2003: 99. See also Felton 1999: 64.
[388] From the Assyrian dram book; see Oppenheim 1956: 283.
[389] Oppenheim 1956: 243.
[390] One of the meanings of *zaqīqu* is 'god of dreams'; Oppenheim et. al. 1961: 58.
[391] See Oppenheim 1956.
[392] Oppenheim 1956: 240.

fragmentary late tablet, though a letter suggests that people sometimes interpreted each others' dreams.[393]

The book is a collection of dream omens. Collections of omens in lists have been found dating back to the Old Babylonian period, so the dream book should be understood alongside this wider category, though Rochberg has noted that the practice of dream interpretation seems to bear more similarity to interpretive techniques connected with extispicy than one might expect from an unprovoked omen.[394] Noegel has argued that, like other Mesopotamian divinatory texts, the dream book makes use of puns (metynomy) to derive meaning; for example, if a man dreams that he is eating a raven (*arbu*) it means that he will have income (*irbu*).[395] Noegel has described punning as 'one of the most persuasive divinatory hermeneutics throughout Mesopotamian history'.[396] He has also argued that the use of punning in the interpretation of dreams in literary texts, such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, reflects the use of punning in 'real' dream divination.[397] Considering the weight of evidence here, this seems likely.

The Ramesside dream book from Egypt (P. Chester Beatty III), like the Assyrian dream book, often uses punning to derive meaning from apparently ordinary dreams; however, this is not the only method used. Szpakowska has summarised some of the main methods it uses; some interpretations are based on the principle of opposites (for example, to see oneself dead means one will have long life), some on characteristics of the dreamed object (figs were often used in medicine, so if someone dreams of figs, it means they are

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[393] Butler 1998: 7, 20.

[394] Rochberg 2004: 83. See also Oppenheim 1956: 256.

[395] See Noegel 2007: 11-21. Oppenheim, it should be noted, stated that there were not many instances of punning in the Assyrian dream book; Oppenheim 1956: 241.

[396] Noegel 2007: 24. This technique was used in other areas of Mesopotamian religious thought as well; see for example Livingstone 1986: especially 2-3 and 49-52.

[397] Noegel 2007: 66.

ill) and some on myths, satire or proverbs.[398] The dream book demonstrates a clear

division of dreams into 'good' and 'bad'. This does not refer to the content of the dream

('good' dreams include mourning and appearing weak, while 'bad' dreams include eating

hot meat and sexual dreams).[399] The division refers to the meaning of the dream –

whether it indicates that good or bad things will happen to the dreamer.

The use of punning among these other devices provides evidence of a possible

link between Egyptian and Mesopotamian traditions, and suggests that dream

interpretation was carried out by those in authority, and the vocabulary used also suggests

a possible connection with magical and medical practices.[400] However, Noegel also notes

that divination in general appears to have been rare in Egypt before the New Kingdom,

and that, although punning appears throughout Egyptian history, it first appears as a

divinatory technique in the dream book.[401] This suggests that Egyptian dream

interpretation may have been heavily influenced by the Near East. Oppenheim also

suggests that the much later Demotic dream book also shows signs of Mesopotamian

influence, though it is organised differently.[402]

We know of the existence of several dream books from Classical and Hellenistic Greece,

but most have not survived.[403] The only text, usually referred to as a dream book, to

survive is the section 'On Dreams', Περὶ ἐνυπνίων, from the work 'On Regimen', Part

Four, from the Hippocratic corpus, which Oberhelman has referred to as an 'appendix' to

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[398] Szpakowska 2003: 72.
[399] Szpakowska 2003: 95, 99.
[400] See Noegel 2006: 96.
[401] Noegel 2006: 104.
[402] Oppenheim 1956: 244-245. For the text, see Volten 1942.
[403] See van Lieshout 1980: 237.

the preceding three books.[404] Van Lieshout described this text as the 'first' dream book of Western civilisation (obviously discounting the Assyrian and Egyptian dream books), though he argues that this book is based on an earlier model.[405] The date of the work is uncertain, though most scholars place it in the fifth or fourth century BC, with a *terminus post quem* of c420 BC.[406] The problem with using this text to talk about dream books in general is that it is not intended primarily as a guide to signs and omens that predict the future, but as a medical resource. It differs from the other dream books in its semi-philosophical introduction, in its preoccupation with astronomical phenomena, and, most obviously, in its prescriptions for medical action. Most dream books merely state what will happen; this one advises the dreamer about what they should do. It does, however, discuss some dream signs that indicate very general predictions about the future.

This section opens by explaining that, when one is asleep, the soul performs all the functions of the body, particularly the sensory functions. Because the soul performs all the functions of body and soul during sleep, the 'signs' (το τεκμηρίον) which occur in dreams will be very useful medically (Hippocrates, *De Diaeta*, 4.86). The author notes that there are special interpreters who have their own method for interpreting dreams which are given by the gods to give people foreknowledge of the future. These interpreters also interpret the signs which relate to the state of the body; but the author notes that they are sometimes right and sometimes wrong, and they do not know why they are right or wrong, or how to take care of oneself (Hippocrates, *De Diaeta*, 4.87). If one has dreams in which events happen in a normal way, as if awake, this is good, as the soul is remaining in the same state in sleep as during the day. When dreams are of a very

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[404] Oberhelman 1993: 129.
[405] Van Lieshout 1980: 185-186.
[406] Van Lieshout 1980: 187-188; Oberhelman 1993: 128.

different character to reality, this is a sign of bodily disturbance and that the soul is also disturbed (Hippocrates, *De Diaeta*, 4.88). This part of the treatise has more in common with philosophical works than with the more usual form of dream books.

Many of the dreams in this book relate to astronomical phenomena, such as the movements of the stars, or to geographical features, such as rivers. Other sorts of dreams do appear, though; for example, if one dreams of a dead person in clean white clothes, this is good, because the dead nourish the living, but to see a dead person naked, in dark clothes, or unclean, is bad, indicating that harmful things are entering the body (Hippocrates, *De Diaeta*, 4.92). Because this particular dream book is a medical guide, it focuses on dreams as they relate to health and demonstrates the importance dreams were felt to hold for health.

From the Roman period, the only surviving dream book is that of Artemidorus (which we will discuss further in Chapter Five). Artemidorus uses similar methods to the other dream books, though he takes care to separate his work from the inferior work of others that it follows and, in his opinion, surpasses.

Although the methodologies of the various dream books may be similar, they often attribute different meanings to the same symbols. For example, the Assyrian dream book says that, if a man dreams that he is eating a fig, it means that he will eat sweet food, while the Ramesside dream book says that, if a man sees himself eating sycamore figs in a dream, the dream is bad and means that he will have pains.[407] The Hippocratic dream book does not refer to figs specifically, but it does note that seeming to eat one's normal diet in a dream indicates malnourishment, and means that the dreamer should eat in real

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[407] Szpakowska suggests that this may be because figs were used medicinally to ease pain; Oppenheim 1956: 272; Szpakowska 2003: 96.

life what they seemed to be eating in the dream (Hippocrates, *De Diaeta*, 4.93). Artemidorus has a number of suggestions; figs in season are good, but out of season they foretell abuse. If the dreamer works in the open air, white figs mean good weather and black figs mean bad, though this means nothing if the dreamer does not work outdoors (Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, 1.73). He notes that a man with a rich sister dreamed that a fig tree grew outside her house and he ate seven black figs from it. Seven days later, she died and he inherited; Artemidorus says the meaning of the dream is obvious (Artemidorus, *Onirocritica*, 5.35).

The dream books do not seem to share a common source, though there are some connections, especially between the Egyptian and Near Eastern books. As we have seen, both the Egyptian and the Near Eastern dream books use punning and other linguistic devices to establish meaning in their dream interpretations. This produces different interpretations of similar dreams, but uses the same method of interpretation and may indicate a link between the two. Methodologies may be passed from one dream book to another, but not actual content.[408]

We know from his own work that Artemidorus had read other dream books, and he mentions a number of other dream interpreters. He complains that his predecessors merely copied one another's work, with the quality getting worse and worse, whereas he has not only read books, but consulted the street diviners in the marketplaces, who are despised by others (Artemidorus, 1 praef.). He also accuses two others, Artemon of Miletus and Phoebus of Antioch, of discussing non-significant ἐνύπνιον dreams, corresponding to apparitions, rather than significant ὄνειρος dreams, corresponding to visions and oracular responses (Artemidorus, 1.2). It may be that the content of the dream

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[408] The Hippocratic dream book is almost totally separate from any tradition of dream interpretation because it is a different sort of work with a different purpose.

books was sometimes passed on. However, it is more likely that only the basic method would survive, as there would be no market for a dream book that was identical to an older text.

Similarities in interpretive methodology may or may not indicate a common source. Eighteenth century Russian dream books, for example, make use of the principle of opposites, metonymy, interpretations based on perceived qualities or appearances and, more rarely, direct interpretation. These have been compiled both from written sources, which, via late Byzantine dream books and Artemidorus, may go all the way back to the Near Eastern dream book, and from native Russian orally transmitted sources.[409] It is difficult to say whether any similarities in the oneiric technique are related to the transmission of the texts, or whether they are coincidences resulting from humans thinking in similar ways in different places.

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[409] See Wigzell 1999: 117.

PART TWO: CULTURAL MEMORY AND IMAGINATION:

DREAM REPORTS IN ROMAN PERIOD LITERATURE

CHAPTER THREE

Why Did Greco-Roman Writers Record Dreams in Literature of

Record?

Dreams appear very rarely in modern literature of record, with the occasional exception of particularly personal forms of record such as published diaries or autobiographies, but in ancient literature, they appear much more frequently. The term 'literature of record' is a loose one, covering a variety of historical works aimed at recording the (sometimes mythical) past for the benefit of future generations. Each ancient writer of record had a different agenda and they had different reasons for including dream reports, some of which will be explored in this chapter.

In Chapter Four, which is concerned with imaginative literature, we will focus on the imagined source of dreams – whether they are imagined to come from the divine, or to feature an actual visitation from the dead, or whether they come from the dreamer's mind. In an article which discusses both historical and imaginative literature, Pelling has argued that that a dream might be considered important because it reflects the psychological state of the dreamer, as well as because it was prophetic (coming from both without and within at the same time), and both Pelling and Brenk have drawn attention to certain dreams in Plutarch's *Lives* and argued that they should be understood as

psychological dreams coming from within the dreamer, not from an external divine force.[410] Indeed, Brenk has gone so far as to argue that the majority of the dreams in the *Lives* are anxiety dreams, included to demonstrate the 'disturbed psychological state' of the dreamer.[411] However, the examples Brenk cites are all death omens and, given the tradition of death omens of which they are part (see below), it seems unlikely that Plutarch intended them to be understood as internal anxiety dreams. In any case, whereas authors of imaginative literature can tell their readers where the dream came from if they choose to do so, authors of literature of record do not have this authority. If they want to, they can tell their readers where they think a dream came from, but they cannot offer the sort of definitive explanation that is possible in an imaginative work.

A small number of dreams in Imperial literature of record may be firmly placed within the category of anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams (see Appendix One). In some other cases, the author states directly that a dream came from the gods (see below on Josephus, Aristides and Valerius Maximus). In most cases, however, the author offers no definite answer and the reader is deliberately left to make up their own mind, for the author, who is usually not the dreamer, has no way of knowing the answer to this question themselves. Brenk has also rightly emphasised the importance of Plutarch's frequent use of the phrase 'it is said' to introduce dreams and portents, distancing himself not only from making a decision as to whether they were divine or not, but also from whether they actually occurred or not, and Plutarch is not the only author to refrain from committing himself to the truth of what he reports.[412] This chapter, therefore, will focus

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[410] Pelling 1997: 198.
[411] Brenk 1975: 344.
[412] Brenk 1975: 348.

more on the function of dream reports within narrative of record than on their apparent origin.

How Frequent are Dreams in Literature of Record?

At first sight, it would appear that there is a marked difference between the number of dreams in pre-Augustan literature of record, and the number in Augustan and post-Augustan literature of record. Caesar and Cornelius Nepos' surviving works include no dreams at all, and only one fragment of Sallust contains a brief reference to a dream (Sallust, *Histories*, Book 3, Frag. 109). On the other hand, literature of record from later periods almost always includes a dream report or two, and some authors, such as Plutarch, Josephus or Suetonius, record numerous dreams. The temptation is to conclude that, as Augustus set to work restoring the material religious culture and the priesthoods, interest in religious matters among those who wrote literature of record grew correspondingly.[413]

However, the references to older dream reports in Polybius and in Cicero's *De Divinatione* demonstrate that this was not the case. Polybius explains several times why he is sceptical concerning dreams, and is extremely forthright in his opinion that Scipio, specifically, was successful due to his own intelligence, rather than divine intervention (though he suggests that Scipio used these things to convince others of his ideas)

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[413] On Augustus' religious restoration, see further Galinsky 1996: 288-294. It is important to note that, although a need was felt to restore public religion, private religion was largely unaffected and less in need of restoration; Galinsky 1996: 292.

(Polybius, 10.2).[414] Polybius expresses contempt for those who include dreams and divine visitations in their memoirs, in part of a longer section criticising Timaeus, who had supposedly written in this way (Polybius, 12.12b.1; Polybius, 12.24.5). For Polybius to expend so much energy arguing against the recording of dreams, dream reports must have been reasonably popular among pre-Augustan historians.

Our best source for pre-Augustan dream reports is Cicero's dialogue *De Divinatione*, in which Quintus provides a long list of examples of divinatory dreams from various genres, including history (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.20-28).[415] Fragments are outside the scope of this study, but this lengthy list of dreams from the ancient world is particularly revealing concerning the popularity of dream reports in pre-Augustan sources. The list provides an indication of which stories were of interest to earlier authors and which stories were particularly popular, and it demonstrates that dreams did form an important part of some earlier Roman histories.

Additionally, the fact that all our surviving works of record from the early Imperial period include dreams does not necessarily indicate that every work of record written during this period did so. Josephus felt the need to defend his use of dreams in his historical work, somewhat tersely adding that anyone who does not believe these things is welcome to his own opinion but should not interfere with one who disagrees (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 17.354). This implies that dreams were not universally considered historically significant. We can also say with relative confidence that Tacitus was aware

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[414] He actually includes a dream report attached to Scipio's brother, which he uses to explain how Scipio came to use dreams for political gain; Polybius, 10.4-5.
[415] Quintus often mentions where he knows the story from and whether the author wrote in Latin or Greek.

of some dream stories and chose not to record them all, suggesting that dream reports, where known, were not always automatically included in the record of an event.[416]

Message Dreams

The form and function of message dreams is quite varied in Roman period literature of record. Those authors who include a large amount of mythical material (Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Josephus, Pausanias and Diodorus Siculus, the only pre-Augustan historian whose work has survived who shows some enthusiasm for dream reports) show a preference for divine message dreams, while others show a marked preference for symbolic dreams. We will see in Chapter Four how the message dream survived in some genres of imaginative literature, and its appearance among mythological material in works of record suggests that this sort of dream, within the cultural imagination, was something that occurred long ago, and often far away, but not often within more recent memory.

Message dreams featuring the dead are more common in imaginative literature than in literature of record. Cicero includes examples from both sorts of literature in his list of dreams in *De Divinatione* and the dreams featuring dead people come from rhetoric (the dream of Gaius Gracchus is recorded in historical works, but since Coelius claimed to have heard the dream from Gaius himself, it probably originates in a speech of the latter), from philosophy (two Stoic writers) and from a well known story which sounds like what might be referred to as a 'folktale' (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.26.56-

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[416] See Morgan 1996: 45.

1.27.58). Plutarch also reports Gracchus' dream; one of his other examples is used as a springboard for a discussion of human sacrifice, while the other is from Sulla's memoirs (Plutarch, *Gaius Gracchus*, 1, *Pelopidas*, 21, *Sulla*, 37). The appearance of these reports in memoirs and in what was presumably a political speech indicate that they were certainly imagined to be really possible but, often, writers of literature of record are not especially interested in them.[417]

Josephus is one of the authors who shows a preference for message dreams. This is partly because his work contains a large amount of mythological material, but also partly because he maintains a stronger link with older Near Eastern predecessors. As a Jewish writer, Josephus records a number of dreams which are closer to Near Eastern message dreams than to later Greco-Roman dream reports. In Josephus' writing, dreams appearing to Jewish prophets are usually divine message dreams; dreams appearing to other rulers (Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Archelaus) are usually symbolic dreams (see below). Because Josephus is often recording the political dreams of ancient Near Eastern leaders, the dreams in his work are more similar to Near Eastern message dreams than other Greco-Roman reports.

It is possible that one of the reasons for the decline of message dreams was that they were no longer seen as a likely form of divine dream.[418] There are examples of message dreams from later periods of Antiquity, but it is possible that there was a period during the early Empire when they were 'out of fashion', when they were not uppermost within

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[417] Valerius Maximus includes the Gracchus dream, the story of the poet Simonides and another story which sounds like a 'folktale'; Valerius Maximus 1.7.6, 1.7.ext.3, 1.7.ext.10. Two instances in Josephus are actually two different reports of the same dream, concerning a woman who had re-married after her husband's death; *Jewish Antiquities*, 17.351-353; *On the Jewish War*, 2.114-116.
[418] Harris has suggested that this was happening by the time of the Renaissance; Harris 2009: 89-90.

the cultural imagination as a common form of dream. Message dreams still appear in imaginative literature, where the reader can be told unequivocally that the god really is visiting the dreamer. In historical literature, however, message dreams are no longer as frequent as they once were. Whether this is because people used to have dreams in which gods spoke to them, but had grown more cynical over time and no longer experienced such dreams, or whether it is because these dreams were always a purely literary construct which had become unfashionable in the wake of the Roman interest in omens (which lent itself more to symbolic dreams than message dreams), is hard to say.

Lying or invented dreams are more often described as message dreams than symbolic dreams in literature of record, which may indicate that these were more likely to be considered to be suspicious in the Roman period. For example, Plutarch, who describes this ploy as making use of δεισιδαιμονίαν, superstition, reports that Eumenes, needing to pacify Antigenes and Teutamus, told them that Alexander appeared to him in a dream and told him that if he held councils in a tent with a royal throne, Alexander himself would be present and would help them (Plutarch, *Eumenes*, 13). He also reports that Sertorius invented dreams, and that as part of a ploy to convince the 'superstitious' barbarians that a certain doe was a gift from Diana and revealed hidden secrets to him, he claimed that the doe had talked to him in dreams (it should perhaps be noted that, as these two are a pair, the similarity in the stories may have been deliberately emphasised in order to underline the comparison between the two) (Plutarch, *Sertorius*, 11). Similarly, Livy describes how Numa encouraged fear of the gods in order to increase his own power, saying that Numa told the people he had been having nocturnal conversations

with the nymph Egeria, in order to convince them of his own supernatural wisdom (Livy, *History of Rome*, 1.19.5).[419]

The frequent use of message dreams in fictive literature shows that the idea of the message dream had not been abandoned, but the possibility of the communication being false is often considered. This may be due in part to Homer. One of the best known and most discussed dreams in Homer is the false dream sent to Agamemnon by Zeus near the beginning of the *Iliad*, which will lead Agamemnon to suffer and lose many troops in hopeless battles so that he begs Achilles to return (Homer, *Iliad*, 2.1-35).[420] The idea that survives in the cultural imagination is that message dreams, even those actually sent by the gods, are not reliable and may be false. Imaginative literature, taking its cue from Homer, continues to incorporate message dreams, but in literature of record, they are no longer considered an unequivocal sign of a divine connection. Combined with the Roman interest in symbolic omen dreams, this started to push message dreams, especially those in which gods, rather than the dead, appear, out of the collective mindset, making them a less viable historical tool.

Interpreters and Interpretation

In literature of the Roman period, both of record and of imagination, professional dream interpreters appear only rarely. There are many references to seers and soothsayers, and sometimes a dream is said to confirm other signs interpreted by seers and soothsayers,

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[419] It is not entirely clear whether he means dreams or real conversations by night, though as Numa is lying, Livy may not have considered the distinction to be important; dreams seem a more likely method for this sort of discussion.

[420] For ancient references to this dream, see for example Lucian, *Zeus Tragoedus*, 40; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 13.216-220.

but it is very rare to see a dream itself interpreted by a seer or soothsayer, and specialist dream interpreters are almost entirely absent. Most of the cases where a dream is interpreted by a seer or similar person are 'foreign' – the Magi interpret the dream of Darius and Aristander interprets dreams for Alexander and Philip (on Darius, see Plutarch, *Alexander*, 18, on Aristander, see Arrian, *Alexandri Anabasis*, 2.18.1, Plutarch, *Alexander*, 2). There are occasional exceptions, and there are a number of references to the *existence* of professional dream interpreters, but, for the most part, professional interpreters are conspicuous by their absence.[421]

Kragelund suggests that, in Rome, a private person could go to dream interpreters or act on dreams as they wished, but, with some exceptions, these had no place in public business.[422] We may tentatively conclude that dream interpreters definitely existed, but they were not of so much interest to the upper classes (see further Chapter Five pp283-285). Because the authors of the surviving literature were the upper classes, they do not mention interpreters more than they need to, and although there are frequent references to soothsayers, upper class dreamers are usually able to interpret dreams that are not obvious without their help, by themselves or with advisors (political advisors, not dream interpreters) or friends.

There is one important exception to this general rule: Josephus writes about some important dream interpreters and claims to be a dream interpreter himself.[423] The dream

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[421] There are occasional exceptions. For example, in Suetonius' version of Julius Caesar's sexual dream about his mother, Caesar is upset by the dream at first, but then interpreters (*coniectores*, possibly dream interpreters specifically) tell him that it means he will eventually conquer the Earth, the Universal Mother, and he is cheered (Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 7).

[422] Kragelund 2001: 80-81.

[423] On the possible origins of Josephus' interest in dreams, see Gnuse 1996: 13. Rajak notes that Jewish priests were rarely known for scriptural interpretation and Josephus' claims to prophetic skill are inherently

interpreters described by Josephus are chiefly from the Old Testament, from the ancient Near East (and he himself grew up in Palestine). In Josephus' eyes, Jews who have been granted a special prophetic gift by God can sometimes interpret dreams, but not others.

Josephus does not always imply that dreams necessarily need interpreters. Describing a dream of Nebuchadnezzar, he claims that God revealed the meaning of the dream to the king in his sleep, but the king forgot it when he woke up (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 10.195). When no one is able to describe his dream to him, or explain it, he orders them all to be killed, but they are saved when God, taking pity on them, reveals the dream and its significance to Daniel (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 10.196-210; see also *Daniel* 2-4).[424] Josephus relates Nebuchadnezzar's second dream more briefly, without the detail of the forgotten explanation and without all the detail included in *Daniel* 4.1-24, simply noting that only Daniel was able to interpret it (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 10.216-218). He reports the same problem in the story of Joseph, claiming that Pharaoh saw the explanation of both his strange dreams at the same time as the dream, but that when he woke up, he had forgotten the explanation, though he remembered the dream (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 2.75). This is an addition to the account in *Genesis*, which simply records the dreams, and makes no mention of an explanation given before Joseph interprets them (*Genesis* 41.1-8).[425] It seems that Josephus was uncomfortable with the idea that God might send a dream that

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ties to his need to justify his actions at Jotapata; see Rajak 1983: 18-19. On Josephus' description of Simon the Essene's method of dream interpretation, see Gray 1993: 104.

[424] Josephus records most of the meaning of the dream, but refuses to reveal the meaning of one symbol, a stone which destroys the statue that represents the Babylonian kings. He claims that, since this part of the dream refers to the future, not the past, it is not proper for him to relate it, but refers the interested reader to the *Book of Daniel*; this is may be because the Jewish interpretation current at the time, that the stone represented the Messiah who would overthrow the Roman Empire, might have offended Greco-Roman readers; see footnote in the Loeb edition (Marcus 1937: 275). He also omits the Biblical mention of clay in the iron fourth kingdom, preferring to focus on the durability of iron.

[425] See also Gray, who argues that Josephus projected his own 'experience of revelation' through dreams onto the Old Testament; Gray 1993: 28.

required interpretation; his work suggests that, when God sends a dream, it is either very straightforward, or God provides the explanation with the dream, and the only reason one might need an interpreter is if one forgets the explanation.[426]

Josephus usually attributes message dreams to Jewish leaders, and symbolic dreams in need of interpretation to Gentile rulers. These rulers will usually require the help of a Jewish dream interpreter to interpret their dreams. The implication is that God communicates directly with certain Jewish prophets through dreams, and allows certain prophets (including Josephus himself) to reveal some divine communications to others. This is probably because Josephus' main source for the *Antiquitates Judaicae* was the Old Testament, and that the Old Testament shows the same tendency, but Josephus does occasionally include post-biblical dreams, including his own (on which, see below).[427]

How are Dreams Used in Different Works of Record?

Dreams as Historical Explanation

In works of record which aim to explain to readers what happened in the past and why, dreams may sometimes be included to explain the motivation of an historical figure. There are two reasons why an historian might inform his readers that a certain action was taken because of a dream. The first and most obvious is that the historical character in

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[426] See also Gray, who argues that Josephus implies that dream interpreters need a special kind of wisdom, and Niehoff, who suggests that Joseph in particular was often portrayed as especially wise; Gray 1993: 67, Niehoff 1992: 88.
[427] See further Smith 1987: 246-247.

question said so themselves. As we have seen, dreams are especially useful to political leaders as an explanation for an action that might otherwise be disapproved of; a divine dream suggests that the gods themselves are ordering the action, and the receipt of a divine dream is completely impossible for a sceptic to actively disprove. For example, Velleius Paterculus reports that Octavian's doctor Artorius tried to persuade him not to remain in camp when he was ill because he was frightened by a warning that had appeared to him in sleep, which meant that Octavian was not in the camp when it was captured. This incident is reported very briefly in four surviving sources from the first two centuries AD.[428] Wardle has suggested that this dream is acting as an explanation for a cowardly act, fleeing from the camp and hiding in the marshes for three days (which would hardly be beneficial if he was ill).[429] Appian informs us that Augustus recorded this himself in his memoirs, which suggests that perhaps Augustus, needing to explain why he left just before the battle without appearing cowardly, claimed to have been guided by his doctor's dream as this furnished him with a perfect excuse.

On rare occasions, a historical person's use of a dream to explain their actions will be used as a mark against them by an historian. Tacitus, for example, opens Book 16 of the *Annals* with the statement, *Inlusit dehinc Neroni fortuna per vanitatem ipsius et promissa Caeselli Bassi*… ('From this time, Fortune ridiculed Nero through his own aimlessness and through the promise of Caesellius Bassus…' Tacitus, *Annals*, 16.1). Bassus claimed to have discovered the location of some hidden treasure in a dream, and Nero believed him (Tacitus, *Annals*, 16.3). Tacitus also records that Claudius once used a dream as an excuse for an execution which was actually motivated by suspicion of

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[428] Appian, *Bellum Civile*, 4.14.110; Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 91.1; Velleius Paterculus, 2.70.1; Valerius Maximus, 1.7.
[429] Wardle 2000: 484.

conspiracy (Tacitus, *Annals*, 11.4). In both cases, the emperor's use of a dream to determine his actions is implicitly disapproved of (though since, in both cases, the dream in question did not come to the emperor himself, it might be other people's dream reports in particular that are especially unreliable).

There are also instances in which the historical figure themselves has not made any claim concerning a significant dream, but the historian suggests that such a dream may have prompted their action. When an ancient historian comes across an action taken by an important person that cannot be excluded from their history, but that does not appear to have an obvious motivation, they usually try to find an explanation for it.[430] The action may be explained as resulting from a person's particular character, or from the influence of others around them. However, the action might also be explained as the result of a command from the gods. In the case of divine command, dreams are the most obvious solution. If an important person received a divine order through an oracle, this would usually be a matter of public record, and their visit to the oracle would be known. They might be informed of a divine command by augurs, but again, this would be on record. If, however, they had a dream which told them to do something, there is a possibility that they might act on it without informing anyone. This makes dreams the perfect solution to explain an inexplicable action. This line of thought is clearest in Herodotus, who suggests that Xerxes may have invited Athenian generals to sacrifice as they wished because he felt guilty about burning the Athenian sanctuary, or that perhaps Xerxes was told to do this in a dream (Herodotus, 8.54). However, similar thinking may have led to the inclusion of similar dream reports in later sources, such as when Appian says that

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[430] See further Harris 2009: 55, who discusses this as a function of both literature of record and imaginative literature.

Mithridates had been chopping down trees from a grove dedicated to Latona, but stopped when he told to in a dream (Appian, *Mithridatica*, 106).

Dreams can also be used in this way even if they are not obviously divine. For example, Appian reports that Caesar, when encamped near Carthage, was troubled by a dream in which he saw a whole army weeping, and immediately noted down that Carthage should be colonized, and though he died shortly afterwards, it was this note that prompted Augustus to re-found Carthage (Appian, *Libyca*, 645). Whether this dream was a symbolic divine message or not, it explains the action (or in this case, someone else's action). Sometimes, if a dream has been suggested as the motivation for the action once or twice, it may become ingrained in the cultural memory and become the traditional explanation for the action.

Birth and Death Omens: Suetonius

We have categorised the two main forms of dream reports in ancient literature as message dreams and symbolic dreams. However, beyond these two forms, there are some dream reports which, though they may be in the form of a message dream or a symbolic dream, are linked by the similar functions they perform in literature. In Rome and in the Greco-Roman world what might be called *omen dreams* come to form a category of their own. Omen dreams appear intermittently throughout Greco-Roman history and biography, and often form a part of a long list of omens of various kinds which were said to have foretold a great event, where the dreams are only a part of the bigger picture. Although they may be message dreams, they are usually in the form of symbolic dreams. The increased

interest in this sort of dream report might be connected with the general importance of omens to Roman politics and society, where the reading of omens was incorporated into state cult, though neither dreams nor dream interpreters played a part in official state religion.[431]

Suetonius' biographies of emperors each follow a clear structure and omens are an integral part of that structure. Suetonius describes the ancestral background, birth and early career of his subject; then, once he has reached their reign as emperor, he describes this period in themed sections, such as military achievements, family life, writing, public works and personality. At the end of each *Life*, he describes the emperor's downfall and death. The beginning of his *Life* of Julius Caesar has not survived, while the beginning of his *Life* of Augustus is brief and does not include any omens. However, when Suetonius goes on to discuss Augustus' religious beliefs, he pauses to describe the omens that presaged Augustus' birth (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 94). After short sections describing other omens which took place during his lifetime, Suetonius goes on to describe the omens that presaged his death, and then the death itself (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 97-101). After this, Suetonius regularly includes lists of omens that foretold the birth or death of an emperor, and these lists of omens often include dreams.[432]

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[431] Dreams do not appear in the officially recorded *prodigia*, but they did have a role to play in historical literature; Harris 2009: 176. Wallace-Hadrill has suggested that the tradition of including lists of portents in annals culminated in Livy (whose records of portents have been preserved chiefly in the work of Julius Obsequens). He suggests that these portents were significant in religious terms, because they demonstrated the temper and the wrath of the gods that must be appeased, and in dramatic terms, as they build the pace of the narrative leading up to a major conflict or disaster; Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 191.

[432] Benediktson has noted that the middle section of Suetonius' *Life of Galba* contains much the same material as Plutarch and Tacitus, but that neither of them include the dreams found in Suetonius' version, possibly because Suetonius has 'appended... his usual rubrics of ancestors, birth, omens, death etc.'; Benediktson 1997: 167. However, Benediktson also suggests that it is more likely that these dreams a part of a ring composition used in this *Life* by Suetonius, with Galba's end echoing his beginning; Benediktson 1997: 169.

Sometimes, Suetonius uses omens to make some comment concerning the character of his subject. He records various omens relating to Vespasian, which he suggests can explain the source of Vespasian's imperial ambition, as the omens (including a dream) had led him to be confident that one day he would be emperor (Suetonius, *Divus Vespasianus*, 5).[433] Similarly, of the omens relating to imperial deaths, of which there are several (see Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 74; *Gaius*, 57; *Galba* 18), the most thoroughly foreseen imperial death is that of Julius Caesar, which is implied in a number of omens including one dream attributed to Caesar himself, and one to Calpurnia (Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 81) (see further below).[434] Here, Suetonius almost seems to suggest that Caesar invited his own death; a few paragraphs later, he states that *talem ei mortem paene ex sententia obtigisse*, 'you could nearly say that such a death came to him out of desire', for the omens that presaged it were so unmistakeable (Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 87). It may be, then, that Suetonius wanted to imply, by recording the number of omens of death which Caesar ignored, that the dictator was almost inviting his end. However, because omen dreams are presumed to be sent by external forces with external concerns, they do not always bear any relation to the character or even the life of the dreamer. The dream Suetonius records as having been dreamt by Domitian has nothing to do with Domitian whatsoever, but is a prophecy of better times to come and, therefore, a compliment to Trajan and Hadrian (Suetonius, *Domitianus*, 23).

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[433] Several ancient authors recorded omens relating to Vespasian's ascent to the throne; see further Morgan 1996: 42.
[434] *Nero* 46 also mentions omens of Nero's death, though these dreams seem more likely to have a psychological origin.

It is tempting to think that many readers would be expected to be sceptical of these sometimes quite lengthy lists of supernatural phenomena that supposedly surround the entrance into, or exit from, the world of someone who considers themselves important, but this is perhaps not the point. For example, Suetonius provides a long list of omens which foretold Augustus' good fortune from his birth onwards, including several dreams, and this lengthy section may suggest that Augustus' success was overseen by a divinity and that Augustus enjoyed a favour not given to many (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 94). On the other hand, the inclusion of elements such as Atia's dream of the snake, which invites clear parallels with Alexander the Great, may be intended to underline parallels drawn by people around Augustus, emphasising a view of the emperor as divinely conceived, without suggesting that the story is necessarily true. This is a literary device, informing readers about the sort of person they are reading about.

Other historians also recorded omen-dreams, though, with the exception of Plutarch, they include less numerous examples than Suetonius. For example, Josephus reports a death omen in which Herod has a dream warning him of his brother's death, and wakes to meet messengers who have come to tell him of it (Josephus, *De Bello Judaico*, 1.328). Pausanias records a death omen apparently dreamt by Pindar shortly before he died, in which Persephone tells him that she is the only deity he has not honoured with a hymn, but that he will write one for her when he joins her (Pausanias 9.23.3-4). This dream takes the form of a message dream, but functions as a death omen. Pausanias also records omens which foretell severe illness (for example 10.2.6). The pleasant dream Tacitus records Germanicus experiencing appears to be a good omen, though it is possible that Tacitus includes this dream in order to clarify Germanicus' motivation (and it should be

remembered that, despite whatever good omens may have occurred, Germanicus did not end well) (Tacitus, *Annals*, 2.14). However, it is the biographers, Suetonius and Plutarch who are the most strongly attached to omen-dreams.

The function of omen dreams in biography is usually to enhance the stature of the historical subject. The gods do not take interest in everyday affairs of ordinary folk, but they do sometimes send signs relating to great men or events, and it is these signs that, especially in the case of birth omens, indicate the greatness of the subject (on the gods' disinterest in commoners, see for example Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.63.129). Tacitus notes that 'we' only believed (*credidimus*) in the omens relating to Vespasian and his sons after his success (Tacitus, *Histories*, 1.10.3).[435] Tacitus may intend this remark to be read in a cynical tone – wild stories about omens are only believed if what they supposedly predicted comes true anyway – but it confirms a link between interest in omens and related phenomena, and the perceived success of the individual they relate to. Josephus justified some of his dream reports by claiming that anything involving royalty was worth recording (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 17.354). One might wonder why Galba has several omens connected with him, but it seems plausible that Suetonius considered becoming emperor to be a sign of importance, even if it was only for a short time.

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[435] On this passage, see further Morgan 1996: 43.

Morals, Character and Dreams: Plutarch

The majority of the dreams recorded in the *Lives* of Plutarch are also omen dreams, some of which are described quite briefly; for example, a line in *Pericles* notes that, a few days before Pericles was born, his mother dreamed that she had given birth to a lion (Plutarch, *Pericles*, 3). Similar dream omens are reported in the *Life of Alexander*, as the pregnancy of Olympias and birth of Alexander the Great is nearly always accompanied, in ancient retellings, by various omens, including dreams (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 2). The stated intention of Plutarch's *Lives* is to provide moral exempla of virtue to be emulated or vice to be avoided (see Plutarch, *Alexander*, 1.1, *Aemilius* 1.1-5, *Pericles* 1.4, *Demetrius* 1.5-6).[436] It may, then, seem odd that Plutarch includes so many dreams that do not appear to offer great moral insight, and Harris argues that Plutarch 'crammed dreams uncritically into his biographies', although he was actually 'something of a sceptic about dreams'.[437]

However, the inclusion of omen reports like these gives Plutarch's biographies greater weight as moral *exempla*, as they emphasise the stature of the man who is to form an example. On the one hand, if these reports are taken literally, they indicate a man highly favoured by the gods. On the other hand, even if the reader does not 'believe' all these omens actually took place, the stories that grow up around a man's birth are a good indicator of his fame and reputation; the more successful a man is, the more stories of signs from the gods will grow up around him. The reporting of dreams and omens connected to the birth of a great man enhances his reputation, making him an appropriate subject for moral interrogation.

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[436] See Duff 1999: 50-51, 63.
[437] Harris 2009: 151-152.

Plutarch used biography to exemplify moral values because he was particularly interested in moral character. Virtuous or non-virtuous actions, for Plutarch, were indications of a virtuous or non-virtuous character and the material he chose to include in the *Lives* was selected to illustrate character, in the hope of encouraging his readers to emulate the good and avoid the bad. As Duff puts it, 'by carefully 'shaping' his literary lives, Plutarch claims to be 'shaping' the lives of his readers.[438] He also, partly in an attempt to separate his work from the of others and partly better to illustrate the character of his subject, deliberately includes material that other writers have not included (see Plutarch, *Nicias*, 1.5). His biographies, then, are focussed around providing a description of the moral character of their subject, and most of the various incidents reported within them, including dreams, are designed to shed light on their character.

Some dream reports offer only a small insight; for example, when Plutarch reports that Sulla foresaw his own death in a dream, and wrote as much in his memoirs, Plutarch describes how, despite knowing that he was soon to die and stopping writing his memoirs at that point, Sulla continued to work right up until he died from having over-exerted himself. In this way, the dream provides an opportunity to illustrate Sulla's hard working character by showing how he continued working despite knowing he would soon die. Similarly, in a passage explaining how good Alexander was to his friends, Plutarch notes that he had a vision in his sleep that Craterus was sick, he sacrificed for his recovery, and wrote to Craterus, telling him to do the same (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 41).

More illustrative of character are dreams which may be real, or which may have been invented by the dreamer for his own reasons. In addition to two dreams which are

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[438] Duff 1999: 17. See further Duff 1999: 13-51.

unequivocally described as inventions of the supposed dreamer (see above), there are

occasional reports of dreams which are highly dubious, but not definitely described as

false. For example, Plutarch's biography of Cicero includes a description of Cicero's

dream of Octavian, also recorded in Suetonius' *Divus Augustus* and in Dio Cassius

(Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 94, Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 45.1-2). Plutarch's version

of the dream is simpler than the others; the sons of senators are invited to the Capitol and

Jupiter examines them all and chooses Caesar's adopted son from among them, and says

that Rome's civil wars will end when he rules. Cicero does not know the young man, but

recognises him while walking past the Campus Martius the following day, and introduces

himself (Plutarch, *Cicero*, 44). The golden chain and whip described in Dio Cassius and

Suetonius are not mentioned.

Plutarch explains that this dream was one of the reasons Cicero gave for trying to

forge a connection with Octavian. However, he adds that, in fact, Cicero attached himself

to Octavian because of his hatred of Antony and his desire for the τιμή that came from a

political connection with Julius Caesar. Plutarch does not seem to believe the story of the

dream, even though it proves true, and his version omits the flourishes of Suetonius' or

Dio Cassius' versions. It functions as a character dream for Cicero; the dream represents

the reason Cicero himself gave for his actions, but also provides Plutarch with an

opportunity to counter this version with his own opinion of Cicero's motives.

Sometimes, when another source is available, we can see how far Plutarch was

prepared to move or alter a dream report in order to fit his purpose and illustrate

character. Plutarch briefly notes that it is said that, the night before he crossed the

Rubicon, Caesar dreamed that he had sex with his mother: ἐδόκει γὰρ αὐτὸς τῇ ἑαυτοῦ

μητρὶ μίγνυσθαι τὴν ἄρρητον μῖξιν, 'for he imagined he had the unspeakable

intercourse with his own mother' (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 32). Suetonius also reports this

dream, but places it during Caesar's quaestorship in Spain, just after Caesar has been

admiring a statue of Alexander and regretting that, having reached a similar age, he has

not done anything particularly outstanding. He is at first upset by the dream, but then

interpreters tell him that it means he will eventually conquer the Earth, the Universal

Mother, and he is cheered (Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 7). Dio Cassius also reports that the

dream took place while he was quaestor, but chooses to report it while describing the

later civil war in Spain between Caesar and Pompey (Dio Cassius, *Roman History*,

41.24).

In Plutarch, the reference to the dream is almost a throwaway line, but its

placement, immediately before the crossing of the Rubicon, gives it a heightened

significance. Brenk has referred to Plutarch's use of this dream as 'blatant manipulation

of a dream for biographical purposes' and suggests two meanings of the dream in

Plutarch; a link with the dream of Hippias before Marathon in Herodotus (Herodotus,

Histories, 6.107), suggesting the future murder of Caesar, and the importance of

Plutarch's description of the dream as 'unlawful' (the Greek ἄρρητον, which can mean

'shocking' 'horrible' and 'secret' or 'thing that must not be told').[439] Pelling has also

suggested an intertextual reference with Herodotus, and agrees with Brenk that the dream

and its placement recalls Hippias and Marathon.[440] It seems likely that there is some link

with the Herodotean dream. It is also possible that Plutarch wanted to emphasise a

intertextual reference to Oedipus, who unlawfully violated both familial and political

bonds by killing his father, taking over the rule of his father's city, and sleeping with his

mother. The result for the city of Thebes was disaster and plague, which was only

[439] Brenk 1975: 346.
[440] Pelling 1997: 200-201.

alleviated when Oedipus left. By placing this dream at this crucial point, immediately after the famous line 'the die is cast', Plutarch may be drawing a parallel between Caesar and Oedipus, suggesting that, like Oedipus, Caesar brought sickness and destruction by his violation of, in this case national, boundaries.

Whenever possible, Plutarch gives a dream report multiple meanings, and makes omen dreams illustrative of the character of his subject. For example, Alexander's ominous dream before his murder of Cleitus, is also quite condemnatory concerning Alexander's character. Alexander sees Cleitus, dressed in black and seated with the sons of Parmenio, all dead (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 50). The sons of Parmenio had all died because of Alexander, directly (Alexander's torture and execution of Philotas) or indirectly (the other two died during Alexander's campaigns, one from sickness, the other from exhaustion, swimming away from a capsized ship). It seems more than likely that, as Brenk suggests, Plutarch's readers would have been familiar with these events, and they certainly knew of the torture of Philotas, since it had just been recorded in the previous section (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 49).[441] This dream, immediately preceding Alexander's drunken murder of Cleitus, provides an image of the leader as a violent man, with death following in his wake. Plutarch draws the reader's attention back to Philotas at the start of this section. Although the narrative stresses the 'misfortune' of the event, and the fact that it was not deliberate on Alexander's part, the impression of a stream of deaths following Alexander has been made, and despite the narrative's emphasis on Cleitus' bad behaviour and culpability in the brawl, the reader is still left with an impression, if not of direct villainy, then certainly of a tendency towards violent disaster.

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[441] Brenk 1975: 340.

Of course, Plutarch is not the only writer of literature of record to use dreams in this way. Tacitus, for example, also tends to use dream reports to indicate character or motive. In addition to the incident concerning Caesellius Bassus, discussed above, the dream of the general Aulus Caecina Severus, as well as producing a sense of uneasiness and increases the reader's sense of foreboding, relates to Caecina's character. On a military campaign in the Teutoberg Forest, Caecina sees Varus rising from the mud in a bloody mess and holding out a hand to him, which Caecina pushes away (Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.65). The horrific appearance of Varus emphasises his already infamous end; the dream indicates Caecina's superiority as a general, and his strength of character in resisting a road that would lead to disaster.[442] Although categorised as a symbolic dream, as Pelling has argued, it might be interpreted as an anxiety dream.[443] Dreams which are obviously meant to be understood as anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams are not especially numerous in literature of record, but they are not entirely absent either, and their presence reminds us that ancient writers were no less interested than modern writers in the possibility that someone's dreams might help us to understand their character.

The Religious Significance of Dreams

Scribis te perterritum somnio, says Pliny to his client Suetonius in at the beginning of a letter; 'you write that you have been troubled by a dream' (Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 1.18). Suetonius is involved in a legal suit and has had a dream that makes him think it

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[442] See also O'Gorman, who emphasises the importance of the dream within the wider context of the campaign; O'Gorman 2000: 54.
[443] Pelling 1997: 207. On Tacitus' use of omens to demonstrate 'direct psychological impact', see Morgan 1996: 45.

will go badly for him. Pliny offers encouragement, telling Suetonius about a dream he once had that seemed to foretell disaster but was actually followed by success, but adds that if Suetonius is really worried, it is better to be safe than sorry.[444] Suetonius appears genuinely troubled by his dream and Pliny, although he asks Suetonius to question whether his dreams usually tell the future, takes the situation perfectly seriously and quotes Homer, that dreams come from Zeus. Should we take it from this that Suetonius, Pliny and perhaps many other ancient writers included dreams in their works because they really considered some dreams to be potentially important signs of divine will?

Wallace-Hadrill has argued that, for Suetonius, 'superstitious prognostications of the future' were 'the heart of a man's religion'.[445] He argues that Suetonius treats omens and portents very differently from annalistic Roman historians and that, for Suetonius, the mood of the gods can be deflected, but portents foretell the inevitable course of the future.[446] Because there is no continuous narrative in Suetonius' biographies, they cannot quicken the pace, but merely show that what happened was foreseeable.[447] Wallace-Hadrill argues that Suetonius' lists of signs revolve solely around the rise to imperial power and the fall from it (including death as a fall from power).[448] In practice, this usually results in a list of omens focussed around the birth and death of an important man. Wallace-Hadrill argues that Suetonius represents a vital shift in interest from the fortunes of the state to the fortunes of the people the state depended on.[449] But in an empire, the fortunes of the imperial family are the fortunes of the state, so the point of

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[444] On Pliny's own dream, and his implicit self-praise in this letter, see Hoffer 1999: 212-218.
[445] Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 190.
[446] Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 191. Wallace-Hadrill argues that Suetonius' attitude to portents is 'radically different' to the republican one, because the assumption behind them is that destiny can be foretold if you read the signs correctly; Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 192.
[447] Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 191.
[448] Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 191.
[449] Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 192.

interest has not actually changed, it has just been redefined for an empire instead of a republic.

