

I will begin by analyzing a rather singular text. It is a “practical” work dealing with everyday life, not a work of moral reflection or prescription. Of all the texts that have survived from this period, it is the only one that presents anything like a systematic exposition of the different forms of sexual acts. By and large it does not make direct and explicit moral judgments concerning those acts, but it does reveal schemas of valuation that were generally accepted. And one notes that the latter are quite close to the general principles that, already in the classical epoch, organized the ethical experience of the *aphrodisia*. The book by Artemidorus thus constitutes a point of reference. It testifies to a perennality and exemplifies a common way of thinking. For this very reason, it will allow us to measure what may have been uncommon and in part new in the work of philosophical and medical reflection on pleasure and sexual conduct that was undertaken in the same period.

CHAPTER ONE

THE METHOD OF
ARTEMIDORUS

The Interpretation of Dreams by Artemidorus is the only text that remains, in full, of a literature that was abundant in antiquity: the literature of oneirocriticism. Artemidorus, writing in the second century A.D., himself cites several works that were in use in his day: those of Nicostratus of Ephesus, Panyasis of Halicarnassus, Apollodorus of Telmessus, Phoebus of Antioch, Dionysius of Heliopolis, and the naturalist Alexander of Myndus.¹ He makes favorable mention of Aristander of Telmessus, and he refers to the three books of the treatise by Geminus of Tyre, to the five books of Demetrius of Phalerum, and to the twenty-two books of Artemon of Miletus.²

Addressing the man to whom his work is dedicated, a certain Cassius Maximus (possibly Maximus of Tyre, or his father,³ who he says urged him "not to surrender my wisdom to silence"), Artemidorus declares that he "has not done anything else" but employ himself "always, day and night," in the interpretation of dreams.⁴ An emphatic statement of the sort that was rather customary in this kind of presentation? Perhaps. In any case Artemidorus did something quite different from compiling the most famous examples of prophetic dreams that were confirmed by reality. He undertook to write a work of method, and this in two senses: it was meant to be a manual for use in daily practice; it was also meant to be a theoretical treatise on the validity of interpretive procedures.

One should bear in mind that the analysis of dreams was one of the techniques of existence. Since images encountered in dreams, or some of them at least, were thought to be signs of reality or messages of the future, a high value was set on their decipherment; a reasonable life could scarcely dispense with the task. This was a very old popular tradition; it was also an accepted custom in cultured milieus. If it was necessary to consult the countless professionals of nocturnal images, it was also good to be able to interpret their signs oneself. There are innumerable testimonies showing the importance accorded the analysis of dreams as a life practice, one that was indispensable not only in dramatic circumstances but also in the everyday course of events. This was because in dreams the gods gave advice, guidance, and sometimes explicit commands. Moreover, even when the dream only announced an event without prescribing anything, even when one believed that the concatenation of future occurrences was inevitable, it was still good to have foreknowledge of things that were bound to happen, so that one might prepare for them. "Providence," says Achilles Tatius in *The Adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon*, "sometimes foreshows the future to men in dreams, not so that they may be able to avoid the sufferings fated for them, for they can never get the better of destiny, but in order that they may bear them with the more patience when those sufferings come; for when disasters come all together and unexpectedly, they strike the spirit with so severe and sudden a blow that they overwhelm it; while if they are anticipated, the mind, by dwelling on them beforehand, is able little by little to turn the edge of sorrow." Later, Synesius will express a completely traditional point of view when he remarks that our dreams constitute an oracle who "dwells with us," who accompanies us "if we go abroad; she is with us on the field of battle, she is at our side in the life of the city; she labors with us in the fields and barter with us in the marketplace"; dreams are to be regarded as "a prophet who is always ready, a tireless and silent adviser." Hence we should all make

