

ALCMENA'S DREAM IN MOSCHUS' *MEGARA*:
AN INTERPRETATION IN THE LIGHT OF ANCIENT
ΟΝΕΙΡΟΚΡΙΣΙΑ¹

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Un análisis del sueño de Alcmena en el epilío de Mosco titulado *Mégara* demuestra que el poeta lo ha construido siguiendo con exactitud las antiguas teorías onirocríticas.

An analysis of Alcmena's dream, in Moschus' *Megara*, demonstrates that the poet constructed it in accurate adherence to ancient oneirocritical theories.

Although a great number of recent publications² is devoted to the study of the dream in Greek literature and philosophy, less attention has been paid to the

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² A. H. M. Kessels, *Studies on the Dream in Greek Literature* (Utrecht 1978), R. G. A. van Lieshout, *Greeks on Dream* (Utrecht 1980), H. Wijsenbeek - Wijler, *Aristotle's Concept of Soul, Sleep and Dreams* (Amsterdam 1978), G. Guidorizzi, *Il sogno in Grecia* (Bari 1988), C. Brillante, *Studi sulla rappresentazione del sogno nella Grecia antica* (Palermo 1991), L. Hermes, *Traum und Traumdeutung in der Antike* (Zurich / Dusseldorf 1996).

dreams appearing in Hellenistic poetry. Dreams attested in Hellenistic poets³ are mostly examined as literary motifs⁴, while no attempt has been made so far to interpret them in the light of the ancient oneirocritic theories. Our purpose in this paper is to examine Alcmena's dream in Moschus' *Megara* according to the ancient *ὄνειροκρισία*.

It is well-known that, as Wetzel⁵ has demonstrated, there is a fundamental difference⁶ between Homeric⁷ and Hellenistic dreams, although it is impossible to draw a clear borderline between the two types. In Homer dreams are, as a rule, messages from the gods⁸, i.e. messages which come from outside into the mind of the sleeper (A 63 *ὄναρ ἐκ Διὸς ἐστὶ*, ξ 495 *θεῖός μοι ἐνύπνιον ἦλθεν ὄνειρος*). Their purpose is usually to urge the dreamer towards a particular course of action or to deceive him.

Later on, however, the great advances made in psychology by Aristotle⁹ and his successors led the Greeks to realise that dreams were the product of the

³ Six dreams in all appear in Hellenistic poetry. Namely: one in Theocritus (*Idyll* 21.39ff.), three in Apollonius Rhodius (*Arg.* 3.617ff.; 4.662ff.; 1732ff.), and two in Moschus (*Europa* 1ff.; *Megara* 91ff.).

⁴ On the dream as a literary motif in Hellenistic poetry, cf. A. H. M. Kessels "Dreams in Apollonius' *Argonautika*", *Actus Studies in Honour of H.L.W. Nelson* (Utrecht 1982) 155-173. See especially p. 169 n. 2 for bibliography on dreams in Hellenistic literature.

⁵ J. G. Wetzel, *Quomodo poetae epici et graeci et romani somnia descriperint* (Diss. Berlin 1931) 25 ff.

⁶ According to Wetzel in Homer there is a contradiction between the fact that "Homerus auctor est illius aetatis in qua somnia a deo mitti putebantur" (p. 20: "Homerus", therefore, describes "somnia extrinsecus venientia": p. 8, n. 4) and the fact that "Homerus" was "non ignarus somnia cogitatione animi non dormientis effici" (p. 9), wherefore certain, though not all, Homeric dreams reflect the "statum ... qui est in animo dormientis" (p. 10 and 14). In Hellenistic times, however, as Wetzel has demonstrated, such a contradiction disappears, because owing to the progress of psychology from Aristotle onwards, it was clearly recognized that dreams were produced by the *ψυχή* of the sleeper. Wetzel's theory has been in part opposed by Kessels (*Studies on the dream in Greek Literature*, 17 ff.), but Kessels' arguments are not cogent, resting as they do on the notion that "Homeric epics" show "a primitive way of thinking" (p.21, n. 13). According to Kessels, Homer did not have a clear view of the *ψυχή* (p. 6) and Homer "clearly was not aware of any relation between dream and psyche" (p. 13). (On the accurate notion that Homer had of *ψυχή*, cf. e.g. C. Capelle-C. Risch *Vollständiges Wörterbuch über die Gedichte des Homeros und den Homeriden* [Leipzig 1889, Darmstadt 1968] s.v. *ψυχή* article based on Nagelsbach). In reality, the examples used by Wetzel prove him right, so that we shall conclude with A. Grillone, *Il sogno nell' epica latina Tecnica e poesia* (Palermo 1967) 9 that "l'influenza della disposizione psicologica e della partecipazione del dormiente alla visione omirica" is "rara nei poemi omerici, sempre presente nei sogni del poema di Apollonio Rhodio" (italics mine).