Wallace-Hadrill perhaps puts a little too much emphasis on the idea that Suetonius reflects 'belief' of some kind (see further Chapter Five). He assumes that the author's interest in dreams lies in whether they predict the future or not. But for the writer of biography, a dream report is usually only worth including if it did predict the future (unless it is particularly revealing concerning the subject's character). A biographer is not discussing the nature of dreams philosophically, but using them to make a point about his subject. This means that we cannot make easy assumptions about the writer's attitude towards dreams in general from records which are intended to be concerned with the exceptional.

However, since it seems clear from Pliny's letter that Suetonius was at the least open to the idea that dreams might be meaningful, it is important to consider this as a possible motivation for including dream reports in a work of record. There are also occasional hints from other authors that this was part of their reason. Valerius Maximus, for example, describes all the dreams he includes in his *exempla* as being from the gods, including the dream of Simonides in which he saw the man whose body he had buried warning him not to sail. We would expect this dream to be understood as a visitation from the grateful soul of the dead man, but Valerius says it shows the kindness of the gods, implying that one reason he wanted to include dream reports was that he considered them to be of religious significance (Valerius Maximus, 1.7.ext.3). Mueller has argued that Valerius intensifies the religious element in the *exempla* that he reports, and Valerius' emphasis on the religious importance of dreams certainly suggests that he was

primarily interested in them for religious reasons.[450] However, since Valerius' collection of *exempla* is designed to provide material for rhetoric, his obvious interest in dreams as religious *exempla* does not necessarily indicate that he, himself, believed them to be significant in religious terms, but that he considered them to be a useful tool for demonstrating the work of the gods in a rhetorical speech.[451]

One historian does state clearly that one of his reasons for including dream reports was religious. Josephus, explaining why he has included two particular dream reports, says that he had two reasons; first, that they concern royalty, and are, therefore, worth recording and secondly, because these stories provide examples of something concerning the immortal soul and the way in which God becomes involved in men's lives (Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 17.354). This is the strongest indication in Greco-Roman literature of record (excluding Aristides) that an historian has included dream reports because he, personally, believes them to be significant.

On the other hand, Josephus may have had more practical reasons for placing some significance on dreams. He claimed to be a dream interpreter himself, and gave a dream as his reason for becoming a traitor to his own people and going over to the Romans. He says he is skilled in finding the meaning of the sayings of God and he claims that God had shown him that the Romans were to prevail in a number of recent dreams, and that he understood the prophecies in the sacred books (Josephus, *De Bello Judaico*, 3.351-354). Josephus records a dream of his own in his autobiography, which also functions as his *apologia*, in which he claims that, in an ὄνειρον, he imagined that a figure spoke to him, telling him to cheer up and not to be afraid, and that he woke up feeling much better (Josephus, *Josephi Vita*, 208-210).

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[450] Mueller 2002: 176.
[451] On the technique of rhetorical illustration, see Bloomer 1992: 1-5.

The question of whether Josephus really predicted the accession of Vespasian and the Roman victory before they occurred has been the cause of some scholarly debate, and is, ultimately, impossible to solve.[452] What we can say is that, in both the *Bello Judaico* and the *Vita*, his main concern is his representation of himself.[453] Rajak has observed that, in the 'group memory', rare occasions of tension may loom as large as cultural links.[454] Josephus' work as an historian is ultimately an attempt to rehabilitate himself within the cultural memory of the war. His desire to reconcile his own memories with a hostile collective memory of his actions during the war is the driving force behind his work. His own dreams are so central to his defence of his actions that it is not surprising to find that he values dreams as part of history in a wider sense.

We are left, then, with two possibilities; either Josephus genuinely believed his claims regarding dreams, and was moved to action by dreams, or he invented these stories to excuse his own behaviour. He certainly had a personal stake in the argument that God communicated with people through dreams. His use of dream stories in his historical works, then, may have been more motivated more by his own interests than by religious belief in the significance of dreams; for, if he considered dreams to be so significant that he based military decisions on them, he could hardly deny them significance in other areas of history.

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[452] See Rajak 1983: 186-187. Suetonius also records that, shortly after Vespasian's dream about Nero's tooth, Josephus, who was a prisoner, said that Vespasian would become emperor and, at a later date, he would be set free; Suetonius does not say how Josephus said he knew this (Suetonious, *Divus Vespasianus*, 5.6).
[453] See for example Rajak on the *Bello Judaico*; Rajak 1983: 188.
[454] Rajak 2002: 6-7.

By What Process Does a Dream Report Become a Cultural Memory?

The Career Dreamer: Aristides

We have discussed, in the Introduction, the process by which a dream is transformed from the personal experience of a dreamer to a cultural memory. For the most part, this study has not been concerned with whether or not dreams were actually dreamt, but there is one case in which it may be useful to consider how far the published record reflects actual dreams, because it might help us to see in what ways dream reports were manipulated for publication.

A number of scholars have argued that the dreams recorded in Aelius Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi* are genuine records of dreams Aristides experienced. Harris concludes that, while the finished product is certainly part of a literary narrative, Aristides is 'a relatively credible witness'.[455] Del Corno also suggests that Aristides' dreams are genuine dream reports and that they reflect of his character, and Festugière reads Aristides as entirely sincere, with a very strong faith.[456] Aristides' dreams are certainly difficult to classify according to our system (see Appendix Two), which may further indicate that their adaptation into a literary form has been minimised. Assuming that this is indeed the case,

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[455] Harris 2009: 121.
[456] Del Corno 1978: 1616; Festugière 1954: 85-104.

it becomes much more difficult to separate Walde's *spontaner Traum* from *literarischer Traum*.[457]

Leuci has argued that Book 1, which is chiefly composed of a dream diary (edited for publication), should be read separately from Books 2-6, because Book 2 contains a second introduction, and the material in these other books is organised into themed narrative based on what Aristides can remember, rather than a dream diary.[458] If we assume that Aristides is being truthful and that Book 1 is a diary of events recorded soon after they happened, while the rest relies on older memories, and that the contents of Book 1 have not been excessively altered for publication, this allows us a unique opportunity. We can compare dream reports which may be the closest it is possible to get to a reasonably accurate record of real dreams with some which have been written down at a greater distance of time and designed to fit into a narrative (while still being based on genuine dream memories). We are still dealing with a consciously literary narrative, and several scholars have observed that dreams are impossible to put into words accurately, but we are considerably closer to the actual dream experience than in most ancient texts.[459]

The categorisation of dream reports into message dreams and symbolic dreams, which has preoccupied us so much, becomes extremely complicated in the case of Aristides. Most of the dreams from the *Hieroi Logoi* are symbolic dreams. This may indicate that although, as Harris has suggested, it is possible that ancient people sometimes experienced message dreams, the majority were, like ours, made up of

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[457] See Walde 2001: 1.
[458] Leuci 1993: 67-68.
[459] For example, Freud noted that dreams become distorted in the attempt to narrate them and suggested that the later narration can be part of the dream experience; Freud 1976: 658-659. Whitmarsh has more recently observed that what the *Hieroi Logoi* narrate is essentially unnarratable, and the dream world is impossible to reach; Whitmarsh 2004: 446-447. See also Walde on the significance of *Traumerzählung*; Walde 2001: 18.

snatches of conversation, movement and images.[460] This is borne out by the fact that hardly any of the message dreams in the *Hieroi Logoi* appear in Book 1, the section that is presumed to be closest to an accurate record of Aristides' dreams.

A symbolic dream in Aristides' writing, however, is very different from symbolic dreams in other writers. Aristides' symbolic dreams are filled with so much dialogue that they might almost be message dreams and they function like a message dream.[461] Whereas symbolic dreams usually tend to be predictive and are often not understood until after the event, Aristides treats his symbolic dreams as if they were message dreams; he takes the content of conversations that take place within the various symbolic settings as if they were orders. Direct communication is normally reserved for message dreams, but Aristides' symbolic dreams contain so much dialogue that direct communication is possible in them as well (see for example Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 1.26, 1.3-39, 1.45 and many more). Whenever he passes over a dream without recording it in detail, he describes it as if it was an order, i.e. a message dream. It is clear that, whereas other authors often questioned the exact provenance of symbolic dreams – whether they came from δαίμονες, or the soul reflecting the world, or the prophetic nature of the soul, or from a deity – Aristides treats all the dreams he records as direct 'messages' from the god (Asclepius, though he also has dreams involving Isis and Serapis), regardless of the form in which they appear (any dreams that he did not consider divine are not recorded).

Although symbolic dreams are always the most numerous, Books 2-6 contain a higher proportion of message dreams than Book 1. This may be partly because, at a greater distance of time, Aristides has remembered the message more clearly than the

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[460] See Harris 2009: 58-62.
[461] See further Festugière, who notes that Aristides' dreams were 'widely diverse', but that Aristides interpreted them in the morning as divine commands (Festugière argues that Aristides cannot possibly have dreamt the same thing – someone giving him orders – every night); Festugière 1954: 98.

details of the dream. However, it is also partly because it is these later books, and especially Books 4 and 5, that deal in particular with dreams relating to Aristides' career, and it is in Books 4 and 5 that we find the highest proportion of message dreams. The *Hieroi Logoi* have been described as a combination of an aretalogy of the god Asclepius and a record of Aristides' literary career.[462] The god's purpose in sending these dreams is said to go beyond merely curing Aristides of his illness, or providing temporary relief from his symptoms. Aristides also claimed that Asclepius was encouraging him in his literary career, and so partly attributes his success to the god, while also suggesting to his readers that his career and its direction were divinely inspired and in accordance with the wishes of the god (see for example Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.25). It may also be that a message dream was more appropriate to this sort of order, while medical dreams could come in either form (Alexander, for example, was said to have experienced a symbolic medical dream relating to Ptolemy; see Diodorus Siculus, 17.103.7-8, Quintus Curtius Rufus, 9.8.26-28, Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.66.135).

Aristides' dreams are often more successful in glorifying Aristides than the god he is supposedly so devoted to. At one point, he describes how he praised Asclepius, addressing him as 'the one', meaning 'the god', but Asclepius turned to him and said 'it is you', suggesting that Aristides himself had god-like qualities (Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.50).[463] Even Aristides' foster sister's daughter's death turns out, through a dream, to relate to his own health, for she has given her life for him (Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 5.22-25).[464] According to the *Hieroi Logoi*, Aristides set up an inscription in a temple to Zeus Asclepius at Pergamum, referring to himself as 'not unknown' and a 'glorious charioteer

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[462] See further Pearcy 1988: especially 377-381 and 390-391.
[463] See further Fields 2008: 163-166.
[464] See further Holmes 2008: 96-97; Pearcy 1988: 388.

of everlasting words'; it is clear what his intentions were in setting up this inscription (Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.45).[465] These most extreme examples are all from the books relating to his career, and it seems likely that Aristides has exaggerated certain qualities of the dreams to increase the praise due to himself.

One of the ways Aristides manipulates his dreams to fit his literary purpose is to draw parallels with other literary texts, especially Homer's *Odyssey*. The relationship of the *Hieroi Logoi* to the *Odyssey*, which Aristides himself points to in his opening lines, has recently been discussed by Brooke Holmes and their literary nature has been discussed by a number of scholars (Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 1.1).[466] Pearcy, for example, refers to the *aristeia* of Aristides, noting the ways in which Aristides combines medical, Hippocratic language with literary and dramatic motifs.[467] These parallels are drawn broadly, with Aristides' narrative echoing the epics in his use of language or in general comparisons to an epic character or situation; he does not narrate dream reports that particularly strongly match or echo Homeric dream reports (he does include a number of message dreams but that is where the similarity ends, and he does not use the Homeric theme of the god in disguise; his god reveals himself clearly).

We might expect Aristides to be good source for information about incubation, since many of his dreams were experienced while undergoing incubation at the temple of Asclepius at Pergamum, but his preoccupation with his own importance means that he is not, in fact, a good example of a typical incubant. First, Aristides is often not specific on

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[465] I have followed Behr's translation here; Behr 1968: 264.
[466] Holmes 2008: 81-113. See for example Pearcy 1988: 379; and, on Aristides' self-conscious narration, including comparing himself to Helen, Whitmarsh 2004: 442-443.
[467] Pearcy 1992: 611; on the combination of medical and literary language, see further 606-614.

where he was when a dream took place, so it is often difficult to tell whether he is describing dream experienced during ritual incubation, which we know he took part in regularly, or a dream experienced spontaneously while sleeping in a more normal manner. As Downie has recently pointed out, much of Aristides' time is, in fact, spent outside the sanctuary, where, unlike others, he still has special access to the god, and his extraordinary baths are not only extraordinary to us, but are intended to be read that way by second century readers, and are framed as epic battles.[468] Additionally, his *narcissisme*, as Michenaud and Dierkens put it, is so well-documented as to be almost legendary, and the way in which this *narcissisme* present itself in his writings affects their value as a source of information on incubation.[469] Kee has suggested that Aristides was not an 'oddity' for his time and that he reflects his era and Pernot has argued that Aristides was not as unusual a character as he is usually assumed to be.[470] However, although Pernot can find other sophistic characters who criticised Rome, or who may have been involved in the worship of Asclepius, none engage in self-promotion in quite the same way as Aelius Aristides. Aristides' own emphasis on his unique relationship with the god indicates that neither he nor anyone else would have considered his experience to be normal.

Aristides' experience, as he presents it, is extremely atypical, and his dreams bear little resemblance to any other evidence for incubatory practice (on which, see Chapter Five pp253-268). For example, he describes a dream which stopped him on the road to Pergamum, and which caused him to wait several days, while the dream reoccurred (Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 1.69). This is followed by a dream in which Aristides begs the

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[468] Downie discussed these issues in an oral presentation given at the Classical Association Annual Conference 2009 in Glasgow.
[469] Michenaud and Dierkens 1972: 59.
[470] Kee: 1983: 102; Pernot 2008: 200.

god to save his foster father Zosimus, who is also sick, and is given certain phrases to say which will heal him. The description of Aristides' communication with the god is highly unusual; rather than bowing down, or grasping the god's knees like a Homeric hero, Aristides grasps the god's head. This action is much more aggressive than the usual actions of a mortal towards a god in a dream, and allows Aristides himself to take some of the credit for the cure, his actions having persuaded, perhaps even compelled, the god. The cure is also unusual, the recitation of secret phrases, which Aristides will not reveal to his readers, being almost more evocative of magic than of religion. The true purpose of the story seems to be the glorification of Aristides, rather than of the god.

Aristides has often been referred to as a 'hypochondriac', but there is no convincing evidence for such a diagnosis.[471] Many people suffer from chronic, undiagnosed illness and many more must have done so in the ancient world.[472] It seems most likely that he turned his bad luck into a tool and used his illness, and the 'cures' and dreams sent to him as a result of this illness by the god, to further his literary career. Aristides uses his tales of divine dreams to increase his own reputation, and the more concerned his is with narrating his own importance and oratorical success, the more he turns his dream reports into message dreams closer to the style of ancient Near Eastern kings, rather than the jumble of symbolism and message that can be seen in the dream diary in Book 1.

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[471] For the description of Aristides as a 'hypochondriac', see in particular Phillips 1952; Harris 2009: 92.
[472] Lloyd-Jones suggests that asthma and hypertension, producing headaches, insomnia and stomach trouble may have been the chief causes of Aristides' illness; Lloyd-Jones 1985: 155. At this distance in time it is impossible to diagnose him, though his severe stomach problems might also indicate an unrecognised food allergy.

Why did Aristides decide to base his career and the *Hieroi Logoi* on records of his dreams?[473] He may have wanted to present himself as special, a person with divine favour, and dreams offered the best vehicle for conversation with the divine. He may genuinely have wanted a cure for his illness. So we can infer from Aristides that dreams were considered to be a way in which the gods showed their favour to men, and that the idea that the gods might heal someone through a dream was a strong one within the cultural imagination. Aristides presents a similar case to that of Josephus. He appears to have recorded dreams because he 'believed' that they provided human beings with a link to the gods and that the gods send messages through dreams. However, he himself has a strong personal stake in demonstrating the importance and religious significance of dreams, leaving us once again with the question of whether the use of dreams to promote his own interests was inspired solely by a 'belief' in their importance, or whether they he came to see them as a useful tool to achieve his own ends, suggested by his visits to the incubatory shrine at Pergamum for his health. In this case, however, we may perhaps lean towards the former, rather than the latter.

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[473] It should be noted that although most of the *Hieroi Logoi* are dreams, not every sacred tale is a dream; for example at 1.18, a god who is both Asclepius and Apollo at the same time specifically tells Aristides, as he stands by his bed, that this is not a dream, but a waking state, quoting Homer, *Odyssey*, 19.547. For further detail, see Appendix Two.

Dreams in the Cultural Memory

Dreams That are Worthy of Remembrance: Valerius Maximus

It may seem obvious to state that any story told in a historical work has been included because the historian felt it to be worthy of remembrance. However, in some works, this is a more significant motivation than in others. Modern historical works often record terrible things that we are encouraged never to forget; they are worthy of remembrance because we hope that by remembering them, we will not repeat them. Other things are worthy of remembrance because they caused a great historical change. We have seen that dreams may be recorded because they provide an explanation for an historical event, or because they are connected with the lives of 'great' people and are, therefore, worthy of remembering. The question remains as to whether, in Greco-Roman literature of record, any dreams were recorded because they were felt to be worthy of remembrance in themselves, because the dream itself is interesting, rather than because of their connection with a great person or event.

If any Greco-Roman historian were to have recorded a dream because it was inherently interesting, it would be Valerius Maximus. Valerius Maximus specifically states at the outset that his work is not intended to be comprehensive, but selective (Valerius Maximus, Preface). His selections of dream-stories, uniquely collected together in one place, have, therefore, been chosen carefully as those most worthy of remembrance, those most important and most firmly kept in the cultural memory. His purpose is to provide a reference work for orators or declaimers needing examples to

support their argument; these include examples of virtue, or vice punished, but go beyond these basic requirements to includes sections on such diverse topics as foreign habits (2.6) and men of humble origin who became famous (3.4).[474] His first Book, which deals with religious *exempla*, is not organised according to the nature of the religious phenomena. The *exempla* Valerius records in his first Book are not *exempla* of human characteristics, but of the nature of human interaction with the divine, and he considered dreams to be important enough to warrant a section of their own.

What were Valerius' selection criteria? The task of identifying why Valerius was interested in a particular story is complicated by his narrative structure. Although Fantham has suggested that the book 'cannot' be read continuously and is not intended to be so, the structure of the text suggests that Valerius did intend his work to have a sense of structure and of narrative flow.[475] Valerius opens Book 1 of his *exempla* with a section on state religion and temples; this is followed by sections on public displays of religious fervour by political figures (given a heading, probably not original, of those who feigned religion) (1.2); on mysteries and divination, given the heading *De Superstitionibus* (1.3); on augury (1.4); on omens in general (those not covered by other sections) (1.5); on prodigies (1.6) and 1.7 is the section on dreams. The final section of Book 1 is 1.8, on wonders that occurred while people were awake, given the title *De Miraculis* later. There is a clear logic to how Valerius organises his examples, and he tries to ensure that each example leads logically and smoothly into the next, though some links are more convincing than others. The significance of this for his selection of dreams is that some examples may have been chosen partly because they fit neatly into his narrative. The system of linking each dream to the next through a common theme also allows Valerius,

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[474] See further Bloomer 1992: 1-5, Fantham 1996: 133.
[475] Fantham 1996: 132-133.

where possible, to draw out two notable features of the dream; that which links it to the previous dream, and that which leads into the next.

He starts with a story about the most sacred memory of the divine Augustus (*a divi Augusti sacratissima memoria*); this introduction suggests that this story has been selected because it is connected with a great man and a ruler, Augustus (Valerius Maximus 1.7.1). Valerius provides more details about this dream, which prompted Octavian to leave his tent just before the battle of Philippi, than any of the other three surviving sources.[476] In Valerius Maximus' account, the dream comes to Octavian's doctor, Artorius, and is a message dream; a *species* of Minerva appears and tells the doctor to tell Octavian not to let illness stop him from being at the battle. The story demonstrates Augustus' bravery and military zeal, as in Valerius Maximus' version he has himself carried into battle on a litter.

Valerius' text connects this dream with that of Calpurnia, for he claims that one of the reasons that Octavian took note of the doctor's dream was that Caesar had ignored Calpurnia's dream, not wanting to be seen to be alarmed at a woman's dream, and so died (Valerius Maximus, 1.7.2). He notes that Caesar was shown what would happen, while Augustus was given a chance to put off a similar fate. (This is because Caesar's dream was a symbolic dream, showing the inevitable future, while Artorius' dream was a message dream, which can be acted upon). The next dream, that of the consuls Decius and Manlius, is one that also had a clear outcome (*clari exitus*) (1.7.3) (see also Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.24.51; Livy, *History of Rome*, 8.9), and it is linked to the fourth dream, that of Titus Latinius, by its significance for public religion (1.7.4). The link between the

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[476] Velleius Paterculus and Appian mention the dream very briefly, Appian noting that Augustus recorded it in his memoirs, while Velleius Paterculus attributes the dream to Octavian's doctor Artorius; Suetonius also refers to it only briefly, and says it was dreamed by a friend of Octavian (Appian, *Bellum Civile*, 4.14.110; Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 91.1; Velleius Paterculus, 2.70.1).

Latinius dream and the next, that of Cicero in exile, is much more tenuous; Valerius merely notes that Cicero's dream also must not be kept silent, and Cicero's dream is connected to the next only by opposition, as Cicero's dream foretold of something good that would happen to him, while the next is that of Gaius Gracchus, which foretold the bad things that would happen to him (1.7.5-6). This is linked to the next dream, a dream of Cassius, by its dire form and meaning, which is linked to the next, an otherwise unknown dream of a Roman knight, by its foretelling of death (1.7.7-8).[477]

After this dream, Valerius moves on to foreign examples, starting with Hannibal's dream which he notes also gave a clear prediction, and he observes that even Hannibal's sleep was hateful to the Roman empire (1.7.ext.1).[478] This is followed by a dream of Alexander's, otherwise unknown, which demonstrates that Alexander was warned to take better care of his life, and would have done better if he had been more prudent (1.7.ext.2). He notes that the gods were better to the poet Simonides, as they gave him the prudence to heed the warning, as well as the warning itself in a dream, and links this to the next dream by explaining that the dream that made Croesus first afraid, then sad, was also effective (1.7.ext.3-4).

The fifth external dream is linked because it also shows the unconquerable necessity of Fate (*invictae fatorum necessitates*), which determined that Cyrus would rule Asia (1.7.ext.5). The sixth dream, of the woman of Himera, is linked only by the theme of the hostility of Fate, while the seventh, of Dionysius' mother, provides a more positive contrast, and is also concerned with Dionysius (1.7.ext.6-7). The next dream, of

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[477] The dream of Cassius is otherwise unknown in that form, but is very similar to a story told of Brutus by Appian and Plutarch, though when the story is attached to Brutus, it is a waking vision rather than a dream (Appian, *Bellum Civile*, 4.17.134; Plutarch, *Brutus*, 48; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 69).
[478] This was a standard way of organising examples, seen also in Cicero's *De Divinatione*, though he puts foreign and Roman the other way around. See Bloomer 1992: 5.

Hamilcar, is not strongly linked, and shows how Hamilcar was deceived by hope through a misleading dream; this is followed briefly by the dream of Alcibiades, which also accurately foretold his death (1.7.ext.8-9). Valerius specifically explains that he has included the tenth dream, of the two Arcadians in Megara, which is rather long, because it is 'excessively distinct' (*nimiam evidentiam*) (1.7.ext.10).[479] It is with this dream that he chooses to close the section on dreams.

From this summary, it will be seen that Valerius' primary interest in dreams, like that of the written Quintus in Cicero's dialogue, lies in those that appear to have been accurately fulfilled. It is the accuracy and fulfilment of the dream (and the consequences for religious thought) that make the dream worthy of remembrance for Valerius Maximus.[480] This reinforces the idea that dreams were included in some historical works because they were imagined to be an important point of connection with the divine. In Valerius' case, this does not necessarily imply that he himself thought so but, more importantly, that enough other people thought so that it was worth building a rhetorical argument on that basis. Only those dreams which were, eventually, fulfilled are recorded, because only fulfilled dreams can demonstrate the workings of the divine in the world.

However, this was not Valerius' only reason for including these particular dream reports. His 'intensification', as Mueller put it, of the religious element in his *exempla* goes beyond just emphasising a religious element that is already present in the story; Valerius introduces the gods into stories where they are not usually found.[481] We have mentioned the poet Simonides above, whose dream would usually be understood as an encounter with a ghost, but which Valerius claims came from the gods (1.7.ext.3).

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[479] This story also appears in Cicero's *De Divinatione*; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.27-28.57.
[480] On the importance of dreams as connections with the divine in Valerius Maximus, see also Mueller 2002: 91-93.
[481] Mueller 2002: 176.

Mueller points out that he also attributes a dream of Cicero to Jupiter, which Cicero himself had argued was internal (in the course of arguing that this was the case for all dreams) (Valerius Maximus, 1.7.5; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.67.137-139).[482] Valerius could have chosen to focus on dream reports which fitted his purpose especially well, but instead, he forces reports which do not fit so well to conform to his purpose. His choice is determined partly by the need to form a narrative from a collection of unconnected reports. Beyond this, the same interests can be seen as in other authors. Valerius occasionally includes death and disaster omens for those not of high standing, but the dreams are usually of wider significance to a larger group, and Bloomer has observed that all the dreams Valerius includes have some public importance.[483] Valerius, like other Roman period authors, is interested in important people, in omens relating to political concerns and in events of significance for Roman history. These dreams have been enshrined in the cultural memory because the communication from the divine that came through them was shown to have a wider significance for the community.

Frequently Reported Dreams: Titus Latinius and Calpurnia

Certain dream stories became firmly lodged in the cultural memory of a particular event and appear again and again in historical sources (and a few imaginative sources) from the Greco-Roman world. The function they play, however, may vary from work to work. In order to gain the most complete picture of how these frequently attested dreams function in historical literature, I have included some earlier sources in this discussion, but I have

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[482] Mueller 2002: 92-93.
[483] Bloomer 1992: 20.

not included any later sources (including Julius Obsequens' summary of portents in Livy; as a summary, it cannot provide sufficient context to answer this question). This is because the earlier sources affect the presentation of these dreams in later sources and are, therefore, important to understand in order to fully understand the later sources.

In the middle of his long list of examples of precognitive dreams from various sources, Quintus Cicero announces that he wants to leave foreign examples and move on to Roman stories, which please him more (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.26.55). He starts with the story of the dream of Titus Latinius (sometimes called Latinus) which, along with the dream of Calpurnia, is one of the most widely reported dreams in ancient history. This retelling in Cicero is the oldest surviving version, but Quintus observes that the story is told by all 'our' historians (*omnes hoc historici*) and names Coelius as his source. The emphasis on Rome is important in this case, as this dream often functions as an aetiology for a particular Roman custom. This story is reported in three surviving Latin sources and two Greek from the period up to AD 200, though of those two, only Plutarch lived outside of Italy.[484] Kragelund has observed that, overall (and including several late sources and fragments), the story is told more than a dozen times.[485] The form of the dream is the familiar message dream**.**

The Ciceronian version of the dream is designed to disprove the validity of such dreams; like all the dreams in *De Divinatione*, it is set up to be knocked down. Cicero describes the social standing of the dreamer in the lowest terms; his 'rustic' (*rusticus*) becomes a farmer of good fortune in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a plebeian in Livy and

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[484] Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.26.55; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 7.68; Livy, *History of Rome*, 2.36; Valerius Maximus, 1.7.4; Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, 24-25.
[485] Kragelund 2001: 77.

Valerius Maximus, and Plutarch does not refer to his social status at all, but prefers to focus on his character. This is because part of Cicero's argument against divinatory dreams in the second half of *De Divinatione* rests on the idea that the gods (assuming they exist) are too dignified to spend their time visiting poor people in dreams; it is, therefore, rhetorically useful to report a story in which a divine message dream was apparently granted to a poor man (see Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.63.129).[486] The function of the dream for Cicero, then, is to provide a patently absurd story about a man of low social standing receiving a divine message dream, in order to demonstrate that such divine visitations do no, in fact, occur.[487]

The purpose of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' *Roman Antiquities* is to demonstrate the virtues of early Romans, to show that Rome's dominance is right and proper and not a malicious stroke of Fortune, (partly by demonstrating that they are all Greeks anyway) (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 1.4).[488] In Dionysius' account, the dream follows on from a list of unfavourable omens and prodigies and a pestilence which, it is suggested, are punishments for the banishment of Coriolanus. This section describes the close interest the gods take in Rome, and the dangers of angering them; but, perhaps more importantly, Dionysius segues from this into a description of the rites performed at the festival which, he says, will demonstrate that the city of Rome was, in fact, founded by Greek colonists (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 7.70).

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[486] As Krostenko has noted, the gods are presumed to act in the same way as the Roman social elite; Krostenko 2000: 356-358.

[487] The idea that people cannot dream about things that are above them is common; Cicero argues from the point of view of divine communication, that the gods would not bother to give important messages to unimportant people, and Aristotle also used this argument to argue against divine dreams; Aristotle, *On Divination in Sleep*, 2.463b. Artemidorus also suggests on more naturalistic grounds that a person cannot dream about things they never think about; Artemidorus 1.2.

[488] This preface suggests that Dionysius is writing for a primarily Greek audience, though Weaire has suggested that his intended readership was a more broad audience of Greek-speaking people, both Greek and Roman; Weaire 2005: 246.

Livy includes this dream in order to explain why the Great Games were held twice. In Livy's account, the dream functions as an aetiological explanation for this event, and is related to dreams used to explain motivation. Dionysius, Livy and Plutarch all refer to the dream as the reason for the repetition of the Great Games, making the story an aetiological one, though Cicero, with his different emphasis, does not, simply noting that this happened during the repetition of the Games.

For Valerius Maximus, the dream is interesting because it held a clear significance, and because it is connected with public religion. He describes Latinius as a man of the people (*homini ex plebe*) and includes a clear instruction to repeat the Games in the dream. Although the dream does provide a aetiology for the repetition, and Valerius specifically emphasises its importance for public religion, his chief interest in the dream lies in the example it provides of the importance of heeding instructions given in dreams, and the importance of dreams in general for Roman religion (rather than the significance of the dream as a specific aetiology for a specific custom).

Plutarch's given reason for including the dream is because it explains why the Games were held twice. The dream does not relate directly to Coriolanus, the subject of the *Life* in which it appears, though the mistreatment of slaves, which the dream condemns, could be related to Coriolanus' mistreatment of the plebeians, which led to his downfall. Plutarch is generally more interested in character and in providing examples of good and bad characters than in aetiologies.[489] This may be why he also takes this opportunity to comment on the character of the dreamer; he describes Titus as καθαρὸς δεισιδαιμονίας, 'free from superstitions' (Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, 24). This phrase implies that, while a superstitious character might attribute meanings to meaningless dreams, as

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[489] See Duff 1999: 14.

described in his *De Superstitione*, a person who does not succumb to superstition might experience a genuinely meaningful dream (see Plutarch, *De Superstitione*, 3).

The other most commonly reported dream is that of Calpurnia before Caesar's murder. Although the different accounts show fairly wide variation in the actual dream content, they all agree that, the night before Caesar's assassination, Calpurnia had a dream which warned her that something bad would happen if Caesar went to the Senate the next day, which she told him about, but he went anyway.

Calpurnia's dream also appears five times in surviving sources.[490] Again, three of these sources are Latin and two Greek; however, again, one of these Greek sources was written by a Roman citizen living in Rome, while the other was one of Plutarch's Greek and Roman *Lives*. The dream takes place at a turning-point in Roman history and concerns the murder of a Roman dictator. Exactly what Calpurnia dreamed varies according the source. Velleius Paterculus simply notes that she had been terrified by a nocturnal vision. Valerius Maximus has her see her husband lying in her lap with many wounds. Plutarch presents two possible versions of Calupurnia's dream, though the two are somewhat more similar; one is a literal foreshadowing of Caesar's death, the other a metaphorical representation of the same event (the pediment on Caesar's house collapses). Suetonius includes one dream attributed to Caesar himself, and one to Calpurnia; Julius supposedly dreamt that he was flying above the clouds, then that he clasped Jupiter's hand, while Calpurnia dreamt that the pediment of their house fell down

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[490] Valerius Maximus, 1.7.2; Velleius Paterculus, 2.57.2; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 63; Suetonius, *Divus Julius*, 81.3; Appian, *Bellum Civile*, 2.16.115. If one were to include Livy, who recorded the dream but whose version has only survived in Julius Obsequens' summary, the number would be six; Julius Obsequens 67.

and her husband was stabbed in her arms. Appian says she dreamed she saw Caesar's body streaming with blood.

Harris has suggested that Calpurnia's dream, as reported by Suetonius, was obviously an invention, but it does not speculate on the origin of the invention.[491] The bare bones of the story – that Calpurnia did not want Caesar to attend the Senate because she had been disturbed by a nightmare – were already in place by the time Velleius Paterculus was writing, and Velleius chooses to include the story, even though he includes only a few dream reports. From Velleius' brief description, Valerius Maximus first adds Caesar's body covered with wounds, Suetonius and Plutarch include the less literal, more symbolic dream in which the pediment of the house falls down (though Plutarch gives two versions), then Appian reverts to the simpler literal prophecy. It is, therefore, possible that Calpurnia really did have a nightmare the night before Caesar died, that this was heard of by others, interpreted as a literal vision of what was about to happen to Caesar, and later elaborated into a more symbolic story featuring a more obviously divine dream (since a generic nightmare or a dream or harm coming to Caesar might be reflections of Calpurnia's own fears, whereas the dream of the pediment is more obviously a symbolic message which may be understood afterwards).

Like the dream of Titus Latinius above, this dream does not come to the Roman politician it actually concerns, but to a person of lesser status, in this case, a woman.[492]

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[491] Harris 2009: 91-92.

[492] This is not the only instance of a woman receiving a significant dream in Roman literature. Cicero records an incident when a consul called Lucius Julius rebuilt the temple of Juno the Saviour because of a dream of Caecilia, daughter of Balearicus, which Kragelund has discussed as the dream of 'Metella' (Julius Obsequens gives her name as Metella Caecilia), and which he claims is 'by far the best documented political dream from the republican period'(Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.2.4; 1.44.99; 2.66.136); Kragelund 2001: 54. However, the only source Kragelund quotes in addition to the three mentions in *De Divinatione* is Julius Obsequens (55). It is true that Julius Obsequens based his fourth century AD work on a lost epitome of Livy, but in the surviving material up to AD 200, this dream is mentioned only by Cicero; it does not seem to have held an important place in the minds of many late republican or early imperial writers.

Kragelund suggests that Calpurnia's dream was the first example of what later became a dream type under the monarchy. He suggests Atia's dream reported in Suetonius is of this type (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*, 94.4) and imitates Herodotus (Herodotus, 1.107-108; 6.131). Other imitations/adaptations include Seneca (Seneca, *Octavia*, 115-124; 712-739) and Plutarch (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 2).[493] Atia's dream does bear some similarity to that of Astyages; as Kragelund points out, both involve a bodily aspect of the mother spreading itself over a geographical landscape. These and the examples from Plutarch are birth omens, while Calpurnia's dream and the examples from Seneca are death omens (Kragelund describes them as foretelling the future greatness or fall of the imperial house); the Senecan examples are also taken from drama, not history. The details of the dreams and the circumstances of the dreamer vary greatly. The only real thing these examples have in common is that they are dreamed by imperial women. Calpurnia is the first of these because that she is the first imperial woman. Kragelund notes that, previously, Roman dreams, particularly of women, had affected the *res publica* as a whole rather than a single aristocratic *domus*.[494] However, again, the reason for this is that, in an imperial context, the fate of the imperial *domus* affects that of the whole empire, whereas in a Republican context the fate of one *domus* would not have such an effect.

Valerius Maximus' version of Calpurnia's dream is one of three occasions when Caesar receives divine warning of his death but chooses to ignore it.[495] In this case, he ignores Calpurnia's dream because he does want others to think he was swayed by a woman's dream. Although the gods have given him warning, he cannot take account of it

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[493] On other fragementary version, see Kragelund 2001: 55-56 (footnotes).
[494] Kragelund 2001: 56.
[495] See Wardle 1997: 334-336.

because of the source. Velleius Paterculus, who does not devote much space to the dream (or, indeed, to any dream) also uses it to emphasise the fact that, although soothsayers warned him and the gods sent signs, his fate was inevitable.

Plutarch opens his description of the dreams that preceded Caesar's death with the statement that 'destiny may be foreseen more easily than avoided' (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 63). Plutarch has Caesar make some effort to heed the dream, planning to adjourn the Senate, but he is persuaded otherwise by Brutus (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 64). Although Caesar does turn out to be mistaken in allowing himself to be persuaded, Plutarch's opening statement seems to suggest that his theme here is, like the others, the inevitability of Fate. Appian also emphasizes how many signs and warnings there were preceding Caesar's death. In Suetonius, the dream functions both as a death omen and as an illustration of Caesar's character and motive, as seen above.

Two themes emerge from these accounts; first, that Caesar was a headstrong man who ignored signs from the gods and secondly, that a momentous event for Rome is presaged by divine signs, not necessarily so that the event can be avoided, but simply as a mark of its significance. Which of these two interpretations is offered by each account depends on how much blame is attached to Caesar for ignoring the warnings.[496]

The dream of Titus Latinius is a message dream, whereas Calpurnia's dream is a symbolic dream (bordering on a literal prophecy). As we have seen, message dreams usually require some form of action on the part of the dreamer, in response to the message. A message dream, therefore, is recorded by later historians because it led to a

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[496] Wardle has noted that Valerius Maximus frequently refers to Caesar's murder as parricide and has suggested that Valerius adapted his material to present Caesar as blameless; Wardle 1997: 334. However, in this case, Valerius Maximus does appear to attach some blame to Caesar himself.

particular action on the part of the dreamer or those around them. So, in this example, Titus Latinius' dream led to the repetition of the Games. A symbolic dream, however, is much less likely to lead to direct action and, if it does, it is unlikely that this action will achieve anything other than the fulfilment of the dream. So, much of the focus in records of Calpurnia's dream is on the inevitability of Caesar's death and Calpurnia's inability to prevent it. Message dreams are remembered as the cause of a particular action, while symbolic dreams are remembered as divine signs that demonstrate the importance of an unavoidable event.

These frequently reported dreams are culturally remembered because they are connected to equally memorable and important events. The dream of Titus Latinius provides an aetiology for an important Roman custom, while the dream of Calpurnia is connected to one of the most significant events in Roman history. The dreams are remembered and used differently in each report and the core of collective memory is readjusted to fit each author's personal agenda; for example, Plutarch attaches less blame to Caesar for ignoring divine warnings than earlier writers. However, that collective core has to be there in order for the new twist of significance to have the desired impact on the reader.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Nature of Imaginative Dreams and their Place in the Cultural Imagination

The Nature of Imaginative Dreams

We know that ancient writers of literature of record often moulded, adapted or outright fictionalised elements of the 'history' they recorded. However, literature of record must obey what are understood to be the laws of the universe and the way the world is perceived to work in reality. Writers of imaginative literature, however, have more freedom, especially if they are writing within a mythological or otherwise magical 'fantasy' setting. This gives these writers much more freedom in how they use dreams, and makes the task of relating dream reports from imaginative literature to their place in the wider cultural imagination more complicated.[497]

Miller has used the term 'cultural imagination' in her work on dreams in Late Antiquity, focussing on how a culture 'imagines for itself one of its own processes of imagining'.[498] Her use of the term is rooted in post-modern literary theory, drawing on a variety of different post-modern scholars' works. Veyne referred to the 'constitutive imagination', but he viewed this as a restrictive thing, a 'fishbowl' which it takes 'genius' to get out of.[499] However, here, the idea of 'the imagination of a culture', or 'cultural

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[497] As explained in the Introduction, this chapter focuses on the first two centuries AD.
[498] Miller 1994: 12.
[499] Veyne 1988: 118.

imagination', is explored within the framework of 'cultural memory'. Where cultural memory refers to shared ideas about events in the past, 'cultural imagination' refers to shared concepts within a particular cultural group. This is not a restrictive 'fishbowl', but a fluid and adaptable group of ideas that are constantly, often consciously, being remoulded.

Whereas literature of record may leave the exact nature of the dream experience uncertain, writers of imaginative literature have the ability, if they so choose, to explain the exact nature of the dream experience to their readers. When they describe a dream, there are several options available to them:

1. The writer can invent a form of dream not known in reality.

2. The writer can use an idea already current in the cultural imagination and provide a minimal explanation of it. For example, 'the general fell asleep... and Pan himself appeared to him, saying...' (Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, 2.26). This example clearly explains the exact nature of the dream – an actual visitation by the god Pan – but assumes that the reader will not be surprised that the god Pan is visiting someone in a dream, and therefore does not provide a lengthy description of the mechanics of the visit.

3. The writer can deliberately leave the exact nature of the dream open to doubt, but suggest that it fits a pattern known in the cultural imagination.

4. The writer can leave the exact nature of the dream in doubt.

5. The writer can deliberately suggest that the dream is not what it appears to be. This often assumes that the reader will automatically consider that the dream may

be one of two different things, suggesting that both are ideas current in the cultural imagination.

In ancient imaginative literature, the source of significant dreams is usually given as one of the following:

1. The dream comes directly from a god and the process requires minimal explanation (usually a message dream).

2. The dream comes from a god, but follows a complicated process of delivery to the dreamer.

3. A dead person has contacted the living sleeper through the medium of the dream.

4. The dream is the product of the dreamer's own thoughts, feelings or preoccupations.

5. The author does not define the origin of the dream absolutely, but strongly suggests that it comes from something divine. In this case, often, the characters within the story doubt the origin of the dream, but its eventual accurate fulfilment suggests to the reader that the dream is a divine omen. These are usually symbolic dreams.

6. The author deliberately leaves the reader in some doubt as to the origin of the dream, possibly suggesting alternatives.

This chapter will take each of these in turn and ask what place the treatment of dreams in the literary text suggests that dreams held within the cultural imagination.

Dreams That Come from the Divine

Dreams That Come Directly from the Divine

Simple, direct message dreams, which are unequivocally understood to represent a visit from the divine being in question, are relatively rare in imaginative literature of the first and second centuries AD. The message dream has not disappeared; other varieties of message dream (including more complicated divine message dreams, which are indistinguishable on the charts, see Appendix One) continue to appear, albeit in a minority compared to the volume of symbolic dreams. However, the 'classic' message dream, in which a god visits the dreamer and imparts a clear message, has become more rare.

The straightforward divine message dream does still appear in the Greek novels of the first two centuries AD (and in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, which is discussed below).[500] For example, Artemis appears to Sostratos in *Leucippe and Clitophon* and the Nymphs appear to Daphnis in *Daphnis and Chloe*; the rustic lovers in *Daphnis and Chloe* are also protected by dreams sent by Pan, a god more appropriate to themes of countryside idyll and sexual awakening (Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 7.12; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, 2.23; 2.26-28; 3.27). The number of straightforward

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[500] The dates of the Greek novels are uncertain and the cause of some debate. I am following the chronology set out by Reardon in the introduction to his edited volume of the novels; Reardon 1989: 5. This puts Chariton, Xenophon of Ephesus, Lucian, Achilles Tatius and Longus within the scope of my study, but Heliodorus and the authors of the *Alexander Romance* and *Apollonius, King of Tyre* outside it. See further Dowden 2007, which supports the placing of Heliodorus outside the first two centuries AD and the others within that period, though with some adjustments to their order within that timeframe, and Bowie 2002; both Dowden and Bowie support placing Chariton in the second half of the first century AD; see Dowden 2007: 138, Bowie 2002: 55.

message dreams is relatively small and Longus seems to be fondest of them, but they still exist.

Morgan has noted that Longus' fictionalised narrator avoids suggesting he has direct knowledge of divine activity except when describing dreams, and it is only through the dreams that the reader discovers what the divine beings (in this case, the Nymphs) have been doing throughout the story (for example, the Nymphs' first dream-appearance to Daphnis in which they explain that they have watched over Chloe since childhood; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, 2.23).[501] Dreams, in this case, provide a way for the narrator to reveal divine activity without claiming to have knowledge of the divine directly; he only knows what divinities choose to reveal to human beings through the medium of dreams, nothing more. Morgan suggests that this reluctance to discuss the actions of the gods contrasts with embedded mythical narratives, which he describes as 'theologically more privileged'.[502]

Dreams in the novels perform important narrative functions. Characters in the novels frequently make decisions based almost entirely upon dreams; for example, Kallirhoe decides to go ahead with marriage to Dionysios because of appearances by Chaireas in her dreams (Chariton, *Chaireas and Kallirhoe*, 2.11), while Sostratos is led to his daughter through dreams sent by Artemis (Achilles Tatius, *Leukippe and Kleitophon*, 7.14). Dreams play a similar role in decision making in *Daphnis and Chloe*, when the lovers' foster parents are persuaded to send them out to the fields, where they will meet each other, through dreams (Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, 1.7-8; see also 4.34, where Dionysophanes is persuaded to give the lovers his consent by the Nymphs in a dream). Message dreams are particularly useful when the literary purpose of the dream is simply

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[501] Morgan 2004: 509.
[502] Morgan 2004: 510.

to get the character from A to B, as they are not usually misunderstood or misinterpreted, and the character can simply obey the dream without further thought. According to MacAlister, the functions of dreams in the novels include foreshadowing later events in the plot, motivating action, marking turning points, depicting character and portraying 'psychological depth', while the various types they form include future-oriented, externally sent, allegorical admonitory or a reflection of waking preoccupations.[503] This is a reasonable summary, though emphasis should be placed on the plot-driven, divinely sent, future-oriented dreams that are most heavily exploited within the novels.

It is difficult to say how far this may reflect real life practices – would people living in the Greco-Roman world at this time base their decisions on dreams? The *Letters* of the younger Pliny suggest that this may sometimes have been the case. While the message dream he claims prompted his uncle to write a history of the Germanic wars may reflect a literary device rather than a real experience, the letter in which Pliny discusses whether Suetonius should pay attention to a troubling dream may indicate a genuine dilemma (Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 1.18; 3.5). Similarly, Galen claims, apparently sincerely, that his career was chosen because of a dream of his father's (Galen, *De Methodo Medendi*, 10.609). On the other hand, dependence on dreams to the extent seen in the novels seems unlikely, and it should be noted that Artemidorus' guide to dream interpretation does not offer advice concerning action to take, but only indicates what future event the dream predicts.

The prevalence of definitely god-sent predictive dreams in the novels implies that the idea that a god might send a predictive dream to command or assist a human being was still strong within the cultural imagination in the second century AD. However, it is

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[503] MacAlister 1996: 70.

important to note that the novels are usually set in the distant past of classical Greece, and cover wide geographical territory in the course of their adventures. As Harris has observed, there is a great difference between saying that a god appeared (in a dream) to someone a very long time ago, and claiming to have had a visit from a god (in a dream) last week.[504] We suspend disbelief when reading a work of fiction, especially one set in a place distant to us in both space and time. The use of divine dreams in the novels, therefore, may not reflect ideas current in the second century AD at all, but literary conventions, such as those of epic.