an effort to interpret our dreams, whoever we may be, “men and women, old and young, rich and poor, private citizens and public officials, inhabitants of the city and of the country, artisans and orators,” without regard “either to sex or age, to fortune or profession.”⁶ It was in this spirit that Artemidorus wrote *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Artemidorus is mainly concerned to show the reader precisely how to go about it: How does one contrive to break down a dream into constituent parts and establish its diagnostic meaning? How does one manage also to take this whole into account in the decipherment of each of its parts? The comparison that Artemidorus makes with the divinatory techniques of sacrificers is significant: they, too, “know how each individual sign fits into the whole,” and yet they “base their judgments as much on the total sum of the signs as on each individual sign.”⁷ His book is thus a treatise on *how to interpret*. Almost entirely centered not on the prophetic marvels of dreams but on the *technē* that enables one to make them speak correctly, the work is addressed to several types of readers. Artemidorus wishes to supply an instrument for the use of professionals and technicians of analysis. This is the vision with which he hopes to inspire his son, the addressee of the fourth and fifth books: “what has been written here, as long as it remains with you alone, will make you a more excellent interpreter of dreams than anyone.”⁸ He also intends to help those who, discouraged by the erroneous methods they have tried, may be tempted to give up this valuable practice. His book will serve as a salutary treatment—*therapeia sōtēriōdēs*—of those errors.⁹ But he thinks, too, of the general reader who needs basic instruction.¹⁰ In any case, he offers the book as a manual for living, a tool that can be used over the course of one’s existence and adapted to life’s changing circumstances: “just as there is an order and sequence in actual events” so he has made an effort to “set down everything in an orderly fashion.”

This “handbook-for-daily-living” aspect is quite noticeable

when one compares Artemidorus' text with the *Tales of Aristides*, an anxious valetudinarian who spent years harkening to the god that sent him dreams through all the extraordinary ups and downs of his illness and the countless treatments he undertook. One notes that in Artemidorus there is almost no place for religious enchantments; unlike many other texts of this kind, his work does not depend on cult therapeutics, even if, using a traditional formula, he evokes Apollo of Daldis, "my own native god," who encouraged him and, appearing at his bedside, "all but commanded me to compose this work."¹¹ Moreover, he is careful to remark on the difference between his work and that of such oneirocritics as Geminus of Tyre, Demetrius of Phalerum, and Artemon of Miletus, who conveyed prescriptions and cures given by Serapis.¹² The typical dreamer whom Artemidorus addresses is not a worried devotee who attends to injunctions given from above. He is an "ordinary" individual: generally a man (the dreams of women are noted as an aside, as possible variants in cases where the sex of the subject happens to change the meaning of the dream); a man who has a family, possessions, quite often a trade (he runs a business; he has a shop). He is apt to have servants and slaves (but the case is considered in which he has none). And, besides his health, his chief anxieties concern the life and death of his entourage, his enrichment, his impoverishment, the marriage of his children, the functions he may be called upon to exercise in the city. In short, an average clientele. Artemidorus' text is revelatory of a type of preoccupations characteristic of ordinary people.

But the work also has a theoretical interest at stake, which Artemidorus speaks of in the dedication to Cassius: he aims to refute the adversaries of oneiromancy. He wishes to convince the skeptics who do not believe in all those forms of divination by which one attempts to decipher the signs that foretell the future. Artemidorus will seek to establish these certitudes not so much by a plain exposition of his findings as

by a carefully considered procedure of inquiry and a discussion of method.

