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SLEEP, DREAMS AND REVELATION IN MEDIEVAL COMMENTARIES ON JOB

Just a quick glance at the Bible makes clear that in Jewish and Christian tradition sleep and dream are privileged means of divine revelation. The best known examples of revelation by dreams occur in the Old Testament with the patriarch Joseph and the prophet Daniel who not only had remarkable dreams themselves, but also possessed the ability to interpret the dreams of others. Further examples are the prophets Balaam and Elias, and this indicates that our topic contributes to the wider field of prophecy as a specific form of divine revelation¹.

In this paper I want to highlight another biblical source, which became an important occasion for medieval theologians to discuss the meaning of revelational dreams: the book of Job. Usually the famous sufferer is not known as a prophetic figure, though he prophesied the resurrection of «his saviour» (Jb 19:25-26). Normally he figures as an example of patience and perfect virtue. Medieval commentators present him also as a wise theologian, who learned to understand God's power and God's plans. Nevertheless there are three passages in the book of Job where medieval commentators regularly speak about the connection of sleep, dream and revelation. These are:

¹ On prophecy see: M. SCHLOSSER, *Lucerna in caliginoso loco: Aspekte des Prophetiebegriffes in der scholastischen Theologie*, Paderborn 2000 (Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes, 43). Schlosser provides a very instructive survey on our topic in an own excursus «Visio in somno: Prophetie und Traum», *ibid.* pp. 73-103; J.-P. TORRELL, *Recherches sur la théorie de la prophétie au Moyen Âge XII^e-XIV^e siècles : études et texts*, Fribourg 1992 (Dokimion, 13). Furthermore: *Cristianesimo nella storia* 17 (1996) which has a special issue on prophecy in the Middle Ages.

S Jb 4:12-17 (the vision of Eliphaz the Temanite)

S Jb 7:13-14 (Job complains about his nightmares)

S Jb 33:14-17 (Elihu, the fourth of Job's interlocutors, describes how God reveals)²

Limiting my presentation to selected medieval explanations of these texts, I don't presume to give a complete discussion of the topic of revelational dreams in medieval theology. I rather want to demonstrate which aspects of the whole problem seemed most central to medieval theologians. As the exposition of a whole biblical book left insufficient time to discuss each problem in detail, I want to examine the following questions: Which aspects of revelational dreams did the commentators consider as so important to mention them within a concise explanation? How did problems of dreams and revelation fit into the broader topics of the book of Job? What can we learn about the attitude of different medieval authors regarding dreams and their theological impact?

I. GREGORY THE GREAT

The most important exposition of Job in the Middle Ages was a patristic text: Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*. This work provided the standard interpretation of Job as a model of virtue and as a typos of the suffering Christ. Up to the 12th century nearly all commentaries on Job were more or less abbreviations or anthologies of Gregory's monumental work³. The most famous example is the *Glossa ordinaria* which drew exclusively from Gregory. Hugh of St. Cher's *Postilla on Job* still has the *Moralia* as its main source. Not only the monastic theologians of the 12th century, e.g. Rupert of Deutz, but also the scholastics of the 13th century,

² J. LE GOFF, «Le Christianisme et les rêves (II^e-VII^e siècles)», in T. GREGORY (ed.), *I sogni nel medioevo*, Roma 1985, pp.171-218 (Lessico Intellettuale Europeo, 35). In the appendix (ibid. 216-218) Le Goff offers a complete list of passages within the Old Testament reporting or speaking about dreams. Le Goff's descriptions of the respective texts in Job are not quite correct, however. The problem of prophetic revelation, especially the different types of visions, received widespread attention in many medieval commentaries on Revelation and on the Psalms. For methodological reasons I omit these texts in order to focus on the book of Job and on its commentaries.

³ R. WASSELYNCK, «Le compilations des *Moralia in Iob* du VII^e au XII^e siècle», *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 29 (1962) 5-32; *Clavis Patristica Pseudepigraphorum Medii Aevi* cura et studio J. MACHIELSEN, Turnhout 1994, vol. II A, pp. 503-516 (Corpus Christianorum. Series latina).

such as William of Melitona, were anxious to be as close as possible to Gregory's interpretation. Thus we have to start our survey with the *Moralia*.