Clear, straightforward message dreams also appear in the context of incubation. If an author has their character go to an incubatory shrine and experience a significant dream, it is safe to assume that the dream is from the god of the shrine, and the dream is often a message dream. For example, when Latinus consults the oracle of Faunus, he does not see the god, but he hears a voice giving him a message which we can safely assume comes from Faunus, the god of the shrine (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7.81-91). Even in these cases, though, the dream can be more complex; for example, Numa, having sacrificed two ewes to Faunus and to Sleep and performed other rituals, dreams that Faunus tell him that he must sacrifice two cows, with one cow sacrificing two lives. Numa wakes up, and does not know what the dream means, and his wife must tell him that it means he must sacrifice a pregnant cow (Ovid, *Fasti*, 4.653-672).   The continued presence of dreams which are simply and uncomplicatedly described as divine messages suggests that it was still imagined, in this period, that this sort of dream was a possibility. However, the fact that these dreams are not especially numerous, and that they fulfil a particular function

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[504] Harris 2009: 225.

for the author in the novels, may indicate that this idea was not as widely or as strongly held as perhaps it once was.

Dreams That Come Indirectly from the Divine

Dreams that come indirectly from the divine are those which, although they are of divine origin, follow a complex process of delivery to the dreamer, often involving a third party. These dreams are found almost exclusively in epic poetry and chiefly in Silver Latin epic.

The origins of the tradition may be traced back to Homer and Virgil, but there the pattern is not fully developed. Homer and Virgil each depict the gods asking a third party (Dream/Sleep) to deliver a dream once, and for particular reasons.[505] When Zeus sends Agamemnon a lying message in order to bring disaster for the Greeks, he does so through an intermediary referred to as Dream (Ὄνειρος). This is the only dream in the Homeric poems in which the message comes from Zeus himself, so it may be that other gods, such as Athena, will appear in person (though disguised), while Zeus, as head of pantheon, is too exalted to appear personally. This dream is also the only lying dream in the Homeric poems, so it is equally possible that Homer depicts Zeus sending an intermediary in order to avoid showing the god lying to someone himself. In the *Aeneid*, Sleep (*Somnus*) takes the shape of Phorbas and tells Palinurus to lie down and nap, and shakes a bough with drops of Lethe-water on it over his head, so that Palinurus falls asleep and into the sea

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[505] There are also several instances in the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* where gods appear to the dreamer disguised as someone else (Homer, *Iliad*, 2.1-35, Homer, *Odyssey*, 4.795-809, Homer, *Odyssey*, 6.13-47, Virgil, *Aeneid*, 5.636-639, Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7.414-458). Homer combines the use of the third party with the theme of disguise by having Dream appear in the form of Nestor, but Dream does not actually pretend to be Nestor and this may be meant to imply that Dream himself has no human shape.

(Virgil, *Aeneid*, 5.838-863). The reason this particular dream is brought by Sleep is that the god is required to actively put Palinurus to sleep, as well as affecting his dreams.[506]

Generally speaking, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* onwards, the process by which a god sends a message dream to a sleeping mortal is depicted in a much more complicated fashion than in Homer or Virgil.[507] The simple process of a god delivering a message through a dream is complicated by the addition of several other elements, including the use of a third party (Dream/Sleep and their relatives), the messenger appearing to the dreamer in disguise, and, through the use of disguise, the combination of the divine message dream with the appearance of a dead person in a dream.

For example, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Juno asks Iris to ask Sleep to send Alcyone a dream in the shape of her late husband (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11.583-588). Following a lengthy description by the narrator of Sleep's home (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11.592-615), Iris asks Sleep to put on the appearance of Ceyx and show Alcyone the shipwreck that killed him, then Sleep asks his son Morpheus to do it, because Morpheus is particularly skilled at imitating human shapes. Ovid adds that a second son, called Icelos by gods and Phobetor by humans, would change himself into an animal or serpent, and a third, Phantasos, would appear as anything inanimate; and that these three were the dreams that appeared to kings and generals, and others would wander among common people (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11.633-649). Morpheus then appears as Ceyx, dripping wet and dead, and tells Alcyone that he is the ghost of Ceyx, and she must not hope for his return (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11.650-670). The reader is informed by the narrator of this long and complex chain of commands that goes through four different divinities, but

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[506] In fact, it is not entirely clear that this is a dream, as it is described more like a waking vision of the god Sleep.

[507] There are a few examples of less complicated divine message dreams; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 9.684-703, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15.641-662, Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 13.55-62.

the dreamer sees only the ghost of her late husband (which, from her point of view, would put the dream in a different category).

The implication of this description is that all dreams are, in fact, made by Sleep and any dream figure the dreamer might see is an illusion made by Morpheus. However, other poems describe the process quite differently, though at equal length. For example, in Statius' *Thebaid*, Jupiter tells Mercury to go down to the underworld and fetch the shade of Laius, who must then tell Eteocles to break his agreement with Polynices (Statius, *Thebaid*, 1.283-302). On his way to carry out this command, Mercury meets Sleep (*Sopor*, not *Somnus*), who salutes him, but does not take over the job (Statius, *Thebaid*, 2.59). Once Mercury has taken Laius to where Eteocles is sleeping, Laius makes himself look like Tiresias, in order to make sure that Eteocles does not dismiss the message as a 'false image of the night' (*neu falsa videri / noctis imago queat*) (Statius, *Thebaid*, 2.94-95). This, then, is a message dream from a dead person, disguised as another dead person, and acting under orders from a god. Laius touches the sleeper with the olive branch and delivers his message, and as he finishes, he throws off the disguise and reveals himself to Eteocles, who wakes up in horror (Statius, *Thebaid*, 2.96-127). Laius goes to some trouble to ensure that Eteocles does not dismiss the message as false, perhaps because the message is, in fact, a lie, designed by Jupiter to start the war (in a clear reference to Homer).

Another way to complicate the process of receiving a divine message is to use a combination of a message dream and a symbolic dream. In Silius Italicus' *Punica*, Silius describes how Jupiter wanted to test the Roman people, so he sent Mercury to urge Hannibal on and Mercury accosted Hannibal in his sleep. This leads into a description of the story of Hannibal's dream of the monster following him, which is found in several

sources (Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 3.163-195).[508] Hannibal rewards Mercury with a sacrifice of a snow-white bull and raises his standards to go and attack (Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 3.196-221). The structure of the dream itself may be chiefly determined by the historical records that are Silius' sources, but the choice of how to describe the process of sending the dream remains with the author.

These long and complicated descriptions suggest that these processes which are described at length did not reflect ideas that were strongly held within the cultural imagination. Divine message dreams are an essential part of the fabric of epic poetry, of the epic imagination. All the epic poets except Lucan include them, but rather than offer a simple, brief explanation and move on, they provide these long and complex explanations of the process. It may be that the poets simply saw an opportunity for a poetic diversion. The first epic poem to include a complicated process of delivery was Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Ovid may have elaborated upon the message dream in order to incorporate his theme of metamorphosis, as one character takes on the appearance of another. Once Ovid had created this sequence, it was then adopted and adapted by Statius and Silius Italicus. This suggests that these descriptions do not reflect ideas that were common outside poetry.

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[508] Valerius Maximus, 1.7.ext.1; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.24.49; Livy, *History of Rome*, 21.22.

Dreams from the Dead

Ghost Stories: The Dead in Imaginative Dreams

This section focuses on message dreams from the dead, rather than symbolic dreams featuring the dead. This is because a symbolic dream may feature any image or action that the dreamer can imagine, whereas a message dream tends to indicate an actual visitation from the ghost through the medium of a dream. Message dreams from dead human beings, rather than a divine or semi-divine figure appear more frequently in Latin literature than in Greek.

In modern Western culture, a ghost story tells of an encounter between a ghost and a waking person, often at night but not usually in a dream. If the visit occurred during a dream, we would assume that this meant that it was not real. For us to fully enjoy a story about an encounter with the dead, it must be a 'real' waking experience. However, because, in the ancient imagination, dreams could provide a vehicle for a visit from an immortal being, the appearance of a ghost in a dream was not necessarily the product of the dreamer's imagination, but could represent an actual visit from the dead person.

Ghosts were particularly likely to appear in ancient literature if they fitted into the category identified as the 'restless dead'; ἄωροι, those who died before their time, usually children; βιαιοθάνατοι, those killed by violence (Ogden notes that murder victims and suicides were the most bitter of these); ἄγαμοι, those who died before

marriage, especially women, and ἄταφοι, those deprived of proper burial rites.[509] Ogden

has suggested that 'through sleep' was 'the usual way' for the living to experience a

ghost in antiquity.[510] It is true that ghost stories are often connected with dreams, and

some have even suggested that ghost sightings are actually dreams.[511] Of the surviving

ghost stories from antiquity collected in Ogden's source book, about half feature ghosts

appearing in dreams, while the other half represent waking experiences, some seen by

several people.[512] Unfortunately, the lack of evidence makes it difficult to ascertain

whether the idea that one might see a ghost in a dream preceded the idea that a ghost

might visit a waking, living person or vice versa.[513] Felton claims that many of the

earliest ghost stories are in the form of dreams, but she quotes only the apparition of

Patroclus.[514] In fact, in the three surviving appearances of ghosts in classical Greek

drama, all three ghosts appear in waking visitations.[515]

The idea that a dead person might bring a message through a dream first appears in

Homer, but is otherwise relatively rare in earlier literature. The main reason for a ghost to

visit the living through a dream is to provide them with some piece of information they

could not otherwise know, usually pertaining to the ghost's death. Most often, the ghost

appears to tell the dreamer that they were murdered (if the dreamer did not already know

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[509] Ogden 2002: 146; see further Johnston 1999, especially 83-84.
[510] Ogden 2002: 147.
[511] See Felton 1999: 19.
[512] Ogden 2002: 146-166.
[513] On classical Greek stories of ghosts appearing in dreams, see Harrisson 2010 (forthcoming).
[514] Felton 1999: 19.
[515] Atossa and the Chorus call up the ghost of Darius in *Persae* in a waking ritual, the ghost of
Clytemnestra wakes the sleeping chorus in *Eumenides*, and the ghost of Polydorus delivers the prologue in
Hecuba; Aeschylus, *Persae*, 623-680, Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, 94-139, Euripides, *Hecuba*, 1-58.

this) and, usually, by whom.[516] This particular motif usually occurs in the dream-ghost-story form and appears most frequently in fictive literature.[517] This motif demonstrates that some appearances of ghosts in dreams were considered to be actual visitations by the spirit of the dead person, as the ghost imparts information that the dreamer could not otherwise have known.

The other frequent message brought by a ghost is a request for proper burial. This appears in both waking visitations and dreams, beginning with Achilles' dream visitation from Patroclus (Homer, *Iliad*, 23.62-107). The story of the ghost that, according to Pausanias, terrorised and murdered the inhabitants of Temesa may also be early in origin (Pausanias, 6.6.7-11).[518] A variant appears in Cicero's *De Divinatione*, apparently from a Stoic source, in which the spirit shows its gratitude for having its body buried (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.27.56, also found at Valerius Maximus, 1.7.ext.3). Elpenor's request for burial in the *Odyssey* is not part of this tradition, as it is not until after Odysseus travels to the underworld and pours out the blood of the sheep that Elpenor appears to make his request, but Elpenor's portrayal as the first and most active of the spirits, who does not need to drink the blood to speak, may imply that his spirit might have appeared as a ghost anyway, even if Odysseus had not come to the underworld (Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.35-80). Felton notes that this is the most common reason for the dead to haunt the living, reflecting the importance of proper burial rites.[519]

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[516] See for example Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 9.31; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.353-359; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.27-28.57; Plautus, *Mostellaria*, 497-504.
[517] Appian, *Punic Wars*, 2 refers to the Dido story, but this is mythologised to the point of fiction. See further Felton 1999: 8-9.
[518] See further Felton 1999: 9-11.
[519] Felton 1999: 9.

Occasionally, the dead might appear to offer some kind of consolation to the living. Statius refers to dreams in poems of lament and consolation, but it is unclear whether these instances should be read as references to actual visitations by the dead, or as dreams of comfort produced by the dreamer's mind. In a poem of consolation, Statius says that he will keep the dead man's shade near and seek guidance from his life's story, and also seek conversation and dreams that bring good counsel (Statius, *Silvae*, 3.3.202-205). In his lament for his own father, he prays that his father's shade will be allowed to go to the grove where the better gate of horn overcomes that of ivory, allowing him to teach Statius as he used to, in the image of a dream (Statius, *Silvae*, 5.3.288-289). He also notes that the Nymph did so for Numa, showing him the sacred rites to be observed, and Scipio had nightly visions of Jove, and Sulla was not without Apollo (Statius, *Silvae*, 5.3.290-293). This would seem to suggest that he is referring to actual visitations, though the reference to seeking guidance from the dead man's life is more suggestive of an internal origin for the dreams.

There are some other examples of comforting visions of the dead that may or may not represent actual visitations. From earlier Greek literature, Admetus in *Alcestis* says that he hopes Alcestis will visit him in dreams, because it is nice to see loved ones, even for a short time (Euripides, *Alcestis*, 354). From the period under consideration, Cornelia, telling Paullus from beyond the grave not to mourn her too much, tells him to let mourning at night and the dreams in which he sees her image be enough, and to speak to her image as if to one who answers (Propertius, *Elegies*, 4.11.81-84). A story that refers more clearly to an actual visitation by a ghost appears in Pseudo-Quintilian, in which a woman sees her dead son in dreams and derives great comfort from him (Quintilian, *Declamationes Maiores*, 10.1). As Ogden has noted, this is a rhetorical exercise based on

an 'absurd' hypothetical situation, but it indicates that the idea might be entertained, if not considered seriously, within the cultural imagination.[520]

All of this demonstrates that it was imagined that dreams might provide an opportunity to communicate with the dead. We turn now to look in detail at one dream ghost story in particular, the visit of Cynthia's ghost in Propertius' *Elegies*, 4.7. This poem is a particularly useful subject for a case study as it incorporates a number of different motifs found in other dream ghost stories, including the appearance of a dead lover, a gruesome ghostly figure, a request from a ghost and a reference to the Gates of Sleep/Dream. Focussing on this poem, we can explore the significance of these themes in imaginative literature.

A Dream Ghost Story: Propertius

Cynthia's ghost has several reasons for visiting Propertius. The most important is to identify her murderers, Nomas and Lygdamus, and demand that they be punished, which, as seen above, was a relatively common story type. However, Cynthia has other things to say too; a long litany of complaints against the poet for unfaithfulness, for allowing her slaves to be mistreated, for replacing her with another woman and for insufficient mourning. Cynthia is not merely an acquaintance of Propertius, but his dead lover, and much of her visit is motivated by a desire to remind him of that fact and promise that she will have him again soon (Propertius, *Elegiae*, 4.7.94).

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[520] Ogden 2002: 165.

Deceased sexual partners appear in message dreams for much the same reasons as others (they may appear in symbolic dreams for different reasons). These include; to inform the dreamer that they will soon be reunited by the dreamer's death (for example Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 4.22-37 and a variant in which Sulla's son appears while he is asleep and asks him to come with him to live with Metella, Sulla's late wife; Plutarch, *Sulla*, 37); to berate the dreamer for their actions since the lover's death (for example Propertius, *Elegiae*, 4.7.5; 4.7.14; Seneca, *Troades*, 438-460, in which Hector (futilely, as it will turn out) tells Andromache to stop weeping and save their son); or both (for example, Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 17.351-353; Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, 17.349-353 and *De Bello Judaicae*, 2.114-116; Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 3.8-35); to tell their lover how and why they were killed (Appian, *Punic Wars*, 2; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.353-359; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 8.8) or to provide comfort (for example Propertius, *Elegiae*, 4.11.81-84). (I have not assumed that Achilles and Patroclus were lovers, but have assumed that Hercules and Hylas are; on Lucan's Pompey, see below).

The reason that Cynthia appears in a dream may be because, as noted above, ghosts who reveal the name of their murderer usually choose a dream in which to do so. The information that the ghost needs to give to the dreamer in this case is very specific and the dream is perhaps considered the best vehicle for this. It plays intertextually with the old epic message dream, and allows for an often poignant conversation between the dreamer and their dead loved one. Although some of the poem is indeed comic, it gains a more serious, tragic air if read as a dream, for while ghosts appearing to those awake tends to be the purview of comedy and satire, dreams of the dead appear in many genres and are often emotional and touching. The dream also allows increased physical interaction between the ex-lovers; whereas Creusa slips from Aeneas' waking embrace

like a dream, Propertius is able to embrace Cynthia *within* the dream, and she slips away only when the dream ends (4.7.96).

Some scholars have doubted whether the poem describes a dream at all, because when Cynthia's ghost appears, the poet says that sleep was suspended since her funeral and she chides him for already starting to fall asleep again (4.7.5; 4.7.14). Allison, for example, has described the poem as a 'bizarre' and 'humorous' tale of a visit by an 'irate ghost' to an 'insomniac narrator'.[521] However, this view is not widely accepted and the experience is usually described straightforwardly as a dream.[522] Although some of the poem is, indeed, comic, it gains a more serious, tragic air if read as a dream, for while ghosts appearing to those awake tends to be the purview of comedy and satire, dreams of the dead appear in many genres and are often emotional and touching. This more serious tone fits with the epic overtones of the poem (see below). It seems safe to assume that the poem should be read as a dream, given the overt references to dreams towards the end, the nature of the dead Cynthia's physical interaction with Propertius and the fact that this particular type of ghost story tends to appear in the form of a dream.

The poem links the appearance of the dead in dreams with the 'sacred gates' mentioned by Cynthia, that is, the Gates of Sleep/Dream, through which both dreams and ghosts come from the underworld, in reference to the end of *Aeneid* 6.[523] The precise meaning and significance of the Virgilian Gates has been the subject of so much scholarly discussion that it is not necessary to go over it again in detail here. Otis has provided a

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[521] Allison 1984: 357.
[522] See for example Dufallo 2005: 112.
[523] The phrase *Somni portae* is usually assumed to derive from somnus, sleep, and translated as Gates of Sleep in reference to the personified Sleep seen elsewhere in the poem, as argued, for example, by Highbarger; Highbarger 1940: 70. However, the Homeric phrase referring to the gates of horn and ivory is δοιαὶ γάρ τε πύλαι ἀμενηνῶν εἰσὶν ὀνείρων, which implies that *Somni* may be derived from *somnium*, dream; see Horsfall 1995: 146.

summary of theories on why Aeneas left by the Ivory Gate up to the time he was writing in 1959. These include: Aeneas came in by the Ivory Gate (by the *Somnia…vana* 6.283-284) and so has to leave the same way (Highbarger); Aeneas leaves before midnight, and true dreams only emerge after midnight (Everett, Norden – see Chapter Five, pp274-276); Aeneas has lost the golden bough and needs to hide among the false dreams that look like real people (Rolland); the dreams are only false to the majority of men, not to Aeneas (Haarhoff); Aeneas does not grasp the truth of what he has seen, but must win by merit, not foreknowledge (Brignoli) and finally, Aeneas had to leave by this gate because he was not, in fact, truly a shade (Ooteghem). Otis himself prefers this last theory, observing that Aeneas is, indeed, not a true shade and arguing that the whole experience is a dream and the character of Aeneas in the dream is not a true shade, so he must leave by the gate of false dreams.[524] More recently, some have argued that the phrase actually does mean that all of the preceding vision of Rome's future glory was a false dream.[525]

One motif that is missing from imaginative literature of this period is a *katabasis* through a dream, such as that in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Literature of this period tends to draw a firmer line between a physical journey to the underworld (*katabasis*) and visitations by ghosts. The Virgilian conception of dreams travelling out from the land of the dead suggests that, if dreams come out through the Gates from the underworld, ghosts may also come out with them, but does not suggest that dreams provide an opportunity for *katabasis*, which requires substantial waking action and actual geographical travel while awake.

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[524] Otis 1959: 174-176.

[525] See for example Boyle 1986: 142-146. For a more recent bibliography, see Horsfall 1995: 146. For a history of philological and editorial work on this section, see Thomas 2001: 193-198.

As regards Propertius 4.7, the most important quality of the Gates of Sleep/Dream is that they are situated at the border of the underworld and that the dead may pass through them. In Virgil's formulation, ghosts send true things through the horn gate and they send false things 'to heaven' (*ad caelum*) through the ivory gate (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 6.893-899). This is why Cynthia refers to both dreams and ghosts coming through the gates; in Propertius, the implication is that the shades come with the dreams, but are forced back in the morning (Propertius, *Elegiae*, 4.7.87-90). Propertius does not suggest that dreams are ghosts or ghosts dreams, and nor does the Virgilian passage. Since the dead enter the world of the living with dreams, it is convenient for them to communicate with the living through a dream.

It is Cynthia's ghost, her shade (one of the *manes*), that visits Propertius, but, unlike the insubstantial shades of the *Odyssey*, the poet's description of Cynthia is viscerally physical. Her clothes are charred to her side, her ring destroyed by fire, her lips worn away by the river Lethe and her fingers and hands bony and brittle (Propertius, *Elegiae*, 4.7.8-12).

Gruesome, mutilated or otherwise unpleasant looking ghosts appear several times in dream stories of the Roman period, but are rarely attested earlier. The earliest examples of wounded and bloody ghosts in dreams appear in Tibullus' *Carmina* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. The detail of the blood in Tibullus' poem is part of his attempt to horrify Nemesis (standing in for his lover) to do what he wants.[526] Virgil uses wounded ghosts twice, first in the dream in which Dido's husband tells her who murdered him, where the ghost's wound demonstrates how he was killed (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.353-359). The second

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[526] See further Murgatroyd 1989: 138-139.

wounded ghost is Hector, in Aeneas' dream, who appears in the state he was in after being dragged behind Achilles' chariot following his death in the *Iliad*. As Kragelund has rightly pointed out, when Aeneas asks Hector what has marred his face and why he sees wounds, he is not asking Hector how he died (there is no reason to suppose that he would have forgotten) but why Hector is appearing to him in such a fashion (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 2.270-302).[527] The reason he appears in this fashion is to remind Aeneas that Troy is lost; one of the main themes of the *Iliad* is that Troy's demise will certainly follow Hector's, so Virgil is reminding both Aeneas and the reader that there is no reason for Aeneas to stay in Troy, as the city is doomed no matter what he does. This reminder is necessary in order to justify Aeneas' escape from the city, which he makes only because Hector tells him to.

There is no single reason for the appearance of these figures in this period. Kragelund has collected together a number of examples of this theme and argued that the appearance of mutilated figures in ancient literature has a different function and significance in Greek literature than it does in 'Roman'; that figures of dead people appearing in dreams in 'Roman' literature choose to 'put on' a particular appearance, rather than automatically appearing in the state in which they died and that a wounded figure appearing in a dream signifies misfortune for the dreamer or others, or sometimes for the shade seen in the dream.[528] Kragelund argues that the state of Hector's body in the *Aeneid* may be read as a code, informing Aeneas of approaching disaster.[529]

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[527] Kragelund 1976: 13.
[528] Kragelund 1976: 14, 17, 20. The examples he gives are: a poet's rebuke in which he suggests his addressee's deceased little sister will appear in a dream covered in blood from the accident that killed her (Tibullus, *Carmina*, 2.6.37), Dido's dream in which her husband shows her how he was killed (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.353-359) (see also Appian, *Punic Wars*, 2), Anna's dream of Dido (Ovid, *Fasti*, 3.639-648), the appearance of Remus to Faustulus and Acca (Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.455-492),a Fury pretending to be Tiburna describing the ghost of her late husband Murrus (Silius Italicus, *Punica* 2.561579), Laius making himself look like Tiresias (Statius, *Thebaid*, 2.94-127), Caecina seeing Varus rising from the mud in a bloody mess

However, the gruesome appearance of the ghosts in these dreams, although a clear sign of the deceased's own misfortune, is not a sign to be decoded, in the way that Artemidorus might decode a symbolic dream – it is an aspect of the appearance of a ghost within a dream setting. Kragelund is right to emphasise the ghost's choice to 'put on' an horrific appearance. Since these are usually understood to be actual encounters with the spirits of the dead, we must assume that either the spirit automatically appears in the state of its own corpse, or that the spirit has chosen to appear in this fashion.[530] The first explanation is possible, but since there are many ghost stories from the Roman period in which the ghost does not appear in an horrific state, we must assume that this was not a strongly held idea, and that the writers who depict ghosts in this way have chosen to do so for a particular reason. The appearance of the ghost reinforces the horror of the situation, usually by visually reminding the dreamer of the ghost's manner of death.

In some cases, as in the first example from the *Aeneid*, the dream is one of the stories in which the ghost is informing the dreamer of how they were killed, and the obvious presence of wounds on their body demonstrates the manner of their death. However, although Cynthia has appeared for this reason, this was not possible in her case, because she was killed by poison, which usually leaves no mark. Her grotesque appearance is an aesthetic choice lending a macabre atmosphere to the poem. During the

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and holding out a hand to him, (Tacitus, *Annals*, 1.65), a Christian poem from the fifth century, and the story in Apuleius' *The Metamorphoses* in which Aristomenes thinks that he must have dreamed the murder of Socrates, and Socrates himself also says he dreamed that his throat was cut and his heart pulled out (Apuleius, *The Metamorphoses*, 1.18); Kragelund 1976: 20. This last example is not actually a dream, the characters only thought it was, and the example from the *Punica* is not a dream either. In addition to Kragelund's examples, dead figures in various states of disarray, or described as corpselike or otherwise distressed, appear at Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 3.8-35; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11.650-670; Pausanias 4.13.2-4; Plutarch, *Sulla*, 37; Plutarch, *Alexander*, 50; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 63; Propertius, *Elegiae*, 4.7.5; 4.7.14; Seneca, *Troades*, 438-460; Suetonius, *Nero*, 46.1-2 and Valerius Maximus, 1.7.ext.10.
[529] Kragelund 1976: 29.
[530] We must exclude Caecina's dream of Varus which, although horrific, is a symbolic dream, not a message dream.

early Imperial period, poets of various genres often included gory or gruesome descriptions of ghosts, bodies, battlefields or fights, and Cynthia's appearance here is an early example of this particular trend in descriptive writing.

The question of why Propertius included this poem here is centred around the question of why this poem, which describes Cynthia's ghost and follows her death, appears immediately before 4.8, in which Cynthia appears alive once again. It has been widely accepted for some time now that Latin love elegy is a fictive form of literature, in which the poets' mistresses cannot be wholly assimilated to real women.[531] Recently, elegy has started to be seen as a narrative genre, in which stories are told both in the individual poems and over the whole collection.[532] Only in 4.7 does the first-time reader of Propertius learn of Cynthia's death. Taken together with 4.8, the two poems explain how she died (the slave she angers in 4.8 has killed her in 4.7), and she does not reappear after 4.8. These poems are part of the much larger implied narrative concerning the poet's love affair with Cynthia which is told over the course of the *Elegiae*, and the two poems together act as a farewell to Cynthia.

Poem 4.7 is usually considered to be inspired by epic poetry, though opinions differ concerning which epic poem may have inspired it. There are two main contenders; Achilles' dream of Patroclus in the *Iliad* and Aeneas' dream of Hector in the *Aeneid*. Although Cynthia's appearance mirrors the *Aeneid* more closely, most scholars have opted for the *Iliad* as the primary inspiration. Hutchinson argues that 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 are related to the epics in the order *Aeneid*, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, and this would assume

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[531] Clarke made an attempt to defend the already unfashionable biographical approach in 1976, but by the time Braund wrote her introductory book on Latin literature in 2002, the fictive nature of elegiac mistresses had been widely recognised; Clarke 1976: 132, Braund 2002: 156.
[532] See Liveley and Salzman-Mitchell 2008: 3-6.

Patroclus as the inspiration for 4.7.[533] Allison has suggested that the poem invites a

parallel with Achilles' dream of Patroclus and that the scene presents a reversal of an epic

nekuia, in which the spirit comes to the upper world to recommend punishments for the

living.[534] Dufallo, on the other hand, argues that the poem is related to a Republican

oratorical topos, 'calling up the dead from the underworld' *mortuos ab inferis excitare*,

citing Cicero's *Pro Caelio* as an example, though he also notes that it 'reworks' the

Iliadic Patroclus dream.[535]

      Dué has pointed out that the opening lines of the poem, *Sunt aliquid Manes*, 'The

Shades are something', echoes *Iliad* 23.103-104 and has argued that the subtle difference

between Achilles' realisation that there is a likeness of the dead person in Hades but no

real substance, and Propertius' assertion that the Shades are *something* (his emphasis) and

death does not end all, is the result of Propertius using a slightly different text of the

Iliad.[536] However, Dué's argument disregards the very nature of intertextuality.

Propertius would not be inclined to blindly quote Homer; if he uses and references

elements of epic poetry, he will do so in a new and interesting way. Structurally speaking,

the resemblances of Cynthia's visit to that of either Patroclus or Hector are superficial.

She appears in a gory and mutilated form, like Hector, and some of her complaints relate

to burial, like Patroclus. But Patroclus appeared because he was unable to cross the river,

not having been buried at all, while Cynthia has been quite properly, if hastily, buried and

is thoroughly ensconced in the underworld. Her appearance is similar to that of Hector,

but her message is very different – where Hector tells Aeneas to flee and save himself,

Cynthia's final message is that Propertius will join her soon.

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[533] Hutchinson 2006: 189.
[534] Allison 1984: 357-358.
[535] Dufallo 2005: 113-114.
[536] Dué 2001: 402-4.

Propertius spends much of the poem describing the underworld and his opening line suggests that the main emphasis is on the possibility that something of a person survives after death. He uses Cynthia to depict a visitation from a dead soul that proves that something goes on beyond the grave, but by using a dream to do so, he also calls that proof into doubt. Propertius uses the uncertainty of dream interaction with the dead – is this is a real contact with a dead soul, or just a dream produced by the living person's memory? – to ponder the possibility of the afterlife. The information Cynthia gives him concerning her murder might be considered as a demonstration that this is really her spirit, but 4.8 shows the reader that the narrator knew of her quarrel with Lygdamus, and so undercuts this idea.

Overall, 4.7 leans slightly in favour of something continuing after death. Whereas the Homeric sentiment starts from the assumption that something of a person continues to exist after death and laments that it is not the whole of the person but only a shade, the Propertian sentiment starts from the assumption that death is the absolute end and takes comfort from the fact that something, however insubstantial, continues after death. However, the nature of the dream interaction means that this 'something' could be merely a memory, and allows the poem to stand as an exploration of the idea without offering definitive answers.

As far as the cultural imagination is concerned, this poem demonstrates the importance of the idea that the dead might visit the living through dreams, though usually only when they had a particularly strong reason to do so – requests for burial or vengeance are far more common than appearances that only comfort the dreamer. They tend to visit through dreams more often than appearing to waking people, possibly partly because this may

seem more plausible (as dreams of the dead are a common experience, waking encounters with ghosts less so). This theme is found more often in imaginative literature than in literature of record. Ghost stories are similar to 'folktales', in that they are stories people tell each other that are not necessarily 'believed', but the idea that there might be something in them is willingly entertained in certain circumstances. Some of the stories reflected in Plautine comedy, for example, might represent this sort of tale. These stories exist on the edge of the imagination, somewhere between a religious idea and an outright fiction.[537] These stories are told because they are exciting and unusual, like fiction, but also come with a vague sense that they might really happen (the question of 'belief' and its relevance will be discussed further in Chapter Five). This could be exploited by poets such as Propertius, who could use the idea that the dead might visit through a dream to bring up questions about the afterlife without providing answers and to present a situation that may either be viewed as a real experience, or as an empty but comforting illusion.

Dreams That Come from Within the Dreamer

Wish-fulfilment Dreams

Anxiety and wish-fulfilment dreams are scattered throughout ancient literature. They are never especially numerous and there are certain genres in which they do not appear; Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi*, for example, records only those dreams which are considered to

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[537] To take a modern example, a flight attendant, having recounted a ghost story and been asked whether she believed in it, said 'I believe in things like that to a certain extent'; Santino 1988: 209.

be sacred, and the political tracts of Near Eastern kings show no interest in personal dreams. However, because these dreams can be particularly useful when it comes to revealing character, they occur occasionally throughout historical and imaginative literature.

Wish-fulfilment dreams are the most common of these dreams, and the most common wish-fulfilment dreams are erotic dreams. Unsurprisingly, then, these dreams are usually found in the Greek novels. For example, the lovelorn king in *Chaereas and Callirhoe* dreams of Callirhoe; Clitophon discusses how the worries and wishes of the soul come out in sleep, and relates this to his dream about kissing Leucippe in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, and not only do Daphnis and Chloe have erotic dreams about each other, but when Daphnis shares a bed with Chloe's father, he often embraces and kisses him, dreaming that he is Chloe.[538] These dreams might be said to be significant in that they reveal the lovers' innermost feelings to themselves, but not beyond this.

These lovers' dreams are surprisingly rare in Latin love elegy, though they are mentioned from time to time. The author who refers to these dreams most often is Ovid. In one case, Ovid offers a warning against taking too much notice of dreams like this: Byblis' forbidden love for her brother comes out in her dreams, which she reassures herself may be enjoyed, as long as she does not attempt similar behaviour in waking life; but later she tries to convince herself that it is a good idea to tell her brother, wondering whether dreams are important, and what her dreams might mean (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 9.472-486; 9.495-496). As with all of these dreams, there is no suggestion that they come from the divine or that they reflect anything other than the dreamer's preoccupations, and in Byblis' case, the thought that they might be more meaningful leads to disaster. This

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[538] Chariton, Chaereas and Callirhoe, 6.7.2; Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 1.6; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, 2.10; 3.9.

reaffirms the idea that ancient writers considered many dreams to come from the internal workings of the dreamer's mind, and to be relatively unimportant.

Anxiety Dreams: Lucan

Anxiety dreams are more rare in ancient literature but, as can be seen from the Appendices, they do occur. However, there are some dreams that, although they have been classified differently (see Appendix Two), should perhaps also be interpreted as anxiety dreams.

Lucan's epic poem, the *Bellum Civile*, is devoid of the usual divine machinery and includes no scenes depicting the gods driving the plot, though it does include supernatural elements including prophecy, most notably from the Pythia and through necromancy.[539] We might expect, as in the novels, to find the gods working through dreams, since they are denied the opportunity to actively guide the action in any other way and there is a strong epic tradition in favour of this approach. Dreams in the *Aeneid*, for example, are used as part of the divine machinery and are one of the ways in which gods deliver messages to the living.[540]

However, Lucan includes only three dreams throughout his poem and not one of them is a divine message dream. Each one has been classified differently in the Appendices because each takes a different outer form (what Freud would call their

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[539] Dick has noted that accurate prophecy plays an important part in foreshadowing the climax in epic poetry, and is usually delivered by a deity, ghost, or qualified seer, to ensure that the reader knows the prophecy is reliable, but in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, there is no divine machinery, so prophecies can only be delivered by a professional seer, a ghost or the omniscient narrator Dick 1963: 37.
[540] See for example Virgil, *Aeneid*, 3.150-171, 4.557-572, 7.414-458, 8.30-65, 8.71-78, 8.84-85 (gods), 1.353-359, 2.270-302, 4.353 (the dead).

'manifest content'); one is a message dream from a dead person, one is a symbolic dream and one is a set of anxiety dreams (similar dreams come to a number of different people). But Lucan's narrative suggests that they all ultimately originate from within the dreamers and may all be understood as anxiety dreams.

The dreams which are clearly described as anxiety dreams appear in the last of the dream sequences. After the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar's troops are harassed by dreams, and their crime is foremost in their thoughts as they dream about the battle. The narrator imagines that the battlefield groaned and guilty spirits haunted the night. Victory brings punishment and the soldiers each see different visions of the ghosts of murdered citizens, and some see their brothers or fathers (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 7.764-776). The narrator notes that all these shades are in Caesar (*omnes in Caesare manes*), that is, all these deaths are ultimately Caesar's fault, and speculates that the faces of the Eumenides looked like this when tormenting Orestes (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 7.776-778). Caesar himself sees all the swords of Pharsalia and is attacked by monsters. There is a reference to his guilty mind, which allows him to escape seeing Pompey among the shades or in the Styx, because Pompey is still alive; this indicates that the dreams are to be understood as the products of the soldiers' guilty consciences (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 7.779-786).

The other two dreams in the *Bellum Civile* are both experienced by Pompey. Neither is explicitly described as an anxiety dream, but the narrator implies that both may be anxiety dreams. Pompey's first dream appears to be a message dream from his late wife Julia, Caesar's niece. Julia appears on a flaming pyre and tells him that, since the civil war began, she has been driven from the Elysian Fields and into Stygian darkness. She

says that Pompey will never stop being Caesar's son-in-law and civil war will make him

hers, and that he was successful when married to her, but that his luck changed with his

marriage (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 3.8-35). Her emphasis at all times is on the importance

of their marriage, as a reminder of Pompey's guilt in this 'more than civil' (*plus quam*

civilian) war, that is, a civil war between men who ought to be bound together by the

familial ties of in-laws (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 1.1).

The dream of Julia recalls the appearances of Patroclus to Achilles in the *Iliad*,

and of Hector to Aeneas in the *Aeneid*, as Propertius' dream of Cynthia did.[541] Lucan

echoes Patroclus' complaint in Julia's accusation that because of Pompey's actions, she

has been denied her proper place in the underworld, though that it is his military actions,

rather than lack of burial, which has caused the problem, and the dream performs a

similar function to the Hector dream, as it foretells Pompey's doom as Hector foretold the

fall of Troy. However, this dream lacks any instruction, hope or helpful message and

offers Pompey no action to take to remedy the problem (other than possibly the

somewhat unlikely option of surrender to Caesar).

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[541] Several suggestions have been made as to the formative influences on the Julia dream. According to Bruère, it may have been suggested by Morpheus' appearance to Alcyone in the form of Ceyx in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, though he also notes that the threat echoes that of Dido, while Currie does not suggest any earlier prototype but ascribes it to Lucan's taste for 'the supernatural and the bizarre'(he suggests that Silius Italicus 'borrowed' it in the *Punica* for Hannibal's last dream, but there is no great similarity between the two); Bruère 1951: 222; Currie 1958: 50; cf. Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 17.158-169. Recent scholarship, following Ahl, has emphasised the parallels between Pompey and Aeneas and has favoured the idea that the dream of Julia is designed to parallel the waking encounter between Aeneas and the ghost of Creusa; see Ahl 1976: 156. See also Rossi 2000: 573; Mills 2005: 57; Thompson 1984: 207, who also compares him to Turnus. Although both instances relate to an apparition of a dead wife, Virgil describes Creusa flying away as like grasping the wings of a fleeting dream, because he is reflecting Homeric descriptions of the shades in the Odyssean underworld slipping away like a dream (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 2.794; Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.207). The Virgilian experience reminds readers of the more prosperous marriage with Lavinia to come, while the Lucanian version reminds them that only defeat and death lie before Pompey; Rossi 2000: 574. Thompson describes this as 'Lucan's version' of Creusa's apparition, though she also notes that Julia's language recalls Dido's words to Aeneas; Thompson 1984: 209. Keith has suggested that there are 'multiple Virgilian models' for this dream sequence, citing the appearances of Hector and Creusa to Aeneas in Book 2 and Allecto's 'dream-visit' to Turnus in Book 7; he argues that Lucan 'conflates' this with the vision of Hector, resulting in Pompey's rush to arms; Keith 2000: 87-88.

Like Propertius, Lucan uses the dream to explore his character's feelings about

death. Morford views Pompey's dream as looking forward to his death, and his

renunciation of fear of death immediately after waking reinforces this.[542] Dick suggests

that the dream allows Lucan to use Pompey as a mouthpiece for his own feelings about

death (if sensation ends with death, the apparition is false; if sensation remains after

death, then death is not to be feared).[543] Dick has also argued that all the forms of

prophecy used in the *Bellum Civile* are connected with death and 'underscore the poet's

thesis that knowledge of the future annihilates hope' and prophecy as a narrative device is

used to underline its futility.[544] Julia's prophetic statement that civil war will make

Pompey hers is, in fact, the only prophecy made in a dream in the *Bellum Civile*, and if

Pompey were feeling sufficiently pessimistic, he could easily have imagined this

consequence for himself.

Pompey's second dream occurs the night before the battle of Pharsalus, when he dreams

that he is sitting in his own theatre and the crowd are cheering (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 7.7-

18). This dream is found in some historical sources, but all post-date Lucan, so it is

difficult to say how far Lucan may have deviated from the original source (assuming that

there was one and that this dream is not an invention of Lucan's).[545] The narrator notes

that it was an empty apparition (7.9) and wonders rhetorically whether Pompey's mind

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[542] Morford 1967: 80.
[543] Dick 1963: 46.
[544] Dick 1963: 49. Divinatory practices and the desire for foreknowledge of the future are not looked upon well in Lucan; Arruns is horrified by what he sees in the entrails and refuses to reveal what he knows of the future, Appius Claudius forces the Pythia to prophesy against her will and causes her destruction and his death, Sextus is described as giving in to fear for consulting the witch Erichtho, and Cato refuses to consult the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, saying that he has no need of it (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 1.584-639, 5.65-236, 6.423-424, 9.564-584). See also Morford, who argues that 'it is clear' that Lucan himself was sceptical about dreams as a method of divination; Morford 1967: 76.
[545] Plutarch, *Caesar*, 42; Plutarch, *Pompey*, 68; Appian, *Bellum Civile*, 2.10.68.

had wandered back to happier times, or whether his sleep had foretold the opposite of what he saw and was actually a bad omen (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 7.19-27). No definitive answer is given. Dick has emphasised Lucan's provision of alternative readings, arguing that he is 'exploding one of the most venerable of the epic devices'.[546] Lucan will not tell his reader that these dreams are internal anxiety dreams, he leaves the reader to make up their own mind, but his narrator leaves little doubt as to his own feelings on the subject.

Morford has identified guilt as one of the main themes of the *Bellum Civile*, and of the dream sequences in it.[547] The theme of guilt certainly ties together Pompey's first dream of Julia and the dreams of Caesar and his men and, despite Pompey's ruminations on the possibility of life after death, guilt is the most likely source of these dreams. Pompey's second dream is a little more complicated. His dream of success, placed immediately before his defeat, is a poignant reminder of his doom. One of the strongest themes in the poem is that of impending doom, as the narrator sympathises with the enemies of the ultimate victor, Caesar. The dreams provide what Morford calls 'colour' and add to overall gloomy tone of the poem.[548] The narrator's reference to Pompey's second dream as 'empty' (*vana*) seems to rule out the possibility that the dream was a divine omen (following the rule of opposites sometimes employed in dream books) but, rather than proceeding from guilt, this dream proceeds from anxiety ('from his troubled sleep', *sollicitos... somnos*) and emerges in the form of a desperate and illusory wish-fulfilment (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 7.8).

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[546] Dick 1963: 46.
[547] Morford 1967: 83.
[548] See Morford 1967: 75. See also Pelling, who argues that Pompey's dreams should be understood as both external, possibly divine, dreams and internal anxiety dreams at the same time; Pelling 1997: 205.

Confusing your Characters: Symbolic dreams

One of the main problems for a character in an imaginative work who has apparently received a significant symbolic dream, is to determine, first, whether or not the dream was divine and secondly, if it was a divine omen, what it means. Frequently, in these cases, the reader is able to ascertain for themselves whether or not the dream was divine because they already know what it means, while the characters are left in the dark. The reason for the author to include such a dream is to create dramatic irony by allowing the audience or reader access to privileged knowledge not available to the characters. The importance of this technique for the place of dream stories in the cultural imagination is that it reinforces the idea that dreams which may not appear to be divine actually are, and that divine dreams may go unrecognised or be misunderstood because they have been misinterpreted.

Interpreters and Interpretation

We might expect symbolic dreams to be interpreted by professional interpreters of the sort we know existed throughout the ancient world, but in Imperial period literature, this is rarely the case.

In Homer, prophets and seers in general, including characters like Eurydamas, the dream interpreter (and Calchas, who specialises in bird-divining) are well respected, and Penelope asks Odysseus to interpret a dream for her (Homer, *Iliad*, 1.68-72; 5.149-150; *Odyssey*, 19.535). In classical Greek imaginative literature, dream interpreters are

sometimes consulted after a character has experienced a puzzling or apparently significant dream (see for example Homer, *Iliad*, 1.63, Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers*, 38). Noble characters might also be known as good dream interpreters; for example, Euripides' Hecuba wants Helenus or Cassandra to interpret her dream for her (Euripides, *Hecuba*, 78-89). Dream interpreters in these texts appear to be respected and dream interpretation might be carried out by an aristocratic prophet such as Cassandra.

However, in later imaginative literature, dream interpreters appear much less frequently and, when they do, they are not referred to in a complimentary manner (see Chapter Five pp283-286). Plautus, who was, in this respect as in others, transmitting Greek drama makes use of dream interpretation, but his dream interpreters tend to be lower class characters. In *Curculio*, for example, Cappadox asks Palinurus what he thinks about the meaning of the dream he had last night. (Cappadox is suffering from various health problems, and attempts incubation in the temple of Asclepius to cure them, but this does not work, and he departs highly unsatisfied, which is perhaps why he asks Palinurus to interpret his dream, rather than relying on the professional interpreters at the shrine; Plautus, *Curculio*, 216). Palinurus proudly tells him that he is so good at dream interpretation, the dream interpreters themselves come to him, but then the cook appears and tells Palinurus to go and serve the food while he interprets the dream (Plautus, *Curculio*, 247-255). Palinurus tells Cappadox that he learned everything he knew from the cook, and leaves.[549] Apollodorus refers to an upper-class dream interpreter (Priam's son Aesacus), but this is because he is retelling a much older story as faithfully as possible (rather than deliberately altering the story to suit his own era) (Apollodorus,

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[549] It has been suggested that the reason that this dream interpretation is given to the cook, rather than to Palinurus (who does not reappear after this) is that the same actor played both Palinurus and Curculio, and needed time to change while the cook provides the dream interpretation; see Conrad 1918: 398.

Library, 3.12.5). The result of this tendency is not that no one interprets dreams, but that they are less likely to be a professional dream interpreter, and characters frequently interpret their own dreams when interpretation is required.

The most significant appearance of a dream interpreter in imaginative literature of the first two centuries AD is in Ovid's *Amores* 3.5 which presents a dream, followed by its interpretation by an augur. Since the dream exists in the narrative solely in order to be interpreted, it presents a series of clear symbols which the augur interprets easily. The lover dreams of a cow and a bull, which the augur tells him represent himself and his mistress, but the cow is pecked by a crow, representing a bawd, and a black bruise on her breast shows that she will be unfaithful (Ovid, *Amores*, 3.5). The purpose of the dream is to provide a bad omen for the relationship, to make the poet afraid and suspicious, and to foreshadow the discovery, in 3.11a, that the poet's mistress has, indeed, been unfaithful. Some later literature (outside the scope of this study) refers to dream interpreters, such as the prose fiction concerning the fall of Troy attributed to Dictys of Crete, but, like Apollodorus, this is included as part of a new telling of a much older story.[550]

The Audience as Dream Interpreters[551]

Although professional dream interpreters may appear, other characters often try to interpret apparently significant dreams. Characters in the Greek novels, for example, often incorrectly interpret their own dreams (see for example Xenophon of Ephesus,

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[550] The story refers to interpreters who interpreted Hecuba's dream of the torch and to a dream of Odysseus; Dictys of Crete, 3.26; 6.14.
[551] Meaning the notional audience, i.e., the readership.