He does not mean to dispense with earlier texts; he has taken pains to read them, but not in order to recopy them, as many writers do; what interests him in the “already said” is not established authority but rather the breadth and variety of experience to be found there. And he has not searched for this experience in a few great authors, but has insisted on going to those places where it is formed. As he says in the dedication to Cassius Maximus, and later repeats, Artemidorus takes pride in the breadth of his inquiry. Not only has he compared innumerable works, he has patiently frequented the market stalls kept by dream readers and soothsayers at the crossroads of the Mediterranean world. “I, on the other hand, have not only taken special pains to procure every book on the interpretation of dreams, but have consorted for many years with the much-despised diviners of the marketplace. People who assume a holier-than-thou countenance and who arch their eyebrows in a superior way dismiss them as beggars, charlatans, and buffoons, but I have ignored their disparagement. Rather, in the different cities of Greece and at the great religious gatherings in that country, in Asia, in Italy and in the largest and most populous of the islands, I have patiently listened to old dreams and their consequences. For there was no other possible way in which to get practice in these matters.”¹³ With regard to all that he has brought back, Artemidorus does not intend to impart it in the form of raw data; rather, he will submit it to “experience” (*peira*), which is for him the “guiding principle” and “witness” of everything he says.¹⁴ What he means by this is that he will verify the information to which he refers by matching it against other sources, by comparing it with his own practice, and by subjecting it to argument and demonstration. In this way, nothing will be said “in the air,” nor by resorting to “mere conjecture.” One recognizes the methods of inquiry, the notions—e.g., the notions of *historia*

and *peira*—and the forms of testing and “verification” that characterized the gathering of knowledge carried out in natural history and medicine during this period, under the more or less direct influence of skeptical thought.* Artemidorus’ text offers the considerable advantage of presenting a careful reflection on a vast body of traditional material.

There is no question of looking in such a document for the formulations of an austere morality or the emergence of new standards of sexual conduct. What it does offer are indications concerning current modes of valuation and generally accepted attitudes. Philosophical reflection is certainly not absent from the text, and one finds in it rather clear references to contemporary problems and debates; but these references concern the procedures of decipherment and the method of analysis, not value judgments and moral contents. The material on which the interpretations bear, the oneiric scenes they treat, as auguries, and the situations and events they announce, belong to a common and traditional landscape. One can thus expect this text by Artemidorus to provide evidence of a rather widespread moral tradition, which was doubtless rather deeply rooted in the past. But once again it must be kept in mind that while the text abounds in detail, while it presents in connection with dreams a catalog of different possible acts and relations, and is more systematic in this regard than any other work from the same period, it is not in any sense a treatise on morality, which would be primarily concerned with formulating judgments about those acts and relations. It is only indirectly, through the decipherment of the dreams, that one can discern the valuations brought to bear on the scenes and acts represented in the text. The ethical principles are not affirmed for their own sake; one can recognize them only through the

*R. J. White, in his introduction to the English edition of Artemidorus, points to several traces of the empiricist and skeptical influence on Artemidorus. A. H. M. Kessels, however, asserts that Artemidorus was only a practitioner, who just interpreted the dream that he had before him on a particular day.¹⁵

actual progression of the analysis, by interpreting the interpretations. This suggests that we should dwell for a moment on the procedures of decipherment that Artemidorus brings into play. We will then be able to decipher the ethics underlying his analysis of sexual dreams.

1. Artemidorus draws a distinction between two forms of nocturnal visions. First, there are the *enypnia*, dreams that express the present affects of the individual and “run their course in proximity to the mind.” One is in love, one desires the presence of the beloved, one dreams that the latter is there; or one goes without food, one feels hungry, one dreams of eating; or again, “a man who has stuffed himself with food dreams that he is vomiting or choking”;¹⁶ a man who fears his enemies dreams that he is surrounded by them. This kind of dream has a simple diagnostic value. It is grounded in the current state of affairs (from present to present); it shows the sleeping subject his own state; it conveys that which is deficiency or excess in relation to the body, and that which is fear or desire in relation to the mind.

The dream experiences called *oneiroi* are different. Their nature and function are readily discovered by Artemidorus in the three “etymologies” he submits. The *oneiros* is that which *to on eirei*, “tells what is real.” It tells what is, what is already inscribed in time’s unfolding and will come true as an event in the not-too-distant future. It is also that which acts on the soul and excites it—*oneirai*. The dream alters the soul, it fashions and shapes it; it leads it into dispositions and induces movements in it corresponding to what is shown. Further, one recognizes in this word *oneiros* the name of the beggar of Ithaca, Irus, who carried the messages that were entrusted to him.¹⁷ Term by term, then, *enypnion* and *oneiros* are opposed to each other: the first speaks of the individual, the second of events in the world; one originates in the states of the body and the mind, the other anticipates the unwinding of the temporal chain; one manifests the action of the too-little and the too-

much in the domain of appetites and aversions, the other alerts the soul and at the same time shapes it. On the one hand, the dreams of desire tell the soul's reality in its present state. On the other hand, the dreams of being tell the future of the event in the order of the world.