⁷ For dreams in Homer, see E. Levy, "Le rêve homérique", *Ktēma* 7 (1982) 23-41.

⁸ The notion of Homeric origin according to which dreams were messages sent to the humans by the gods was a subject of discussion between philosophers and others. Despite several efforts at rational explanation by e.g. Heraclitus, Democritus, Plato and Hippocrates, the belief that dreams had a divine origin did not die out. Writers cast in a religious mode such as Philo and Iamblichus consider the dreams as sent by the gods (cf. D. Del Corno, *Graecorum de re oneirocritica scriptorum reliquiae* [Varese, Milano, 1969] 89; 112).

⁹ On Aristotle's views on dreams cf. J. Frere "L'aurore de la science des rêves Aristote", *Ktēma* 8 (1983) 27-37, cf. Artem. I.6 (Her. p. 13.15) οὐχ ὁμοίως δὲ νῦν ἐγὼ ὡς Ἀριστοτέλης διαπορῶ πότερον ἔξωθεν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ τοῦ ὄνειρώσσειν ἢ αἰτία ὑπὸ θεοῦ γινομένη ἢ ἔνδον αἰτίων τι δὲ ἡμῖν διατίθῃσι τὴν ψυχὴν καὶ ποιεῖ φύσει συμβεβηκὸς αὐτῇ.

sleeper's mind (*ψυχή*), and reflected the feelings and worries of the dreamer. The key passage is Arist. *On Dreams* 458 b1 ff.; 30 ff. Already before Aristotle, of course, it was realised that dreams were the product of the human *ψυχή*. The first appearance of this belief seems to be a well-known Pindaric fragment¹⁰ (fr. 116 Bowra, cf. A. H. M. Kessels, *Studies*, 162). It is equally well-known that Democritus¹¹ also believed dreams to be produced by the human mind, and Wetzel (*op. cit.* 26, n. 58) has demonstrated that this belief was also held by Herodotus¹².

However, the notion that dreams were the product of the human mind (*ψυχή*) was fully accepted by Hellenistic writers such as Apollonius Rhodius (cf. especially Wetzel, *op. cit.* 25 ff.; Kessels, *Dreams in Apollonius*, 155). The dream in Theocritus' *Idyll* 21 has been shown by Giangrande¹³ to be a case in point: a fisherman went to bed without having dinner, and consequently dreamed about food. In the same way, the dreams which the characters in the *Argonautica* have, are often conditioned by the state of mind of the sleeper.

The human *ψυχή* sent messages of one or the other of two kinds to the sleeper. The first, simpler, kind of dreams was conditioned by the physiological state¹⁴ in which the sleeper was: if, for instance, he had gone to bed hungry, he dreamed of food. The second kind of dreams was much more complex: the human *ψυχή*, either because it was believed to be in communion with gods¹⁵, or because it was held to acquire special powers of concentration during the sleep¹⁶ of the person concerned was able to thoroughly analyse the situation in which the person concerned found himself. The *ψυχή* could therefore foresee future developments which would affect this person and warned the sleeper accordingly by producing dreams, which were coded messages, i.e. messages which the *ὄνειροκρίται* could decode¹⁷.

As regards Alcmena's dream, the following observations are necessary. Perrotta¹⁸ maintains that, since the events which occurred in the dream never repeated themselves subsequently, in real life, Alcmena's dream was not "un vero sogno". According to Perrotta, Moschus intended his readers to consider the dream not as one which Alcmena actually had, but as an overt artifice, invented by the poet in order to intimate to his readers that Heracles would die. Perrotta's

¹⁰ ἀτὰρ εὐδοντέσσιιν ἐν πολλοῖς ὄνειροις / δείκνυσι τερπνῶν ἐφέρπουσαν χαλεπῶν τε κρίσιν.

¹¹ Cf. Lieshout, *op. cit.* 86.