Ephesiaka, 5.8). In *Chaireas and Kallirhoe*, a misinterpreted dream has a particularly

unfortunate effect, as not only does Kallirhoe come to believe (wrongly) that Chaireas is

dead, she also cries out his name in her sleep and arouses the jealousy of her new

husband Dionysios (Chariton, *Chaireas and Kallirhoe*, 3.7). Kallirhoe also misinterprets

her next dream. She dreams that she rescues Chaireas, but she remains entirely unmoved

and not remotely cheered up by this aspect of the dream, as she interprets it to mean that

he is dead (Chariton, *Chaireas and Kallirhoe*, 4.1).

In the novels, the reader usually knows that the character has misinterpreted their

dream because the omniscient narrator has already conveyed to them information the

dreamer does not have (for example, that Chaireas is alive). However, in other works

(such as plays and epic poems) the audience or reader may be able to interpret the dream

successfully where the character cannot because they know the whole story of which the

play or poem is only telling a part. In an historical or mythological play or poem, the

audience knows what will happen later in the piece or after the end point of the work,

which the characters do not. This means that, while the characters struggle to work out

whether their dream was a divine sign or not and if so, what it means, the audience know

that the dream is divine because they know what the dream is accurately predicting and

are able to interpret it correctly. The dream is designed to be comprehensible to the

audience, but not to the characters.

We will illustrate this with another case study, from pseudo-Seneca's *Octavia*. The

question of how much the audience is supposed to know about the eventual fulfilment of

the dreams has been particularly important in scholarship on this play, as it contributed to

the eventual conclusion (now widely accepted) that the play is not, in fact, Senecan, but

of much later date, after the death of Poppaea and possibly after the death of Nero. There are two dreams in the *Octavia*, and the two relate directly to each other. If the play was Senecan, the audience would know the eventual fate of the first dreamer but not of the second – it is the clear relationship between the two that indicates that the audience are expected to know the fates of all the major characters.

As there has been some debate in the past about the precise translation of these passages, I have given them both in full here.

Octavia's dream:

> Quam saepe tristis umbra germani meis   115
> offertur oculis, membra cum solvit quies
> et fessa fletu lumina oppressit sopor:
> modo facibus atris armat infirmas manus
> oculosque et ora fratris infestus petit,
> modo trepidus idem refugit in thalamos meos;   120
> persequitur hostis atque inhaerenti mihi
> violentus ensem per latus nostrum rapit.

How often the sad shade of my brother is brought before my eyes, when rest has loosened my limbs and my eyelids, tired from weeping, are weighed down with sleep! Sometimes he arms his feeble hands with black torches and fiercely aims at the eyes and face of his brother; sometimes, in terror, he flees back in to my bedroom; his enemy [Nero] pursues him and, as he [Britannicus] clings to me, he [Nero] violently drives his sword through our side [i.e. both our bodies].

Poppaea's dream:

> ... visa nam thalamos meos
> celebrare turba est maesta: resolutis comis
> matres Latinae flebiles planctus dabant;   720
> inter tubarum saepe terribilem sonum
> sparsam cruore coniugis genetrix mei
> vultu minaci saeva quatiebat facem.
> Quam dum sequor coacta praesenti metu,

diducta subito patuit ingenti mihi   725
tellus hiatu; lata quo praeceps toros
cerno iugales pariter et miror meos,
in quis resedi fessa. venientem intuor
comitante turba coniugem quondam meum
natumque; properat petere complexus meos   730
Crispinus, intermissa libare oscula:
irrupit intra tecta cum trepidus mea
ensemque iugulo condidit saevum Nero.

…for there seemed to be a sorrowful crowd filling my bedroom: with
unfastened hair Latin matrons gave out weeping and lamentations; and amidst a
frequent, terrible sound of trumpets, the mother of my husband with a fierce,
threatening expression, brandished a torch sprinkled with blood. And as I was
following her, compelled to do so by fear, suddenly the earth was split apart and
a great chasm opened, which I was borne headlong into, and I saw my
marriage-bed, and wondered at the same time at it, and I lay down on it, tired. I
saw my former husband and my son coming, accompanied by a crowd;
Crispinus hastened to seek my embrace, to pour on me kisses that had been
interrupted, when Nero, in a state of agitation, burst into my room and buried a
sword savagely in his [Crispinus'] throat. [552]

In the past, there has been some doubt as to who is being killed by whom, and who or

what has previously 'interrupted' Crispinus' kisses. 'Nero' as the subject of the last

clause, combined with *condidit* in the active, makes it clear that Nero is the killer, while

the lack of a possessive pronoun suggests the victim is Crispinus, not Poppaea. Crispinus'

kisses might have been 'interrupted' either by divorce, or by death.[553] Much of the debate

concerning the date of the play focussed on whether the author knew that Nero killed

Poppaea and her son, and ordered the execution of Crispinus, and whether, in this case,

the dream referred to these events.[554] The dream of Octavia earlier in the play was

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[552] I would like to thank Niall Livingstone for his help in translating these passages.

[553] For example, Carbone has argued that Poppaea falls into the underworld, where Crispinus and her son meet her, although, historically, she predeceased Crispinus; Carbone 1977: 63.

[554] For example, Carbone argued that the dream predicts Nero's death and suggested that it will involve a sword to the throat. However, since Nero is clearly the attacker in both dreams, it seems more likely that it is the deaths of his wives and their relatives that the dreams are foretelling. Pease, on the other hand, argued that the dream, referring to the death of Crispinus, is a prediction made before the event by Seneca himself,

important because the author of the play clearly knew about the fate of Britannicus and the exile of Octavia, and presumably also knew of her death; if the earlier dream predicted Octavia's death, it is likely that the later dream predicted that of Poppaea.

For this reason, the parallels between the two dreams have been the subject of some debate. Kragelund argues that Octavia's recurring dreams are both 'psychological and oracular' and terms them 'frustration dreams', which he defines as a wish-fulfilment dream that has not worked and has not fulfilled the wish, resulting in frustration.[555] Carbone, on the other hand, has argued that the apparent symmetry between Poppaea's and Octavia's dreams has distracted scholars from the intended parallel between Poppaea's dream and the speech given by the ghost of Agrippina in between the two.[556] Carbone argues that those who see parallels are led by the mistaken belief that Nero, rather than Octavia, is the central character of the play.[557] However, as Kragelund points out, both dreams are set in the empress' bedroom and feature a torch and a murder, by Nero, with a sword; these similarities, and the positioning of the dreams towards the beginning and end of the play, suggest that the reader is intended to see a parallel between the dreams, though the thematic links with Agrippina's appearance as a ghost are also striking.[558]

Both dreams feature two people embracing and Nero attacking them with a sword. Both are unusually worded regarding the victim of the sword – the singular *latus* in Octavia's dream standing for both Octavia and Britannicus and Crispinus' throat in the second being slightly ambiguously phrased. There is a deliberate connection between the

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who correctly guessed that Nero would hasten the death of Crispinus, but did not know the manner of Crispinus' death (suicide); Pease 1920: 392.
[555] Kragelund 1982: 22-23.
[556] Carbone 1977: 59.
[557] Carbone 1977: 60.
[558] See Kragelund 1982: 22.

two; the audience is supposed to remember the earlier dream when presented with the later one. The central character of the play is Octavia and it is her tragedy that is the focus. Poppaea's dream demonstrates that Octavia's tragedy will be repeated in her replacement, with Poppaea and her ex-husband falling victim to Nero just as Octavia and her brother had done. All of this suggests that the author knew of and deliberately invokes the deaths of Poppaea and Crispinus, as well as those of Octavia and Britannicus. The symmetry of these dreams fits with the overall symmetries of the play as a whole.[559]

These dreams are clearly symbolic omens, not literal prophecies. Pease argued that, because the prophecies of the deaths of Poppaea, Crispinus and Nero himself in the *Octavia* do not eventually come true in the same way as they are prophesied, it can be inferred that they were written before these people had died by someone with no knowledge of their ultimate fates. However, literal prophecies in dreams, though they occur, are relatively rare. The author of the *Octavia* was presumably aware of the eventual fate of Octavia and certainly knew that Britannicus had been poisoned, but depicted both of them as stabbed by Nero in Octavia's dream. Kragelund has pointed out that a burning torch in a dream is usually a bad sign (stemming from Hecuba's dream; Apollodorus 3.12.5).[560] He argues that, together with the mourning women, these elements show that the dream is predicting Poppaea's death, and that the fact that it does not allude to the manner of her death is irrelevant, because the semiotic system for dream interpretations is not complex enough to reflect the precise manner of death for an individual.[561] Although Kragelund relies a little too much on the idea that all ancient

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[559] See further Lucas 1921: 92.
[560] See for example Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.21.42-43; Lucan, *Bellum Civile*, 3.8-35; Ovid, *Heroides*, 16.45-50; Virgil, *Aeneid*, 5.636-639, though this is a lying dream.
[561] Kragelund 1982: 10-11.

authors followed the same semiotic system of dream interpretation, his main point is valid – the dream clearly foretells Poppaea's death, as Octavia's predicted hers.

These dreams can only fulfil their dramatic function properly if the audience know something about them that the characters do not. Certain genres of ancient imaginative literature – chiefly epic poetry and drama – tend to tell only part of a bigger story, which the audience is expected to know and which will inform their understanding of the section of the story presented in each poem or play (usually mythical, but in this case historical). Often, these works include a prophecy which will not be fulfilled within the span of the work itself. This trope goes back to the *Iliad*, which depicts neither the death of Achilles, nor the fall of Troy, though both are prophesied within the course of the poem. The audience of this play should know that Octavia, Crispinus and Poppaea would all be killed by Nero, and interpret their dreams accordingly.

This means that, whereas the characters in the play are uncertain how to react to the dream or where it comes from, the audience know that the dream is a divine omen because they know that it will be fulfilled. (This is not a case of *post hoc ergo propter hoc*; the later event does not occur *because of* the dream, but, because the later event occurs, the audience know that the dream is genuinely divine). Poppaea's nurse interprets her dream incorrectly because she lacks the superior knowledge of the audience. The problem faced by the characters in these situations may reflect the sort of real life dilemma faced by someone like Suetonius on experiencing a dream of uncertain origin, and it is in order to help solve this sort of problem that someone might turn to a dream book. As we have seen, the other problem with symbolic dreams as opposed to message dreams for the dreamer is that, they tend to be purely predictive and the event they

presage is unavoidable no matter how hard the dreamer might try to counter it. Symbolic dreams are the most difficult dreams to understand and the most difficult to deal with.

On the Border: Ambiguous Dreams

Some dreams in imaginative literature, however, are deliberately ambiguous and even message dreams can be presented in an ambiguous manner in a literary text. Either the author does not explain whether they represent a genuine experience through the medium of a dream or not, or the author deliberately casts doubt on their divine or other-wordly provenance. This confirms that both explanations of dreams – that they might represent divine or otherwordly visitations, or that they were psychological phenomena – were current within the cultural imagination, and suggests that both might be thought to hold equal weight, though some authors are more inclined than others to suggest that there is nothing divine or supernatural about them.

For example, towards the end of Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*, the poet receives instructions from Cupid which seem to come to him in a dream, though he twice questions whether or not he was truly asleep and dreaming. Ovid does not suggest that Cupid spoke to him through a dream; rather, he imagines that either Cupid spoke to him and he was not, in fact, asleep, or that it was a dream (the implication being that, if it was a dream, it was not Cupid, though this is not stated directly). This is not, then, a message dream; it is either a dream or a message, and the poet emphasises his doubt that he was really asleep, twice suggesting that he was not really asleep and dreaming (556 and 576). The purpose of including the dream is to suggest that this particular piece of advice

comes directly from Cupid, though it seems that Ovid did not think a message dream was a good way to do this; rather, he blurs the line between dreams and reality and allows the communication from the god to be deliberately unclear and mysterious.

We will further explore the issue of ambiguous dreams and their implications by looking at another case study; the Isis dreams at the end of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

Double Meanings: Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*

Lucius' dreams of Isis at the end of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* clearly demonstrate the continuing importance of message dreams within the cultural imagination. However, these dreams, which have sometimes been the subject of intense academic debate, are particularly complex and may be considered more ambiguous than many other ancient imaginative dreams.

We know from Apuleius' philosophical works and from the *Apologia* that he had an interest in the connection between dreams and the divine. He argues that the soul, especially when young, might go into so deep a sleep that it returns to a primal nature, which is divine and immortal, and may predict the future (Apuleius, *Apologia*, 43). He describes *daemones* (Greek δαίμονες) as messengers between heaven and earth who convey human hopes to the gods and bring messages back again; each is assigned to a different area, including creating dreams (*De Deo Socratis*, 6).[562] He notes that it was in this way that dreams warned Hannibal that he would lose an eye, and that it would have been beneath gods to create a dream for Hannibal themselves (*De Deo Socratis*, 7-8). He

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[562] The relationship between dreams and δαίμονες was sketched out in Plato, *Symposium*, 202d-203a.

claims that divinities want different things in different countries, and if humans get it wrong, they are informed through dreams, oracles and prophecies (*De Deo Socratis*, 14). He describes Sleep and Love as among a number of superior *daemones* and also states that each person has a personal *daemon* who acts as a guardian and helps the person it is connected to through dreams (*De Deo Socratis*, 16; see Plato, *Timaeus*, 90a).

Most important, in his *Apologia*, Apuleius implies that to act on a message or command received in a dream is not only sensible, but may be used in court as evidence that any crimes committed for such a reason are not the fault of the dreamer. He argues that if he is accused of owning something magical, he can counter the accusation several ways, one of which is to claim that a dream made him carry it (*Apologia*, 54). He emphasises that this explanation would not be abnormal or outside of common experience.[563]

We are not surprised, then, to find the protagonist of the *Metamorphoses* experiencing a series of divine dreams, all of which he obeys absolutely. Up until Book 11, dreams have appeared in dream ghost stories and in one symbolic dream which may or may not be viewed as misinterpreted, and characters have obeyed the requests of ghosts made through dreams, but no divine dreams have appeared at all.[564] Isis, as we will see in Chapter Five, was one of a number of deities who were likely to give commands in dreams and, although Lucius does not participate in incubation ritual (which would be impossible for a donkey), his fervent praying in a secret place and at a special time of night might be expected to produce some kind of visionary response from

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[563] As Harrison has argued, the *Apologia* probably pre-dates the *Metamorphoses*, as there are no references to the latter in the former, but some elements of the *Metamorphoses* do seem reminiscent of the *Apologia*; see Harrison 2000: 9-10.

[564] The dream suggests that Charite's husband will die trying to rescue her from the bandits; in fact, she is successfully rescued, but her husband is later murdered by someone else; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 4.27. Ghost stories involving dreams appear at 8.8 and 9.31; in the story of the two friends in the inn, they only think they have been dreaming; 1.17-19.

the goddess (*Metamorphoses*, 10.35-11.2).[565] Isis arranges for him to gain access to some roses in exchange for a lifetime of servitude to her religion, and when Lucius eats the roses and regains his human form, it emerges that a number of people in the crowd had been told to expect such a miracle through dreams as well.

There seems no strong reason to suspect this dream of being anything other than what the narrator declares it to be; a divine message dream which is the salvation of the character Lucius, who devotes himself to Isis in gratitude. Then, over the course of Book 11, Lucius receives more and more dreams, first from Isis, then from Osiris. At first the dreams continue to be helpful and positive, and Lucius' belongings and horse are unexpectedly returned to him. Lucius is initiated into the cult of Isis and all seems well (entry into a sacred space belonging to Isis by dream command is also attested at Pausanias 10.32.13).

However, after he has been initiated into the cult of Isis, Lucius receives more dreams, telling him to go to Rome, and then to be initiated into the related cult of Osiris. Lucius had originally pursued his religious calling, not just out of gratitude to Isis, but in hope of greater benefits (*spe futura beneficiis praesentibus*) following the material benefit he received in the recovery of his possessions (*Metamorphoses*, 11.21). However, following his arrival in Rome, Lucius finds himself in increasing financial difficulty, partly through his lack of connections and partly because of the monetary offerings he keeps having to make to the cults. As time goes on and Lucius is ordered to undergo a third initiation, he himself becomes suspicious that he is being cheated, and says so, only to be persuaded by another dream, in which he is ordered to give even more money than

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[565] Although, as Amat has pointed out, this scene does not represent actual incubation ritual, the sense of an act of devotion including prayer and sleep is still there; Amat 1985: 37.

before (*Metamorphoses*, 11.29). Finally, Lucius is told by Osiris, in a dream, to make a living as an advocate.

The sheer volume of dreams and the amount of money that Lucius hands over to the cults of Isis and Osiris make even the devout narrator himself suspicious; they seem even more suspect to the reader. The question of how seriously we should take the dreams in Book 11 have been the subject of great academic debate. Some argue that we should take all of Book 11 seriously and that it is intended as a sincere story of religious conversion. Festugière, for example, argues that the whole novel is 'a story of a sin and a redemption... a conversion', with Isis in Book 11 in opposition to Fortune/Destiny in the rest of the novel. The story is, therefore, a contrast between these powers, with Isis triumphant in the end.[566] More recently, Shumate has attempted to reconcile Winkler's narratological reading with a reading of Book 11 as a sincere story of conversion, maintaining that the process of conversion appears as a 'shift in cognitive paradigms' as old systems for organising reality 'disintegrate' and new ones are constructed.[567]

Others argue that the scene should be read purely as a comic parody of cult devotees like Lucius. Van Mal-Maeder has argued that the end of the story is missing, and would have returned to a more comical tone.[568] Keulen favours a satirical reading of Book 11, connecting it with an equally satirical reading of the story of Socrates in Book 1.[569] Harrison has argued in the past that the protagonist is being satirised as a dupe taken in by a cult.[570]

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[566] Festugière 1954: 72.
[567] Shumate 1996: 14-15.
[568] Van Mal-Maeder 1997: 117.
[569] Keulen 2003: 107.
[570] Harrison 2000: 250. On Harrison's more recent argument, see below.

Some scholars have suggested that the story of Lucius' conversion at the end of the *Metamorphoses* is roughly autobiographical.[571] Festugière goes so far as to say that the narrator of Book 11 is 'certainly' Apuleius, pointing out that the priest Asinius has been told to initiate 'a citizen of Madaura', that is, according to Festugière, Apuleius himself.[572] He also emphasises the fact that Lucius, like Apuleius, is punished for trying to practice magic (by transformation into an ass) and suggests that, in order to depict the hero's state with so much warmth, Apuleius must have had similar spiritual experience.[573] It can be tempting to see links between Apuleius and his fictional narrator, Lucius, since we know that Apuleius was initiated into various mysteries, and that he was interested in magic, and Isis was sometimes connected with magic in the Roman world.[574] However, the *Metamorphoses* is an extraordinarily complex work of literature, drawing on Lucius of Patrae's lost *Metamorphoses*, Platonic philosophy, popular folk-tale and numerous other influences.[575] A few shared interests between the author and his protagonist do not make it autobiographical.

One of the most influential theories concerning the meaning of Book 11 has been Winkler's argument that the sequence can be read both ways. According to Winkler, the narrator deliberately leaves enough ambiguity that either one of two possible interpretations is equally possible. Readers who tend to share the narrator Lucius' belief in divine dreams will read his joy sincerely, while those who tend towards scepticism will

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[571] See for example Kee 1983: 133.
[572] Festugière 1954: 76.
[573] Festugière 1954: 77, 84. However, Festugière at times takes his argument too far; he also suggests that 'religious feeling does not change' and seems to assimilate all 'personal religion' to Christianity; Festugière 1954: 84.
[574] See Festugière 1954: 76. Festugière finds Apuleius' defence against an accusation of witchcraft in the *Apologia* 'scarcely convincing', despite the fact that the defence was successful – presumably he means it is scarcely convincing to us, and confirms Apuleius' interest in magic; Festugière 1954: 77.
[575] See Harrison 2005: 218.

find just as much justification in the text for believing Lucius to be a gullible fool.[576]

Winkler emphasises the importance of the reader's own religious beliefs (or lack thereof) in their reading of the novel, and argues that this dual understanding has been deliberately written that way by Apuleius, in order to present both sides of the argument.

Harrison, on the other hand, has recently argued that Book 11 of the *Metamorphoses* is a parody of Aelius Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi*.[577] Harrison sets out a series of similarities between the two works which he argues support this theory, but also acknowledges that the strongest argument against it is that there are no references to health or illness in Book 11, which one might expect in a parody of Aristides.[578] This problem seems insurmountable as far as the idea that Book 11 is a direct parody of the *Hieroi Logoi* is concerned. Surely no writer who wished his readers to be amused by a parody of Aristides would omit any mention of illness or medicine.

However, although the *Metamorphoses* may not contain a direct parody of the *Hieroi Logoi*, this does not mean that they are entirely unrelated. Aristides began practising incubation and recording his dreams because he was suffering from an unknown illness and needed help, and presumably, he felt that help had been given, and so chose to continue down that path. As the narrative of the *Hieroi Logoi* progresses, his dreams cease to be related only to his health and he describes dreams connected with other aspects of his life and, most importantly, his career. His reliance on dream-instruction goes beyond the original desire for medical help and becomes a much larger obsession. Judging by the narrative presented in the *Hieroi Logoi*, what was originally a helpful experience takes over his whole life.

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[576] Winkler 1985: 226-227.
[577] Harrison 2000-2001: 248.
[578] Harrison 2000-2001: 250-258, 249.

Apuleius may not have written Book 11 as a direct parody of Aristides, but he may have been inspired by the *Hieroi Logoi* or by others who had undergone similar experiences. When Lucius first receives a dream instruction from Isis, it helps him, but as time goes on, his divine message dreams become an obsession that completely takes him over. Apuleius as author leaves the ultimate source of Lucius' later dreams ambiguous. It may be that they are all genuinely divine and Lucius is indeed better off than he would have been otherwise. Unlike Lucan, Apuleius' narrative does not strongly imply a negative reading of the dreams. However, by having Lucius himself question the truth of his experience and by emphasising his poverty and the amount of money he hands over, Apuleius sows a seed of doubt in the reader's mind – are these all divine commands, or has Lucius become carried away following his first (genuinely divine) experience and is now deluding himself (or worse, being cheated by others)? It is also worth noting the name of the limping priest of Osiris – Asinius. Having been rescued from ass-form, Lucius is now devoting all his wordly goods and fortune to an ass. Rather than assuming, as Winkler suggests, that religiously inclined readers will read the dreams as divine and sceptics will read Lucius as gullible, Apuleius forces both groups to question their automatic assumptions. This is not a question that is intended to be resolved – it is a deliberately ambiguous treatment of divine dreams that allows Apuleius to problematise the question of how one can tell if one has been given a divine command in a dream.

What does this mean for the place of dreams within the cultural imagination? It means that, just as people living in the modern Western world have many different ideas concerning what Dodds would refer to as the 'irrational', so did those in the ancient world. Literary texts like the *Metamorphoses*, or Propertius' *Elegiae*, are able to play

with these different ideas. The author himself may not have a proscriptive idea of which way the text *should* be read.[579] It may be that Apuleius himself could not say whether Lucius' dreams are genuine message dreams or not. However, the idea that they might be was obviously still present within the cultural imagination. The next chapter will question how strongly that idea was held and in what circumstances it was imagined that dreams might form a point of connection with the divine.

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[579] In modern fiction, for example, it is not unknown for an author to deliberately leave a story open-ended; not only is the audience uncertain what the truth of the story is, the author her or himself may not have decided (see for example the film *Broken Flowers*, dir. Jim Jarmusch 2005).

PART THREE: THE PLACE OF DREAMS IN THE GRECO-ROMAN IMAGINATION: A POINT OF CONNECTION WITH THE DIVINE?

CHAPTER FIVE

The Place of Dreams in the Cultural Imagination in the Second Century AD

Dodds chose, as the focal point for his study *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, the period from the accession of Marcus Aurelius to the conversion of Constantine. While noting the inherent problems of periodisation, he suggested that, during this period, material decline in the Greco-Roman world was at its steepest and 'the ferment of new religious feelings', which Dodds connects to this material decline, 'most intense'.[580] Veyne puts the starting point of this change somewhat earlier, seeing the Flavian period as the line of demarcation, and argues that, from this time on, there was a increase in faith in the justice of gods, who would communicate 'en particulier en rêve'.[581] Festugière cites Aristides and Apuleius as evidence of an increased interest in personal religion in the second century AD.[582] Harris discusses the years AD 100-250 under the heading 'A

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[580] Dodds 1965: 3.
[581] Veyne 1986: 259.
[582] Festugière 1954: 85-104.

Victory for Religion?' and argues that Sextus Empiricus was right when he said that predictive dreams were believed in by all men.[583]

The second century AD produced some of the most important dream reports which have survived, from the dreams recorded in the later works of Plutarch at the beginning of the century, through Artemidorus' dream book and Aristides' *Sacred Tales*, to Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* at the end of the century. But was there really an increased feeling of religiosity in this period, a reaction to anxiety? Obviously, this study cannot hope to answer that question in full, but by exploring to what extent the place of dreams in the cultural imagination may have shifted, we may contribute to that debate.

'Belief' and Cultural Imagination

The concept of 'belief' has caused much controversy and debate in various fields. Mathematicians studying logic have tried to compose mathematical formulae in order to measure 'belief', while philosophers have debated the nature and strength of belief.[584] Anthropologists frequently state that 'Tribe X believe Y'; some treat this as an indication of the psychology of the members of the tribe, but, as Leach has pointed out, the statement reflects 'something which is true of the culture as a whole' rather than the innermost feelings of individuals.[585] Southwold, although he disagrees with Leach,

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[583] Harris 2009: 202-216.
[584] See for example Patrick Suppes' attempt to 'measure' and 'construct' beliefs; Suppes 1974: 161 and Hunter 1996: 95.
[585] Leach 1966: 40.

conceded that individuals may publicly adhere to a dogma they privately do not believe.[586]

The question of 'belief' in the ancient world has long been recognised to be a complicated one. Two main questions emerge concerning 'belief' in the ancient world. First, did ancients 'believe' in a strong sense at all, or is the whole concept of 'belief' largely irrelevant to ancient religion? Secondly, can we talk about what a group of people 'believed', or must we restrict ourselves to discussing individuals only, because it is impossible to describe the 'beliefs' of a large number of people?

The problem of understanding the differences between modern monotheistic religions and ancient polytheistic paganism has long been recognised, though finding a solution is more difficult.[587] Harris has recently argued for a reconsideration of ancient 'belief', arguing against the oft-drawn dichotomy between Christianity as a religion of 'belief' and ancient paganism as a religion of practice, thus denying the ancients any faith or belief at all.[588] We certainly should not dismiss the idea of 'belief' out of hand simply because ancient paganism was less dogmatic and less tied to a received text than Christianity. Marshall suggests that the practice of ritual 'produces' belief, a theory which is not dissimilar from the old 'myth and ritual' school of thought.[589] However, not all 'beliefs' proceed from ritual. In the case of dreams, those rituals which are associated with dreams proceed from ideas concerning the dreams themselves – for example, the idea that a bad dream might be harmful leads to the development of rituals to negate the effect of the dream. In the case of incubation, the idea that gods might communicate with

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[586] Southwold 1979: 629.
[587] See for example Beard 1986: 34; Feeney 1998: 13.
[588] Harris 2009: 130-131.
[589] Marshall 2002: 360. On the myth and ritual school, see Doty 2000: 336-345.

or assist mortals through dreams led to the development of the ritual asking for such a dream.[590]

This study, however, is more concerned with the second question. Can we talk about group 'belief'? Can we even describe the 'beliefs' of any one person, considering that people may hold many, often contradictory, ideas over the course of their lifetime? In this area, Veyne's important book *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* has led the way in recent years, most notably with its concept of 'brain-balkanisation' and discussion of the useful idea of 'the plurality of modalities of belief'.[591]

There are some major problems with describing 'belief', of groups or individuals. A person might profess a 'belief' without really 'believing' for a variety of reasons, particularly if threatened, and an individual might believe different things at different times and in different situations.[592] A group may, in theory, all subscribe to the same belief, but, in practice, they may differ; Brink's study of apparently contradictory beliefs in young women at a Catholic school demonstrates that not all those who would enter the same religious affiliation on a census form actually believe the same things.[593] 'Belief' is also something than may be held to a greater or lesser degree. Hunter has categorised belief as either 'categorical' (definite belief in a given statement) or 'probabilistic'

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[590] See Harrisson 2009 (forthcoming).

[591] See Veyne 1988: 92, 135-6.

[592] See for example Veyne 1988: 87, where he discusses his own experience of feeling afraid of ghosts despite ostensibly not believing in them. Some 'beliefs' can be tied to a particular social group or occupation, such as the ghost 'beliefs' investigated by Santino, which are connected particularly with hazardous occupations; see Santino 1988. See also Johnston 1999: 6-7.

[593] Brink 1978: 83. There are some serious flaws in Brink's survey: for example, the statement 'I believe in astrology' is ill-defined, as 'astrology', as opposed to Roman Catholicism, is not a strongly defined set of dogmas. Brink notes that those who were least interested in socially oriented religious rituals (baptism, marriage and so on) were most likely to express a belief in astrology, but the difference is small and, in fact, his statistics show that it is those who believe in reincarnation who are least likely to want to engage in Catholic social rituals. (Brink 1978: 84). Overall, most of the young women surveyed show a stronger allegiance to social religious rituals than to religious beliefs, except in one case; there is a high proportion of positive responses to the statement 'There is a God'. We may tentatively conclude that allegiance to social traditions is generally stronger than adherence to 'beliefs', with the exception of very general statements of 'belief' in an unspecified deity.

(indicating a degree of uncertainty) and argued that most 'beliefs' would belong to the category of 'probabilistic' belief.[594] Many people do not strongly 'believe' in anything, but do not strongly 'disbelieve' either, but are perfectly content with a state of vague uncertainty which may lean towards belief or disbelief. To talk of what a very large group of people do or not 'believe', therefore, is impossible.

However, the question of what ancient people thought about dreams and whether they might be divine or foretell the future is an essential one, and a number of scholars have referred to 'belief' in connection with dreams. As Harris has pointed out, scholars are often quick to assert that almost everyone in antiquity 'believed in' the divinatory power of dreams, without questioning who they mean by almost everyone, or what variation there might have been.[595] Harris himself suggests that a change took place within the intellectual elite, that they 'believed' in dreams more in the second century AD than they had previously. He argues that few, if any, physicians would have gone as far as Galen in preceding centuries and that Dio's work on dreams relating to Septimius Severus could hardly have been produced in earlier centuries.[596] However, the evidence of Herodotus, of Polybius' references to Timaeus and other unnamed writers (Polybius, 12.12b.1), of Cicero's references to earlier authors, of Valerius Maximus and of Velleius Paterculus suggests that dreams had long been a major feature of some historical writing.

Wallace-Hadrill argues that the evidence of Suetonius shows how seriously divination and divine signs predicting the future were taken by Roman society in

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[594] Hunter 1996: 95.
[595] Harris 2003: 18.
[596] Harris 2003: 32.

general.[597] Acknowledging that there was certainly a fair amount of calculated manipulation of superstitious beliefs by the upper classes and those in power, Wallace-Hadrill argues that this does not mean that the manipulators themselves were 'above superstition'.[598] Similarly, Momigliano suggested that we can catch a glimpse of Sulla's 'superstition and belief in *fortuna* through fragments of his memoirs.[599] However, while it is true that Sulla seems to have 'claimed divine protection and portents in his favour', this does not necessarily indicate 'belief'; Polybius argued that Scipio made use of the superstition of other people and invented or exaggerated the importance of apparently prophetic dreams, and it is possible that Sulla did likewise. It does, however, indicate the presence of the idea that an important man might be associated with portents in his favour. Bowersock argues that fiction of the Roman period reinforces the impression given by non-fictional texts in terms of taking dreams seriously (though it should be noted that Bowersock has a very wide definition of what constitutes fiction, and that a literary trope may exist independently of 'belief').[600] Overall, it is clearly the case that some ancient people 'believed' in the divinatory power of dreams, and others did not.[601]

In order to discuss the question of what large groups of people may have thought about dreams without falsely attributing 'beliefs' to them, we will refer to ideas that a particular

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[597] Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 193.

[598] Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 194. He refers to the well-documented beliefs of various emperors concerning astrology and luck, and discusses the measures sometimes taken against diviners; Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 194-195. He argues that the rise of 'superstition' was particularly compatible with hellenization and that the rise of astrology and dream-interpretation can be seen through Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars* (on 'superstition', see below); Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 196. He suggests that dream-interpretation and astrology were more appealing to a 'sophisticated' society because they were based in apparent evidence, as opposed to 'archaic rituals like the inspection of livers' Wallace-Hadrill 1995: 196.

[599] Momigliano 1971: 94.

[600] Bowersock 1994: 93.

[601] See further Artemidorus, who says that one of his reasons for writing the *Onirocritica* was that he wanted to provide evidence of dreams that came true to refute the claims of those who denied the existence of divination all together; this shows that a number of people did not 'believe' in divine dreams, or, indeed, in divination at all (Artemidorus 1 praef.).

group have in their cultural imagination, regardless of whether or not they personally 'believe' in them. The difference is this: it is possible for someone to engage with a culturally conditioned idea without believing it to be literally true. For example, Dalton Trumbo, the writer of the 1960 film *Spartacus* (dir. Stanley Kubrick), chose to depict Spartacus being crucified, rather than dying in battle, because, regardless of whether any particular audience member is Christian or not, the idea of the hero sacrificing himself on a cross has a certain cultural power. Other heroes, especially in science fiction and fantasy, often die with their arms outstretched in a distinctly cross-like position.[602] Johnston touched on this point in her introduction to her study of ancient ghost stories, where she notes that vampire films tend to use a crucifix as a weapon of good, rather than a piece of coral (sometimes used to avert demons in Polynesian cultures), because a crucifix is immediately comprehensible as a weapon against evil to a member of 'predominantly Christian American culture'.[603] When dealing with an idea as strongly ingrained as this, it is important to acknowledge that some people believe wholeheartedly in the idea, some are not quite sure and some absolutely do not believe it at all; but the idea is just as present within their cultural imagination, whether they believe it or not.

Veyne's final chapter is entitled 'The Need to Choose Between Culture and Belief in a Truth', in which he describes 'truth' as 'a work of the constitutive imagination'.[604] However, Veyne see this as a restrictive 'fishbowl'. But the cultural imagination is not a closed bowl; it is always open to change, alteration and adaptation, often at a subconscious level, as the process is, by nature, a slow one, though some ideas do survive

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[602] See for example *Superman Returns*, 2006, dir, Bryan Singer; *The Matrix: Revolutions*, dir. Andy and Larry Wachowski, 2003; *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 'The Gift', dir. Joss Whedon 2001, all of which feature deliberately messianic characters facing doom in a cross shape, and at least one of which was written and directed by an avowed atheist (Joss Whedon).
[603] Johnston 1999: 4.
[604] Veyne 1988: 117.

for phenomenally long periods of time, transferred via cultural memory and kept alive in the cultural imagination. At the conclusion of this chapter, we shall look at some Christian dreams; rather than regard Christianity as a religion of 'belief' in a specific narrative in opposition to ancient ritual practice, this will focus on ideas shared by Christians and pagans alike, and explore that similarity. Rather than try to answer the impossible question of what people in the ancient world did or did not 'believe', then, this study explores ideas held in their cultural imagination.

How can we identify or place an idea with the imagination of a culture? Ideas are like myths or Jungian archetypes – they can never be absolutely defined, categorised or identified. We can never describe an idea belonging to an entire culture. However, like Jung's archetypes, ideas manifest themselves in the surviving products of that culture; in literature, epigraphy, art and archaeological finds. Although dreams are quite often depicted in modern art, images relating to dreams are less common in ancient art, and Greece and Rome lack physical objects (such as the now popular 'dream catchers') connected with dreams, so this chapter will focus on literature and epigraphy.

Cultural ideas about dreams are manifested in different ways in different circumstances. The most relevant to this period are; cultural memories (i.e. historical records of recorded significant dreams); imaginative uses of dreams; acts of devotion (such as dedicatory inscriptions referring to dreams or instances of incubation); reactions to dreams (such as rituals undertaken to avoid bad consequences from a dream or experts consulted for advice on a dream) and philosophical reactions to dreams (which are outside the scope of this study).

Acting on Dreams: Message Dreams

We have already noted that the one of the most important differences between a message dream and a symbolic dream is that a message dream usually requires some form of action on the part of the dreamer, while a symbolic dream often does not require any action and may be entirely impossible to respond to even if this is attempted. Message dreams are remembered because they led to an action, while symbolic dreams are remembered because of an event they are attached to. We have seen that message dreams constitute the highest proportion of dream reports in literature of record from the ancient Near East, but appear proportionally less in later times and genres, though they never disappear all together. We have also seen that, in the first century AD, the literary message dream had become such a complex structure that it may not have reflected widely held ideas (see Chapter Four). Despite this apparent decline, we do have a wealth of evidence for message dreams from the second century AD, though this evidence appears only in certain specialised circumstances, in particular, from acts of devotion dedicated to a particular god.

Aetiological Explanations: Pausanias

Pausanias' use of dream reports suggests that message dreams, and indeed dreams in general, were still considered to be acceptable as a reason for taking a particular course of action, and increasingly appear in connection with various people, no longer restricted to political or religious leaders, though they continue to appear in connection with leaders as

well (for example, Pausanias says that Troezenian magistrates were given a cure for an epidemic in dreams by Pan; Pausanias 2.32.6).

Pausanias includes a number of dreams among his many aetiological explanations. For example, he reports a story about a blind fisherman of Erythrae, who saw a vision in a dream that told him the women of that place should cut their hair; the native women refused but the Thracian women there agreed to do so and the fisherman regained his sight (Pausanias 7.5.7-8). This seems to be a straightforward aetiology for certain customs of that place, though we should note that the central figure in the story is a humble man, not a leader (see also Pausanias 2.33.1, another aetiological dream story). Pausanias also records occasions when temples or statues have been set up because of a vision in a dream (for example Pausanias 3.14.4-5; 8.37.3) and statues or images may even be stolen because of a dream (for example Pausanias 7.20.8). Dreams can also inspire art, and the clearest message dream of these is that of a woman who dreams the recently deceased Pindar stands by her and sings a hymn to Persephone, which she then writes down (Pausanias 9.23.4; see also 3.16.1; 6.25.4; 8.42.7). Sometimes towns and cities are also established because of a dream (for example Pausanias 3.23.6; 7.5.2) or human remains moved because of a dream (for example Pausanias 3.23.7; 9.29.8), military advice can be given in dreams (for example Pausanias 10.32.4) and, in one case, a child is given away because of dreams (Pausanias 6.20.4). In a number of these reports, it is not clear whether the dream is a message dream or an omen dream, though the dreamer wakes with a clear idea of what they should do and has not doubt that the dream is divine, suggesting a message dream (see Appendix Two).

It seems that, for Pausanias, dreams were the foremost form of divination; at one point, he notes with surprise that people sacrifice at a sanctuary of Melampus, even

though he does not divine by dreams or any other way (Pausanias 1.44.5). He also

mentions a dream of his own in which a vision stopped him from relating the details of

the Eleusinium at Athens (Pausanias 1.14.3; 1.38.7). Of the dreams which contain enough

detail to classify, a small majority belong to the general category of message dreams.

This suggests that direct messages from a god were still considered as a reasonable

explanation for an action taken. Many of Pausanias' stories relate to people and places

that were long ago and far away and, as Harris has noted, people will often accept a story

about a remote time and place that they would not accept of their own neighbourhood and

period.[605] However, some of Pausanias' stories relate to inscriptions which obviously

held some significance at the time they were put up, and we continue to find inscriptions

claiming to have taken action because of a dream into the second century.

Message Dreams for the Common Folk? Commands from the Gods

Just as many of the dreams recorded by Pausanias come to 'ordinary' people, much of the

epigraphic evidence relates to people who were not of exceptionally high status. In most

cases, dedicants must have been wealthy enough to put up the inscription, but are

otherwise unknown to us, and in the case of the inscriptions at Epidauros, the priests

might set up the inscription of behalf of someone who might be relatively poor (though

wealthy enough to make the trip). Leaving an inscription relating to a dream is a clear

way of demonstrating that a dream has been received, decided to be of divine origin and

acted upon. Harris has suggested that we should be suspicious of those who profess to

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[605] Harris 2009: 225.

find significance in a dream but do not act on it; according to this view, epigraphic evidence relating to the building of temples or shrines takes on a particular importance.[606]

MacMullen has noted that Latin inscriptions on all subjects are more numerous in the second and third centuries AD and peak during the reign of Septimius Severus, in the late second and early third century.[607] This is reflected in the number of Latin inscriptions relating to dreams, which are concentrated between AD 1 and AD 284.[608] The majority of Greek inscriptions relating to dreams were put up between the second century BC and the third century AD, which coincides with the peak period for Greek inscriptions in general (though it should be noted that inscriptions at incubation shrines, for example at Epidauros, go much further back).[609] The second century AD, therefore, represents a peak of interest in epigraphy in both Greek and Latin, which means that this body of evidence is of limited use in determining whether there was any change in the way people related to dreams and dream commands in the second century AD, as any increase in dream inscriptions is likely to reflect a general epigraphical trend, rather than a trend particular to ideas about dreaming. However, the fact that much of this evidence relates to the second century AD means it is very useful for exploring the place of dreams within the cultural imagination during that period.

This study has frequently discussed the Greco-Roman world in the widest possible terms. This is inevitable, owing to the nature of the evidence, which must be compiled from the various disparate sources available. However, it is important to note at this point that there were regional differences in religious practice and that these might

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[606] Harris 2009: 132.
[607] MacMullen 1982: 242-243.
[608] Renberg 2003: 143.
[609] Renberg 2003: 143. On Epidauros, see LiDonnici 1995: 76.

have an impact on views of and reactions to dreams, though these variations are outside the scope of this project.[610] For example, MacMullen has observed that Latin inscriptions in general refer to a number of different deities, with only Jupiter Dolichenus, originating in the east but more popular in the west, having slightly more than others.[611] Inscriptions referring to dreams also refer to a wide variety of deities, though some slight trends can be detected (see below).

The methodology used so far in this study, which is designed for use with literary texts, is more problematic when it comes to analysing inscriptions. First, inscriptions rarely record enough information to constitute a dream report (though a fairly large number of Epidaurian inscriptions, relating to incubation, do). Secondly and more importantly, the use of dream terminology in inscriptions, especially in Latin inscriptions, is different to its use in literature.

Inscriptions relating to a command received from a god or a dedication to a god use certain groups of terms. For example, of the Greek inscriptions studied by Leuci, roughly 54% of the vocabulary used is based on words for ordering, about one fourth are based on dream or sleep, about 9% use oracular terminology or describe a god's epiphany, and a little more than 6% are based on words for sight.[612] Leuci has noted that Aristides' use of dream-technical terms, unlike that of Artemidorus, is quite similar to their use in inscriptions.[613] Of the Latin inscriptions, about three fifths relate to commands, a little less than one third to sight, and the warning and dream groups

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[610] See further MacMullen 1981: 4.
[611] MacMullen 1981: 60-61.
[612] Leuci 1993: 10.
[613] Leuci 1993: 124.

together form about one ninth.[614] Leuci notes that only a fairly small proportion of Latin

inscriptions refer to dreams/sleep, whereas they form a much larger proportion of the

Greek evidence.[615]

Among the Latin inscriptions, the most common terms are *visus*/*visum*.[616] Leuci

has noted that the Greek terms whose usage most closely corresponds to *visus*/*visum* are

ὄνειρος/ὄναρ.[617] Leuci concludes that *visus* is, therefore, the 'main word' for dream in

Latin inscriptional writing.[618] The terms *visus*/*visum* are outside the scope of this study,

as they do not refer unequivocally to dreams (see Chapter One, pp53-61), but the

correspondence with ὄνειρος/ὄναρ in the epigraphic evidence suggests that many, if not

all, of these inscriptions do refer to dreams.[619]

Gil Renberg's 2003 doctoral thesis took the form of a detailed study of 1300

dedicatory inscriptions in Greek and Latin which refer to a dedication being set up on the

command of a god. One of the major arguments of Renberg's thesis is that the various

dedicatory terms he studies, which include many more terms than just those relating

specifically to dreams, actually terms refer to 'symbolic dreams' or 'different divinatory

media' rather than to visible epiphanies of the gods.[620] Renberg divides the dedicatory

inscriptions into three categories. The first is the Dream/Vision Group, which refers

specifically to a dream or vision and emphasizes the medium of communication between

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[614] Leuci 1993: 131.
[615] Leuci 1993: 167.
[616] Leuci 1993: 169.
[617] Leuci 1993: 169.
[618] Leuci 1993: 176.
[619] Other studies bring up the same problem. Leglay, for example, defined three formulae followed by Latin votive inscriptions to Saturn in North Africa; the name of the dedicant (nominative), alone or followed by *votum solvit*, *l...a...* (*libens animo*), *votum redit* or *fecit*; the name of the dedicant (genitive), alone or followed by *votum solvit* or *mu*(*nimentum*?), or the name of the god (dative), followed by the name of person who made the vow (nominative) and the formula *v.s.l.a.* – this is the 'schéma classique'. It sometimes includes the phrases *capite ordinario*, *somnio monitus*, *nasililim*, *ex vitulo*, *pro filio suo* 'etc'; Leglay 1966: 27.
[620] Renberg 2003: 2.

god and mortal (this includes terms such as ὅραμα and ὄψις); the other two, the

Command Group and the Advice/Warning Group, emphasize the nature of the message

rather than the means of communication.[621]

One of the largest groups of non-dream-specific terms is the group of terms

meaning order or command. The main phrases used are κατὰ πρόσταγμα, κατὰ

κέλευσιν and *ex iussu*, all of which mean roughly 'by order'. In this case, there is no way

of knowing whether the 'order' came through a dream, a waking vision, or in some other

form (such as an omen of some kind). Renberg, like Leuci, has suggested that, because

nearly all the Greek Dream/Vision inscriptions refer to dreams, the Latin *ex viso*

inscriptions also refer to dreams – but, as he himself has pointed out, we cannot be sure

of this.[622] He has also suggested that the choice of terminology was not affected by any

wish to reflect the experience, but by chronological or local preferences.[623]

Renberg, however, has warned against too easily accepting the usual opinion that

references to commands should automatically be assumed to be referring to dreams, as

Weber does.[624] Renberg has further suggested that, if a dream is referred to, it may not

have been the dedicant's dream, but that of a priest.[625] (This may take us, once again, out

of the realm of likely 'real' dreams and into an area where the possibility of a 'lived'

dream behind the report becomes more suspect). There are also a number of other

divinatory practices that the inscription might be referring to, such as extispicy, or

oracular pronouncement. He also points out that we know of some inscriptions that relate

a waking vision and some which use a command phrase for an order given by a diviner or

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[621] Renberg 2003: 39-40.
[622] Renberg 2003: 56.
[623] Renberg 2003: 231.
[624] Renberg 2003: 20; Weber 2000: 59.
[625] Renberg 2003: 24.

oracle; therefore, any inscription which does not specifically state that it was inspired by a dream may relate to a waking vision, omen or oracle.[626]

The greatest proportion of the ὄναρ inscriptions catalogued by Renberg come from the Asclepion at Epidauros or from Pergamum, and probably relate to incubation rather than to a spontaneous command from a deity.[627] Other terms show a little more variety; ἐνύπνιον, ὄναρ and ὄνειρος inscriptions as a whole show a tendency towards the gods Artemis, Apollo, Asclepius and Serapis. Since we know the Asclepion at Epidaurus and the site at Pergamum to be incubation sites and that commands there were almost certainly given in dreams, this may suggest that the Greek texts do show a slight preference for specifying if an epiphany was in a dream. However, *somnus* and its cognates are, generally speaking, relatively rare in the Latin inscriptions (they are most common in the dedications to Saturn in North Africa). In literary texts, *visus/visum* was often used to refer to a dream when accompanied by a phrase denoting sleep or the night, such as *per quietem*, possibly because of the lack of specific dream vocabulary. However, in an inscription, dedicants use the smallest possible number of words, and so the phrase becomes shortened to just *visus/visum/ex viso* and so on.