All commentators agreed with Gregory that in Jb 4:12-17 Eliphaz of Teman, the most ancient of Job's friends, did report a vision which he experienced himself⁴. While the scholastics of the 13th century described the circumstances of this vision in detail, Gregory the Great was not interested in this sort of extraordinary experience at all. For him the biblical text offers first of all images and metaphors, which have to apply and to respond to the needs of his monastic audience. Whenever the Bible speaks of sleep (*sopor*) it can refer to three different realities: corporal death, religious lethargy (*topor negligentiae*), or the most intensive peace of mind achievable in a contemplative life (*quies vitae*). To arrive at this ascetic calmness is the main purpose of Gregory's teaching in the *Moralia*. Therefore, dream and sleep were for Gregory images of contemplative retreat and of renunciation of the busy world⁵. The same idea can be applied to the image of the «bed». Bed, sleep, dream and their connotations served for Gregory as metaphors for the passivity of sensual perception. God can be the more perceived, the less the *mens* is distracted by sensual impressions⁶. Thus dream and sleep are metaphors for an ideal state of mind. In the stillness of the mind God can be experienced like in a dream⁷. Hence, Gregory interpreted «dream» as a radical inwardness, as a fertile silence which is indispensable to meet God, in a nutshell, as a metaphor for monastic behaviour.

⁴ «(12) Porro ad me dictum est verbum absconditum et quasi furtive suscepit auris mea venas susurri eius (13) in horrore visionis nocturnae quando solet sopor occupare homines (14) pavor tenuit me et tremor et omnia ossa mea perterrita sunt (15) et cum spiritus me praesente transiret inhorruerunt pili carnis meae (16) stetit quidam cuius non agnoscebam vultum imago coram oculis meis et vocem quasi aurae lenis audivi».

⁵ Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Iob*, V, xxxi, 53 (in Jb 4:13), M. ADRIAEN (ed.), Turnhout 1979, p. 255 (Corpus Christianorum. Series latina, 143).

⁶ «In lectulo quippe et per noctem dilectus quaeritur quia nimirum inuisibilis conditoris species, repressa omni corporeae uisionis imagine, in cubili cordis inuenitur». *Moralia* VIII, xxiv, 41 (in Jb 7:14), ed. cit. 411.

⁷ «In somnio exteriores sensus dormiunt et interiora cernuntur... Vox uidelicet Dei quasi per somnium auditur, quando tranquilla mente ab huius saeculi actione quiescitur et in ipso mentis silentio diuina praecepta pensantur. Cum enim ab externis actionibus mens sopitur, tunc plenius mandatorum Dei pondus agnoscitur. Tunc uerba Dei mens uiuacius penetrat, cum ad se admittere curarum saecularium tumultus recusat». *Moralia* XXIII, xx, 37 (in Jb 33:15), ed. cit. 1172.

Despite the predominantly metaphorical interpretation of dream and sleep Gregory also discussed, though briefly, the natural phenomenon of dreams in a more literal exposition. He did so in the context of the nightmares Job was haunted by (Jb 7:14). Gregory listed six kinds of dreams, which, however, he did not differentiate in terms of content but according to their origin and their natural or supernatural cause. Gregory's list proceeds from meaningless to meaningful dreams. The first two forms are dreams which are caused by a full or an empty stomach. While everybody knows these two kinds of dreams from personal experience, the remaining four refer to such kinds of dreams as are described in Scripture. The third kind are dreams which are based on illusion (*ex illusione*), the fourth combine illusion and interpretation (*ex illusione cum cogitatione*), the fifth kind reflect true revelation (*ex revelatione*), and the sixth again combine revelation with interpretation (*ex revelatione et cogitatione*)⁸. Introducing the category of *cogitatio*, Gregory went beyond the simple description of the phenomenon, stressing the interpretation of dreams as an integral part of and most important for the phenomenon itself. Although he did not mention it, we have to assume that he understood *cogitatio* not as a subsequent reflection by the dreamer himself but as the interpretation of dreams by other people. There is good reason to compare these three pairs of dreams to the three kinds of visions elaborated by Augustine in the 12th book of his *De Genesi ad litteram*, but Gregory neither mentioned Augustine nor used his terminology. Nevertheless his first pair reminds of the Augustinian *visiones corporales*. Those dreams which Gregory described as illusive parallel the Augustinian *visiones spirituales*, while only the true revelational dreams with or without subsequent interpretation can be compared to the Augustinian *visiones intellectuales*⁹.