¹² Cf. 7.16 πεπλανῆσθαι αὐταὶ μάλιστα ἐώθασι ὄψεις αἰ τῶν ὄνειράτων, τὰ τις ἡμέρης φροντίζει. For dreams in Herodotus, see H. A. Gartner, "Les rêves de Xerxes et d' Artabane chez Herodote", *Ktema* 8 (1983) 11-18, A. P. Frisch, *Die Traume bei Herodot.*, Beitrage zur klassischen Philologie, Heft 27 (Meisenheim am Glan 1968); A. Missiou "Ὀνειρα καὶ Ἀνατολή στό ἔργο τοῦ Ἡροδότου", *Ἀριάδνη* 6 (1993) 89-107.

¹³ "Textual Problems in Theocritus' *Idyll* XXI", *Ant. Class.* 46 (1977) 514ff. (*SMA* I, 184ff.).

¹⁴ Cf. Del Corno, *op. cit.* 68; 148.

¹⁵ Cf. Del Corno, *op. cit.* 137; 162; 182-3.

¹⁶ Cf. Del Corno, *op. cit.* 94; 146; 150; 182; 184; 186.

¹⁷ Cf. Del Corno, *op. cit.* 174; 194 "decifrazione".

¹⁸ "Arte e tecnica nell' epillio Alessandrino" *Scritti Minori*, II (Urbino 1978) 46.

hypothesis is rightly rejected by Breitenstein¹⁹: the events which were seen in dreams were not expected, by the ancients, to subsequently repeat themselves in real life. What occurred in dreams was, in the belief of the ancients, only a symbolic intimation of future events which were going to occur in real life²⁰ - an intimation the constituent symbols of which had to be correctly interpreted according to the rules of oneirocritic science.

Other critics²¹, whilst correctly understanding that Alcmena's dream was meant by Moschus to be a real one, composed by the poet so as to indicate to her and to his readers Heracles' impending doom, have nevertheless not interpreted the dream according to ancient oneirocritic beliefs.

The teachings of oneirocritic writers were originally transmitted orally - from mouth to mouth²². In the Hellenistic and later period²³ such teachings were made known to the general public by handbooks²⁴, of which Artemidorus' work²⁵ constitutes a late and exhaustive *summa*.

Xenophon for instance, was, as explained in more detail below²⁶, perfectly capable of interpreting his own dreams in the light of ancient oneirocritic beliefs, and many personages in the Greek novel were able to decipher the messages which dreams sent to the sleeper²⁷. For instance, we know that seeing fire in a dream was regarded as intimation of future dangers, and accordingly, in Xen. *Eph.* 1.12.4 Habrokomes, having dreamed of a fire, expected τι δεινὸν ἐκ τοῦ ὄνειρατος. At 2.8.2 Habrokomes dreams of himself and his beloved as being a horse and a mare: on the whole, a horse was a sign of good omen²⁸, and therefore Habrokomes becomes εὐελπίς.

¹⁹ *Recherches sur le poème Mégara* (Copenhagen 1966) 67.

²⁰ Cf. Artemid. 1.2 (Her. p. 4.27) ὄνειρός ἐστι κίνησις ἢ πλάσις ψυχῆς πολυσχημῶν σημαντικῆ τῶν ἐσομένων ἀγαθῶν ἢ κακῶν.

²¹ Breitenstein, *op. cit.* 67.

²² "Von Mund zu Mund" (*RE s.v. Traumdeutung* 2235).

²³ *RE s.v. Traumdeutung* 2234-2235.

²⁴ *Der Kleine Pauly s.v. Traumdeutung* 931 "eine umfangreiche Fachlit.", cf. also Del Corno, *op. cit.* 123 "manuale oniromantico pratico"; 127 "trattato oniromantico"; 104 "trattato ... descrittivo".