We might expect, in the light of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, to find a number of inscriptions connecting Isis with dreams. According to Diodorus Siculus, Isis was particularly connected with healing, and it is clear that it is gods associated with healing – Apollo, Asclepius, Minerva – who are especially likely to appear in dreams, no doubt because they were thought to do so at incubation sites, and therefore were considered more likely to do so at other times as well (Diodorus Siculus, 1.25.3). We also hear from Pausanias that there was one temple of Isis which people were only permitted to enter if

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[626] Renberg 2003: 67, 82.
[627] See Renberg 2003: 319.

they had been invited in a dream (how anyone checked this is not mentioned; Pausanias

10.32.13). However, although Isis does appear with some frequency in the inscriptions,

she is only rarely connected with specific dream terms.[628] Considering that the references

to dreams of Isis and Osiris in the *Metamorphoses* suggest that experiences of this nature

were not uncommon in their cults, the use of *visus* at Isis sites, as well as at Asclepeia,

implies that the term does indeed refer to dreams, and we may count Isis and Osiris,

along with Serapis, as deities who were particularly likely to appear in dreams.[629]

However, as Renberg has pointed out, this does not exclude the possibility that some, or

many, of these may refer to waking epiphanies. In this case, we simply cannot know.

Even when we can be sure that the inscription refers to a dream, there is often little or no

detail given. The Epidaurian miracle inscriptions, which do give more details, contain a

wide variety of message dreams, symbolic dreams which lead to a cure, literal prophecies

of the cure, dreams in which the god appears to operate on the patient through the dream,

and dreams in which instructions are given in various ways. It should also be noted that

these refer to dreams experienced during incubation, rather than a spontaneous command

from a god. However, it is clear that, when a person has erected an inscription following

a dream, they consider that dream to be significant and of divine origin. For the dreamer,

these dreams, as an experience, are more like message dreams, even if they contain

elements of symbolism, than they are like confusing symbolic dreams (and see Chapter

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[628] Among the inscriptions dedicated to Isis and Serapis catalogued by Vidmann, only two use a specific dream phrase (κατ ὄναρ) and seven use *visus/visum*, while a larger proportion of the inscriptions use κατὰ πρόσταγμα; Vidmann 1969: 354.

[629] Vidmann also included some Osiris inscriptions, though these were not part of his focus, and Griffiths suggested in his review that Osiris should perhaps have been included in the book's title; Griffiths 1973: 217.

Three on Aristides, pp163-171). They have also clearly been acted upon and, in many cases, have brought great benefits to the dreamer.

We can say with reasonable certainty that, probably throughout antiquity, the idea that a god might issue an instruction or give a cure in a dream was still in existence, and reasonably strong. However, this does not necessarily indicate that every individual dedicant 'believed' that they had received a divine message through a dream. There are some cases in which it is possible that the dream has been invented as a justification for the action. For example, one inscription, in Greek, from Delos, c200 BC, explains that the author, a priest called Apollonius, built the Serapeum on the island because the god told him to in a dream.[630] In addition to the original order, when some men tried to sue Apollonius, the god appeared again in his sleep and reassured him that he would win the case. The inscription was set up in thanks for this legal victory. This dream seems remarkably convenient; it may be that there was no dream, but Apollonius claimed that there was in order to support his case, using dreams in much the same way as characters in literature sometimes use lying message dreams. It is, therefore, important to remember that not all inscriptions necessarily spring from religious devotion.

However, even if this is case, the fact that a dream was given as the cause indicates that the idea of the commanding dream was still strong with the cultural imagination. We can tentatively identify certain deities who were particularly likely to give commands this way; Asclepius, Isis, Osiris and Serapis, Artemis, Apollo and Saturn.[631] White, in his notes to Artemidorus, suggests that, according to Cicero, only

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[630] See Austin 1981: 226-227.
[631] See also Veyne, who observes that the gods who were the most honoured in general were also those who tended to appear in dreams; Veyne 1987: 390.

Asclepius, Serapis and Minerva give help through dreams.[632] However, Cicero has mentioned these three as examples of gods who might give help though dreams (and these are particularly likely to give such help, especially Asclepius and Serapis) but he does not imply anywhere that they are the only gods who do so (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.59.123). The association of particular gods with dream epiphanies suggests that divine message dreams might be experienced in particular circumstances, where they were expected – they might appear to the members of certain cults, for example, who anticipated that their particular deity might ask something of them in a dream (an anticipation which may in turn have affected the content of their dreams). We turn now to look more closely at those sites where we know people expected to experience divine dreams; incubation oracles.

Connecting with the Gods: Incubation Beyond Aristides

The continued existence of incubation oracles in the period of the Roman Empire confirms that the idea still existed that a god might communicate, or heal, a supplicant through the medium of a dream. Incubation is defined here as *a practice in which a person performs a ritual act and then sleeps in a sacred place, with the deliberate intention of receiving a divine dream*, and is considered to be a Greek custom dating from the archaic period.[633]

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[632] White 1975: 233.
[633] See Harrisson 2009 (forthcoming).

Message dreams, as we have noted, require action on the part of the dreamer, but in the case of incubation, the dreamer has already taken the initiative and performed an action in order to receive the dream. Incubation dreams are experienced by dreamers who, rather than being privileged to receive instruction or information from a god, have actively sought communication with the god themselves. MacMullen has noted that oracles in general require a third party to assist with ritual or interpretation, or both, in a way that ordinary dreams do not; they also require much more effort on the part of the dreamer.[634] The existence of incubation oracles provides the strongest evidence of all that it was imagined that the gods might communicate through dreams, for those who undergo incubation have deliberately performed an act of devotion in the expectation that this is so.

This requirement for action of the part of the dreamer may be the reason that incubation is so particularly associated with medicine. A medical problem is perhaps more likely than any other to drive someone to the point of desperation, so that, unable to make the gods answer their prayers at home, they make the journey and pay the price to the priests in order to try to encourage a response from the gods at their temples. However, not all incubation oracles were solely medicinal, and incubation was associated with several gods and deified heroes.

Interestingly, Artemidorus, although he argues in favour of god-sent symbolic dreams in general, appears to consider incubatory message dreams as mere reflections of the dreamer's anxiety, rather than as a divine message. He refers to the dreams of those who, being anxious about something, have asked the gods for a dream as belonging in the class of non-significatory ἐνύπνιον dreams, saying they refer only to the present state of

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[634] MacMullen 1981: 61.

affairs and correspond to dreams that are sometimes called anxiety dreams or 'petitionary' dreams (μεριμνηματικὰ δὲ καὶ αἰτηματικὰ πρός τινων λέγεται) (Artemidorus 1.6). It also worth noting that, of the 97 dreams recorded in Artemidorus' Book 5, only two are message dreams. Artemidorus does not suggest that they do not exist, but that they are not divine.

Although incubation could be performed at a number of shrines apart from those dedicated to Asclepius, MacMullen perhaps overstates the matter when he suggests that 'one could turn [the gods] on at will in any temple'.[635] MacMullen refers in particular to a passage from Celsus, quoted by Origen, a passage from Petronius' *Satyricon* and 'an inscription from a shrine in the Greek-speaking world'. However, the quoted section from Celsus refers to dreams of the dead, rather than of gods, while the incident from the *Satyricon* refers to a medical problem (see below) (Origin, *Contra Celsus*, 2.60; Petronius, *Satyricon*, 17). The inscription is from the Memnonion at Abydos, which was at one point an oracle of Osiris and became an oracle of Bes during the Roman period.[636] Osiris and Bes were particularly associated with (non-medical) incubation oracles (see below), and so an inscription from a pilgrim who has come to the temple in order to undergo incubation does not necessarily indicate that this might happen in any temple.

Oracles have sometimes been considered to be in decline during the first century AD, and experienced a revival during the second. Towards the end of the first century, Plutarch composed a dialogue, *On the Decline of Oracles*, in which the principal characters take it for granted that 'all but one or two' oracles have completely disappeared (Plutarch,

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[635] MacMullen 1981: 61.
[636] For the inscription itself, see Bernand 1972: 133. On the Memnonion at Abydos, see Frankfurter 1998: 169-174.

Moralia, 411 E).[637] During the second century AD, evidence from both literary and archaeological sources suggests that certain oracles went through a particularly active period, and *Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse*, is rather more optimistic in tone, while Lucian's *Alexander sive Pseudomantis* describes the operation of a false oracle (Lucian, *Alexander sive Pseudomantis*, 8).

There is, however, some of evidence for activity at incubation oracles from the first century. We know of some incubation oracles described by Strabo very early in the imperial period. Strabo briefly describes the oracle of Calchas at Daunia, noting that suppliants sacrifice a ram to the hero and sleep in the hide (the word used for 'sacrifice', ἐναγίζω, being specifically related to sacrifice to the dead) (Strabo 6.3.9). This oracle was very close to a temple to Podaleirius, which does not appear to have been incubatory but which was a healing site.[638] Strabo also describes a healing incubatory oracle near Nyssa referred to as the 'Charonium', above a temple to Pluto, at which the priests would sleep in a cave above the precinct and have a dream which would prescribe a cure for suppliants. Suppliants also slept in the cave and sometimes followed instructions from their own dreams, though they would still seek advice from the priests (Strabo 14.1.44).[639]

From Egypt, the Demotic text of the second tale of Setna (P. British Museum 604), written on the back of Greek accounting papyri dated AD 46-47, features several references to incubation. The first example, which is badly damaged, opens with the wife

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[637] The date of this dialogue is debatable, but is generally assumed to be towards the end of the first century AD; see further Ogilvie 1967: 108-119.

[638] See further Bouché-Leclercq 1975: 346 (Vol. 3).

[639] Virgil describes an oracle of Faunus, one of the few native Italian oracles, which appears to have been incubatory; the consultant sacrifices a sheep, then sleeps on the fleece, seeing phantoms and hearing voices which answer his/her question (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7.81-91). However, it is possible that Virgil's description, because it is set within the mythical past, bears no relation to reality, and that the similarity between this description and other descriptions of incubation ritual is the result of Virgil using the same sources as Strabo.

of Setna sleeping in the temple 'to gain a remedy'; 'they' (presumably gods) tell her to drink a certain preparation, and she does as she is told, and conceives.[640] At a later point in the story, Horus-son-of-the-wolf goes to the temple of Hermopolis looking for a solution to a problem Pharaoh is having.[641] He offers burnt offerings and libations and prays to Thoth to let him learn the solution to Pharaoh's problem. He then lies down in the temple and has a dream in which he sees himself speaking with Thoth, who tells him how to help Pharaoh. Although the text does not specify that Horus performed these actions in order to receive a dream, the combination of the offering, the prayer and sleeping in the temple strongly suggests that this is indeed Horus' intent.

The most important oracles in operation during the second century seem to have been Delphi, Claros and Didyma, all oracles of Apollo, though these were by no means the only oracles experiencing frequent activity in this period.[642] Plutarch's dialogue on the decline of oracles was set in Delphi, but the problem with assessing the extent of the 'decline' of the Delphic Oracle is that it was so famous and so rich in its heyday, that, inevitably, whatever position it occupied in later years, it would appear to have 'declined' from its previous high status.[643] Scholars have sometimes focused on the lack of high profile visitors to Delphi under the Empire as a sign of decline, but in the second century AD, the oracle was patronised by some very high status visitors.[644] Parke has noted that

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[640] Ritner 2003: 472. This is followed by a spontaneous dream experienced by Setna, in which he is told to name the child Si-Osire. This second dream is not sought, and does not represent incubation.
[641] Ritner 2003: 482-483.
[642] See Levin 1989: 1637.
[643] Whether he composed the dialogue before or after he became a priest of Delphi in AD 93 is uncertain, but it seems safe to assume that he had a close connection with the site at the time he composed *On the Decline of Oracles*; see Ogilvie 1967: 108-109.
[644] See for example Parke 1939: 287-291; Parke 1967: 134;Levin 1989: 1601-1602. In earlier times, the oracle had frequently been consulted by leaders and statesmen concerning political and military activities, such as the famous consultation by the Athenians before the battle of Salamis, when they were instructed to

the oracles of Asia Minor, especially Claros and Didyma, flourished in this period, and seem to have been busier at this time than the Greek sites, which he suggests is due to a general decline in population in mainland Greece, while Asia Minor prospered as a centre of trade.[645]

The popularity of incubation oracles may have increased in the second century AD. The Temple of Aesculapius in Rome records dream-cures from second century AD but not before.[646] One of the most important oracles in Boeotia to survive into the second century AD was the incubatory oracle of Trophonius.[647] The epigraphic evidence at the oracle at Claros suggests that the oracle reached its peak during the second century AD, the inscriptions pointing to a large number of visitors.[648]

MacAlister has suggested that, by the second century AD, the oracle was no longer the first port of call for predicting the future, and 'the dream was beginning to supplant it' on its way to being an integral part of Christianity.[649] MacAlister argues that by this period we see the dream authenticating the oracle or omen, rather than the earlier pattern where an oracle or omen authenticates the dream. Many of MacAlister's

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rely on a wooden wall for victory (Herodotus, *Histories*, 7.141). The last official embassy sent to consult the oracle by the Romans departed in 216 BC, during the Second Punic War; see Parke 1967: 131. During the Imperial period only a handful of emperors consulted or patronised the oracle, and of those, at least two (Nero and Commodus) had a sufficiently bad reputation that priests of Delphi were, perhaps, unlikely to boast of their patronage. Plutarch himself suggested that the decrease in importance of the questions put to the oracle was the reason that it no longer prophesied in verse (Plutarch, *Oracles at Delphi No Longer Given in Verse*, 408 C). During the second century, however, the Delphic Oracle was patronised by the famously philhellenic emperor Hadrian, a much more popular figure, and it should be noted that the oracle was still asked political questions from time to time, but by anonymous questioners, such as an oracle delivered after the death of Commodus concerning who should be the next emperor; see Parke 1939: 291. In general, the record of political patronage of the Delphic Oracle points to a decline under the Empire, with some revival of interest in the second century AD.

[645] Parke 1967: 137.
[646] Harris 2003: 28.
[647] See Levin 1989: 1637.
[648] See Parke 1967: 137-138, Lane Fox 1986: 171-181 and MacMullen 1981: 62.
[649] MacAlister 1996: 8.

examples refer to omens rather than oracles, and she acknowledges that there are still instances where an omen authenticates a dream (see further below). It is also important to remember that, generally speaking, one cannot call up a dream to authenticate an omen. However, at an incubatory oracle, this is possible. Incubation sites may have been popular partly because they did not require the supplicant to choose whether they preferred dream or oracular revelation, as the practice of incubation offered a oracular response in the form of dream.

Incubation for healing was still practised throughout this period. The healing sanctuary at Epidauros continued to be used well into the Roman period, and is described by Pausanias in the present tense. He notes that no birth or death was allowed within the sanctuary, and that a Roman senator in his time restored the Portico of Cotys, which was provided for this purpose (Pausanias, 2.27.1-6). The same senator also built a temple to Health, dedicated to Asclepius and Apollo (Pausanias, 2.27.6).

The Amphiareion at Oropos, which was especially active during the fourth century BC and offered incubation both for healing and for other purposes, was still in use in the second century AD.[650] Pausanias describes the ritual at the Amphiareion at Oropos, where suppliants would sacrifice to the god-hero, then sacrifice and ram and sleep on the fleece and wait for a divine dream (Pausanias 1.34.5). Pausanias notes that the hero Amphiaraus was first established as a god at Oropos, and he himself believes that the oracle was always a dream-oracle (Pausanias 1.34.1-5).[651] Pausanias also briefly describes an oracle of Ino on the road from Oetylus to Thalamae, at which people consult the goddess in sleep, and she replies to them through dreams (Pausanias 3.26.1), and

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[650] On the fourth century BC, see Lupu 2003: 333.
[651] On the details of the ritual at Oropos and the pre-incubation sacrifice, see Lupu 2003.

mentions a secretive shrine to Dionysus near Amphicleia, where people are cured through dreams; presumably this was an incubatory oracle, though it is hard to say for sure from such a brief description (Pausanias, 10.33.11).

Whether the dream cures at medical incubation oracles were assisted by actual medical practice is hard to say. As LiDonnici has pointed out, although some 'cures' may have been the result of the psychological effects of the incubation, many of them cannot be explained in this way.[652] The Edelsteins noted that some inscriptions refer to salve or drugs.[653] Herzog has argued that, at Cos, the 'rational' physicians worked in the temple alongside the priests; however, Sherwin-White asserts that there is little evidence to support this theory.[654] Some instruments found at Epidauros have sometimes been identified as surgical tools; however, this is perhaps unlikely.[655] Hart and Forrest have argued in favour of a relatively close alliance between priest and physician, noting that a coin from Epidauros, minted in the fourth or third century BC, shows an incense burner on an altar, flanked by two cupping vessels, while a bas-relief from Oropos shows a man (Asclepius or a physician?) treating a patient's shoulder, and in the background, shows the patient asleep and a serpent licking his shoulder.[656] Kerényi interpreted the human action as the dream, and the snake as the reality; however the reverse seems more likely to be the case.[657] Not many people, even very sick, devout followers of Asclepius, are

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[652] LiDonnici 1995: 2.
[653] Edelstein and Edelstein 1998: 153.
[654] See Sherwin-White 1978: 275.
[655] Pers. comm. R. Jackson. Patton refers to these unproblematically as surgical instruments; Patton 2004: 198.
[656] Hart and Forrest 2000: 136.
[657] Kerényi 1959: 36. The Edelsteins also suggested that sacred dogs or serpents might cure patients by licking them; Edelstein and Edelstein 1998: 153.

likely to lie calmly while a snake licks them, and the image of the patient lying down can

be safely assumed to refer to the point at which he is asleep and dreaming.

Some inscriptions suggest the possibility that physicians carried out some form of

practical medical procedure while the incubants were asleep (and possibly drugged):

> A man with an abscess in his abdomen. When asleep in the temple,
> he saw a dream. It seemed to him that the god ordered the servants who
> accompanied him to grip him and hold him tightly so that he could cut
> open his abdomen… Thereupon Asclepius cut his belly open, removed
> the abscess, and, after having stitched him up again, released him…
> Whereupon he walked out sound, but the floor of the Abaton was covered
> with blood.[658]

It is tempting to assume from inscriptions like this that medical procedures were

carried out in the temple. However, it is important to note that not all the inscriptions

refer to cures that can be explained by human action, and some explicitly refer to cases

where this is impossible. For example, some inscriptions refer to people undertaking an

incubation on behalf of someone else, such as the mother who slept in the temple for her

daughter's sake, and dreamed that her daughter's head was cut off by the god, fluid

drained from her body, and then her head put back on. The daughter, sleeping at home,

saw the same dream, and was cured.[659] Clearly, practical medicine was not necessarily

part of the treatment. Patton has further suggested that patients turned to the god and to

incubation when all other courses had been tried and failed, citing an example from

Epidauros which refers to the patient having despaired of the skills of mortals.[660] This is

possible, as patients who went to the trouble of a pilgrimage to an Asclepius shrine, with

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[658] Edelstein and Edelstein 1998: 235.

[659] Edelstien and Edlestien 1998: 233. LiDonnici notes that both long-distance cures and incubation on another's behalf are recurring motifs on this stele, though they do not appear on the other stele with a substantial number of miracle inscriptions; LiDonnici 1995: 101.

[660] Patton 2004: 198.

all the accompanying sacrifices and gift-offerings, may have been relatively desperate, though Holowchak argues that some of the illnesses and injuries recorded seem to have been less severe, and the patient (perhaps especially if they lived nearby) may have chosen incubation out of preference.[661] It should also be remembered that there is no reason to assume that ancient people chose one or the other from prayer and pilgrimage and more practical medical treatment; most religious people, faced with health problems, will do both.

The most famous suppliant of Asclepius is Aelius Aristides, though, as we have seen, his stories are often intended more to glorify Aristides than Asclepius. It is difficult to say how many of the dreams recorded in the *Hieroi Logoi* were experienced during incubation. We do know that a number of them were not (see for example, Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 1.69). Of the incubation dreams, it is often unclear exactly where they take place, though many of them appear to take place at the Asclepeum at Pergamum. Considering what has been said concerning Aristides' opinion of himself (see Chapter Three pp166-169), it is now necessary to ask whether inscriptions were truly intended to glorify the god, or whether they, in fact, reflect positively on the patient or other interested parties.

The answer may be that this would vary, depending on the person who paid for the inscription. Some are set up to glorify the god by people with a vested interest in doing so; for example, the inscription from Epidauros recording how a sceptical man was cured might have been set up by the priests to advertise their services (though this must

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[661] Holowchak 2002: 156.

remain conjecture).[662] In another example, an earlier inscription at Epidauros from a man

called Hermodicus is set up to provide an example of the power of Asclepius.[663]

Hermodicus' story, of how Asclepius told him to lift as large a rock as he could, after

which he was cured, is also told in the series of inscriptions which include the story of the

sceptical man; this lends credence to the idea that this series of inscriptions may have

been set up by priests or others directly involved with the shrine, rather than by the

patients themselves. Aristides himself set up an inscription in a temple to Zeus Asclepius

at Pergamum, referring to himself as 'not unknown' and a 'glorious charioteer of

everlasting words'; it is clear what his intentions were in setting up this inscription

(Aristides, *Hieroi Logoi*, 4.45).[664] Other inscriptions, however, may be genuine acts of

piety.

Medical incubation at sites such as Epidauros and Pergamum is particularly well known,

thanks in part to Aristides, but not all incubation oracles were primarily concerned with

healing, and in the period of the Roman Empire, several other incubation oracles

flourished.

Clark has argued that the oracle of Trophonius was no longer incubatory by the

second century, noting that neither Pausanias nor Plutarch, both of whom describe the

oracle, mention going to sleep as part of the ritual.[665] Clark suggests some possible ways

to explain the oracle without reference to dreams, chiefly that either the priests put on a

performance for the enquirer, or that the consultant was given hallucinatory drugs before

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[662] IG IV².1.121, in Edelstein and Edelstein 1998: 222, 230 and Austin 1981: 219-220.
[663] IV².1.125, in Edelstein and Edelstein 1998: 246-247.
[664] I have followed Behr's translation here; Behr 1968: 264.
[665] Clark 1968: 65, 70.

descending into the chasm.[666] Burkert also discusses the oracle of Trophonius separately from 'dream oracles' which he describes as being 'more straightforward'.[667] The oracle certainly seems to have been incubatory at some point, for as Clark observes, the rituals carried out there and described by Pausanias match those carried out at known incubatory oracles.[668] The ritual at the oracle of Trophonius is so similar to incubation ritual that it seems likely that it was an incubation oracle, and Pausanias' experience certainly suggests a dream-like quality.

By Pausanias' time, the preliminary ritual at the oracle of Trophonius had become somewhat elaborate, and seems to have required the consultant to spend several days living in the sanctuary (Pausanias, 9.39.5). Levin suggests that the experience has become quite unsettling, and that, by the time consultants came out of the cave, they were 'scared out of their wits'.[669] Pausanias certainly describes the experience as frightening, though he notes that one swiftly recovers, and that the only person to have been killed was trying to steal from the shrine (Pausanias, 9.39.12-13). Parke has suggested that one reason for Claros' popularity in this period may have been the similarity between its underground chambers and those of the 'mystery' religions that were also popular; if so, the dramatic conditions of a consultation of Trophonius, involving several days of preparation before dropping down into a mysterious hole, must have made that site extremely popular (see Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9.39.1-14).[670]

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[666] Clark 1968: 73.
[667] Burkert 1985: 115.
[668] Clark 1968: 71.
[669] Levin 1989: 1641.
[670] Parke 1967: 140.

Graf has suggested a comparison between the descent underground to consult the oracle of Trophonius with a descent into the underworld.[671] L. Johnston argued that the association with the dead was 'evident' at all incubation oracles, which is something of an exaggeration, but the link is common enough to be worth attention.[672] Incubation oracles were often connected with deified heroes, and sometimes with gods connected with the dead, chiefly Osiris. Plutarch tells the story of Elysius of Terina, who goes to a ψυχομαντεῖον, an oracle of the dead, to ask whether his only son had been killed by poison and, after performing the customary sacrifices, goes to sleep and sees his son in a dream (though sleep is not mentioned in Cicero's version of the same story; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, 1.115; Plutarch, *Consolation to Apollonius*, 109b-d).[673] Ogden has noted that the frequent appearances of ghosts in dreams mean that it is not surprising that one might seek to communicate with a ghost through a dream.[674] There is also some evidence of invocations for ghosts to appear in dreams in Greek magical papyri.[675] On the (slim) evidence of the popularity of these sorts of incubation oracle in the second century AD, and Plutarch's connection of the story with incubation, we might be tempted to see this as a particularly second-century development. However, we must remember that the chthonic hero Amphiaraus (who escaped his enemy by being swallowed whole by the earth, thanks to Zeus) was considered to be presiding over an incubation oracle from the fifth century BC, and Herodotus mentions incubatory practice relating to the dead in North Africa (Herodotus, 4.172).

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[671] Graf 2004: 19.
[672] Johnston 1948: 350. There is no firm evidence to support Johnston's assertion that the animal skins suppliants slept on 'summoned up the wild spirits of the dead', but the link with the dead in general is well noted; Johnston 1948: 354.
[673] On the history of this common tale, see Ogden 2001: 75-76.
[674] Ogden 2001: 76.
[675] See Ogden 2001: 79.

Incubation, which had become popular in Egypt (see Chapter Two), continued to be popular in Roman Egypt. A number of temples from this period feature incubation chambers in or alongside the temple, where clients could sleep in order to receive divine assistance.[676] Donalson has suggested that, while incubation at temples of Isis in Greece and Italy took place near the cult statue, within the temple, incubation at Isis temples in Egypt often took place in the temple grounds or even in nearby caves.[677] This would fit with a title given to Isis in some much earlier demotic documents, in which she is called 'lady of the cavern'.[678]

An oracle of Bes is referred to (in the past tense) by Ammianus Marcellinus, as an oracle which could be consulted either in person or by letter (Ammianus 19.12.3). Frankfurter has argued that this was an incubation oracle, because some of the votive graffiti at the site refers to the god as 'dreamgiver'.[679] Some of the inscriptions at Abydos do seem to confirm this; one, for example, records how the author slept there many times and received true dreams.[680] The oracle in question had originally been devoted to Osiris, and then to Serapis.[681] It is possible that the oracle maintained some incubation rooms and functioned as an incubation oracle as well as functioning as a traditional question-and-answer oracle and expanding into a mail-order oracle. Frankfurter has linked these developments with three Greek texts relating to Bes from the Greek and Demotic spell manuals, which refer to the suppliant performing certain rituals before sleep, such as sleeping on a rush mat with a brick beside your head. Frankfurter suggests that these indicate that people could pursue a Bes dream oracle from wherever they were; this

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[676] Frankfurter 2005: 233.
[677] Donalson 2003: 35.
[678] See Austin 1981: 272-273.
[679] Frankfurter 2005: 239.
[680] See Bernand 1969: 525.
[681] See further Bernand 1969: 525 and Frankfurter 2005:238.

challenges the strict definition of incubation as sleeping within a sacred place.[682] This is clearly not incubation proper, but may represent a related practice, focused on a deliberate attempt to bring on a divinely inspired dream, derived from traditional incubation rituals.

The part played by dream interpreters at these oracles is difficult to determine. Pausanias records that, at the oracle of Trophonios, the priests would take the enquirer to a chair of Memory and ask them what they dreamt, but he is not specific about whether the priests would then offer an interpretation or leave this to the enquirer (Pausanias, 9.39.13). Aristides is also unclear concerning how far he interpreted his dreams himself and how much he asked for the interpretation of others. Clark has argued that there was no 'medium' at Trophonios, but suggested that sometimes a consultant could employ a non-professional 'medium' if they wanted to.[683] It seems possible that the choice of whether or not to ask for a dream interpreter was left up to the client.

Incubation oracles do seem to have been reasonably popular in the second century AD, but whether or not they, or oracles in general, experienced a 'revival' is difficult to say. It does seem likely that incubation oracles of various kinds, beyond just those devoted to healing, were particularly popular during this period (though it should also be noted that incubation oracles at various different sites were in use throughout classical antiquity). This may indicate that people were leaning more towards divination by dreams than by some more traditional methods. It may also indicate an increase in religiosity, as people were more willing than ever to make the effort to go to a shrine in the expectation of

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[682] Frankfurter 2005: 241.
[683] Clark 1968: 72.

receiving a divine dream. This presents the first reasonably convincing evidence that dreams in particular were considered potentially more important during this period, though, since much of the evidence is epigraphical, this conclusion must be tempered by the possibility that we are seeing an increase in inscriptions, rather than religious activity, and we must also bear in mind that the incubatory shrines at Epidauros and other shrines to Asclepius were flourishing long before the second century AD.

Reacting to Dreams: Symbolic Dreams

As we have noted, the problems for characters in imaginative literature who think they may have had a significant dream are whether or not it is divine or significant, and, if so, what it means and whether there is anything they can do about it. Literary symbolic dreams, whether they are from literature of record or of imagination, tend to be impossible to react to successfully. However, this does not mean that either fictional characters or people in general did not try to respond to symbolic dreams, and to avert any misfortune they might indicate. We have already mentioned Suetonius' dilemma, mentioned by Pliny in his letter; here we will explore the various ways in which one might deal with an unclear or potentially threatening dream (Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 1.18).

Dreams and Medicine

Outside of incubation oracles, dreams were sometimes considered as possible indicators of the dreamer's general state of health, or as diagnostic tools when the dreamer was ill. Whereas most significant dreams were imagined to come from the divine, dreams might be considered medically important precisely because they were not divine, but reflected the state of the body. Medical opinions on the usefulness of dreams varied considerably.[684] There were three different approaches to the use of dreams in medicine, of which the first (and most common) considered it likely that dreams coming from within the body might reflect the physical state of the body. Secondly, there was the possibility that dreams sent from an external source might relate to bodily concerns. Thirdly, it was hoped by those who practised ritual incubation that a god or divine being would provide them with medical assistance through a dream (see above). Whereas incubation represents a specific act of devotion, the other medical uses of dreams formed part of everyday life.

The most significant literary evidence for medicine in the second century AD comes from two writers, Soranus and Galen. Galen wrote positively concerning both potential medical uses of dreams; those that might have come from a divine source to provide medical or diagnostic assistance, and those come from the soul and are related to physical symptoms and he discusses both in his short treatise *On Diagnosis in Dreams*. He notes that it is difficult to tell the difference between dreams that are produced by the soul and

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[684] Oberhelman's overview of dreams in Greco-Roman medicine is somewhat flawed in its over-generalisation, but does provide a useful summary of the uses of dreams in classical medicine. Most importantly, Oberhelman draws attention to the fact that a number of medical writers did not think dreams were at all significant in a medical context; Oberhelman 1993: 137-138.

may indicate the body's state of health, and prophetic dreams, but emphasises the importance of paying attention to dreams, which may indicate the balance of the humours (Galen, *De Dignotione ex Insomniis*, 6.833-834). He suggested that the soul reaches out for what the body needs in sleep, so that someone who is sweating too much will dream of bathing, and so on (Galen, *De Dignotione ex Insomniis*, 6.834-835).

We know that Galen also made use of prophetic dreams sometimes, as he records some instances where a decision had been made because of a prophetic dream. Most importantly, he became a physician because his father had been told to have him trained as a physician in a dream (Galen, *De Methodo Medendi*, 10.609). He carried out a blood-letting exercise on himself on the order of a dream and he also claimed that some sections of his written work were composed on the orders of dreams (Galen, *De Curandi Ratione per Venae Sectionem*, 11.315; *De Usu Partium* 3.812).

However, even Galen did not rely blindly on dreams. As Harris has noted, he obeys dreams chiefly with regard to himself when no one else is at risk if he is wrong (see below).[685] Furthermore, as Kudlien has pointed out, Galen implies that Asclepius might assist a physician in developing his ideas, that is to say, that a physician might have an idea that is confirmed or assisted by the god.[686] Even someone as willing to accept the possibility of divine dreams as Galen was wary of putting them to medical use (outside of an incubation sanctuary).

Soranus, on the other hand, firmly stated that midwives should not be superstitious and change their treatment because of a dream or omen (Soranus, *Gynaeciorum*, 1.4). Soranus was writing in the early second century, and clearly did not place much faith in dreams as a diagnostic tool. The *Vita Hippocratis*, attributed to

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[685] Harris 2009: 210-212.
[686] Kudlien 1981: 122, cf. Galen, *In Hippocratis Epidemiarum Librum II Commentaria*, CMG 5.10.1, 311.

Soranus includes a brief dream report which states that a dream ordered Hippocrates to settle in Thessaly, but the uncertainty of authorship (the Soranus of Cos, credited with this story, may or may not be the same person as Soranus of Ephesus) means that we cannot imply any strong attachment to the idea of divine dreams on Soranus' part (Soranus, *Vita Hippocratis*, 4).[687]

Philosophers sometimes considered the medical potential of dreams. For example, in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, while giving thanks to the gods for his various blessings in life, Marcus Aurelius thanks the gods for remedies prescribed in dreams, and notes especially two occasions, at Caieta and Chrysa, when he was cured of blood-spitting and vertigo (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 1.17.9). He does not always speak so positively of dreams; at another point he encourages himself to concentrate on what he sees while awake and shake off slumber, as it was only dreams that troubled him (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 6.31.1). However, referring to all those who speak against him, Marcus Aurelius notes that the gods still help them with dreams and oracles (Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 9.27.1). This suggests that the dreams experienced during incubation or in a medical context were generally considered to be important; whether Marcus Aurelius meant to imply the significance of non-oracular dreams as well is difficult to say.

Plutarch's *De Tuenda Sanitate Praecepta* provides some advice on dreams relating to health. Plutarch warns that 'abnormal' visions in sleep may indicate that the body is becoming ill, if they are not caused by a problem in the soul, for the soul may give warning that there is something wrong with the body (Plutarch, *De Tuenda Sanitate Praecepta*, 14). Plutarch also discusses the link between dreams and the body in *De*

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[687] On the authorship of the *Vita Hippocratis*, see Temkin 1991: 52.

Defectu Oraculorum, as Lamprias, the narrator, describes how sometimes a person might have a lot of dreams, at other times none, and mentions some older men who claim to have never had a dream (Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum*, 50). This approach fits in with the idea that some dreams reflect the current state of the body.

Harris has suggested that dreams 'gained respectability' among physicians during the second century AD (part of his wider argument that confidence in dreams increased during this period).[688] He cites Galen as evidence for this, as Galen obviously expected his ideas to seem reasonable, but acknowledges that, when Galen follows the advice of dreams (as opposed to using dreams as a purely physical diagnostic tool) that advice usually affects only himself, unless it is given through a dream at a healing sanctuary.[689] Harris suggests that Galen, like Aristides, may have felt himself to be particularly privileged in this respect, or perhaps that he trusted his own δαίμων more than others.[690] Either is possible; it is also possible that Galen was willing to risk following dream advice in his own case, or when the dream was especially likely to be significant (at a healing sanctuary), but would not risk his patients on something uncertain like a dream. If this were the case, it implies that the idea that dreams might be divine was strong, but not so strong that one would risk a paying customer's health on it.

There is no really convincing evidence, however, that dreams were treated more seriously by physicians of the second century AD than previously. Dreams as an indicator

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[688] Harris 2009: 209.
[689] Harris 2009: 210-212.
[690] Harris 2009: 211. A popular philosophical view of dreams at this time was that dreams were sent by δαίμονες, divine beings that were less than a god but more than mortal; see Apuleius, *De Deo Socratis*, 6, 8-16; Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum*, 45; Tertullian, *De Anima*, 47. This idea has its roots in Plato's *Symposium*, in which Plato has Diotima describe Love as a great δαίμων, through whom the gods converse with man, both awake and asleep; Plato, *Symposium*, 202d-203a.

of the state of the body was an old idea, going back at least to the Hippocratic corpus (Hippocrates, *De Diaeta*, 4.88). Galen's dream that inspired his career has less to do with medicine than with lifestyle in general, and while there are important second century analogues (the career of Aristides, and Lucian's satirical *The Dream, or the Life of Lucian*) there are also earlier stories in the same vein (such as the Younger Pliny's story of his uncle's dream of Drusus which prompted the Elder's writing on the Germanic wars; Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 3.5). His actions concerning his dream about his finger suggest that Galen personally thought dream instructions might be valuable, but does not tell us anything about other physicians. Finally, we must remember that Galen was born and raised at Pergamum, which was the incubatory oracle favoured by Aristides, and it may be that living near the shrine encouraged Galen to pay more attention to dreams than some of his contemporaries.[691]

Dreams had been closely connected with medicine since at least the fifth century BC through incubation sanctuaries and medical treatises like the Hippocratic dream book, and continued to be so. Some incubation sanctuaries, as noted above, may also have provided waking medical treatment, allowing dream-cures and more 'scientific' medical practices to co-exist and influence each other. It seems likely that dreams, within the cultural imagination, were linked in some ways with healing and were considered potentially medically significant, and this idea did not rely on assuming dreams to be a form of divine communication, as dreams produced by the internal workings of the soul but also be medically useful. However, there is no strong evidence, beyond the apparent increase in the popularity of incubation shrines, that physicians were more interested in

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[691] Although we must note here that Galen appears to implicitly criticise over-reliance on incubatory cures in places; see Kudlien 1981: 124.

dreams in the second century AD than at any other time. Considering that a number of the incubation shrines that flourished in the second century AD were not healing shrines, it seems likely that we should look to other factors for the explanation of their rise in popularity, rather than connecting it with medical practice.

Rituals and Responses to Dreams

Rituals and responses to these dreams are designed to do one or both of two things – to determine whether or not the dream was divine, significant or true, and to avert any possible negative consequences of a divine or significant dream.

It has sometimes been suggested that there was a 'belief' that false dreams occur before midnight, and true dreams afterwards (which has sometimes been used to explain why Aeneas leaves through the Ivory Gate), though the supporting evidence is limited. The idea dates back to Everett's 1900 note on *Aeneid* 6, in which Everett cites 'preeminently' Horace, *Satires*, 1.10.33 and Ovid, *Heroides*, 19.195, and additionally, Moschus 2.2, and Plato, *Crito*, 44a.[692] In Ovid's *Heroides*, Hero says she has had a vision just as morning was approaching, which she says is when dreams are usually true, while Horace says that Quirinus (Romulus) appeared to him in a dream after midnight, when dreams are true (*post mediam noctem visus, cum somnia vera*) (Ovid, *Heroides*, 19.196-203; Horace, *Satires*, 1.10.33). A Latin inscription refers to dawn in describing a dream containing a

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[692] Everett 1900: 154.

command which was obeyed.[693] Dawn, rather than midnight, is also the important factor

in the reference from Moschus, where the time just before dawn is said to be when true

dreams come out (Moschus, 2.2). A brief reference to dreams that are more sure and clear

towards the end of the night from Tertullian may also provide some evidence to support

this theory (Tertullian, *De Anima*, 48). The Plato reference, however, is more likely to

refer to the timely appearance of the dream, rather than the point of the night at which it

was dreamed (Plato, *Crito*, 44a).

Amory observed that this supposed 'belief' had often been cited as an

'explanation' for the Homeric Gates, but adds that there is no reason to suppose a

connection, rather, this appears to be an 'alternate' belief.[694] (We have already noted the

problems with using the term 'belief' at all). Otis argues that there is no convincing

evidence of such a 'belief' and Steiner also disputed this theory, on the grounds that, if

such a 'belief' were widespread, Cicero would have mentioned it when he discusses

distinguishing true from false dreams in *De Divinatione* (1.39-65, 2.119).[695]

Reed defended the theory by citing Pliny the Elder, who noted that *vana* visions

appear close to the time the sleeper has been drinking wine and eating, while the effects

of food and wine wear off later in the night (Pliny, *Natural History*, 10.211).[696]

Considering that the precise time of midnight is mentioned only by Horace, it may be that

this is the source of these scattered references. It may have been generally assumed that

dreams that occurred towards the morning, when the effects of food and wine had worn

off, were more reliable. The precise time of midnight, however, appears to have been

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[693] Renberg 2003: 236.
[694] Amory 1966: 3.
[695] Otis 1959: 174; Steiner 1952: 94.
[696] Reed 1973: 311.

chosen somewhat arbitrarily by Horace, and should not be used to help explain the significance of the Virgilian Gates.

It seems that this was one way in which the important distinction between 'true' and 'false' dreams might be made, but the paucity of evidence, much of it from imaginative literature, does not seem to indicate that this was a particularly commonly held idea. In imaginative literature, the writer is able to decide what world view they want to present, and present it. Horace and Ovid chose to suggest that the essential difference between true and false dreams was due to what time they come to the dreamer, whereas Virgil, alternatively, chose to explain it by which Gates the dreams leave through. So this does not necessarily indicate a strong cultural idea, and the need to explain it suggests that it was not especially widely known.

From classical Greece, we have some evidence that, if someone thought a dream was significant, they would turn to another, more reliable, form of divination (often a sacrifice) to determine whether the dream was meaningful and if so, what it might mean. Xenophon, for example, looks for further divinatory signs after both his own significant dreams. After the first, he sacrifices to Zeus, because the dream came from Zeus, and learns from the entrails that he should not take sole command (Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 6.1.22-24). Xenophon also uses extispicy to confirm his second significant dream, and is further encouraged by more favourable signs (Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 4.3.9). He also refers to a similar practice in a more comical way in his *Symposium*; Callias remarks to Charmides (who is explaining why he is proud to be poor) that he is sure that if Charmides prays never to be rich, and that if he ever sees a good dream, he sacrifices to the gods (presumably to avert actually gaining riches) (Xenophon, *Symposium*, 4.33). We

also hear from Theophrastus that a superstitious person, whenever he dreams, will ask the interpreter which god or goddess to sacrifice to (on interpreters, see below).[697]

Kragelund has suggested that the Greeks sacrificed in order to avert the evil foretold in a dream, whereas in 'Roman' examples, the sacrifice is performed in order to check the reliability of the dream.[698] However, Xenophon's actions suggest that he performed the sacrifice to check the reliability of the dream, and to obtain further details on the dream's meaning. Kragelund's other examples (the advice given to Atossa but the Chorus in Aeschylus' *Persians* and the libations made by Chrysothemis on behalf of Clytemnestra in Sophocles' *Electra*), are designed to avert the evil signified by the dream rather than to check its veracity, though it should be noted the former are Persian characters, not Greek, while the latter refers to libations, rather than sacrifice (Aeschylus, *Persians*, 215-227).

The Roman examples cited by Kragelund are the dream of Decius as reported by Livy, and the dream of Calpurnia as reported by Plutarch. In Plutarch's version of Calupurnia's dream, Calpurnia tries to persuade Caesar to carry out sacrifices and look for more divinatory signs if he does not believe her dream (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 64). However, none of the other sources which report Calpurnia's dream refer to any such suggestion, and it should be noted that, although the story is Roman, Plutarch himself is Greek. The example from Livy, on the other hand, does refer to a sacrifice performed in order to establish the veracity of a dream, and Valerius Maximus also reports this detail, though Cicero does not (Livy, *History of Rome*, 8.8; Valerius Maximus, 1.7.3; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.24.51). Kragelund has also pointed out that some literary dreams, although no ritual is carried out, still require secondary confirmation from the gods before they are

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[697] See further Harris 2009: 154-155.
[698] Kragelund 2001: 80.

believed, such as the death of Titus Latinius' son or the sow and piglets discovered by Aeneas which confirm his dream.[699]

These literary examples are isolated and refer to works written, in some cases, centuries apart and in very different circumstances. They do suggest that, at least in classical Greece and perhaps in early Rome, one response to a dream that might or might not be significant was to perform a sacrifice and compare the results of the sacrifice to the dream. Plutarch's reference to this method in his *Lives* indicates that the practice may have continued into the second century AD. The isolated nature of these examples suggests that this was one option among several, rather than a course of action automatically taken by most people, but their wide chronological and geographical spread suggest that the practice was a persistent one.

As we have seen, some have argued that, in the Near East and possibly in Greece, one might tell dreams to the sky to avert evil (see Chapter Two pp119-120). We have also seen that this was more likely a dramatic device for the ancient tragedians rather than a common custom (though Propertius does refer to Cynthia telling her dreams to Vesta to find out if they are harmful; Propertius, *Elegies*, 2.29b.27-29). Another suggestion, which is more relevant to later Greco-Roman examples, is that a person might tell dreams to a river, or wash themselves, especially in a river, to avert dream-evil. In Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*, for example, there is a brief reference to Medea, having been alarmed by heavenly portents in the night, getting up and going to the river to purge the night's horrors (Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 5.329-332). Mozley, in his edition, suggests that

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[699] Kragelund 2001: 78; for Aeneas and the pigs, see Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8.30-65; 8.71-78; 8.84-85; on Titus Latinius, see Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.26.55; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 7.68; Livy, *History of Rome*, 2.36; Valerius Maximus, 1.7.4; Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, 24-25.

people told dreams to the sun or to a river to avoid evil effect, and, from the Roman period, refers to Propertius, *Elegies*, 3.10.3 and Persius 2.16 (where Persius refers to a pious man who washes off the pollutions of the night by dipping his head in the Tibur two or three times).[700] However, the Propertius poem cited seems to be referring more straightforwardly to washing sleep from one's eyes, that is, washing the sand out of one's eyes after waking up (Propertius, *Elegies*, 3.10.13). The reference in the *Argonautica* may indicate a ritual washing, but could also refer to washing oneself after getting up, while the Persius reference may indicate a different sort of nightly activity requiring washing.