A second cleavage brings another form of distinction to each of the two categories of "nocturnal visions." There is that which reveals itself clearly and transparently, requiring no decipherment or interpretation, and that which displays itself only figuratively, in images telling something different from their first appearance. In state dreams, desire can be manifested by the easily recognizable presence of its object (one sees in a dream the woman one desires); but it can also be manifested by another image exhibiting a more or less distant relationship with the object in question. An analogous difference obtains in event dreams. Some of them directly designate, by showing its actual appearance, that which already exists in the future mode: one sees in a dream the sinking of a ship on which one will later suffer shipwreck; one sees oneself struck by the weapon by which one will be wounded the next day. These are the so-called theorematic dreams. But, in other cases, the relation between image and event is indirect: the image of the ship that breaks apart on the rocks may signify not a shipwreck, or even a misfortune, but, for a slave who has this dream, his emancipation in the near future. These are the "allegorical" dreams.

Now, the margin that exists between these two distinctions poses a practical problem for the interpreter. Given a particular vision in sleep, how is one to know whether one is dealing with a state dream or an event dream? How does one determine whether the image announces directly what it shows, or whether one must suppose that it stands for something else? Referring to this difficulty in the first pages of Book IV, Artemidorus emphasizes the importance of considering the individual who has the dream. It is quite certain, he explains, that state dreams will not appear to "virtuous" persons, for they

have been able to subdue their irrational movements, hence their passions, their desires or fears; they also know how to keep their bodies balanced between deficiency and excess; for them, consequently, there are no disturbances, hence none of those “dreams” (*enyypnia*) that are always to be understood as manifestations of affects. Moreover, it was a very frequent theme of moralists that virtue is marked by the disappearance of dreams that translate the appetites and involuntary movements of the mind and the body. “The sleeper’s visions,” said Seneca, “are as turbulent as his day.”¹⁸ Plutarch cited Zeno in affirming that it is a sign of progress when a person no longer dreams that he derives pleasure from indecent actions. And he alluded to those individuals who have enough strength in their waking hours to combat and resist their passions, but who at night, “throwing off opinions and laws,” cease to feel any shame: then there awakens what is immoral and licentious within them.¹⁹

For Artemidorus, in any case, when state dreams occur they can take two forms. In most people, desire and aversion are manifested directly and without concealment; but in a man who knows how to interpret his own dreams, they are manifested only through signs. This is because his mind “plays tricks on him in a rather ingenious way.” Thus a man with no experience in dream interpretation will see in a dream the woman he desires or the longed-for death of his master. The mistrustful or clever mind of the expert will, so to say, refuse to make manifest the state of desire in which he finds himself: it will resort to trickery, so that instead of simply seeing the woman he desires, the dreamer will see the image of something that signifies her: “a horse, a mirror, a ship, the sea, an animal that is female, a piece of feminine apparel.” As an example, Artemidorus cites a painter from Corinth, an expert interpreter no doubt, who saw the roof of his house collapse in a dream and saw his own decapitation. One might have imagined that this was the sign of a future event, but in fact it was

a state dream: the man wished for the death of his master—who is still living, Artemidorus notes in passing.²⁰

