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ARTEMIDOROS

**WOMEN WHO
DREAM OF WOMEN**

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Artemidoros translation, introduction, and notes © Diana Molkova 2024

Greek text from: Roger A. Pack, ed., *Artemidori Daldiani Onirocriticon Libri V* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1963)

Back cover art: 'Root & Branch Tree' © Emily Setzer 2024

THE TRANSLATOR

Dr Diana Molkova

I grew up in Ukraine, and when I was studying Classics as an undergrad, discussions of non-heteronormative behavior in Antiquity were skirted; this discomfort was reflected in omissions and revisions in translations with which we worked. As a graduate student at University of Washington, I was lucky to join a community of queer scholars and explore areas of knowledge I hadn't even known existed. My background has made me a strong believer in accessible and honest translations of ancient texts, which is why I am excited to contribute to this anthology.



ἌΡΤΕΜΙΔΩΡΟΣ Ὁ ΔΑΛΔΙΑΝΟΣ

Artemidoros (or Artemidorus, who styled himself Daldianos, from his mother's hometown Daldis, although he was born in Ephesos) lived in the second century CE in the Roman province of Asia (modern western Turkey) and is the author of *Oneirocritica*, a treatise about dreams and their meanings.

Artemidoros believed there were two types of dreams: *enhypnia* merely reflect the daily happenings of life, as well as the dreamer's fears and desires (1.1); *oneiroi*, on the other hand, predicted the future. The latter come in two forms: *theorimatikoi*, which are literal predictions that come true immediately, and *allegorikoi*, which require more imaginative interpretation (1.2).

In our passage, Artemidoros notably classifies a dream of sex between two women neither as a reflection of a woman's waking desire nor a straightforward foretelling of the near future, but rather as an allegorical prediction. Sandra Boehringer observes that while for a man's dream it was morally relevant whether he was the penetrator or the penetrated, and what the social status was of the other person involved, for a woman the sex identity of the sexual partner is conclusive. She also notes that the application of the conventional penetrator/penetrated binary to sex between women creates a 'general feeling of something unreadable'.¹ Bernadette Brooten similarly wonders if woman-on-woman sex seemed unnatural to Artemidoros because it fell 'outside of the category of penetration'.² His association of sex between women with idle actions (in the second prediction) echoes the notion developing among contemporaneous Christian thinkers that all non-procreative sex is unnatural and sinful.³ Indeed, women dreaming about sex with other women is grouped with other dreams of *para physin* – unnatural – sexual acts, such as having sex with oneself, a deity, an animal, or a corpse.

¹ Boehringer (2021) p. 321.

² Brooten (1996) p. 185.

³ See, for example, Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 2.10.

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ROOT & BRANCH READING GUIDE

Our translations branch out to explore
a variety of options for the text:
any variants in the original <Greek
Latin> texts
and the various possible meanings in English.

Our translations are rooted in the words
of the original text, replicating when possible
word order, root meanings of words, and
grammatical gender $\left(\begin{matrix} [n] \\ [f] \\ [m] \end{matrix} \right)$ of words about people.

You, the reader, will choose which branches you prefer to follow.

ONEIROCRITICA 1.80

if woman < penetrates
finishes off > woman, her < secrets
mysteries > with the
< penetrated
finished off > [f] will be < shared
common >. if she is < unknowing
ignorant > of
the < penetrated
finished off > [f], she will put her hand to (foolish
vain
idle
wanton)
< business
circumstances >. if woman by woman is < penetrated
finished off >, she
will be separated from < husband
her man > or will < be widowed
be without >; the
< secrets
mysteries >, however, of the one [f] she (mingled
mixed
had intercourse) with
she will none the less learn.



γυνή δὲ γυναῖκα ἐὰν περαίνει, τὰ ἑαυτῆς μυστήρια τῇ
περαινομένη κοινώσεται. ἐὰν δὲ ἀγνοῇ τὴν περαινομένην,
ματαίοις ἐπιχειρήσει πράγμασιν. ἐὰν δὲ γυνὴ ὑπὸ γυναικὸς
περαίνεται, χωρισθήσεται τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἢ χηρεύσει· τὰ μέντοι
μυστήρια τῆς μιγνυμένης οὐδὲν ἥττον μαθήσεται.

NOTES

- *penetrates / finishes off*: Henderson (1991 p. 50 n. 23) posits that the verb περαίνεσθαι was used as a euphemism for 'bring to orgasm' in Attic comedy.



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