One epigram of Martial lists various actions that might be taken when dealing with difficult dreams. Nasidienus has been telling Martial every morning about the 'excessive' dreams he has been having about the poet (Martial, *Epigrams*, 7.54.1). The poet has become so disturbed by this that he has exhausted his supply of wine while a wise woman is appeasing Nasidienus' night-visions for him (*exorat noctes dum mihi saga tuas*) (Martial, *Epigrams*, 7.54.4). Martial has used up vast amounts of salt and frankincense and has sacrificed all his lambs, pigs and hens in his attempts to solve the problem, and asks that Nasidienus either stay awake or sleep (and dream) for himself (Martial, *Epigrams*, 7.54.5-8).[701] This being satirical, we can assume two things; first, that no one would really be expected to react in quite such an extreme way to dreams (especially someone else's) but secondly, that all of these must have been genuine responses to dreams carried out by some people, otherwise the joke would be lost.

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[700] Mozley 1934: 268.
[701] Tibullus also refers to propitiating bad dream omens with salt and spelt; Tibullus 3.4.10. Tibullus also refers to offering holy mean to counteract nightmares; Tibullus 1.5.14.

Some of these rituals are depicted as being carried out by well-respected people and implicitly approved by the narration. However, we have a substantial amount of evidence, from throughout ancient history, for a more sceptical attitude, which considers reacting to a dream in any way to be an indication of low superstition. For example, in Cicero's *De Divinatione*, Quintus says he has come to see that the Stoic view of divination is too much like superstition, and it is also said to be a duty to weed out superstition from true religion (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.48.100, 2.72.149). The unsympathetic character Tryphaena is persuaded by 'superstitious' (*superstitiosus*) talk in Petronius' *Satyricon* (Petronius, *Satyricon*, 106.3). Horace includes, among things to laugh at, dreams, magic terrors, wonders, witches, nocturnal goblins, and Thessalian prodigies (Horace, *Epistles*, 2.2.205-209). Sertorius invents dreams as part of a ploy to convince the 'superstitious' barbarians that a certain doe is a gift from Diana and reveals hidden secrets to him (Plutarch, *Sertorius*, 11). In the quotation which opened this study, Polybius complained that Timaeus' writing was full of dreams (ἐνυπνίων), marvels (τεράτων) and unlikely stories (μύθων ἀπιθάνων), in summary, of low superstitions (δεισιδαιμονίας ἀγεννοῦς) and old wives' tales (τερατείας γυναικώδους) (Polybius, 12.24.5)

Our best evidence for this attitude from the second century AD comes from Plutarch (though see also below on satire). Plutarch made extensive use of dream reports in his biographical work and might, on this basis alone, be assumed to have considered dreams to be a possible form of communication with the divine. Some of his philosophical work seems to support this idea. In *De Defectu Oraculorum*, Plutarch has Lamprias argue that, if souls that have been separated from the body are δαίμονες, with

the power of prophecy, then souls within the body have the same power, but it is obscured and one of the ways in which this latent power occasionally manifests itself is in dreams (another is at the point of death) (Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum*, 39-40).

However, in other places, Plutarch refers to the problems suffered by people who pay too much attention to dreams. Early on in his *De Superstitione* (Περὶ δεισιδαιμονίας), Plutarch describes how unfortunate the superstitious are, as, although others can forget their troubles in sleep, the superstitious can never have rest from their fears, but continue to be plagued by them in dreams. This section clearly treats dreams as something that comes from within; Plutarch pours scorn on those who consult ἀγύρται, 'cheats' and γόηται, 'sorcerers' because they are troubled by their dreams (Plutarch, *De Superstitione*, 3). Plutarch also reports that Caesar did not pay heed to Calpurnia's dream because he did not want to be seen to be swayed by womanish superstition (γυναικισμὸν ἐν δεισιδαιμονίᾳ) (Plutarch, *Caesar*, 63).

The association of a superstitious nature with bad dreams is mentioned again, briefly, in the *De Virtute et Vitio*. Describing how vice, like bad clothes, accompanies a person everywhere and makes everything more difficult, he explains that it drives away sleep, because, although the body rests, the soul (ψυχή) is troubled by terrible dreams διὰ δεισιδαιμονίαν, 'because of superstition' (Plutarch, *De Virtute et Vitio*, 2). He also goes on to describe how vices which are hidden during the day are indulged at night, where there is no reputation or law to constrain them, and explains that these dreams do not satisfy the impulse to vice, but merely feed the desire to indulge while awake as well; this description is clearly referring to dreams which proceed from the inner thoughts and feelings of the dreamer.

We see here the dual place of dreams within the imagination. Most dreams are considered to be unimportant and irrelevant to any wider purpose, and those who pay too much attention to this great majority of meaningless dreams are considered to be superstitious and foolish. On the other hand, dreams are still frequently imagined to have the potential to be more meaningful, and the idea that in exceptional circumstances, a dream may form a link with the divine is ever present.

Dealing with Everyday Dreams: Artemidorus

We turn now to consider one particular reaction a 'superstitious' person (in the judgement of those mentioned above) might have to a dream. For such a person, one of the easiest solutions to a problematic dream was to consult a dream book. As we have seen, dream books have existed in most literate ancient societies, as they still do today, though the only surviving dream book from the Roman period is that of Artemidorus. There is some doubt as to how widely works such as his would have been consulted, and we should be wary of assuming a privileged status for this work.

Secondary studies of dreams sometimes display a tendency to overplay the importance of Artemidorus.[702] For example, MacAlister argues that Habrocomes' dream in the *Ephesiaca* signifies danger because, according to Artemidorus, swimming signifies danger (Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesiaca*, 1.12, cf. Artemidorus 1.64, but note that he

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[702] See for example Lev Kenan 2004: 248-249; Amat 1985: 81. Brelich uses the *Onirocritica* to represent a generally 'Greek cultural orientation'; Brelich 1966: 294.

also says that swimming across a river is a good sign, 2.27).[703] However, it seems obvious that it is the terrifying giantess who sets his ship on fire that has worried Habrocomes. MacAlister has also suggested that Theron's otherwise inexplicable decision not to throw Callirhoe overboard because he dreamed of a locked door may be explained by referring to Artemidorus, who explains that a dream of a locked door tells the dreamer that they should delay an intended journey (Chariton, *Chaireas and Kallirhoe*, 1.12).[704] This may be so, but it should be noted that Artemidorus' focus in the passage in question is on the appearance of a key in a dream, rather than on the door which the key locks (Artemidorus, 3.54). We are left with two important questions about the place of Artemidorus within the wider study of dreams. How useful is he when it comes to illuminating other texts featuring dreams, and how does he add to our picture of the place of dreams in the cultural imagination?

Apart from incubation oracles, the evidence strongly suggests that dream interpreters in the Roman period were not well regarded. Although dream interpreters were both respected and respectable in archaic and classical Greece, they do not appear to have been so highly regarded in the later Greco-Roman world and, as we have seen, they very rarely make substantial appearances in literature, either of record or of imagination.[705] We have seen that Kragelund argues that in Rome, a private person could go to dream interpreters or act on dreams as they wished, but, with some notable exceptions, these had no place in public business, and the evidence seems to support this

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[703] MacAlister 1996: 38.
[704] MacAlister 1996: 40.
[705] Van Lieshout has noted that, with regard to the classical period in Greece, although most of our evidence for them comes from literary works, in this respect these works are likely to reflect real practice; van Lieshout 1980: 178. He also observes that dream interpretation seems to have taken place within temple precincts, emphasising the religious nature of the activity; van Lieshout 1980: 179.

argument.[706] Renberg has discussed the epigraphical evidence for dream interpreters, of which there is very little.[707] An inscription from the cult of Isis at Athens mentions a woman who was a light-bearer and dream interpreter, ὀνειροκρίτις, and another at Delos mentions a woman who was an ὀνειροκρίτις.[708]

There are enough passing references to dream interpreters that we know that they existed, and we can infer what many people thought of them, and they do not appear to have had a good reputation or to have held a high position in society. For example, Cicero argued that if it were true that, as Chrysippus says, a dream interpreter is one who explains the visions sent by the gods to sleeping men, such an interpreter would need to have great intelligence and perfect learning, and there is no such man (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.63.130). Tacitus describes a man called Libo Drusus, who was accused of conspiracy after a series of events, the spark of which was that a friend of his had persuaded the man, who was apparently improvident and easily led, to pay attention to the promises of Chaldeans, magical rites and interpreters of dreams (Tacitus, *Annals*, 2.27). Propertius refers to a sort of dream interpreter; describing how witches, magic roots and herbs, doctors and fortune tellers cannot him, he includes among these ultimately useless people an old woman who has pondered his dreams ten times (Propertius, *Elegies*, 2.4.5-16). The philosopher Philo refers to the false dream interpreters who invent meanings in order to obtain money (Philo, *De Josepho*, 22.125-126).

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[706] Kragelund 2001: 80-81. See also MacMullen, who suggests that the language used for inscriptions relating to dreams suggests that interpreters were not usually required, as the inscriptions say simply 'I was ordered' or similar; MacMullen 1981: 61.
[707] Renberg 2003: 253.
[708] Heyob 1975: 104.

In the focal period of the second century AD, Plutarch has Cimon, who cannot understand his dream, ask a friend to interpret it for him; presumably this friend, like Cimon, was of high social standing (Plutarch, *Cimon*, 18). Artemidorus himself refers to market-place diviners (μάντεις) as 'discredited' (διαβεβλημένων) (Artemidorus, prol.). At the end of his *Life of Aristides*, Plutarch briefly mentions a very poor grandson of Aristides, who apparently made his living by an ὀνειροκριτικοῦ, a dream interpreting tablet (Plutarch, *Aristides*, 27).

The elite tended to interpret their dreams themselves. In the frequently repeated story of the dream of Titus Latinius, specialist dream interpreters are not required to interpret this symbolic dream. In Cicero's version, Quintus does not refer to specialist dream interpreters and the implication is that the Senate interpreted the dream themselves (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.26.55). Dionysius of Halicarnassus suggests that a senator realised what the dream meant (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 7.69). Livy makes no reference to interpretation (Livy, *History of Rome*, 2.36). Valerius Maximus ends the story with Latinius' recovery and does not refer to interpretation at all (Valerius Maximus, 1.7.4). Plutarch says that the Senate thought of the explanation themselves, then asked the priests to verify that they were right. There are occasional exceptions; for example, Ovid's *Amores* 3.5 describes a dream, followed by its interpretation by an augur. Since the dream exists in the narrative solely in order to be interpreted, it presents a series of clear symbols which the augur interprets easily. The purpose of the dream and the interpretation is to provide a bad omen for the relationship, to make the poet afraid and suspicious, and to foreshadow the discovery, in 3.11a, that the poet's mistress has, indeed, been unfaithful.

Although there are instances when Artemidorus' method of dream interpretation seems to be reflected elsewhere, these are relatively rare. Behr has compiled a catalogue of points of agreement and disagreement between Artemidorus and Aristides (who was writing about thirty years later), but there are very few points on which they agree absolutely.[709] There are no references to dream books in the list of Greek literary papyri found in Egypt.[710] When dream interpretation of the sort featured in dream books is carried out in other texts, it is usually by lower class characters. For example, both the nurse in the *Octavia* and the old woman in the *Metamorphoses* refer to the principle of opposites, which is often used to decode dreams in dream books. In both cases, the theory is mistakenly applied, for both dreams foreshadow an event that is closer to the imagery of the dream; this would seem to confirm that the authors of these texts did not put much stock in this sort of method of interpretation (though this is probably due to a desire to have the characters misinterpret the dream rather than a desire to make a statement about dream books).[711]

Dream interpretation is also still conceptualised as chiefly Eastern. Diodorus Siculus notes that the Chaldeans of Babylon are priests and astrologers, but also do a lot of divination, interpreting dreams and portents, including the flight of birds, as well as extispicy. Unlike in Greece, these skills are passed down through families (Diodorus Siculus, 2.29.1-4). Plutarch records that when Pompey went through Mithridates' private documents, he found interpretations of dreams (κρίσεις ἐνυπνίων) of Mithridates and his wives among them (Plutarch, *Pompey*, 37). Plutarch displays a somewhat scornful

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[709] Behr 1968: 196-204.
[710] See Harris 2009: 134.
[711] See also Gollnick 1999: 7.

attitude towards foreign dream interpretation in *Alexander*, as he notes that the Magi interpreted a dream of Darius' in a way that would please him, rather than according to probability (Plutarch, *Alexander*, 18). Listing the various people trying to predict which of two cousins will die first, Lucian includes, with prophets and astrologers, 'Chaldean dream-interpreters' (Lucian, *Dialogi mortuorum*, 21.1).

Cicero argued that the art of the dream interpreter is simply to use his wits to deceive, and that all the many examples collected by the Stoics do not mean anything, except that the interpreters are shrewd. Unlike symptoms of illness or weather signs, signs from dreams cannot be traced to any natural cause (Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 2.70.144-145). Other writers might have entertained the idea that dreams could be meaningful more willingly than Cicero, but this does not mean that they considered dream interpreters any more reliable. This, then, is the context into which we must place Artemidorus.

Where does Artemidorus fit in our consideration of dreams in the wider cultural imagination in the second century AD? The most important point to make here is that Artemidorus cannot be used to illuminate other texts. The sort of work he did was not considered highly by most writers and his work would not have been consulted or referred to. His book also contains deliberate differences from other similar works, as, if it was not unique, there would have been no demand for it.[712] This is most important because it confirms that we cannot accept Artemidorus' definition of ἐνύπνιον and ὄνειρος dreams as indicative of wider thought on the matter.

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[712] Bowersock has discussed some of the most important differences between what Artemidorus says and other, roughly contemporary works; Bowersock 1994: 95.

However, Artemidorus' work has survived and was part of a long tradition of oneirocriticism, so it still has some relevance for wider opinions on dreams. Artemidorus explicitly problematises the question that has occupied most of this study – where do (or did Greco-Romans imagine) dreams come from? His dream book provides a manual for the interested dreamer to try to establish the meaning of a dream they think is significant. It is less helpful concerning the question of how to decide whether the dream is significant or not, since a great number of dreams might be considered significant according to the book – and this is possibly deliberate, as, the more significant dreams a person has, the more need they have of a dream book, while the existence of non-significant dreams allows the author to claim that, where a dream is not fulfilled, it was not a significant ὄνειρος dream in the first place. The existence of Artemidorus' book is testament to the fact that, for some people, dreams were frequently considered potentially divine and significant, and they thought that it was worth buying a book to help them to work out the meaning of their dreams.

The survival of Artemidorus' dream book, however, does not suggest that dreams were regarded as more important in the second century AD than in earlier times. As Artemidorus himself notes, his book was part of a long-standing tradition and he had many predecessors (Artemidorus, 1.praef.). We must not allow the coincidence that his book dates from the second century AD to mislead us into thinking that it could only have been produced at this time. Artemidorus represents, not change, but continuity.

A Place Within the Cultural Imagination: Satire and Scepticism

It was stated above that the place an idea holds within the collective imagination is distinct from 'belief' in that it does not depend on whether people actually believe in it or not. Chapter Four described the functions of dreams in literature of the imagination, but one important form of literature was excluded; satire and comical works, such the epigram of Martial cited above. In these works, we are often presented with a sceptical view of dreams and the possibility that they provide a link with the divine, which will help us to better place dreams within the cultural imagination.

Petronius is usually presumed to have lived during the first century AD, but it is important to look at him here, as he provides some of the most definite refutations of the idea of divine dreams when he states quite clearly that dreams, which 'mock the mind', are not sent by the gods, for 'each man makes his own' (*sibi quisque facit*) (Petronius, Frag. 30.1-3). He says that dreams, which play with the mind with shadows, are not sent down by the gods, but that each man makes his own, and our minds pursue the same thoughts by night as by day, and it goes on to describe the sort of dreams different people have (Petronius, Frag. 30.5-16, following Lucretius 4.962ff). In the writing of Petronius, it is usually difficult to say what, if anything, is meant seriously and what is a joke, and this becomes almost impossible when faced with a fragment. However, this passage does seem to indicate a scepticism towards prophetic dreams, and this attitude is also expressed in fragments of his *Satyricon*, such as Ascyltus' desire to get away from a tedious lecture on theories which were 'all glittering fragments and the meaning of dreams' (*vitrea fracta et somniorum interpretamenta*) (Petronius, *Satyricon*, 10.2).

Much of the *Satyricon* represents a satirical look at literary conventions or themes, and it may be that Fragment 30, if it is from the *Satyricon*, formed a comical swipe at the literary use of dreams in epic and romantic fiction.[713] The issue is further complicated by a reasonably well-preserved section of the *Satyricon*, in which Lichas and Tryphaena describe their dreams. Lichas and Tryphaena's dreams are entirely true and accurate, though the appearance of Priapus to deliver a message to Lichas is unusual and suggests that this is making fun of the appearance of more exalted gods in other literature (Petronius, *Satyricon*, 104.1-2).[714] However, their dreams are mocked by the protagonist, who notes that all of this simply proves that Epicurus was a divine man for condemning things like this and describes Lichas and Tryphaena's discussion of how the gods have sent them these dreams as 'superstitious' talk (*superstitiosus*) (Petronius, *Satyricon*, 104.2; 106.3).[715] It is possible that the irony here comes from the fact that Eumolpus is reacting as many normal people would to such tales of significant dreams, but is mistaken because he is unaware that he is part of a narrative; although in reality, dreams come from internal thoughts and desires, in literature, they often reveal the truth, and these dreams are not real, but take place within a narrative; hence, they are true. On the other hand, since the narrator mocks their dreams as well, it may be more simply designed as a basic 'spoof' of a scene that appears frequently in ancient fictive literature.

Two of Lucian's works are frequently entitled '*The Dream*' in various editions; '*The Dream, or, The Cock*' and '*The Dream, or, The Life of Lucian*' (often called '*Lucian's*

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[713] On Petronius' use of the title *Satyricon* for work which includes elements of satire, see Walsh 1970: 22.
[714] In addition to the obvious epic parallels, Kragelund has suggested that this scene may be mocking the Greek novels; Kragelund 1989: 437. A more suitable epic deity would be Jupiter, Venus or Minerva, while Pan or the Nymphs might appear in a novel – Priapus is cruder than any of them.
[715] Kragelund argues that the dreams are wish-fulfilments, but the precise information conveyed in the dreams and their fulfilment suggests otherwise; Kragelund 1989: 440.

Career'). The Greek title of the former is Ὄνειρος ἢ ἀλεκτρυών, of the latter, Περὶ τοῦ ἐνυπνίου, ἤτοι βίος Λουκιανοῦ; interestingly, Lucian uses ἐνύπνιον for the dream which supposedly led him to his career, but ὄνειρος for the parabolic story of Micyllus and the cock.

The first is a dialogue between Micyllus, a poor cobbler, and a cock who claims to be a reincarnation of Pythagorus. The cock has woken Micyllus from pleasant dreams of riches (Lucian, *Gallus*, 1). The dialogue is not particularly concerned with dreams or dreaming; rather, the dream is a means to explore the relative well-being of rich and poor. To debate whether the cock is really Pythagorus, and whether one should see the experience as a visit from a dead Pythagorus or as the product of Micyllus' mind, would be to miss the point of the exercise. The second '*Dream*' purports to describe an early dream of Lucian's own that prompted his choice of career. Lucian claims he told the story in order to encourage young men to take the high path of Culture in their careers, and not be put off by worrying about money or by temporary poverty (Lucian, *Somnium sive vita Luciani*, 18). He opens the dream description with a quote from a poet he usually mocks for inaccuracy, Homer, and the story has a clear and simple moral. The choice of dream was probably inspired by writers such as Galen (see above), who had claimed a divine dream as a motivating factor in his choice of career.

In other places, Lucian more clearly expresses a sceptical attitude towards dreams. Lucian claims that Alexander the Great ordered everyone, on pain of death, to worship Hephaestion as a god after his death, and that, to make him happy, flatterers related visions and dreams of Hephaestion to him (Lucian, *Calumniae non temere credendum*, 17). Similarly, when Hannibal and Alexander argue over who is the better general, Hannibal observes that he never pretended to be a god or told everyone about

dreams of his mother; he implies that this makes him a better general (Lucian, *Dialogi mortuorum*, 25.2). In fact, several significant dreams are attributed to Hannibal and to those around him in later sources, both historical and fictive, but perhaps Lucian means to suggest that Hannibal did not use the dreams as a reason why people should follow him, whereas Alexander did.[716]

The main problem with using these texts as evidence is that we cannot be entirely sure what, exactly, they are making fun of. Harris and Veyne have discussed the concept of 'poetic belief' – those things which one might accept in a work of literature but not in reality.[717] Something which is making fun of epic poetry may be reflecting, not current, genuinely held ideas, but a literary *topos* which is recognised as part of the epic machinery but not related to reality. Lucian's Island of Dreams, for example, is not reflecting any current ideas about the landscape of dreams, but is a satire of elements of Homer's *Odyssey*, set within the literary construct of the narrator's sea journey (Lucian, *A True Story*, 2.32-34). We cannot even confidently conclude that this theme was still popular in literature, as the satire may be aimed at older works (such as Homer).

More useful are pieces like Martial's epigram, (see above). Because poetry of this nature is based in situations that must be as real as possible for the joke to work, this is more strongly indicative of a continuing interest in dreams. Our chief evidence of this sort from the second century AD are some of the works of Lucian, such as *The Dream, or the Cock*. Most of Lucian's references to dreams in those of his works which have a more mundane setting refer to anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams, or mention, with some scorn,

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[716] See for example Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 3.196-221 and 4.722-740; Valerius Maximus, 1.7.ext.1; Cicero, *De Divinatione*, 1.24.48-49; Livy, *History of Rome*, 21.22-23; Apuleius, *De Deo Socratis*, 7.
[717] Harris 2009: 133; Veyne 1988: 22.

dream interpreters (see above). We can draw few conclusions concerning the cultural imagination in the second century AD, other than to observe that there seems to be a certain continuity in Roman period satirical treatments of dreams throughout the first two centuries AD, which treats dreams as amusing aspects of epic poetry, as wish fulfilments or refers to the lowly activities of dream interpreters.

Change and Continuity, Memory and Imagination: St Perpetua

At the beginning of this chapter, we noted that Christianity is often viewed in opposition to ancient paganism, as a more dogmatic, less fluid religion, and there is a great deal of truth in this. However, as far as dreams are concerned, Christianity has much more in common with ancient paganism than one might expect. Although various forms of divination were denounced by Christians as sinful, dreams continued to be considered a valid form of divination and a possible link with the divine, not least because the *Gospel of Matthew* contains several dreams.

Matthew contains more quotations from the Old Testament than any other Gospel, and perhaps this increased use of the Old Testament is part of the reason for the appearance of dreams in this Gospel, particularly considering most of the dreams in *Matthew* are message dreams.[718] The message dreams in *Matthew* are brought by 'the messenger of the Lord' (ἄγγελος κυρίου, 1.20, 2.13, 2.19), a formulation which suggests a relationship with the divine that is similar in some ways to that of the Platonic

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[718] Nolland 2005: 29. A full investigation into why *Matthew* includes dreams where the other Gospels do not would require an exploration of the provenance of the synoptic Gospels and the proposed source 'Q' that is beyond the scope of this study. Gnuse had discussed this subject briefly; Gnuse 1990: 114-120. On portents in Matthew more generally, see Kee 1983: 183-190.

δαίμονες. *Matthew* also includes one dream which appears to be symbolic, that of

Pilate's wife – like Josephus, giving message dreams to Jews (and also to the Near

Eastern magi), but a symbolic dream to a Roman.

The great majority of Christian material concerning dreams is outside the scope of

this study, as it dates from the third century AD or later. However, we will conclude this

study with one more case study, focussing on a document produced just outside our focal

period of the second century AD, produced at the very beginning of the third century AD,

but which we may assume reflects ideas current at the very end of the second century. By

examining the dreams recorded in the *Passio* of St Perpetua, we may explore how closely

early Christian dream reports resemble the pagan Greco-Roman tradition that has been

the focus of this study.

Perpetua, as well as being the first Christian we have studied, is also the only woman we

have studied whose dreams have apparently been preserved in her own words. How much

continuity can we see from earlier works in Perpetua's dreams, and has anything

changed? Based on this evidence, did dreams occupy the same place in the cultural

imagination of Christians as in that of their pagan contemporaries?

Once again, it will be necessary briefly to address the question of whether these

are 'real' dreams, experienced by Perpetua before her execution. The Christian genre of

the *passio* refers to an account of the death of a martyr; however, Perpetua's *passio* is so

early an example that it is unlikely that the genre had become particularly proscriptive at

this time and indeed, may have been the document that sparked the development of the

genre in the first place.[719] Perpetua was executed at Carthage around AD 202-3, though

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[719] See Shaw 1993: 15-16.

the date has been the subject of some debate.[720] There are several texts narrating

Perpetua's imprisonment and death; both a Greek and a Latin *Passio Perpatuae*

(composed of Perpetua's prison diary, a vision related to her by her companion Saturus,

and an introduction and account of her death written by an anonymous redactor), and her

death was also narrated in the later *Acta Perpetuae et Felicitas*.[721] Dodds concludes that,

regardless of the reliability of the other sections, Perpetua's prison diary represents a

genuine record of her time in prison, and the dreams she recorded are genuine dreams she

had experienced (based partly on their odd and dreamlike content, and the inclusion of

detail unlikely to be invented by a third party).[722]

However, more recently, Harris has argued that, firstly, the dreams themselves are

not genuine dream reports, and secondly, that the account is written in the style of a

retrospective narrator, not a diarist.[723] However, Harris acknowledges that the surviving

document may be a redaction of a genuine original written by Perpetua, as there are

certain dream-like elements in the reports, though they are arranged into a narrative that

deliberately evokes literary forebears. Overall then, while there may be some core of

truth to these dreams, we will need to analyse them in general terms as the products of

early Christian thought, without relying too heavily on the specifics of Perpetua's life and

situation. Additionally, the redactor's decision to include the accounts of her dreams in an

early example of a genre that would develop into the genre of the *passio* text and

influence the development of hagiography represents a literary decision and can be

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[720] See further Shaw 1993: 3.

[721] See Dodds 1965: 47-48 on the comparative reliability of the various texts. Shaw has suggested that the Latin version is the original, while the Greek is a rough 'translation' with added glosses and additions; Shaw 1993: 3.

[722] Dodds 1965: 49-52.

[723] Harris 2009: 112. See also Heffernan 1995: 320.

analysed as such. This study will focus on the *Passio*, on the assumption that this is the earlier text, and therefore closer to the relevant period.

If the document is genuine and was written by Perpetua, recording her own dreams, it is the only record we possess from the ancient world of a woman's dreams written down by the woman herself, rather than by male commentators. Unfortunately, without any basis for comparison, it is difficult to say whether this has any bearing on the dream reports. Lane Fox stated briefly that 'feminists have overemphasized 10.7', where Perpetua imagines that she herself turns into a man, though such a curt dismissal perhaps glosses too quickly over the unusual and striking dream imagery.[724] On the other hand, any attempt to analyse the dream from the viewpoint of feminism or gender studies is fraught with difficulty. Shaw has suggested that Perpetua's 'visions' are similar to other 'similar female visionary accounts', including such features as a strong interest in the representation of the self, language that is influence by oral modes of communication, and an unspecified 'presence' of the author.[725] However, the only evidence Shaw cites is a secondary book on medieval women's visionary literature, and Shaw concedes that Perpetua cannot be considered as part of a group with these women, as she was not celibate (he does not add that she also lived in a large urban setting, in pre-Islamic north Africa, a thousand years before most of the other women referred to). The representation of the self is not surprising in a diary (not a genre which is very well represented in ancient literature) and the influence of oral communication is also likely due to this more informal genre, while Shaw's 'presence' of the author is difficult to confirm or deny. Ultimately, we cannot read assumptions of 'female' qualities into Perpetua's dreams,

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[724] Lane Fox 1986: 752.
[725] Shaw 1993: 27.

because we have no other 'female' dreams to compare it to, as the other dreams of women in ancient sources appear in very different contexts.

Perpetua's first 'vision' (which occurs at night) has a distinctly incubatory feel to it; although she experiences the dream in prison without special ritual, she specifically asks for the dream, confident that, having asked for a vision, she will be granted one (*Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 3).[726] The dream which follows would have had a clear significance for early Christians; Perpetua ascends a narrow ladder which is surrounded by weapons until she reaches an idyllic place. The message for Perpetua is that she will be martyred; the message for Christian readers is that they must endure whatever 'weapons' they are faced with so that they can ascend into Heaven (*Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 4). The intertextual reference to Jacob's dream of the ladder is clear.[727] Here, then, we elements of Greek incubation and a concept of Heaven with Jewish roots, wrapped up in a symbolic dream.

The second dream relates to her brother, Dinocrates, who had died without being baptised; she sees him suffering, then, the next night, being led away (*Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 7). This dream would bring readers the same comfort it brought Perpetua in the diary, that unbaptised relatives might still be saved. The imagery used here is more uniquely Christian, based as it is on a Christian conceptualisation of the afterlife. It might be said to be linked with ghost stories told through dreams, and with dreams of the dead, with the unburied dead replaced here by the unbaptised. However,

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[726] Her experience is also closer to Servius' definition of incubation, which is less strict than mine, as although Servius suggests the importance of place, referring to incubation on the Capitol, his definition refers simply to prayer, with no emphasis on ritual; Servius, *Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, VII.88.
[727] See further Harris 2009: 111. On the importance of Jacob's dream for the early African church, see Amat 1985: 70.

rather than demanding any action of Perpetua, as dream-ghost stories often do, this dream exists only to reassure her.

In Perpetua's third dream, she is led by a deacon into the amphitheatre, where she must fight an ugly Egyptian, helped by a group of attractive youths, and she herself becomes a man. She defeats the Egyptian and a giant gladiator trainer says 'Daughter, peace be with you' and she goes to the gate. Perpetua notes that when she woke up, she realised that the dream meant that she must fight, not wild animals, but the devil (*Passio Sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 10). This dream contains much more of what Harris refers to as 'the bizarre' than many older dream reports.[728] However, bizarre or not, the symbolism of the dream is reasonably clear and Perpetua is left in no doubt that the dream is of divine origin.

The *Passion* also records a dream of Saturus, their companion, in which he sees a vision of Heaven; this dream is clearly understood by the diarist (Saturus apparently also recorded the dream himself) and redactor as a literal prophecy of what will happen to them after they die. Literal prophecies are not especially common in ancient dream reports, but they do occur occasionally throughout antiquity (see Appendix One). The writing style employed here is sometimes considered to be even more self-consciously literary than that employed in recording Perpetua's dreams.[729]

It is notable that, although all of Perpetua's dreams are clearly designed to deliver a specific 'message' (endure suffering and you will get to Heaven; the unbaptised may still be saved and taken to Heaven; Perpetua will fight the forces of evil and ascend, victorious, to Heaven), none of them are message dreams. We have seen that the tradition

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[728] See Harris 2009: 17.
[729] See Amat 1985: 122.

of message dreams had its roots in the Near East, and that it survived in a stronger form in works related to the Near East, such as those of Josephus. One might expect Judaeo-Christianity to continue the tradition. However, although message dreams are not unknown in later Christian contexts, Perpetua's dreams are all symbolic.[730]

It is possible that this is because they are closely related to 'real' dreams and 'real' dreams are more likely to be symbolic (see Chapter Three pp163-171). However, it is also possible that message dreams were no longer considered particularly likely to occur in the cultural imagination. Over time, we can see an increase in mixed dreams and symbolic dreams, and we have seen that message dreams have become more complex. Even the many inscriptions relating to orders given in dreams do not necessarily relate to message dreams in their classic form, for, as Aristides shows us, orders can be given in more complex ways. Perpetua's dreams demonstrate a continuity with dreams of the pagan early Empire, as well as referring to more compatible examples from Jewish tradition (that of Jacob). It should also be noted that, although each dream imparts a clear piece of information, there is nothing that Perpetua can do about any of them. She is being informed of her fate (and that of Dinocrates), not ordered to take action. A symbolic dream, therefore, is more appropriate for that purpose.

Many forms of ancient divination slowly fell out of common practice under the influence of Christianity in Late Antiquity, but dreams continued to hold much the same place in the cultural imagination. There are several reasons for this. First, a dream is an unsolicited form of divination. Some forms of divination became associated with 'magic'

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[730] On later, Christian, message dreams, see Harris 2009: 66-85.

and considered to be sinful, but dreams, because they appear spontaneously, were not.[731] They are also always strange and in need of explanation, unlike other spontaneous forms of divination such as the observation of the flight of birds. Birds may be assumed to be simply flying where they want to, but, although many dreams may be explained as proceeding from the memories of the day, everyone occasionally has a dream which does not seem to make sense or to have a logical source within their recent memories. We feel a need to explain these dreams, which, in a modern context, is often fulfilled by psychoanalysis, but in ancient times, was more often attributed to a link with divinity or divination. Finally, the Christian scriptures or New Testament, which does not contain many references to divinatory practice, does contain significant dreams, which are few in number but of great significance, allowing dreams to continue to hold much the same place in the cultural imagination as they had before, unlike many other ancient forms of divination.

Although we can see that dreams continued to hold much the same place within the cultural imagination in the second century AD as they had in the earlier Roman empire, we have found no convincing evidence that there was any increase in interest in dreams during this period. As Kudlien has rightly pointed out, to talk of a '*whole age*' (his italics) being in a state of 'anxiety' is too broad, and it is certain individuals within such a period who may or may not hold certain ideas – something Kudlien refers to as a 'belief' that is 'typical' of a certain time.[732] We have preferred, in this study, to refer to the cultural imagination, within which certain ideas might be entertained, but would not be universally accepted. The ideas relating to dreams that were entertained within the

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[731] On the differences between theurgy and incubation, see Harrisson 2009 (forthcoming).
[732] Kudlien 1981: 126.

cultural imagination in the second century AD were not substantially different to those entertained throughout the Roman period.

There does seem to have been an increase in interest in incubatory oracles, but it should be noted that a visit to an incubatory shrine is a very particular act of devotion which is unlikely to be strongly connected to everyday activity. Since we have found no strong evidence for a increased medical interest in dreams (Galen being influenced by the shrine at Pergamum), it may be that the popularity of incubation shrines in this period was not connected to their medical use, but to something else (and this is borne out by the popularity of non-medical incubation oracles). The interest in incubatory oracles seems to be connected to a resurgence of interest in oracles in general. Whether this indicates as general increase in religiosity is more difficult to say. A visit to an oracle is a very particular action, requiring much effort on the part of the suppliant. Obviously, some people felt very strongly that dreams at oracles might offer a chance to communicate with the god, and this idea was linked to the more general opportunities for communication with the divine presented at oracles. However, these were probably a minority in the overall population, and cannot speak for the silent majority.

However, not all uses of dreams relied upon communication with the divine. Dreams were sometimes considered medically useful because they reflected the state of the soul, and novels and satire used dreams to show the state of mind of their characters. Although the idea that one could communicate with the gods through dreams was important, the idea that dreams reflect the state of the dreamer was equally important.

MacMullen has suggested that dreams were the second most important method for communicating with the gods in the period of the Roman Empire.[733] The popularity

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[733] The first, he argues, was through praying to statues; MacMullen 1981: 59-60.

of incubation shrines confirms that the idea that dreams were a possible method of communication with the divine was still strong in the second century AD. Equally strong was the idea that most ordinary dreams are insignificant, and the various ways of dealing with potentially significant dreams were much the same as those that had come before. Christian texts, the *Passio Perpetuae* in particular, show no great difference from pagan texts. If a dream appeared to contain an order, it might be acted upon, and if it seemed to be threatening, there were certain ways to react to it. This shows great continuity with the past, but little change.

CONCLUSIONS

Why did Greco-Roman Writers Record Dreams in their Histories and Fiction?

We can now return to the questions posed at the beginning of this study (see Introduction pp2-3).

To what extent did earlier treatments of dreams survive into the Roman period?

How did the peoples of the ancient Near East, Egypt and Greece conceptualise dreams and dreaming? To what extent did their ideas survive into the Roman period? To what extent might ideas about dreams be transmitted through migration and trade, and to what extent do differing cultures come to similar conclusions independently?

Certain categories emerge from a broad survey as particularly relevant to dreams and dreaming in the ancient world. Among the most interesting are the possibility of a connection between dreams and the dead, and dreams as a vehicle for communication between mortal and divine.

Evidence of similar ideas is not necessarily evidence of a connection. Links between dreams and the dead are particularly common, no doubt because most people will, at one time or another, dream about a person they knew who has died. Many of the various conceptualisations of dreaming have their root in an attempt to explain this phenomenon and describe exactly what is happening in these dreams. For example, some

cultures imagine that, when the body is asleep, the soul is able to leave it and travel to the places seen in dreams, including the land of the dead (the Berti, the Mehinaku, the Ungarinyin, Worora and Wunambal tribes); others view the experience as a visit from the dead person, who comes to see the living person via the dream (the Ingessana, the Igbo, Cherokee Indians, Tibetan Buddhism). Having established that the dead can visit the living through dreams, it is then no great leap to assume that divine spirits or gods may also do so, and the two beliefs may go hand in hand (as among the Ingessana).

Many differing cultures often come to similar conclusions about dreams independently of each other, and any conclusions regarding what may or may be a transmitted idea can only be tentative at best. However, it is sometimes possible, particularly in an area such as the Mediterranean, where we know there were strong trade links at all times, to trace what might be called the history of an idea. These ideas live on in the cultural memory and imagination of later peoples in other places, but they do not live unchanged, and by taking a wide diachronic, chronological look at such ideas over a very long period of time, their history can sometimes be observed.

The idea that the dead or the divine might communicate with the living through dreams led to the emergence, in the literate culture of the ancient Near East, of the message dream. This dream type may have originated in real dream experiences, but became a well-defined literary trope, used by political leaders to justify their actions. In Greece and in Rome, however, the literary message dream was transferred from literature of record to literature of imagination. Political leaders still used dreams to justify their actions, but in Rome they preferred symbolic dreams or omen dreams (probably because of the importance of omens in Roman political culture). In literature of imagination, however, and especially in epic poetry, the literary message dream held on to its place in

the cultural imagination thanks to its use by Homer in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. This idea remained strong in the cultural imagination, and was later developed into the much more complex chain of commands resulting in a dream in Silver Latin epic poetry.

How and why did certain dream reports enter into the cultural memory of an event?

In literature of record, dreams, like other apparently divine signs and omens, were recorded when they appeared to be connected to an important event or person. A story would be told that such and such an event had been foretold by a dream, and the story would become attached to the event, so that no retelling of the event was entirely complete without the dream.

However, we know that many historians did not consider dreams to be either important or relevant. The choice to include dream reports in a work of record, therefore, depends on more than just knowing that there is a dream story connected with the subject of the work. In some cases, it is likely that the author personally considered dreams to be potentially divine (Josephus and Suetonius, for example, may have genuinely believed in the divine power of dreams). In other cases, it may be that there was such a strong idea within the cultural imagination that dreams might provide a connection with the divine or a revelation of divine knowledge, and particular dream reports had become so lodged in the cultural memory, that the author felt obliged to include them. Authors like Velleius Paterculus or Appian include dreams, but briefly and in small numbers. It may be that they felt they could not gloss over something so widely considered important, even if they were not especially interested themselves. Even Polybius felt obliged to mention the dream reports described in other histories, while denying them any significance himself.

The question of why dream reports might be included in imaginative works is made more complex by the fact that modern imaginative works of all genres also include dream stories from time to time. There are some obvious advantages in describing the dreams of fictional characters, which allow the author an interesting way to reveal character and motivation, and these techniques were also used in the ancient world. However, there were some dream traditions used in ancient imaginative literature which were different to the way we might use dreams today, especially the epic use of message dreams. It may be that this reflects a cultural idea concerning the nature of dreams and dreaming that we no longer share. However, it is also possible that the difference lies, not in our approach to dreams and dreaming in general, but in our approach to imaginative literature.

The reliance of epic poetry on tropes established by Homer means that the epic use of dreams partly reflects the way dreams were imagined to connect with the divine in archaic Greece. The way this epic convention was adapted for the Roman period suggests that the idea that the gods would appear and deliver a message in a dream was not, in fact, especially strong in the Roman period, as the Greco-Roman authors add lengthy explanations and whimsical descriptions of Sleep, his home, his wand and so on, removing epic dreams further and further away from the way dreams were imagined to function in the 'real' world.

Dreams, then, were included in imaginative works for a number of reasons, including to show character, to move the plot along and to foreshadow later events. However, they were also included because they were part of a tradition that most authors wanted to follow.

Why did Roman period writers consider individual dreams to be significant for the community as a whole, preserving them as part of a cultural memory?

The inclusion of dreams within literature of record is not solely due to a general cultural openness to the idea of divination. As stated in the Introduction, literature of record is, by nature, about remembering the past, while literature of imagination is more engaged with the imaginative present. The presentation of dreams in literature of record is a record of the cultural memory of an event with significance for the wider community. In modern literature of record, dreams tend to be restricted to diaries, autobiographies and similar personal genres, because they are considered to be interesting for what they reveal about the dreamer, but not in light of wider considerations. In the ancient world, however, dreams were often (though not always) included in literature of record of all genres, suggesting that they, and divination in general, held a different, more significant place within the cultural imagination.

Dreams, together with other omens and divinatory signs, when recorded after the event, emphasise the importance of the event. We have discussed, in Chapter Three, how dreams and other omens were used in biographical writing to demonstrate the greatness of the subject and, therefore, their suitability as the subject of a biography and a moral exemplar. This use of dreams may extend to other areas of literature of record. Major events in Roman history accumulate stories of signs, omens and dreams that indicate that the event was so crucial that the gods foretold it before it happened. If the gods took the time and trouble to foretell something through a dream, that something may be considered to be very important – the murder of Caesar being the classic example.

In more individual works, such as Aristides' *Hieroi Logoi*, dreams can demonstrate the importance of the subject or, in Aristides' case, the writer. The use of

dreams demonstrates how special this person is, how they are more special than everyone else, for a god has chosen to communicate with them. Dreams are also practically useful as an apparently external authority for one's own views and actions, as in the case of Josephus. Since a dream is an entirely individual experience, it is unfalsifiable.

In literature of imagination, dreams can perform useful narrative functions. They provide a means by which gods, divine beings or deceased characters can communicate directly with living mortals, giving them instructions or information. Because dreams are considered, within the cultural imagination, to provide a possible means of communication with the divine, they can neatly fulfil this narratological function.

Dreams can be used in more ways than this, however. As in modern imaginative fiction, they can reveal elements of character, showing the reader the character's worries, wishes and fears, or a character's reaction to a dream can be revealing. Dreams also provide an opportunity for aesthetic embellishments, such as lengthy *ecphrases* on subjects such as Sleep and his home, or the journey of Mercury from heaven to the underworld to the mortal world. The perceived link between dreams and the dead or the land of the dead is also strongest in imaginative literature, for in imaginative literature, the author is free to decide on the exact nature of the relationship for himself and exploit that link. The link can be used to ask questions about mortality, or to terrify the character, or simply to impart essential information to them that they could not otherwise have known.

Did People Living in the Roman Empire Imagine that Dreams Allowed for Communication with the Divine?

In the Roman Empire, dreams were taken seriously as a possible link with the divine. This is not to suggest, as Harris has, that sceptics concerning this possibility were particularly rare. The defensive writing of Artemidorus, as well as the satire of Lucian and possibly also of Apuleius, if he does cast doubt on Lucius' experience, confirms the existence of enough sceptics for them to be addressed in the literature of the time. However there is also plenty of evidence that many people were quite prepared to view dreams as a possible link with the divine.

The idea that a god might make a personal appearance in a dream, though, had lost some of its strength by the second century AD. Already in the first century AD, epic poets explained at length how a message might be delivered by a god through a dream, and the resulting dream usually appeared to feature a dead person or a statue rather than a god. Acts of devotion are an exception to this rule. We do not know, because we do not have enough detail, whether the dreams experienced at incubation sites or those that prompted the setting up of inscriptions were strictly message dreams, or the sort of very strong symbolic dream recorded by Aristides. In the case of incubation, one would expect the god to appear because that is the purpose of going to the shrine. This confirms that a visit from a god was still considered possible, if unlikely outside an incubatory context. However, assuming that the majority of the inscriptions reflect genuine acts of devotion rather than self-interest, the dream which prompted the inscription was obviously considered an unusual and special event. If these dreams occurred with any regularity, it

would be impractical to set up an inscription on every occasion. The idea of the message dream still exists, but is not considered the norm.

Dreams, in the cultural imagination, were also sometimes linked with the dead. To some extent, this may be due to the analogy often drawn between sleep and death, or between Sleep and Death, of which we have a number of examples from the first century AD, which might be expected to inform second century AD ideas (Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, 8.70-74; Seneca, *Hercules Oetaeus*, 534; Statius, *Thebaid*, 5.199, 10.91-117; Statius, *Silvae*, 5.3.261; Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 5.529; 7.633, 15.180-199). However, this is not the only factor in this conceptual connection. Because dreams were also viewed as a point of connection with the divine, dreams put the mortal soul into a state of essential Otherness, allowing interactions with the ultimate Others, the divine and the dead. Apuleius, for example, says that the soul, especially when young, might go into so deep a sleep that it returns to a primal nature, which is divine and immortal, and may predict the future (Apuleius, *Apologia*, 43).

Where other forms of divination gradually lost their importance in later years, or were considered to be sinful by Christian thinkers, dreams continued to be considered to be important through Late Antiquity and on into the medieval period, and Miller, Weber and Harris, among others, have looked at these dreams in detail. There are several reasons for this. Most importantly, dreams always need to be explained. Some modern scholars have suggested that we no longer need to interpret dreams because we have scientific theories concerning REM sleep and psychoanalysis to explain them. But scientific theory and psychoanalysis *are* our interpretation of dreams – that is why Freud cites Artemidorus.[734] Without them, we would form another explanation for why dreams

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[734] Freud 1976: 60.

sometimes, though by no means always, seem inexplicable and unconnected to our daily lives. Indeed, dream books still exist and many people today look for the meaning of dreams in other places than Freudian theory. In the ancient imagination, because people sometimes dream of dead people or of divine figures, it is a logical step to imagine that this is because dreams provide a connection with the divine and with the dead that is not available while awake, when appearances of gods or the dead are much rarer.

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Ancient and Modern Dreams

The idea that the ancient Greeks and Romans 'believed in' the divine significance and predictive power of dreams is one that is particularly strong within our cultural imagination. Studies of the dream in the ancient world tend to focus on the positive evidence for ancient 'belief' in divinatory dreams. As Keen has recently pointed out, modern historical fiction set in ancient Rome also displays a tendency to include prophecy and prophetic dreams, even though little other modern fiction outside of science fiction and fantasy would do so.[735] These can even revive the old form of message dream, which appears, for example, in Caroline Lawrence's children's novel *The Twelve Tasks of Flavia Gemina*.[736] Our culturally imagined view of the ancient Greco-Roman world, especially in popular culture, is a place of extreme religiosity and strange rituals, where predictive dreams, and ways of dealing with them, seem to fit.