⁸ *Moralia* VIII, xxiv, 42 (in Jb 7:13f), ed. cit. 413f. Gregory repeated this list in his *Dialogi* IV, 48 (PL 77, 409), from which Hrabanus Maurus quoted it in his *Commentaria in Ecclesiasticum*, VIII, 1 (PL 109, 1005f). Isidor of Sevilla used the same distinction in his *Sententiae* III, 6, 7 (PL 83, 669). Cfr. LE GOFF, «Le Christianisme et les rêves», 208f; M.E. WITTMER-BUSCH, *Zur Bedeutung von Schlaf und Traum im Mittelalter*, Krems 1990, 105f. Yet Hugh of St. Cher included Gregory's list in his Postilla in Iob: *Postillae super universum Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, Coloniae Agrippinae 1621, tom. 1, fol. 406vb-407ra.

⁹ On dreams in St. Augustine cfr. M. DULAÉY, *Le rêve dans la vie et la pensée de s. Augustin*, Paris 1973; ead., «Songes-rêves: époque patristique», *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. XIV (1990), pp. 1060-1066.

Gregory omitted development of independent criteria by which dreams can be recognized as revelational or illusive. Such brevity, however, is typical for Gregory who generally was very sceptical about dreams and their value. In his opinion most dreams are suggested by the devil, who permanently tries to deceive people, monks in particular¹⁰. Even if Gregory acknowledged that God revealed himself to certain people in dreams, he warned not to overestimate the ambivalent knowledge obtained by dreams. Only if the origin of a dream is absolutely clear, can its content and information be taxed safely. Considering Gregory's scepticism it comes not as a surprise to hear that Job did not receive his answer from God in a dream. The short description that God answered Job «out of the tempest» (*ex turbine*, Jb 38:1) means for Gregory that God spoke either through an angel or immediately into Job's heart (*per internam inspirationem*). The most appropriate way for God to talk to people avoids words, sounds and images. *Repletus Deo*, Job could write down everything which he had received previously by immediate and inward revelation¹¹

II. THE SCHOLASTICS

Commentators of later centuries no longer found satisfying the meager observations of Gregory and his tropological interpretation. They considered Eliphaz' account a paradigmatic vision which merits more detailed analysis. Bruno of Segni called it, in Augustinian terms, a *visio spiritualis*, in which a certain development can be observed. Eliphaz saw only an image, while the true nature (*rei veritas*) remained hidden from him. Bruno explained this by personal experience, reminding that in dreams we often see people close to ourselves although they live currently far away. It seemed also typical to Bruno that Eliphaz heard the message of his vision only blurredly, as the «whispering» indicates. This, too,

¹⁰ Of course this is an old idea in Latin patristic thought; it was already stressed by Tertullian. Cfr. LE GOFF, «Le Christianisme», 192. «L'attitude fondamentale du christianisme à l'égard des rêves sera la méfiance». *ibid.* 195.

¹¹ «...dicta dominica quae sequuntur ipse iam per uerba protulit, qui repletus Deo, haec sine uerbis audiuit.», *Moralia* XXVIII, i, 10 (in Jb 38:1), ed. cit. 1401. Cfr. F. RAEDLE, «Über das leibhaftige Reden Gottes mit den Menschen (nach dem Zeugnis der Bibel und der Exegese)», *Das Mittelalter* 6 (2001) 31-44, who focuses on Augustine, however.