As concerns the *oneiroi*, how does one recognize those that are transparent and “theorematic” in contrast to those that predict allegorically an event different from what they show? If one leaves aside the unusual images that obviously call for an interpretation, those that foretell an event are immediately confirmed by reality: the event follows them without delay. The theorematic dream opens directly onto the thing it announces, not giving interpretation any possible purchase, nor allowing it the necessary time interval. Allegorical dreams are easily recognized, therefore, by the fact that they are not followed by a direct realization, which means that one should seize the occasion to interpret them. It should be added that virtuous individuals—who do not have *enypnia* but only *oneiroi*—ordinarily experience only the clear visions of theorematic dreams. Artemidorus does not need to explain this privilege: it was traditional to suppose that the gods spoke directly to souls that were pure. Recall what Plato said in the *Republic*: “When he has quieted both spirit and appetites, he arouses his third part in which wisdom resides and thus takes his rest; you know that it is then that he best grasps reality.”²¹ And in the novel by Chariton of Aphrodisias, at the moment when Callirhoe is finally near the end of her trials, and when her long struggle to preserve her virtue is about to be rewarded, she has a “theorematic” dream that anticipates the conclusion of the story and constitutes both a presage and a promise on the part of the goddess protecting her: “When night came, she saw herself in a dream, once more a girl in Syracuse, entering the sacred precinct of Aphrodite and returning from it; now she was looking at Chaereas and observing her wedding day; the whole city was decked with garlands and she herself was being escorted by her father and mother to the home of the groom.”²²

We can construct a table of the relationships established by Artemidorus between the types of dreams, their ways of signifying, and the subject's modes of being, as follows:

		state dreams		event dreams	
		direct	through signs	theorematic	allegorical
in virtuous individuals		never		usually	
in ordinary individuals	expert		usually		usually
	inexperienced	usually			

It is the last entry in the table—allegorical event dreams of the sort that ordinary people have—that defines the domain of oneirocriticism. It is here that interpretation is possible, since such visions are not transparent but make use of one image to convey another. And it is here that interpretation is useful, since it enables one to prepare for an event that is not immediate.

2. Decipherment of the oneiric allegory is carried out by means of analogy. Artemidorus returns to this point several times: the art of oneirocriticism is based on the law of resemblance; it operates through the “juxtaposition of similarities.”²³ Artemidorus brings this analogy into play on two levels. First, there is the natural analogy between the dream image and the elements of the future that it foretells. Artemidorus employs various means to detect this resemblance: qualitative identity (to dream of a malaise may signify a future “bad state” of health or fortune; to dream of mud signifies that the body will be congested with harmful substances); identity of words (a ram signifies authority because of the word association *krios*–*kreiōn*);²⁴ symbolic affinity (to dream of a lion is

a sign of victory for an athlete; to dream of tempests is a sign of misfortune); existence of a belief, a popular saying, a mythological theme (a bear indicates a woman because of Callisto the Arcadian);²⁵ also membership in the same category of existence: thus marriage and death may represent each other in a dream, since both are regarded as a *telos*, an end (goal or term) for a man's life;²⁶ and similarity of practices ("if a sick man dreams that he is marrying a maiden, it portends his death, for the same things that happen to a bridegroom happen to a dead man").²⁷

There is also an analogy of value. And this is an essential point in that oneirocriticism has the function of determining whether the events that will take place are favorable or not. The whole domain of the dream's signified is marked, in Artemidorus' text, by the binary division between the good and the bad, the auspicious and the inauspicious, the fortunate and the unfortunate. The question then is this: How does the action that is represented in a dream make use of its own value to announce the event that will take place? The general principle is simple. A dream bears a favorable forecast if the action it represents is itself good. But how is this value to be measured? Artemidorus suggests six criteria. Is the represented action in conformity with nature? Is it in conformity with law? Is it in conformity with custom? Is it in conformity with the *technē*—that is, with the rules and practices that allow an action to achieve its ends? Is it in conformity with time (i.e., is it carried out at the right time and in the right circumstances)? Lastly, what of its name (does it have a name that is itself auspicious)? "It is a basic principle that everything that appears in accordance with nature, law, custom, craft, names, or time is good, but everything that is contrary to them is bad and inauspicious."²⁸ Artemidorus goes on to say, however, that this principle is not universal and that it involves exceptions. There can be a kind of reversal of values. Certain dreams that are "good in regard to their interior" may be "bad in regard to their exterior": the action imagined in the dream is favorable (thus, to dream that one has dinner with a god is in itself positive), but