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[735] Keen 2009 (online).
[736] Lawrence 2003: 69-70.

However, in reality, it is likely that the place of dreams in the Greco-Roman cultural imagination was not quite so far removed from their place in our own as some might think. It is still possible, and indeed easy, to buy a dream book which will inform you of the significance of your dreams in any large bookshop or any shop specialising in candles, incense sticks and 'dream-catchers' (ornamental items which are designed to catch nightmares in their web and filter good dreams to the sleeper through their feathers). It is even easier to find a profusion of websites on the subject. Most people who buy dream-catchers probably do not expect them to actually do anything, but they continue to buy them nonetheless. People will still tell anecdotes about a dream they had that later seemed to come true, and significant dreams have not vanished from modern imaginative literature.

There are two important differences, however, between the ancient world and our own. First, ancient historians included dreams in literature of record and secondly, ancient people would put up inscriptions and dedicate religious sites on the basis (so they said) of a dream. This points to a very important difference in the place of dreams in the cultural imagination; divine or divinatory dreams in the ancient world held a respectable place within the cultural imagination, whereas, in the critical climate of the modern West, they do not.

In the early Roman Empire, no matter how many sceptics railed against those who heeded dreams as superstitious, the idea that the gods might be communicating through dreams was sufficiently strong to provide an excuse for political action, to be seen as an indication of political change, and to be considered as something that, as a consequence of which, one might take action. The idea that the gods communicated through dreams was not only stronger, it was respectable enough that someone like Polybius, who did not

subscribe to the idea, felt the need to address the issue (albeit with some scorn). Where a modern commentator would simply ignore dream stories and a modern person taking action because of a dream would be considered unwise, in the ancient world this was a sensible and respectable approach to take.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

Cultural Memory and Imagination

I hope to have shown, over the course of this study, that Halbwachs and Assmann were perhaps over-hasty when they consigned dreams to the realm of the purely personal.[737] Not only is dream content partly determined by social conditions, our reactions to dreams and to dream reports are formed through our cultural memory and imagination.

The concept of 'cultural memory' is being explored by scholars in ever greater numbers, from all fields of historical study. I hope, in this study, to have demonstrated the equal importance of 'cultural imagination' which, although the term has occasionally been used, has never before been defined in a way that relates to cultural memory. Just as Assmann identified three types of social memory, communicative, collective and cultural (see Introduction, p11), we might say that there are three types of ideas.[738] A communicative idea would be one that is individual and transmitted from one person to another, for example, by a philosopher in conversation with another. The collective

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[737] Halbwachs 1992: 42; Assmann 2006: 2.
[738] Assmann 2000: 13-19.

imagination would refer to those ideas that are shared by a group of people and are linked to their collective identity, such as the ideas shared by a particular religious cult or philosophical school. The cultural imagination is much wider and refers to ideas shared, but not necessarily commonly 'believed in', among a very large group of people and which may endure for a long time.

The concept of the 'cultural imagination' has proved to be productive in this study's discussion of dreams. It is with reference to the cultural imagination that we may come to understand a document like Pliny the Younger's letter to Suetonius (Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 1.18). It is clear from Pliny's advice that he was willing to entertain two separate ideas about dreams – that they might foretell the opposite of what the dream seems to mean, but also that a bad dream might indeed indicate a bad outcome. Both ideas existed within the cultural imagination. Pliny expresses no strong 'belief' or 'disbelief' in either, and his advice to Suetonius might best be summed up as 'it is better to be safe than sorry'.

I hope that cultural imagination may prove equally useful for further study of ancient religion. I hope to have shown that cultural imagination provides a way of talking about how another culture may have viewed the world without restricting ourselves to questions of 'belief'. 'Belief' is so complex, so unique to each individual and so multi-faceted that it is impossible satisfactorily to discuss. By referring instead to the cultural imagination, we may discuss the history of ideas more freely, without committing ourselves to answering unanswerable questions.

APPENDIX ONE: TABLES AND FIGURES

'Early Imperial' refers to the period between c31 BC and cAD 200

General category message dreams' includes message dreams from the divine, message dreams from dead people, message dreams from semi-divine or deified people, message dreams from unknown sources and lying message dreams.

'General category symbolic dreams' includes symbolic dreams, literal prophecies, anxiety and wish-fulfilment dreams and lying symbolic dreams.

'Mixed' includes only dream reports categorised as 'mixed'.

Only those authors who provide enough detail in their dream reports to allow the dreams to be categorised have been included in the charts and tables. Occasional notes in Appendix Two explain why some authors under discussion are not included in these charts and tables.

Table 1: Near Eastern sources

Dreams	[*Gilgamesh*]	[*Righteous Sufferer*]	Assurbanipal	Hattushili III
Message (divine)	1	2	5	4
Message (dead)				
Message (semi-divine/deified)				
Message (unknown)				
Symbolic	8			
Literal prophecy				
Anxiety/wish-fulfilment				
Lying message	1			
Lying symbolic				
Mixed	1	1		1

Figure 1: Near Eastern sources
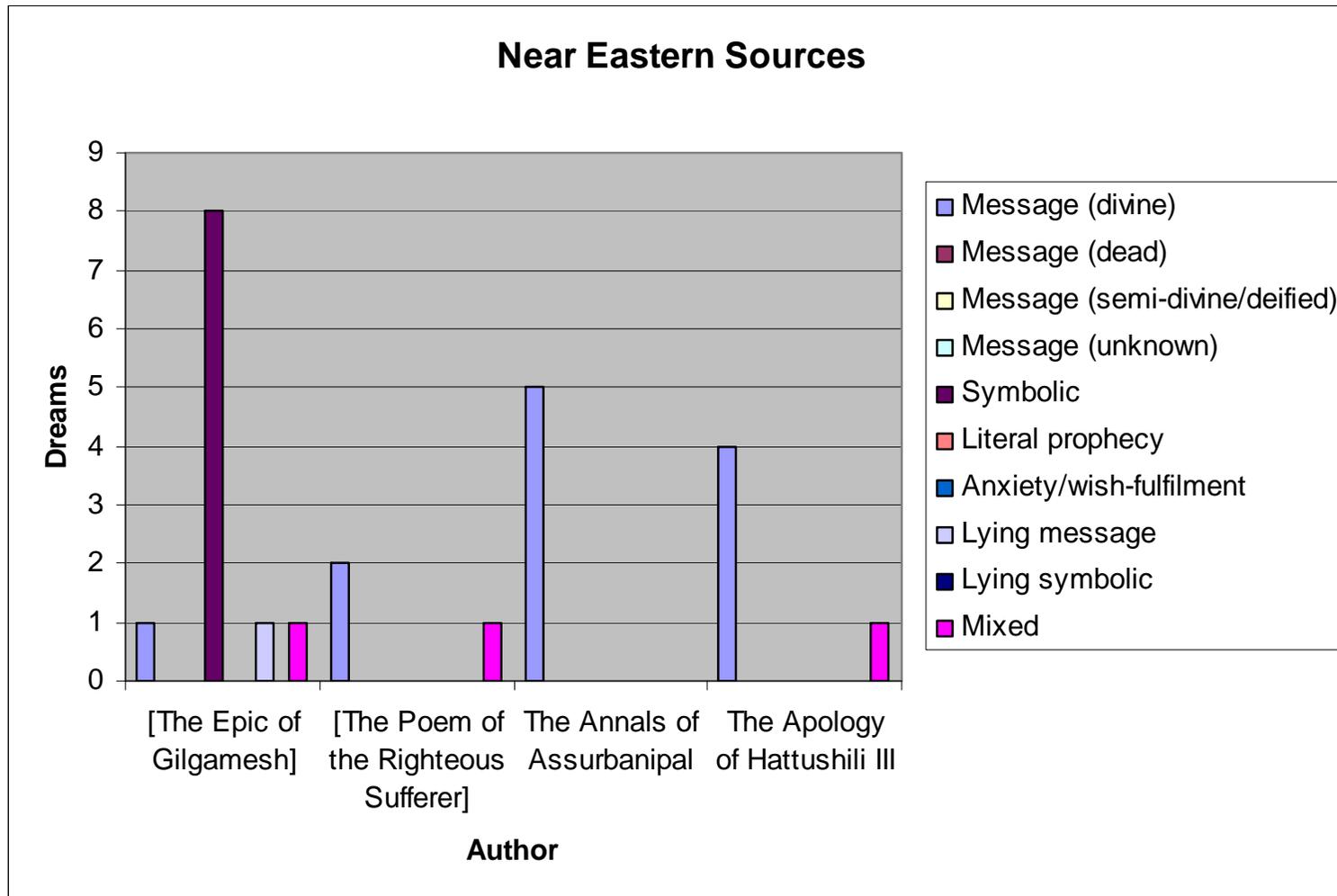
Figure 1b: Near Eastern sources (simplified version)

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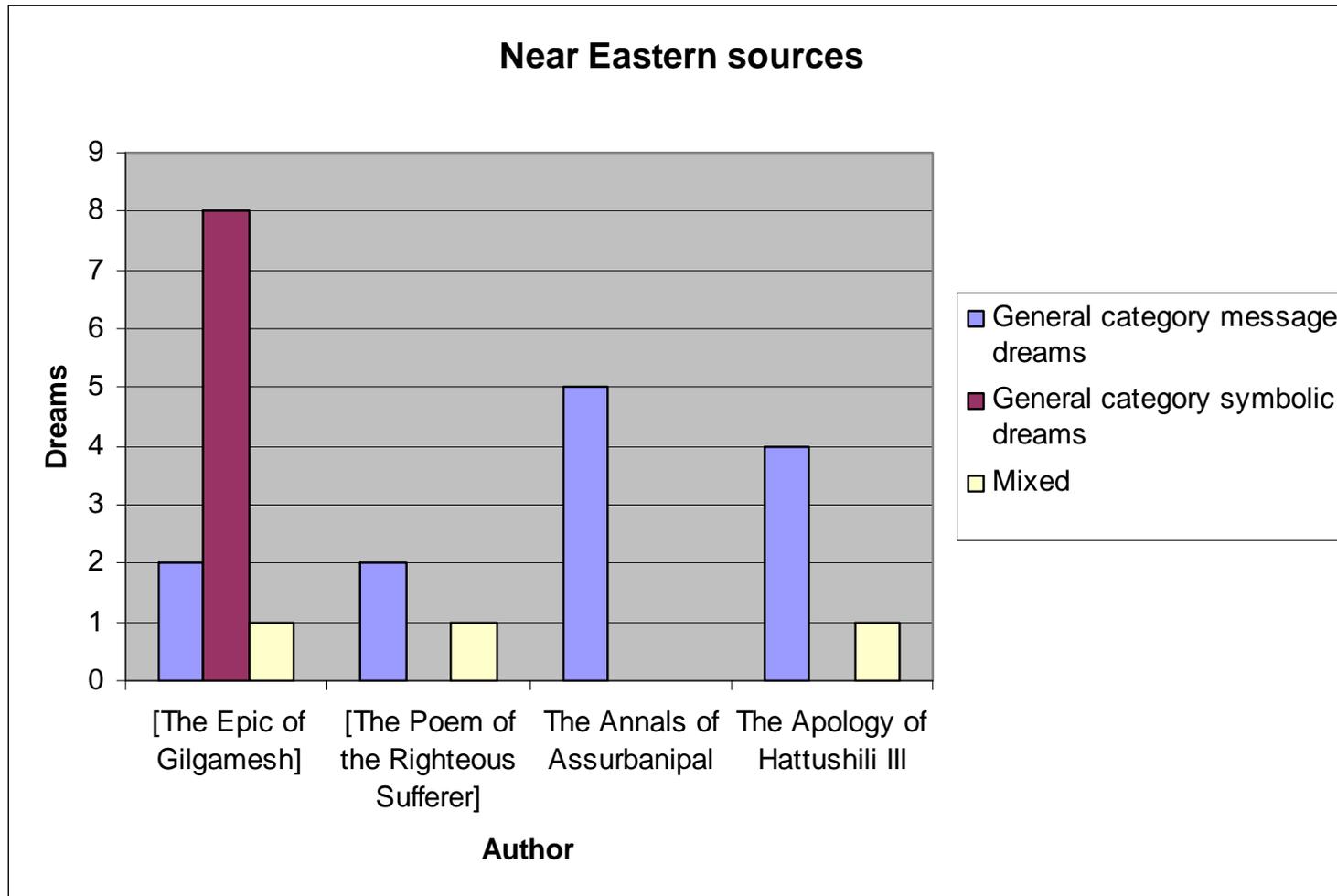
Table 2: Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Greek sources

Dreams	Homer	Pindar	Aeschylus	Sophocles	Euripides	Aristophanes	Apollonius Rhodius	Herodotus	Xenophon
Message (divine)	3	1	1					2	1
Message (dead)	1		1						
Message (semi-divine/ deified)									
Message (unknown)		1						2	
Symbolic	2		2	1	3	5	3	6	2
Literal prophecy			1					2	
Anxiety/ wish-fulfilment			2			2			
Lying message	1								
Lying symbolic									
Mixed									

Figure 2: Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Greek sources
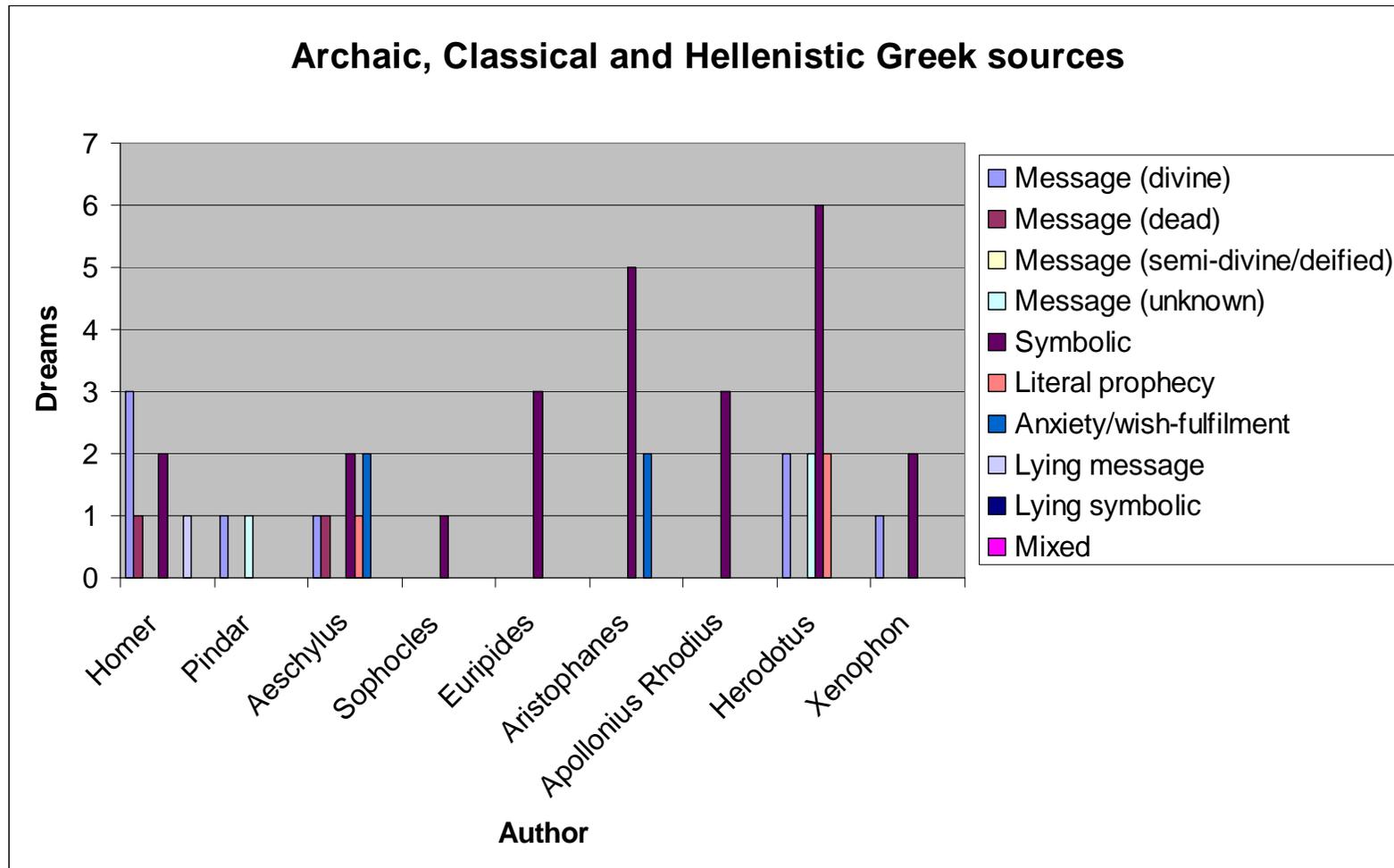
Figure 2b: Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Greek sources (simplified version)

Figure 2b: Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic Greek sources
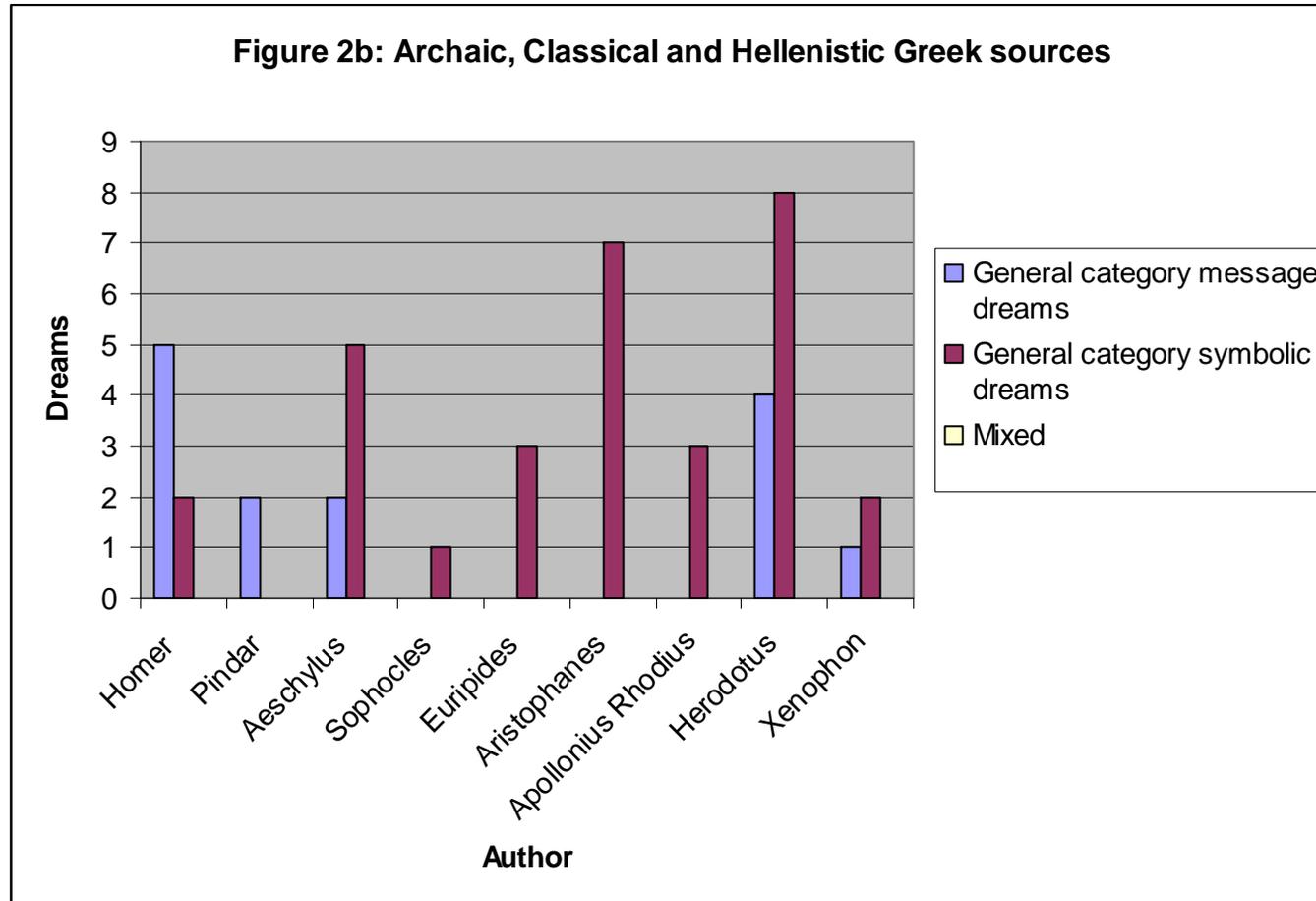
Table 3: Pre-Augustan Greek and Latin literature

Dreams	Plautus	Polybius	Cicero (*De Divinatione* only)	Diodorus Siculus	Dionysius of Halicarnassus
Message (divine)			2	5	3
Message (dead)	1		3		
Message (semi-divine/deified)			1	1	
Message (unknown)			2	1	1
Symbolic	3		14	2	1
Literal prophecy	1	1	1	1	
Anxiety/wish-fulfilment		2		3	
Lying message		1		3	
Lying symbolic					
Mixed			4	1	

Figure 3: Pre-Augustan Greek and Latin literature

Pre-Augustan Greek and Latin literature
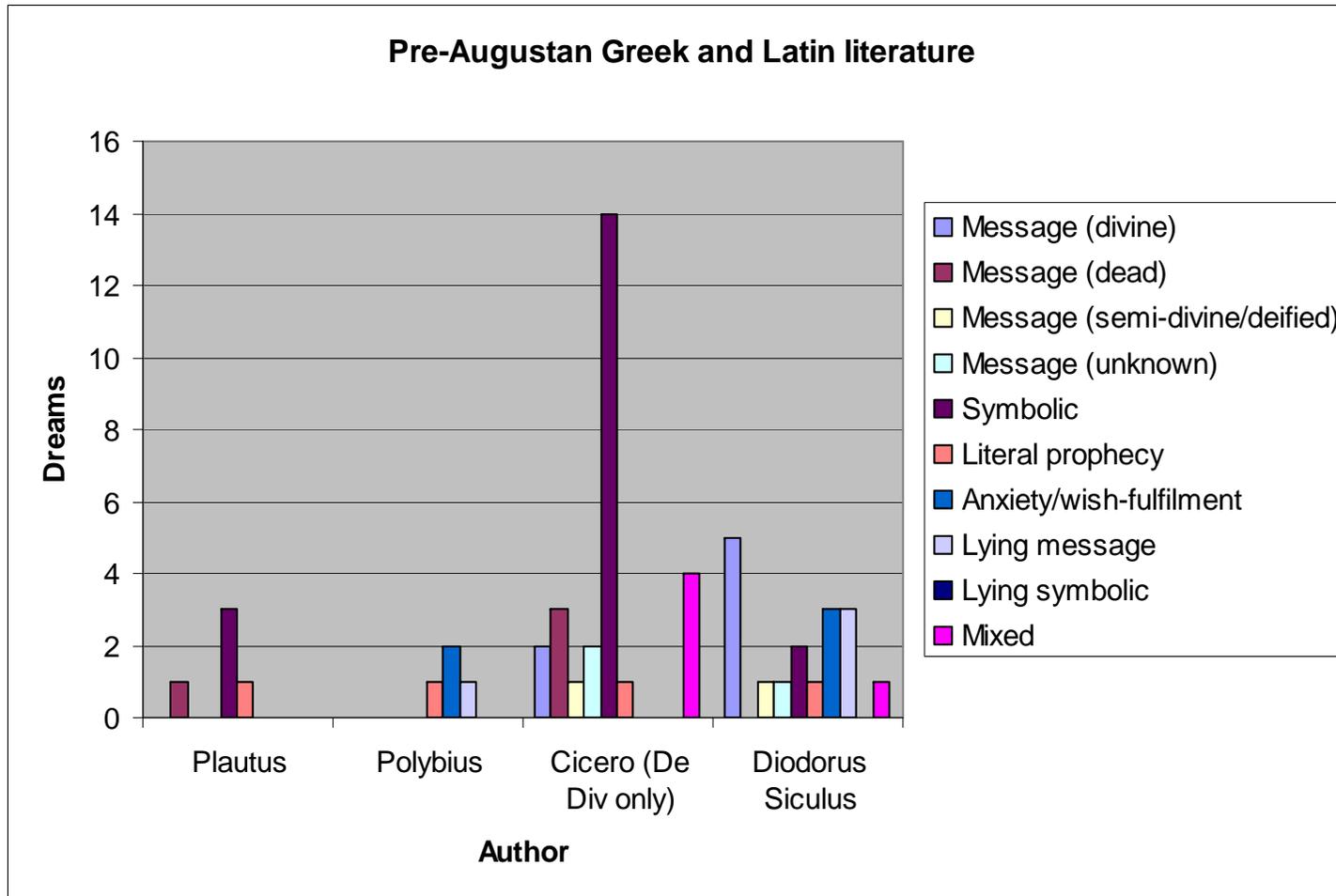
Figure 3b: Pre-Augustan Greek and Latin literature (simplified version)
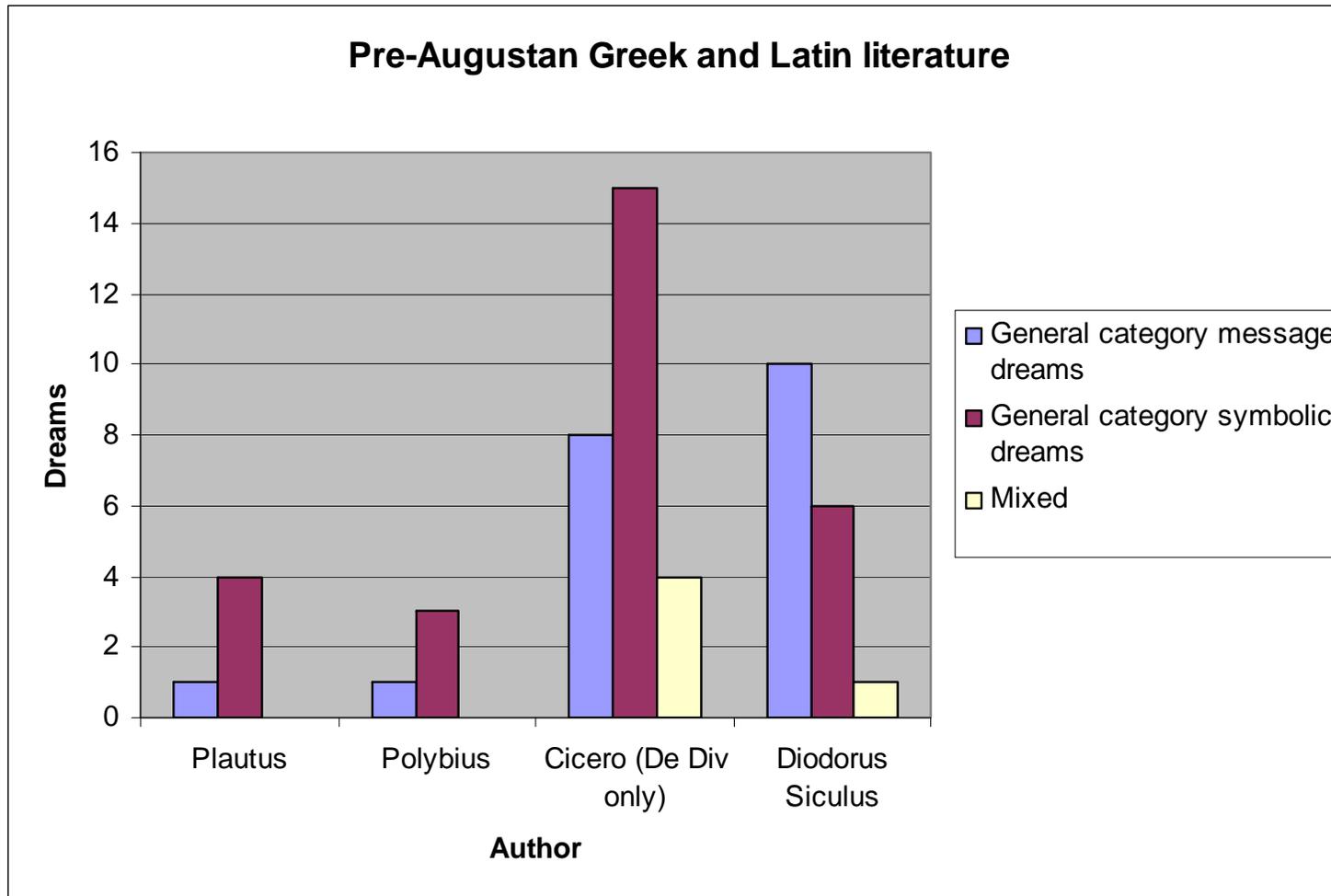
Table 4: Imperial Latin Literature of Record

Dreams	Livy	Valerius Maximus	Quintus Curtius Rufus	Tacitus	Suetonius
Message (divine)	2	3		1	5
Message (dead)		3			
Message (semi-divine/deified)				1	
Message (unknown)		2			1
Symbolic		5	2	3	16
Literal prophecy		5		1	1
Anxiety/wish-fulfilment				1	2
Lying message	2				
Lying symbolic			1		2
Mixed		2	1		1

Figure 4: Imperial Latin Literature of Record

Imperial Latin Literature of Record
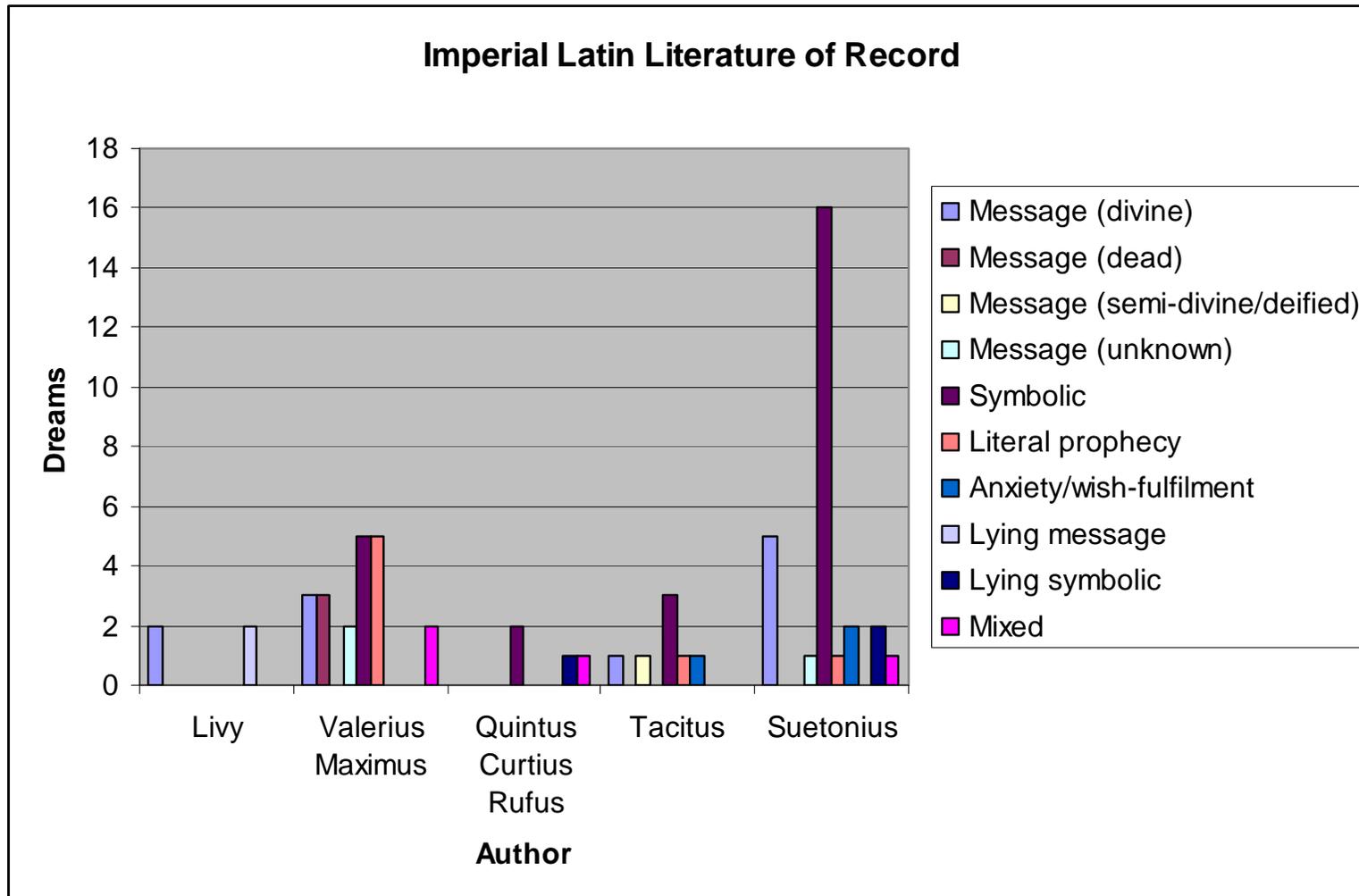
Figure 4b: Imperial Latin Literature of Record (simplified version)

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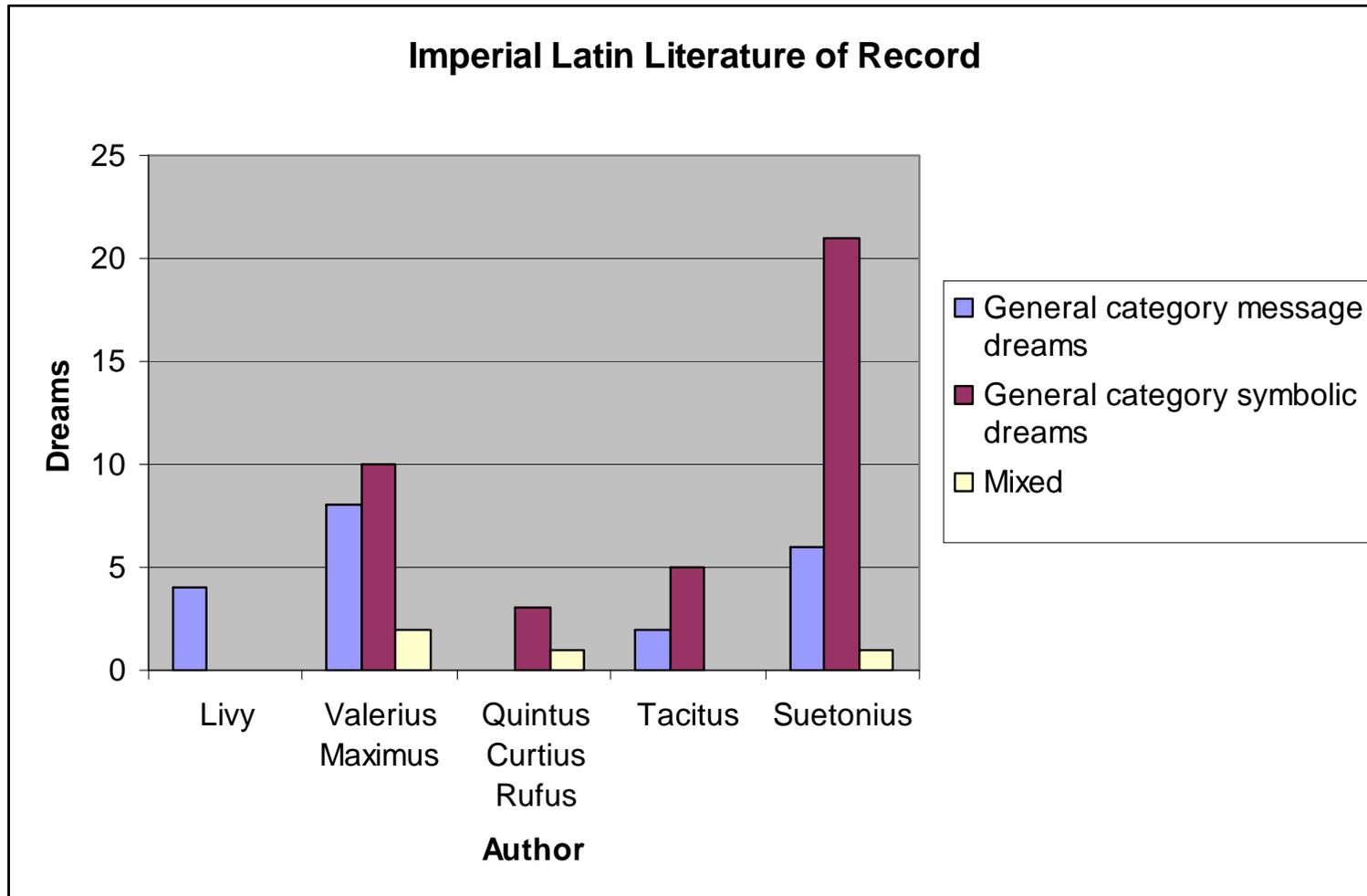
Table 5: Imperial Greek Literature of Record

Dreams	Dionysius of Halicarnassus	Josephus	Plutarch (*Lives* only)	Arrian	Appian	Pausanias
Message (divine)	3	11	10	1	1	6
Message (dead)		2	3			
Message (semi-divine/deified)				1	1	
Message (unknown)	1	4	2		1	4
Symbolic	1	7	24		4	7
Literal prophecy		3	2		1	1
Anxiety/wish-fulfilment		1	2			
Lying message		2	3			
Lying symbolic						
Mixed		1	6	1		1

Figure 5: Imperial Greek Literature of Record

Imperial Greek Literature of Record
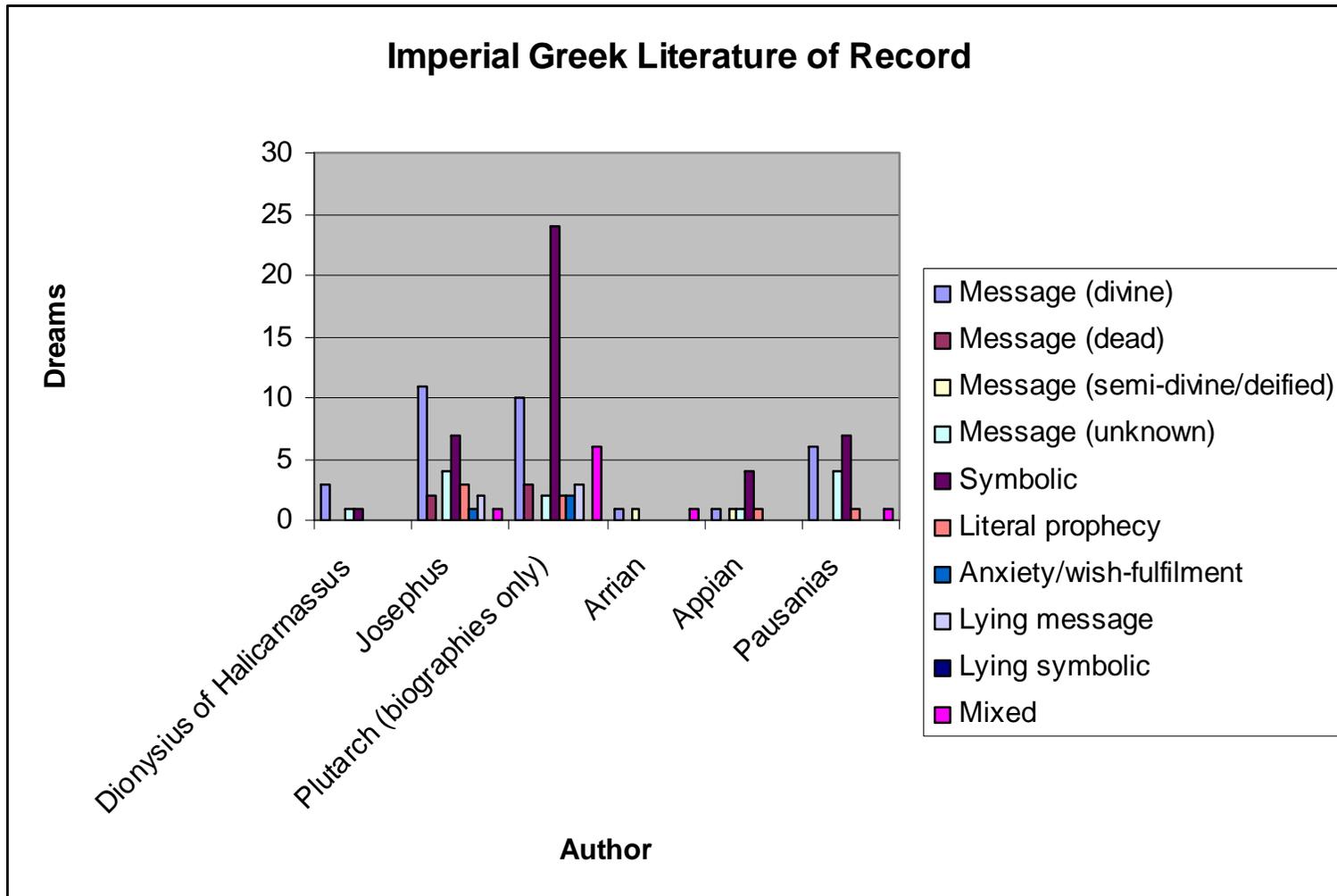
Figure 5b: Imperial Greek Literature of Record (simplified version)
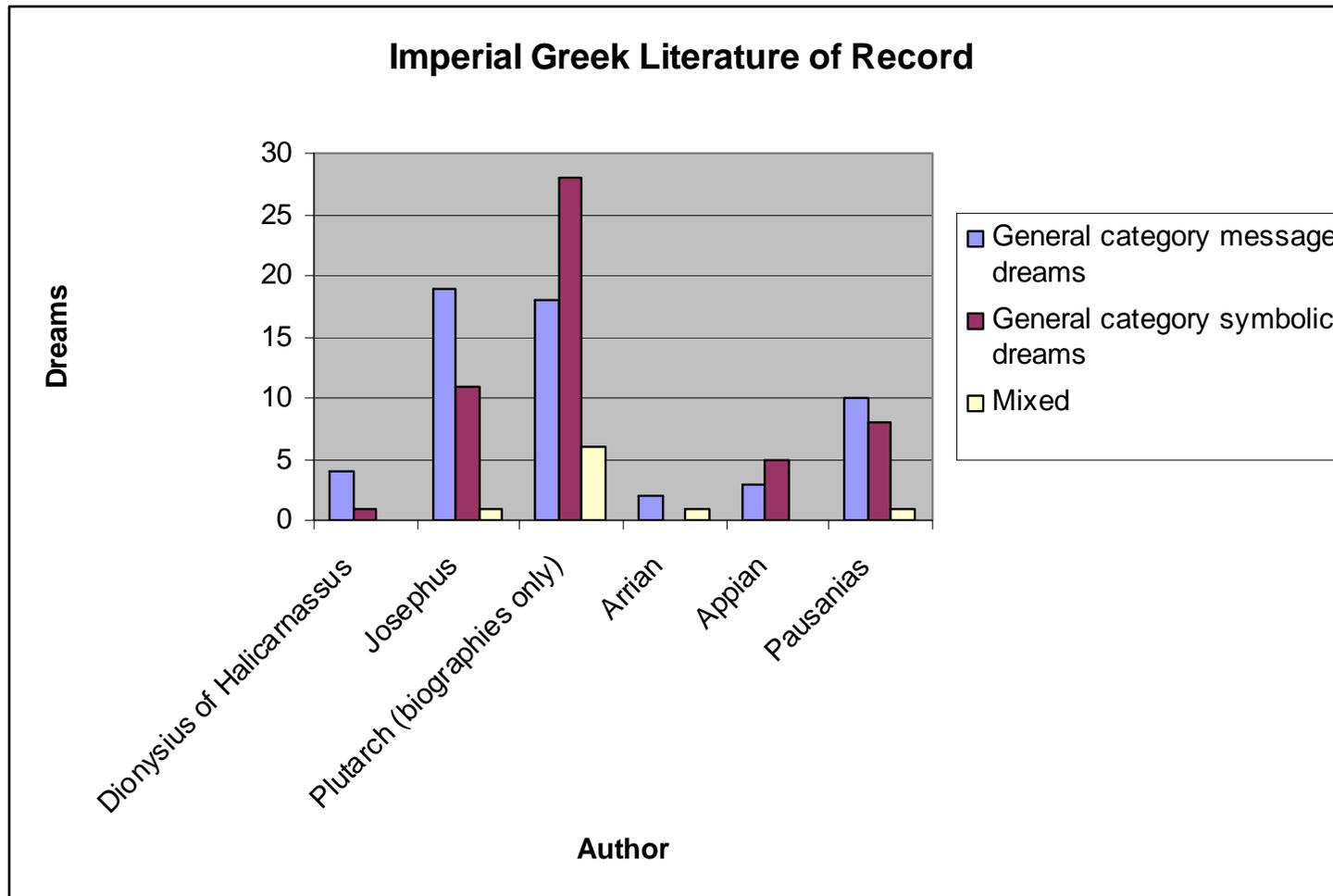
Table 6: Aelius Aristides and Artemidorus

Dreams	Aelius Aristides	Artemidorus
Message (divine)	10	1
Message (dead)	1	
Message (semi-divine/deified)		
Message (unknown)	9	1
Symbolic	62	89
Literal prophecy		1
Anxiety/wish-fulfilment		
Lying message		
Lying symbolic		
Mixed	15	5

Figure 6: Aelius Aristides and Artemidorus
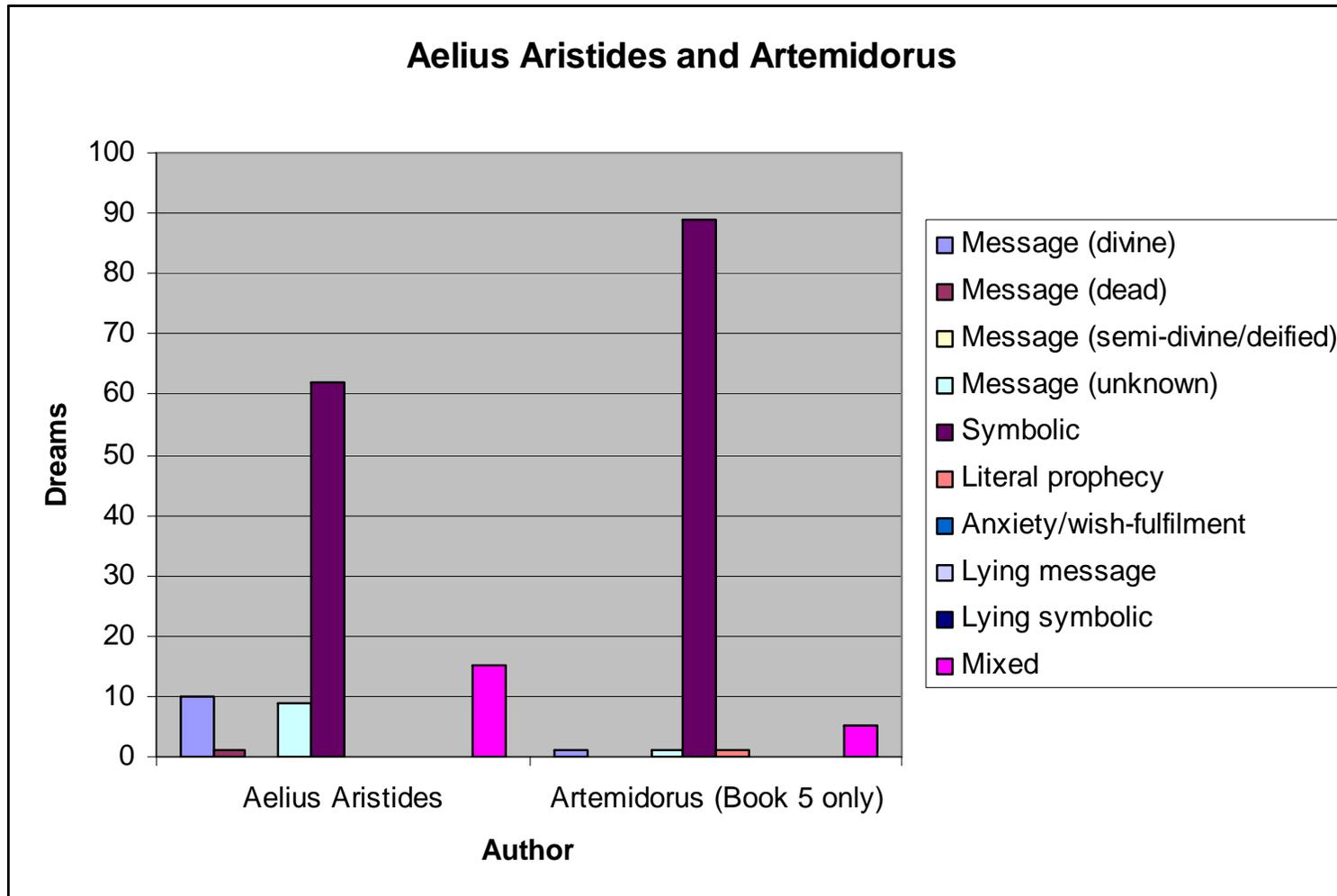
Figure 6b: Aelius Aristides and Artemidorus (simplified version)

Bar chart titled "Aelius Aristides and Artemidorus". Y-axis labeled "Dreams" from 0 to 100. X-axis labeled "Author" with two groups: Aelius Aristides and Artemidorus (Book 5 only). Legend: General category message dreams (light purple), General category symbolic dreams (dark red), Mixed (light yellow). For Aelius Aristides: message dreams ≈20, symbolic dreams ≈62, mixed ≈15. For Artemidorus (Book 5 only): message dreams ≈2, symbolic dreams ≈90, mixed ≈5.