²⁵ *The Oneirocritica* is the only extant ancient dream-book. The author collected dreams and their outcomes and classified what had been taught by many earlier oneirocritic writers. At the beginning of the first book of the *Oneirocritica* (Her. p. 2, 11-17) Artemidorus asserts that besides consorting with the common and presumably illiterate diviners, who practised their trade in the market places, he had taken special pains to procure every book written on the interpretation of dreams (ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο μὲν οὐκ ἐστὶν ὅτι βιβλίον οὐκ ἐκτησάμην ὄνειροκριτικῶν πολλῆν εἰς τοῦτο φιλοτιμίαν ἔχων, τοῦτο δὲ καὶ σφόδρα διαβεβλημένων τῶν ἐν ἀγορᾷ μάντεων, οὓς δὴ προίκτας καὶ γόητας καὶ βωμολόχους ἀποκαλοῦσιν οἱ σεμνοπροσωποῦντες καὶ τὰς ὄφρῶς ἀνεσπακότες, καταφρονησας τῆς διαβολῆς ἔτεσι πολλοῖς ὠμίληκα, καὶ ἐν Ἑλλάδι κατὰ πόλεις καὶ πανηγύρεις, καὶ ἐν Ἀσίᾳ καὶ ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ καὶ τῶν νήσων ἐν ταῖς μεγίσταις καὶ πολυανθρωποτάταις ὑπομένων ἀκούειν παλαιούς ὄνειρους καὶ τούτων τὰς ἀποβάσεις).

²⁶ Cf. below, 6-7.

²⁷ Cf. D. Auger, "Rêve, image et récit dans le roman de Chariton", *Ktema* 8 (1983) 39.

²⁸ Cf. Artem. 1.56 (Her. p. 54,7).

In the light of our previous observations, we believe that the dream composed by Moschus was constructed according to ancient oneirocritic teachings, and it, therefore, contains precise details which the poet's readers were expected by him to be able to interpret in the light of ancient *ὄνειροκρισία*, as signifying Heracles' impending doom.

We shall try, therefore, to analyse the dream within the framework of ancient oneirocritic thinking. The dream will be studied in the light of the evidence imparted in Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica*²⁹ and the ancient *Scriptores onirocritici* collected by Del Corno, in his most valuable edition. In particular, the dream of Alcmena belongs to one of the dream-types classified by Artemidorus, namely to the kind of dream which refers to a "Verwandter des Traumenden" (*RE s.v.*: "Traumdeutung", 2243; cf. also Breitenstein, *op. cit.* 61).

We shall begin with a short precis of the dream. Alcmena sees Heracles undressed from the waist up, digging a trench along the edge of a vine-field. When he has finished, and was to put his clothes on again, suddenly a big fire appears above the trench: the fire encircles him. Heracles retreats using his spade as a shield against the flames. Iphicles, Heracles' brother appears in the dream, intending to be of assistance, but trips up and is thereafter unable to help.

The dream begins thus:

εἶσατο γάρ μοι ἔχων μακέλην εὐεργέα χερσὶ
παῖς ἐμὸς ἀμφοτέρησι βίη Ἑρακλήϊη.

(Lines 94-95)

Although the name of Heracles is mentioned at the end of line 95, the first noun mentioned in the dream, and hence the first object that we see, is the word *μακέλην* ("mattock", a digging implement). This immediately conjures up the image of agricultural work. Heracles, using this mattock, is digging a trench (97 *τάφρον*) at the boundary of a field (97 *τηλεθάουτος ἐπ' ἔσχατιῇ τινος ἀγροῦ*), which happens to be a vineyard (100 *οἰνοφόροιο... ἀλωῆς*). Perrotta³⁰ thinks that Heracles is, in the dream, digging his own grave ("si scava la fossa") and Legrand³¹ thinks that the dream means that Heracles "ne jouira jamais du repos en ce monde; la fosse represente l' ensemble de ses travaux, les flammes annoncent celles du bucher de Trachis".

In reality, Heracles is in the dream a delver (*φυτοσκάφος*)³². Delvers were casual labourers hired (96 *ἐπὶ μισθῶ*) by land-owners. So Heracles is doing a

²⁹ For the purpose of our investigation we have used R. A. Pack's edition, *Artemidori Daldiani Onirocriticon Libri V* (Leipzig 1963) and of course Hercher's *Index rerum* at the end of his edition (*Artemidori Daldiani Onirocriticon libri V* [Lipsiae 1864]).

³⁰ *Op. cit.* 46.

³¹ *Bucoliques Grecs*, II (Paris 1927) 174 f., n. 4.