the event prefigured is negative (for if the god is Cronos, bound in chains by his sons, the image signifies that one will go to prison).²⁹ Inversely, other dreams are “bad in regard to their interior” and “good in regard to their exterior”: a slave dreams that he is fighting in a war; this is a presage of his emancipation, for a soldier cannot be a slave. There is a considerable margin of variation, therefore, around the positive or negative signs and signifieds. What is involved is not an uncertainty that cannot be overcome, but a complex domain which demands that one take account of every aspect of the image in the dream and the circumstances of the dreamer.

Before proceeding to the analysis of sexual dreams as it was practiced by Artemidorus, this rather long detour was necessary in order to understand the mechanics of the interpretations and to determine how the moral valuations of sexual acts emerge in the divination of the dreams that represent them. It would be unwise in fact to use this text as a direct commentary on the value and legitimacy of sexual acts. Artemidorus does not say whether it is right or wrong, moral or immoral, to commit a particular act, but whether it is good or bad, favorable or ominous, to dream that one commits it. The principles that can be isolated do not therefore relate to the acts themselves but to their author, or rather to the sexual actor insofar as he represents, in the oneiric scene, the author of the dream and so enacts a presage of the good or evil that will befall him. The two main principles of oneirocriticism—namely, that the dream “tells what is real” and that it does so in the form of analogy—function here in the following way: the dream tells the event, the good fortune or misfortune, the prosperity or sorrow, that will characterize the subject’s mode of being in reality, and it tells it through a relationship of analogy with the mode of being—good or bad, favorable or unfavorable—of the subject as an actor on the sexual stage of the dream. One must not look in this text for a code specifying what should and should not be done; what it reveals instead is an ethics of the subject, one that was still common in the time of Artemidorus.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ANALYSIS

Artemidorus devotes four chapters to sexual dreams—not counting the many scattered notations.¹ He organizes his analysis around the distinction between three types of acts: those in conformity with the law (*kata nomon*), those contrary to the law (*para nomon*), and those contrary to nature (*para physin*). This division is far from being clear: none of these terms is defined. One does not see how the categories interconnect, or whether the category of “contrary to nature” should be understood as a subdivision of acts “contrary to the law.” Certain acts appear under two headings at once. We should not assume a rigorous classification that would assign every possible sexual act to the domain of the lawful, the unlawful, or the unnatural. Nevertheless, considered in detail, these groupings do have a certain intelligibility.

1. Let us consider first the acts that are “in conformity with the law.” In retrospect, this chapter appears to mix together things that are quite different: adultery and marriage, frequenting of prostitutes, resorting to household slaves, a servant’s masturbation. But in fact—leaving aside for now the meaning that should be given to this notion of conformity with the law—a passage from the chapter makes the progression of the analysis rather clear. Artemidorus states as a general rule that women in dreams are “symbols of things that will happen to the dreamer, so that the character and

disposition of the woman determine what will happen to him.”² It needs to be understood, then, that for Artemidorus what determines the predictive meaning of a dream, and hence in a certain way the moral value of the act dreamed of, is the condition of the partner, and not the form of the act itself. Condition should be taken here in the broad sense: it is the social status of the “other”; it is the fact that he is married or not, is free or a slave, that he is young or old, rich or poor; it is his profession, it is the place where one meets him; it is the position he holds in relation to the dreamer (spouse, mistress, slave, young protégé, etc.). One is thus able to see, beneath its apparent confusion, how the text unfolds: it follows the order of possible partners, according to their status, their connection to the dreamer, and the place where the dreamer encounters them.