Table 7: Imperial Latin Imaginative Literature

Dreams	Virgil	Horace	Tibullus	Propertius	Ovid	Seneca (plays only)	Lucan	Petronius	Valerius Flaccus	Status	Silius Italicus	Apuleius (*Golden Ass* only)
Message (divine)	6		1		9			2		3	2	5
Message (dead)	3			1	2	1	1			1	2	2
Message (semi-divine/deified)		1			1				2			
Message (unknown)	1											
Symbolic	1			1	4	2	1		2	4	3	3
Literal prophecy					1							
Anxiety/wish-fulfilment	1	1		2	8		1			1	1	1
Lying message												
Lying symbolic									1	1		
Mixed											3	

Figure 7: Imperial Latin Imaginative Literature

Imperial Latin Imaginative Literature
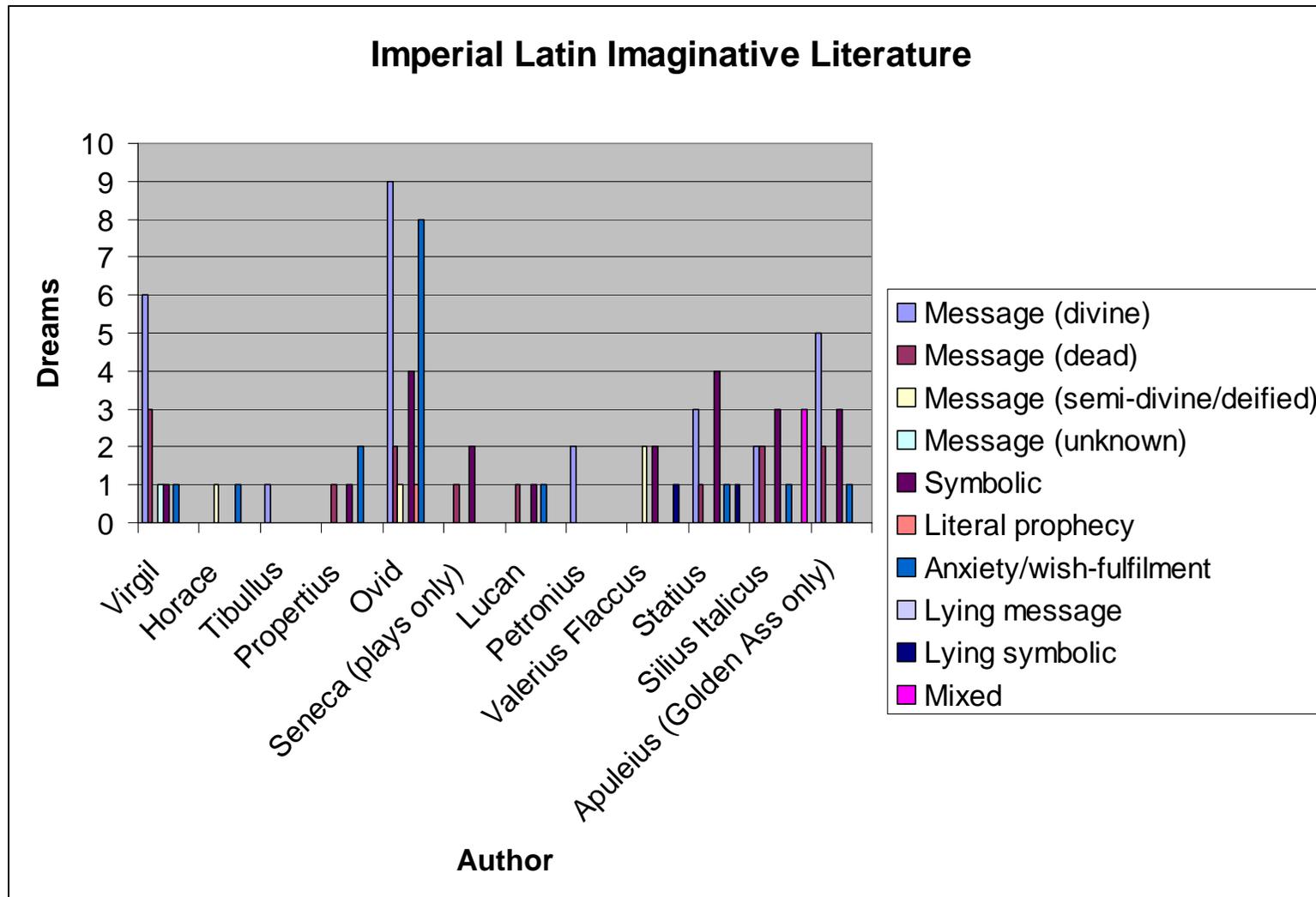
Figure 7b: Imperial Latin Imaginative Literature (simplified version)

Imperial Latin Imaginative Literature

Chart legend:
- General category message dreams
- General category symbolic dreams
- Mixed

Y-axis: Dreams
X-axis: Author — Virgil, Horace, Tibullus, Propertius, Ovid, Seneca (plays only), Lucan, Petronius, Valerius Flaccus, Statius, Silius Italicus, Apuleius (Golden Ass only)
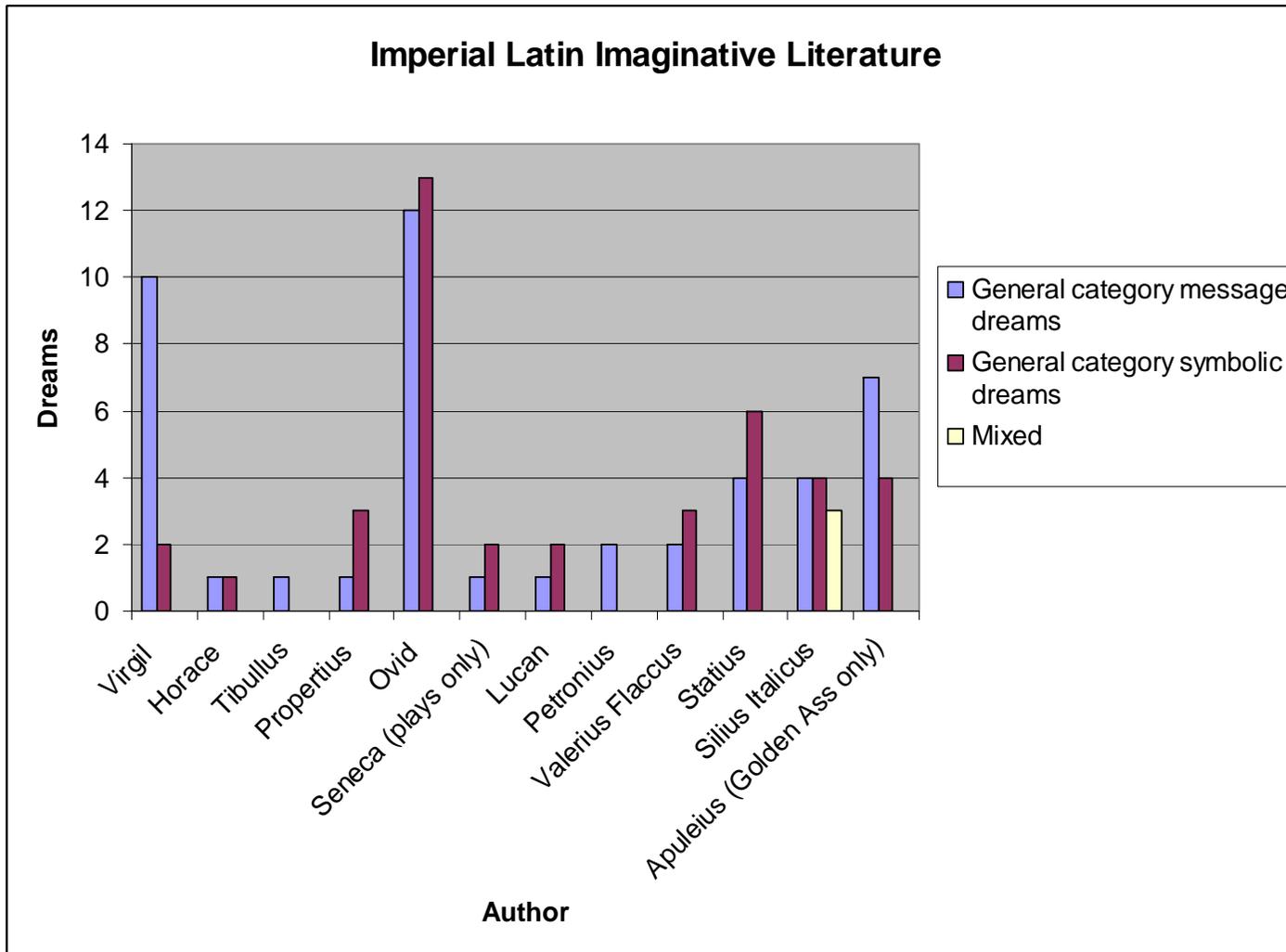
Table 8: Imperial Greek Imaginative Literature

Dreams	Chariton	Xenophon of Ephesus	Achilles Tatius	Longus	Lucian
Message (divine)	1		3	3	1
Message (dead)					
Message (semi-divine/deified)					
Message (unknown)				1	
Symbolic	4	3	3		1
Literal prophecy	1				
Anxiety/wish-fulfilment	1		1	2	1
Lying message				1	1
Lying symbolic					
Mixed	1		1	2	

Figure 8: Imperial Greek Imaginative Literature

Imperial Greek Imaginative Literature
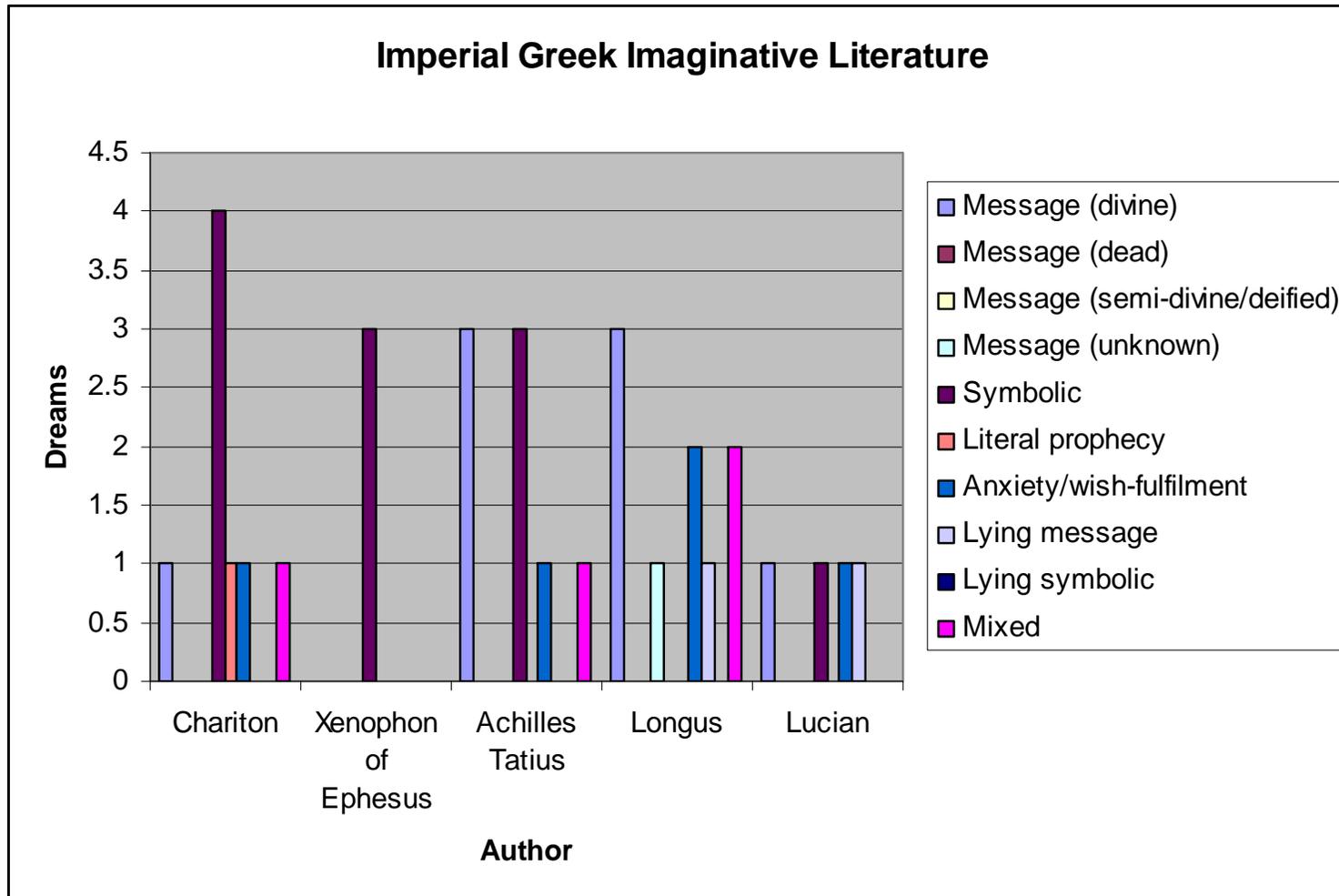
Figure 8b: Imperial Greek Imaginative Literature (simplified version)

Imperial Greek Imaginative Literature
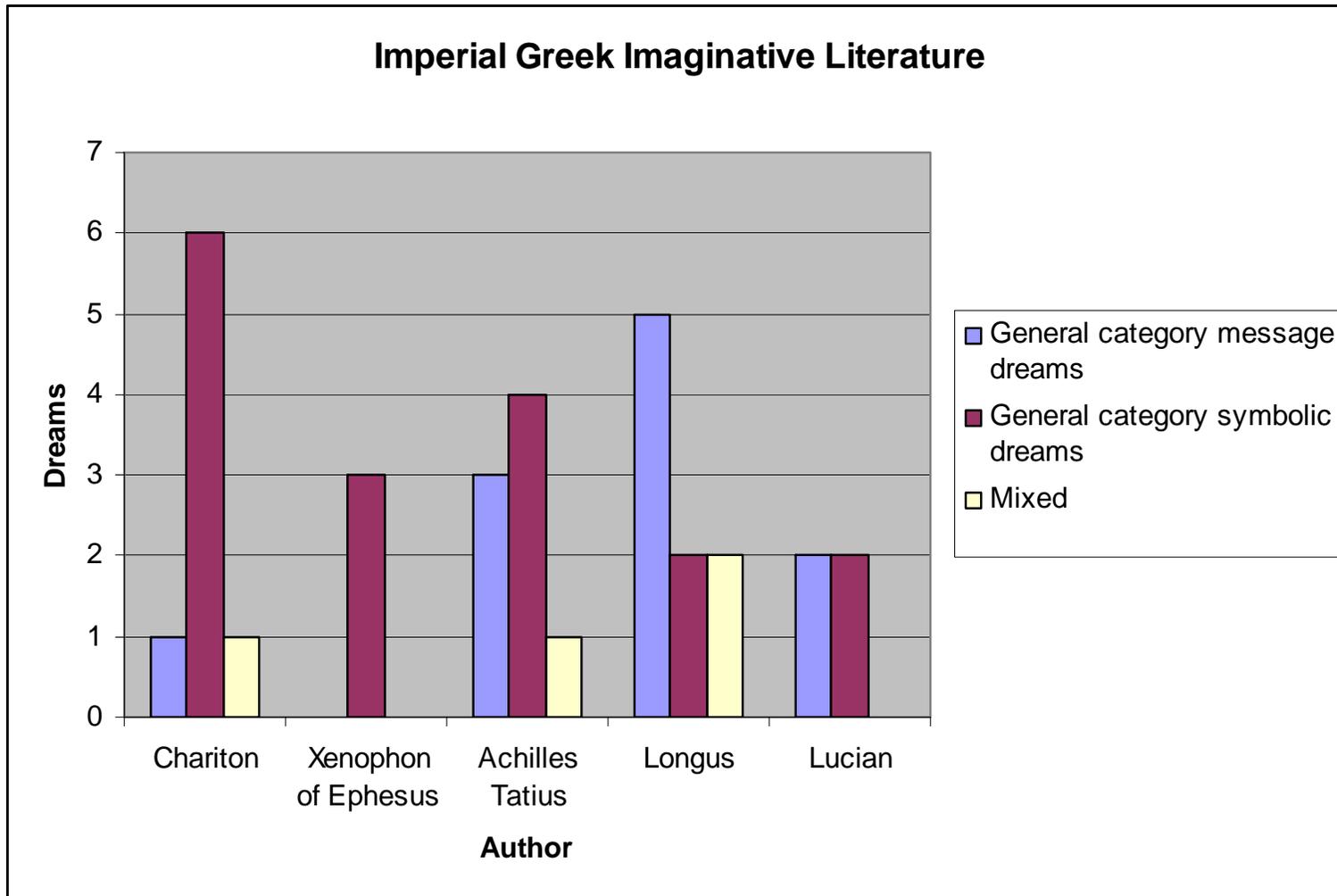
APPENDIX TWO: CATALOGUE

This catalogue indicates which dream reports from each author have been included in the tables and charts in Appendix One and how they have been categorised. Only those dream reports which contain enough detail to classify are included. Authors are listed alphabetically, following two Near Eastern sources of unknown authorship.

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Divine message dreams:	Sumerian poem.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	Standard Version, Tablet 1 (2 dreams, both predicting the same event); Standard version, Tablet 4 (5 dreams, all predicting the same event); Standard Version, Tablet 7.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	Standard Version, Tablet 11.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	Standard Version, Tablet 7.

The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer

Divine message dreams:	Tablet 3 lines 9-16; Tablet 3, lines 21-28.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	Tablet 3, lines 29-44.

Achilles Tatius

Divine message dreams:	*Leucippe and Clitophon*, 4.1; *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 7.12 (2 dreams).
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Leucippe and Clitophon*, 1.3; *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 2.11; *Leucippe and Clitophon*, 2.11.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Leucippe and Clitophon*, 1.6.
Lying message dreams:	None.

Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	*Leucippe and Clitophon*, 4.1.

Aeschylus

Divine message dreams:	*Prometheus Bound*, 645-685.
Message dreams from the dead:	*Eumenides*, 110-141.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Persians*, 181-199; *Libation Bearers*, 524-532.
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Seven Against Thebes*, 710.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Agamemnon*, 420-426; *Agamemnon*, 891.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

The message dream from the dead is from the dead Clytemnestra to the divine Furies. Although the source of Io's dreams is not specified, it is assumed to be divine as they are intended to get her to where Zeus can sleep with her. The dreams in the *Seven Against Thebes* are not described, but Eteocles exclaims at how accurately they showed what would happen.

Apollonius Rhodius

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Argonautica*, 3.616-644; *Argonautica*, 4.659-668; *Argonautica*, 4.1731-1764.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Appian

Divine message dreams:	*Civil Wars*, 1.12.105.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	*Mithridatic Wars*, 371-373.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	*Mithridatic Wars*, 106.
Symbolic dreams:	*Civil Wars*, 1.11.97; *Punic Wars*, 645; *Mithridatic Wars*, 27; *Civil Wars*, 2.10.68.
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Civil Wars*, 2.16.115.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Appian mentions Dido's dream about the murder of Pygmalion, but does not specify whether it was a message or symbolic dream (*Punic Wars*, 2), and does not offer any detail on the dream that made Augustus leave his tent (*Civil Wars*, 4.14.110).

Apuleius (*The Golden Ass* only)

Divine message dreams:	11.3-6; 11.22; 11.26; 11.27; 11.30.
Message dreams from the dead:	8.8; 9.31.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	4.27; 11.20; 11.27.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	9.19.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Aelius Aristides (*Hieroi Logoi* only)

Divine message dreams:	2.7; 2.9; 2.13; 2.55; 3.15; 3.46; 4.15; 4.23; 4.26; 5.38.
Message dreams from the dead:	1.27.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	3.6; 3.12; 3.20; 4.6; 4.23; 4.31; 4.44; 4.58; 5.8.
Symbolic dreams:	1.7; 1.8; 1.9; 1.10-14; 1.15; 1.16; 1.17; 1.19-21; 1.22; 1.23; 1.24-26; 1.28; 1.29; 1.30-31; 1.33; 1.34; 1.35; 1.36-40; 1.41; 1.42-45; 1.46-49; 1.49-50; 1.51-52; 1.54; 1.55-56; 2.30; 2.31-32; 2.40; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.13; 3.23; 3.24; 3.25; 3.39; 3.48; 4.5; 4.21; 4.28; 4.41; 4.42; 4.48-50; 4.53; 4.54; 4.55-56; 4.60-61; 4.62; 4.64-66; 4.69; 4.81; 4.89; 4.97; 4.106; 5.12; 5.18; 5.20; 5.22-25; 5.35; 5.44-45; 5.57-66; 6.1-3.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	1.18; 1.71; 1.76; 1.78; 3.21; 3.37; 4.19; 4.25; 4.39; 4.40; 4.45; 4.57; 4.59; 5.31; 5.49-52.

Stories without specific mention of or reference to a dream: As many as possible have been included in the main table above, including those which do not have a dream word in their own section, but clearly follow on from a previous dream or list of dreams, or are otherwise obviously dream reports, being lengthy or bizarre, and therefore should obviously be understood as dreams. Stories which refer to the god appearing at night have been included in the main table, as they are more clearly identifiable as dreams. However, other examples do not contain enough detail to be positively identified as a dream, for example, 1.6 includes the phrase 'the god instructed me', but no mention of dream or sleeping; it is sometimes interpreted as a

dream; see Leuci 1993: 73. At 1.32, lamps appeared to be brought in to the temple and it was necessary to vomit – which, presumably when waking, he did. In 1.41, 'it was necessary to overturn some casks'. 1.61-65 seems to refer to dreams, but doesn't say so specifically and does not provide enough detail for classification. 1.66 suggests a message dream, but, again, is unclear. At 2.17, Aristides thought that the ship had been wrecked. 2.26-27 is a quite lengthy message and prophecy, but it is not specified that it is a dream, and since it comes shortly after 2.18, which is not a dream, it seems wise not to include it. 2.47, 2.48, 2.50, 2.51, 2.54 and 2.71 all refer to an oracle. 2.75, 2.78, 2.82 and 3.6, say 'it was foretold' and include a command word. 3.11, 3.27, 3.28 and 3.29 refer to signs. 3.30-31 says I thought. 3.32, 3.33, 3.34-36 and 3.39 say he was commanded (next to section concerning an oracle). 3.41 and 3.44 refer to a sign. 3.45 is an order from Isis. 3.47, refers to experiences that are probably dreams, one of Sarapis and one of the gods of the underworld. 4.1 refers to a vision. At 4.11, 4.30, 4.39 and 4.52 Aristides heard a tale. 4.97 includes oracles from Isis and Sarapis. 5.1, 5.10 and 5.17 are also unclear.

2.18 has a god who is both Asclepius and Apollo at the same time specifically tell Arisides, as he stands by his bed, that this is not a dream, but a waking state. Aristides refers to this as a vision and an oracle, not a dream.
2.40 sounds more like a near death experience – Aristides says 'as if it were in a dream' rather than just in a dream – but since it does refer to 'dream', it is included.
2.77 happened before many spectators.
3.49-50, an incident involving geese, is clearly a waking incident.
At 4.75 he receives a verse from Delphi.

It should be noted that, since these are likely real dreams, several of them might be considered to be anxiety/wish-fulfilment dreams by a modern psychologist. However, Aristides obviously did not think so, or he would not have recorded them, so they are not categorised as such here. There are occasions when Aristides says things like 'no bathing because of a dream' or refers to stopping on the road because of dreams, and most importantly, the dreams which told him to write the later Books of the *Hieroi Logoi*, which have not been included, as there is not enough detail. Some dreams lie somewhere between symbolic and literal prophecy, as they contain medical prescriptions that Aristides then follows – they have been classified as symbolic. The dream in which Aristides grabs the god by the head has been counted as 'Mixed', as has 1.76, which features a message delivered via the image of a living temple warden. Obviously, message dreams from unknown sources are probably assumed to be divine. Dreams which provide Aristides with speeches have been classed as Mixed. The symbolic dream at 4.89 contains words from Aeschylus, which give a message.

Aristophanes

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Wasps*, 16-20; *Wasps*, 31-45; *Knights*, 1090-1095 (2 dreams).
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Wasps*, 91; *Clouds*, 16 and 27 (1 dream).

Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Arrian

Divine message dreams:	*Alexandri Anabasis*, 7.26.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	*Periplus Ponti Euxini*, 23.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	*Alexandri Anabasis*, 2.18.1.

Artemidorus (Book 5 of the *Oneirocritica* only)

Divine message dreams:	5.9.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	5.66.
Symbolic dreams:	5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 5.6; 5.7; 5.8; 5.10; 5.11; 5.12; 5.13; 5.14; 5.15; 5.16; 5.17; 5.18; 5.19; 5.20; 5.21; 5.22; 5.23; 5.24; 5.25; 5.26; 5.27; 5.28; 5.29; 5.30; 5.31; 5.32; 5.33; 5.34; 5.35; 5.36; 5.37 (2 dreams); 5.38; 5.39; 5.40; 5.41; 5.42; 5.43; 5.44; 5.45; 5.46; 5.47; 5.48; 5.49; 5.51 (2 dreams); 5.52; 5.53; 5.54; 5.55; 5.56; 5.57; 5.58; 5.59; 5.60; 5.61; 5.62; 5.63; 5.64; 5.65; 5.67; 5.68; 5.69; 5.70; 5.73; 5.74; 5.75; 5.76; 5.78; 5.79; 5.80; 5.81; 5.82; 5.83; 5.84; 5.85; 5.86; 5.87; 5.88; 5.89; 5.90; 5.91; 5.92; 5.93.
Literal prophecy dreams:	5.54.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	5.50; 5.71; 5.72; 5.77; 5.94.

5.13 might be considered divine, as it features Asclepius and Artemidorus attributes the dream and the result to Asclepius, but the form and structure of the dream is symbolic. Several of the 'mixed' dreams feature messages (visual or spoken) from gods which are easily misinterpreted (like an oracle).

The *Annals* of Assurbanipal

Divine message dreams:	Smith 1871: 64-65, 71-72 and 73-74; Smith 1871: 123-126; Smith 1871: 156-157; Smith

1871: 221-222; Smith 1871: 128 (5 divine
message dreams).

Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Chariton

Divine message dreams:	*Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 6.2.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 1.12.5; *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 2.1; *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 4.1; *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 5.5.
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 3.7.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 6.7.2.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	*Chaereas and Callirhoe*, 2.9.

Cicero (*De Divinatione* only)

Divine message dreams:	1.24.48-49; 1.25.53.
Message dreams from the dead:	1.26.56; 1.27.56; 1.27-28.57.
Semi-divine message dreams:	1.25.54.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	1.24.50; 1.26.55.
Symbolic dreams:	1.20.39; 1.20.40-41; 1.21.42-43; 1.22.44-45; 1.23.46; 1.23.46; 1.25.52 (2 dreams); 1.28.58; 1.53.121; 2.65.134; 2.70.144-145 (3 dreams).
Literal prophecy dreams:	2.69.143.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	1.24.48-49; 1.25.52; 1.28.59; 2.66.135.

An attractive youth has been categorised as a divine figure, as unusual beauty usually indicates divinity. Whereas Titus Latinius' dream is usually a divine message dream from Jupiter, here it is a message dream of unknown source. Alexander's snake dream is categorised as Mixed, though Cicero uses it as an example of a plain message delivered in a dream. Three of the symbolic dreams are included to show interpreters giving opposite interpretations.

Quintus Curtius Rufus

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	3.3.2; 4.3.21-22.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	4.2.17.
Mixed:	9.8.26-28.

Diodorus Siculus

Divine message dreams:	1.53.9-10; 1.65.6-8; 4.34.6; 5.51.4; 16.66.4-5.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	3.57.5.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	7.5.5.
Symbolic dreams:	13.97.6-7; 16.33.1.
Literal prophecy dreams:	22.7.1.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	10.29.1; 17.30.7; 29.25.1.
Lying message dreams:	18.60.5; 19.90.4; 34/35.2.5-7.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	17.103.7-8.

The dream which made an Amazon dedicate an island to the Mother of the Gods (3.55.8) is not included because it is not clear whether it's a message or a symbolic dream.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Divine message dreams:	1.57.4; 5.54.2; 7.68.3.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	1.56.
Symbolic dreams:	20.12.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Euripides

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.

Symbolic dreams:	*Hecuba*, 90-97; *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 43-55; *Rhesus*, 780-786.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

There are a number of references to dreams in Euripides, but not many detailed reports. Euripides also includes an explanation of where prophetic dreams came from and why they are no longer prophetic: *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 1234-1282.

The *Apology* of Hattusili III

Divine message dreams:	§4; §9; §12 (2 dreams).
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	§3.

The dream in which the goddess Ishtar sends Hattushili's living brother in a dream to deliver a message has been categorised as Mixed.

Herodotus

Divine message dreams:	7.12; 2.141.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	5.55-56; 2.139.
Symbolic dreams:	1.107-108; 1.209; 3.30; 6.107; 6.131; 7.19.
Literal prophecy dreams:	1.34; 3.124-125.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Polycrates' daughter's dream is not described, but Herodotus says his death matched the dream, suggesting a literal prophecy.

As these lists only relate to dreams with enough information given that they can be categorised several dreams which prompt people to action but are not described have been excluded.

It is assumed that a 'tall handsome man' is divine (the handsomeness suggests divinity, as does the height). The dream that comes to both Xerxes (several times) and Artanabus is counted once, as it is the same dream, experienced several times.

Homer

Divine message dreams: *Iliad*, 2.1-35; *Odyssey*, 4.795-841; *Odyssey*, 6.13-47.
Message dreams from the dead: *Iliad*, 23.62-107.
Semi-divine message dreams: None.
Message dreams of unknown origin: None.
Symbolic dreams: *Odyssey*, 19.535-553; *Odyssey*, 20.83-90.
Literal prophecy dreams: None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams: None.
Lying message dreams: *Odyssey*, 14.457-522.
Lying symbolic dreams: None.
Mixed: None.

Penelope's dream that Odysseus has returned is categorised as 'symbolic' rather than a literal prophecy because, in the dream, he looked the same as he did 20 years previously.

Horace

Divine message dreams: *Satires*, 1.10.32-35.
Message dreams from the dead: None.
Semi-divine message dreams: None.
Message dreams of unknown origin: None.
Symbolic dreams: None.
Literal prophecy dreams: None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams: *Odes*, 4.1.37-40.
Lying message dreams: None.
Lying symbolic dreams: None.
Mixed: None.

Josephus

Divine message dreams: *Jewish Antiquities*, 1.313; *Jewish Antiquities*, 13.320-323; *Jewish Antiquities*, 2.171-175; *Jewish Antiquities*, 2.210-216; *Jewish Antiquities*, 5.215-217; *Jewish Antiquities*, 5.218-221; *Jewish Antiquities*, 8.22; *Jewish Antiquities*, 8.125; *Jewish Antiquities*, 8.188; *Jewish Antiquities*, 7.147; *Jewish Antiquities*, 11.326-328.
Message dreams from the dead: *Jewish Antiquities*, 17.351-353; *On the Jewish War*, 2.114-116 (same story as *Antiquities* 17.351).
Semi-divine message dreams: None.

Message dreams of unknown origin:	*The Life*, 208-210; *Jewish Antiquities*, 1.208-209; *Jewish Antiquities*, 20.18; *Against Apion*, 1.207-208.
Symbolic dreams:	*Jewish Antiquities*, 17.345-348; *Jewish Antiquities*, 10.196-210; *Jewish Antiquities*, 2.11-12; *Jewish Antiquities*, 2.13-14 (predicting the same thing as the previous dream); *Jewish Antiquities*, 2.64-69; *Jewish Antiquities*, 2.70-73; *Jewish Antiquities*, 2.80-84 (dreams predicting the same thing); *On the Jewish War*, 2.111-113 (same story as *Antiquities* 17.345).
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Jewish Antiquities*, 14.451; *Jewish Antiquities*, 11.334-335; *On the Jewish War*, 1.328 (same as *Antiquities* 14.451).
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Jewish Antiquities*, 17.166.
Lying message dreams:	*Jewish Antiquities*, 5.193; *Against Apion*, 1.288-295.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	*Jewish Antiquities*, 1.278-283.

Herod's 'clear' forebodings of his brother's death have been interpreted as literal prophecy.

Livy

Divine message dreams:	2.36; 8.6.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	26.19.4; 1.19.5.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	21.22.

These are from Livy's surviving sections only, and do not include fragments or Julius Obsequens' summary.

Longus

Divine message dreams:	*Daphnis and Chloe*, 2.23; *Daphnis and Chloe*, 2.26; *Daphnis and Chloe*, 3.27.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	*Daphnis and Chloe*, 4.35.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.

Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams: *Daphnis and Chloe*, 2.10; *Daphnis and Chloe*, 3.9.
Lying message dreams: *Daphnis and Chloe*, 3.17.
Lying symbolic dreams: None.
Mixed: *Daphnis and Chloe*, 1.7; *Daphnis and Chloe*, 4.34.

Lucan

Divine message dreams: None.
Message dreams from the dead: *Pharsalia*, 3.8-35.
Semi-divine message dreams: None.
Message dreams of unknown origin: None.
Symbolic dreams: *Pharsalia*, 7.7-18.
Literal prophecy dreams: None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams: *Pharsalia*, 7.764-776.
Lying message dreams: None.
Lying symbolic dreams: None.
Mixed: None.

It should be noted that, as argued in Chapter Four, the narration implies that these are all anxiety dreams.

Lucian

Divine message dreams: *De morte Peregrini*, 26.
Message dreams from the dead: None.
Semi-divine message dreams: None.
Message dreams of unknown origin: None.
Symbolic dreams: *Somnium sive vita Luciani*, 6-14.
Literal prophecy dreams: None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams: *Gallus*, 1.
Lying message dreams: *Calumniae non temere credendum*, 17.
Lying symbolic dreams: None.
Mixed: None.

Ovid

Divine message dreams: *Metamorphoses*, 9.684-703; *Metamorphoses*, 11.650-670; *Metamorphoses*, 13.216-220; *Metamorphoses*, 15.641-662; *Fasti*, 4.665-672; *Fasti*, 6.385-394; *Heroides*, 20.229-230; *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, 3.3.3-94; *Remedia Amoris*, 549-578.
Message dreams from the dead: *Fasti*, 3.639-648; *Fasti*, 5.455-492.
Semi-divine message dreams: *Metamorphoses*, 15.24-50.
Message dreams of unknown origin: None.

Symbolic dreams:	*Fasti*, 3.11-42; *Heroides*, 16.45-50; *Heroides*, 19.196-203; *Amores*, 3.5.
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Metamorphoses*, 7.630-642.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Metamorphoses*, 9.472-486; *Heroides*, 15.123-134; *Heroides*, 16.102; *Heroides*, 19.55-66; *Epistulae Ex Ponto*, 1.2.42-52; *Epistles*, 13.57, *Epistles*, 15.107, *Epistles*, 16.53.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Aeacus' dream about the ants of Aegina has been categorised as a literal prophecy. Ovid's dreams of Love have been categorised as divine message dreams, though the narration questions this.

Pausanias

Divine message dreams:	1.21.1; 2.32.6; 2.33.1; 7.5.2; 9.23.3; 10.32.4.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	4.26.6; 4.26.7; 7.5.7-8; 9.26.4.
Symbolic dreams:	1.30.3; 4.13.2-4; 4.19.5; 4.26.3 (2 dreams); 5.21.11; 10.2.6.
Literal prophecy dreams:	6.1.5.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	9.23.4.

Many of the dreams in Pausanias, including his own, are not included because not enough detail is given to classify them.

Petronius

Divine message dreams:	*Satyricon*, 104.1-2 (2 dreams).
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Pindar

Divine message dreams:	*Olympian Ode* 13.65-70.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.

Message dreams of unknown origin:	*Pythian Ode* 4.163-165.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Johnston describes the dream in *Pythian Ode* 4 as a message dream from the dead, in which Phrixus' ghost delivers the message.[1] Pelias says that Phrixus' soul wants to return, and that Pelias was told this in a dream – likely by Phrixus, but he does not specify. Since this is also, presumably, a lie, it should perhaps be considered a lying message dream, but again, Pindar does not specify the lie.

Plautus

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	*Mostellaria*, 490-504.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Curculio*, 260-267; *Mercator*, 225-271; *Rudens*, 596-612.
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Miles Gloriosus*, 381-392.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Plutarch

Divine message dreams:	*Romulus*, 2; *Themistocles*, 30; *Coriolanus*, 25; *Aristides*, 11; *Lucullus*, 10; *Crassus*, 12; *Agesilaus*, 6; *Pompey*, 23; *Alexander*, 76.
Message dreams from the dead:	*Pelopidas*, 21; *Sulla*, 37; *Gaius Gracchus*, 1.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	*Marius*, 45; *Lucullus*, 23.
Symbolic dreams:	*Themistocles*, 26; *Pericles*, 3; *Alcibiades*, 39.2; *Aristides*, 19; *Pyrrhus*, 29; *Sulla*, 28; *Cimon*, 18; *Eumenes*, 6; *Pompey*, 68; *Pompey*, 32; *Alexander*, 2 (2 dreams); *Alexander*, 50; *Alexander*, 24; *Alexander*, 18; *Caesar*, 63; *Caesar*, 68; *Caesar*, 32; *Caesar*, 42; *Cleomenes*, 7; *Demosthenes*, 29; *Cicero*, 44; *Demetrius*, 4; *Demetrius*, 19; *Brutus*, 20.
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Pompey*, 73; *Alexander*, 41.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Theseus*, 6; *Demetrius*, 27.

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[1] Johnston 1999: 21.

Lying message dreams:	*Lysander*, 20; *Sertorius*, 11; *Eumenes*, 13.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	*Timoleon*, 8; *Pyrrhus*, 11; *Sulla*, 9; *Alexander*, 24 (2 dreams); *Demetrius*, 29.

Alcibiades' dream has been counted as symbolic, but one variant is closer to a literal prophecy, and the same is true of the two versions of Calpurnia's dream. Of the two testing incubatory dreams, one seems to include a message but is not described – the other is counted and is symbolic. The other incubatory dream is a divine message. Two of the Roman divine message dreams are the same dream recounted twice and so are two pairs of the Roman symbolic dreams.

Polybius

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	10.4.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	5.108.5; 18.15.13.
Lying message dreams:	10.11.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Propertius

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	*Elegies*, 4.7.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Elegies*, 2.26a.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Elegies*, 3.6.31-32; *Elegies*, 4.4.67-70.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Seneca (and pseudo-Seneca) (plays only)

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	*Troades*, 438-460.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Octavia*, 115-124; *Octavia*, 712-739.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.

Mixed: None.

Silius Italicus

Divine message dreams: *Punica*, 4.722-740; *Punica*, 13.55-62.
Message dreams from the dead: *Punica*, 8.164-184; *Punica*, 15.180-199.
Semi-divine message dreams: None.
Message dreams of unknown origin: None.
Symbolic dreams: *Punica*, 8.115-127; *Punica*, 8.641-642; *Punica*, 17.158-169.
Literal prophecy dreams: None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams: *Punica*, 1.66-67.
Lying message dreams: None.
Lying symbolic dreams: None.
Mixed: *Punica*, 3.196-221; *Punica*, 10.351-371; *Punica*, 15.546-564.

Statius

Divine message dreams: *Thebaid*, 2.319-320; *Thebaid*, 5.130-142; *Silvae*, 5.3.290-293.
Message dreams from the dead: *Thebaid*, 2.96-127.
Semi-divine message dreams: None.
Message dreams of unknown origin: None.
Symbolic dreams: *Thebaid*, 8.625-8.640; *Thebaid*, 9.570-9.584; *Thebaid*, 5.620; *Achilleid*, 1.22.
Literal prophecy dreams: None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams: *Thebaid*, 3.419.
Lying message dreams: None.
Lying symbolic dreams: *Achilleid*, 1.126-140.
Mixed: None.

The dream in which Laius is ordered to deliver a message by Jupiter through Mercury is categorised as a message dream from the dead, as it is Laius who actually performs the task, though the command comes from the divine.

Suetonius

Divine message dreams: *Divus Augustus*, 91.2; *Tiberius*, 74.1; *Divus Vespasianus*, 7.2; *Galba*, 18.2; *Domitianus*, 15.3.
Message dreams from the dead: None.
Semi-divine message dreams: None.
Message dreams of unknown origin: *Gaius*, 57.1.
Symbolic dreams: *Divus Julius*, 7.2; *Divus Julius*, 81.3 (2 dreams); *Divus Augustus*, 94.4 (2 dreams); *Divus Augustus*, 94.6; *Divus Augustus*, 94.8 (2 dreams); *Divus Augustus*, 94.9; *Divus*

	Vespasianus, 5.7; *Divus Vespasianus*, 25.1;
	Gaius, 57.3; *Nero*, 7.1; *Nero*, 46.1-2; *Otho*, 7.2;
	Domitianus, 23.2.
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Divus Vespasianus*, 5.5.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Divus Julius*, 45.1; *Gaius*, 50.3.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	*Divus Claudius*, 37.1; *Divus Claudius*, 37.2.
Mixed:	*Galba*, 4.3.

Suetonius also does not specify what Augustus' 'friend's' dream was (*Divus Augustus*, 91.1). The two lying symbolic dreams are designed to sound like literal prophecies, but, of course, they do not come true.

Sophocles

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Electra*, 417-423.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

There are other references to dreams in Sophocles, but not actual dream reports.

Tacitus

Divine message dreams:	*Historiae*, 4.83.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	*Annals*, 12.13.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Annals*, 1.65; *Annals*, 2.14; *Annals*, 11.4.
Literal prophecy dreams:	*Annals*, 16.1-3.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Annals*, 4.60.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

The literal prophecy was not, in fact, accurate, but if it had been, it would have been a literal representation rather than a symbolic one.

Tibullus

Divine message dreams:	3.4.23-68.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.

Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	None.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Valerius Flaccus

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	*Argonautica*, 4.22-57; *Argonautica*, 5.231-245.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Argonautica*, 5.333-340; *Argonautica*, 7.143-152.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	*Argonautica*, 1.48-50.
Mixed:	None.

Hylas is considered to be semi-divine/deified.

Valerius Maximus

Divine message dreams:	1.7.1; 1.7.4; 1.7.7.
Message dreams from the dead:	1.7.6; 1.7.ext.3; 1.7.ext.10.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	1.7.3; 1.7.ext.8.
Symbolic dreams:	1.7.ext.5 (2 dreams); 1.7.ext.6; 1.7.ext.7; 1.7.ext.9.
Literal prophecy dreams:	1.7.2; 1.7.8; 1.7.ext.2; 1.7.ext.4; 1.7.ext.10.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	1.7.5; 1.7.ext.1.

Valerius Maximus describes message dreams from dead people as sent by the gods, but they have been categorised in the same way as other dream reports.

Velleius Paterculus

Velleius Paterculus describes how Augustus' doctor was frightened by a warning in sleep, but does not specify what sort of warning (2.70.1). He also does not specify what sort of dream frightened Calpurnia (2.57.2). For this reason, he has not been included in the charts.

Virgil

Divine message dreams:	*Aeneid*, 3.150-171; *Aeneid*, 4.557-572; *Aeneid*, 5.636-639; *Aeneid*, 5.838-863; *Aeneid*, 7.414-458; *Aeneid*, 8.30-78.
Message dreams from the dead:	*Aeneid*, 1.353-359; *Aeneid*, 2.270-302; *Aeneid*, 4.353.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	*Aeneid*, 7.81-91.
Symbolic dreams:	*Aeneid*, 4.466-468.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	*Aeneid*, 4.9.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Dido's dream about solitude has been categorised as symbolic.

Xenophon

Divine message dreams:	*Cyropaedia*, 8.7.2.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Anabasis*, 3.1.11; *Anabasis*, 4.3.8.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

Xenophon of Ephesus

Divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams from the dead:	None.
Semi-divine message dreams:	None.
Message dreams of unknown origin:	None.
Symbolic dreams:	*Ephesiaca*, 1.12; 2.8; 5.8.
Literal prophecy dreams:	None.
Anxiety or wish-fulfilment dreams:	None.
Lying message dreams:	None.
Lying symbolic dreams:	None.
Mixed:	None.

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