³² Cf. Theocr. *Id.* 25.27 and *Id.* 24.138 where see G. Cryssafis' and H. White's commentaries *ad locc.*

peasant's work (cf. Del Corno 28, for a similar background: ἐν ἀμπελῶνι δὲ γεωργὸς εἰργάζετο τάφρον). The fact that Heracles is a "journalier" has already been understood by Breitenstein³³. What is crucial, however, and previously overlooked, is that, as we learn from Artemidorus, γεωργεῖν πόνον καὶ κακοπάθειαν σημαίνει³⁴. The μακέλη has in itself no special significance from the point of view of "Traumdeutung": neither Artemidorus, nor the fragments collected by Del Corno mention such an instrument. The μακέλη, therefore, is mentioned by Alcmena only in order to underline that Heracles was working as a delver (φυτοσκάφος)³⁵ who needs this digging implement (μακέλη). The placing of the spade upon the upraised ridge of earth (101-102 ἦτοι ὁ λίστρον ἔμελλεν ἐπὶ προύχοντος ἐρείσας / ἀνδήρου) is, likewise, of no significance from the point of view of dream interpretation: it simply adds a realistic detail, since workers were in the habit of putting their tools on the top of any heap which their work had produced, such as the winnowers, who put their fan on top of the corn heap in Theocr. *Id.* 7.155-156.

In line 98 Heracles, while at his work, is pictured half naked (γυμνὸς ἄτερ χλαίνης. τε καὶ εὐμίτροιο χιτῶνος). It seems, at first sight, quite normal that someone should be naked from the waist up in order to perform physical labour in the open air, but, although this is normal, we must wonder for what purpose this detail was included in the poem. Again, Artemidorus³⁶ gives us the answer: οὔτε γυμνοῦσθαι οὔτε τὰ ἱμάτια ἀπολλύειν ἀγαθόν.

The temporary relaxation that comes, when Heracles completes his work and is ready to get dressed again, serves to augment the contrast with the following lines. No explanation is given for the start of the fire (103-104 ἔξαπίνης δ' ἀνέλαμψεν... / πῦρ). The fire is vehement (104 ἄμοτον) and comes from above (103 ὑπὲρ καπέτοιο). We know from Artemidorus³⁷ that πῦρ οὐράνιον καὶ θεῖον and πολὺ denotes πολεμίων ἔφοδον: there is no need, therefore, to imagine that the fire signifies the "bûcher de Trachis"³⁸: it is, as Breitenstein³⁹ notes (without, however, being aware of Artemidorus' testimony) an indication of the "lutte" between Heracles and his enemies (not necessarily Eurystheus, as Breitenstein thinks: Heracles had many enemies, for example Hera).

The fire encircles Heracles (104 περὶ δ' αὐτὸν ἀθέσφατος εἰλεῖτο φλόξ). Breitenstein⁴⁰ has shown that this part of Alcmena's dream, where a πῦρ ἄμοτον

³³ *Op. cit.* 63. On the reduction of Heracles to the humble level of a peasant in the dream cf. M. Pérez-López, "[M.] IV Megara y Theoc. XXIV. Algunas notas léxicas", *Minerva* 9 (1995) 61-63.

³⁴ 1.51 (Her. p. 49.2).

³⁵ Cf. Breitenstein, *op. cit.* 62, n. 23 who quotes Nonn. *D.* 4.255 χαλκίησι πεδοσκαφέεσσι μακέλαις.

³⁶ 2.3 (Her. p. 88.18).

³⁷ 2.9 (Her. p. 92.18); cf also 2.9 (Her. p. 96.7) πῦρ... πολὺ δὲ καὶ ἄμετρον ποιηρόν.

³⁸ Cf. Legrand, *op. cit.* 174 f., n. 4.

³⁹ *Op. cit.* 64.

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.* 66, n. 47.

coming from above creates a fire surrounding Heracles, is paralleled by the dream which Xenophon mentions he had in *An.* 3.11 ff.: a thunderbolt (σκηπτός) falls from the sky onto Xenophon's house and sets it on fire: the flames surrounded Xenophon (κύκλω δ' ἔδοκει λάμπεισθαι τὸ πῦρ). However, Breitenstein does not analyse Xenophon's dream from the point of view of ancient oneirocriticism, whereas Xenophon himself does just that. Xenophon wondered what kind of dream he had had (ὁποῖόν τι μὲν δὴ τὸ τοιοῦτον ὄναρ ἰδεῖν). He wondered whether his dream was either positive or negative⁴¹, i.e. positive insofar as he had seen φῶς μέγα ἐκ Διός 42, or negative, because the fact that the fire surrounded him might indicate that he would not be able to escape from the difficult situation (εἴργοιτο πάντοθεν). However, as Xenophon points out, events (τὰ συμβάντα) proved the dream to be positive, insofar as he was able to escape.