The first three figures evoked by the text reproduce the traditional series of the three categories of women to which one can have access: the wife, the mistress, and the prostitute. To dream of sexual intercourse with one’s own wife is a favorable sign, because the wife is in a relationship of natural analogy to the dreamer’s craft or profession. As with the latter, one engages with her in a recognized and legitimate activity; one benefits from her as from a prosperous occupation; the pleasure that one derives from intercourse with her foretells the pleasure one will derive from the profits of one’s trade. There is no difference in this regard between the wife and the mistress. The case of prostitutes is different. Here the analysis set forth by Artemidorus is rather curious: in themselves women, as objects from which one derives pleasure, have a positive value; and prostitutes—whom the traditional vocabulary sometimes calls “workers”—are there to furnish these pleasures, and they “give themselves without refusing anything.” There is, however, “a little disgrace” in frequenting such women—disgrace and also expense—which no doubt detracts a little from the value of the event forecast by the dream that represents them. But more than anything else, it is the place

of prostitution that introduces a negative value—for two reasons, one of which is linguistic in nature. If the brothel is designated by a word signifying shop or workshop (*ergastērion*), which has favorable implications, it is also called, like a cemetery, “a place for everyone,” “a common place.” The other reason touches on a point that is also frequently cited in the sexual ethics of the philosophers and physicians: the useless discharge of sperm, its waste, without the benefit of the offspring the woman can provide. Two reasons why going to prostitutes can, in a dream, portend death.

To the conventional triad of wife, mistress, prostitute, Artemidorus adds the unknown women one encounters. In this case the dream's value for the future depends on the social “value” of the woman it represents: Is she rich, well dressed, well provided with jewelry, and does she give herself willingly? If so, then the dream promises something beneficial. If she is old, ugly, poor, if she does not freely consent, the dream is inauspicious.

The household provides another category of sexual partners: servants and slaves. Here one is in the domain of direct possession. It is not by analogy that slaves signify wealth; they are an integral part of it. It stands to reason, then, that the pleasure one enjoys in a dream with this type of personage indicates that one will “derive pleasure from one's possessions, which will grow greater and more valuable.” One exercises a right; one reaps benefits from one's property. Consequently, these are favorable dreams, which realize a status and a legitimacy. The sex of the partner makes little difference of course; girl or boy, what matters is that one is dealing with a slave. On the other hand, Artemidorus does bring out an important distinction concerning the position of the dreamer in the sexual act. Is he active or passive? To place oneself “beneath” one's servant in a dream, thus overturning the social hierarchy, is ominous; it is a sign that one will suffer harm from this inferior or incur his contempt. And, confirming that it is indeed a question here, not of an offense against nature, but

of an attack on social hierarchies and a threat against the proper ratio of forces, Artemidorus notes the similarly negative value of dreams in which the dreamer is possessed by an enemy, or by his own brother, whether older or younger (the equality is broken).

Next comes the group comprising friends and acquaintances. It is auspicious to dream that one has sexual intercourse with a woman whom one knows if she is not married and if she is rich, because a woman who offers herself gives not only her body but also things "pertaining to the body," the things that she carries with her (clothes, jewelry, and generally speaking all the material goods she possesses). The dream is inauspicious, on the other hand, if she is a married woman, for she is under the authority of her husband. The law bars access to her and punishes adulterers, and the dreamer in this case must expect future punishment of the same type. And what if one dreams of having sex with a man? If the dreamer is a woman (this is one of the rare passages in the text where women's dreams are taken into account), the dream is favorable in every case, for it accords with the natural and social roles of women. If, however, it is a man who dreams of being possessed by another man, the distinguishing factor that enables one to decide whether the dream has a positive or a negative value is the relative status of the two partners: the dream is good if one is possessed by a man older and richer than oneself (it is a promise of gifts); it is bad if the active partner is younger and poorer, or just poorer: clearly a sign of future expenditures.

A last set of dreams in conformity with the law relates to masturbation. These dreams are very closely associated with the theme of slavery, because what is involved is a service that one renders oneself (hands are like servants who do the bidding of their master, the penis) and because the word that means "to bind to a post," used in connection with the whipping of slaves, also means "to have an erection." A slave who had dreamed he had masturbated his owner was in real life