Alcmena's dream was negative, as subsequent events demonstrated: Heracles succumbed to his difficulties. We may conclude that the fire from above was a warning, given to Alcmena by her troubled ψυχή, of the kind mentioned by Artemidorus⁴³ (πονηρότατον δ' ἂν εἴη καταφερόμενον εἰς γῆν τὸ πῦρ ἰδεῖν): this indicates that a danger hangs over the head of the person concerned.

Lastly, the appearance of Iphicles⁴⁴ in the dream puzzles interpreters. At first sight one might be tempted to imagine that Iphicles appears in the dream, because Alcmena was full of concern for both her sons as she says in lines 119-120 (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ κλαῖσκον ἀμηχανέοντας ὀρώσα / παίδας ἐμούς) and already in lines 92-93 (δειμαίνω δὲ παλίγκοτον ὄψιν ἰδοῦσα / ἐκπάγλως, μὴ μοί το τέκνοις ἀποθύμιον ἔρπη). This explanation, however, is refuted by the subsequent course of events, which Moschus' readers are expected to know: the only person who came to grief was Heracles, not Iphicles. It follows, therefore, that the message which Alcmena's ψυχή sent to her and which Alcmena did not correctly decipher was, according to ancient oneirocritic theories, the fact that ἀδελφός signifies an enemy (cf. Artem. 4.70 [Her. p. 244.27] ἔτι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς τὸν αὐτὸν ἔχουσι λόγον πρὸς τὰ ἀποτελέσματα [καὶ οἱ ἐχθροὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς]. οὐ γὰρ ἐπ' ὠφελεία γίνονται ἀλλ' ἐπὶ βλάβῃ).

Alcmena only understands in a vague way that her dream is πονηρόν (91 αἰνὸς ὄνειρος, 92 παλίγκοτον ὄψιν), whereas we have been able, thanks to Artemidorus, to interpret the messages of her ψυχή accurately. To conclude: as regards the presense of Iphicles, Alcmena would seem to have made an error⁴⁵, in

⁴¹ On a dream believed to be either ἀγαθόν or πονηρόν, cf. Del Corno, *op. cit.* 155, and B. Kalfas, "Διάγνωση καὶ πρόγνωση. Ὁ Ἀρτεμίδωρος καὶ ἡ ἀρχαία ἐρμηνευτικὴ τῶν ὄνειρων", in D. I. Kyrtatas (ed.), *Ὀψις ἐνυπνίου· ἡ κρῆσις τῶν ονείρων στὴν ἐλληνικὴ καὶ ρωμαϊκὴ ἀρχαιότητα* (Heraklio 1993) 240.

⁴² For Zeus appearing in dreams as a benign deity, cf. Del Corno, *op. cit.* 35-6 Δία ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν... ἀγαθόν.

⁴³ 2.9 (Her. p. 92.22).

⁴⁴ Cf. Breitenstein, *op. cit.* 64-5.

⁴⁵ Cf. Del Corno, *op. cit.* 190, n. 69; even professional ὄνειροκρίται could make interpretative mistakes.

that she is worried about both her sons: in reality, subsequent events and Artemidorus' teachings show to us that Iphicles appears in Alcmena's dream only as a negative omen, or signal.

In conclusion: our analysis of Alcmena's dream, carried out on the basis of oneirocritic theories, has proved fruitful, in that it has shown that Moschus had carefully constructed the dream so as to convey to the reader through specific oneirocritic symbols an intimation of Heracles' pending doom -a reader, let it not be forgotten, conversant with the teachings of ancient oneirocritic writers. The signals sent by Alcmena's ψυχή to her, which we endeavoured to trace in Artemidorus are the following:

- a) γεωργεῖν (digging a trench) appears as a sign of toil and misery,
- b) being naked (γυμνός) signifies the loss of everything,
- c) the appearance of a vehement fire coming from above (πῦρ ἄμοτον ὑπὲρ καπέτοιο) foretells the approach of enemies,
- d) a fire encircling Heracles is the intimation of a danger, as we learn from Xenophon, from which the person concerned may not be able to escape, and finally
- e) the appearance of a brother symbolizes the presence of enemies and dangers.