Bruno explained by personal experience, because dreams not written down immediately after waking up slip from the mind immediately¹².

The high scholastic commentaries looked for further distinctions. William of Melitona distinguished in Eliphaz' vision *modus revelandi, effectus revelationis, declaratio revelationis, modus revelationis*¹³. Gregory the Great had already interpreted the mysterious *venae susurri*, «veins of whisper» in Jb 4:12, as *modi* in which God reveals himself in hidden or disguised ways. These ways, however, in which God discloses himself to people, aim rather at the affective abilities of man than at his cognitive powers. To recognize God's words or his will behind certain events or signs requires careful attention and preparedness to react accordingly. The scholastics took up this idea, at least investigating the different modes (*modus revelationis, modus inspirationis*) by which God reveals himself to the mind. In the footsteps of Gregory the Great William of Melitona distinguished nine different ways by which God "speaks" to humans. Hence, the veins in Jb 4:12 are a metaphor for any sort of revelation granted by God in this world, in Scripture, creature, by catechesis, by immediate inspiration, or by angels¹⁴. William stressed that in this age God's words mostly appear as dark and hidden. For to hear and to understand him clearly, mankind has to wait for the eschatological fulfillment. William qualified Eliphaz' vision as a *visio imaginaria*, because it aims at an «image» which Eliphaz had before his eyes (Jb 4:16).

¹² Bruno Signensis, *Expositio in Iob*, PL 164, 568. On Bruno's Job commentary see B. GRÉGOIRE, *Bruno de Segni, exégète médiéval et théologien monastique*, Spoleto 1965, p. 70f.

¹³ Guilelmus de Melitona, *Commentarius in librum Iob*, Bordeaux, Bibliothèque Municipale, Cod. 26-27, fol. 74va. On William as an exegete cfr. B. SMALLEY, «Some Thirteenth-Century Commentaries on the Sapiential Books», *Dominican Studies*, 3 (1950) 53-57, where his Job commentary is briefly mentioned. See also B. SMALLEY, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Oxford 1983, pp. 274f, 285f.

¹⁴ «*Venas sussurrii eius, idest subtiles modos occulti sermonis uel inspirationis. Loquitur enim Deus ix modis ut dictum est supra i. Nunc quasi sussurando loquitur nobis occulte, sed in futuro loquetur nobis aperte, Io. xvi (Jo 16:25) Venit hora cum non in prouerbiis loquar uobis sed palam etc. Vene autem dicuntur modi quibus Dominus aliquid occulte loquitur... Dicitur autem locutio occulta uena, quia sicut per uenas uita attrahitur ita in diuina inspiratione uel uena spiritualis uita confertur. Unde uene dicuntur scripture, infra xxviii (Jb 28:1) Habet argentum uenarum suarum principia. Iterum uene sunt creature... Iterum sanctorum predicatorum lingue... Iterum inspirationes interne, Ps. Audiam quid loquatur in me Deus... Iterum reuelationes angelice sicut Mt ii et Luc i.*» Guilelmus de Melitona, op. cit., fol. 74va.

Some years later Albert the Great as well as Peter of John Olivi called it an *oraculum*, because Eliphaz had heard a voice¹⁵. The Dominican Gueric of St. Quentin, who understood the account of Eliphaz' vision first of all as an argument of authority introduced by Eliphaz to criticize Job, distinguished between *modus*, *tempus*, and *magnitudo* of the revelation, emphasizing the *modus revelationis* as darkness and seclusion. According to him Eliphaz received rather a *visio corporalis* than a *visio imaginaria*¹⁶. Thomas Aquinas, who took Eliphaz' vision as an opportunity to discuss the nature of visions in general, distinguished within that passage *altitudo*, *circumstantia*, *certitudo*, and *modus revelationis*¹⁷.

Among all the commentators I have studied only Albert the Great mentioned Macrobius, according to whom an *oraculum* provides a higher and more certain knowledge than a simple dream¹⁸. Concerning the concept of *sopor* Albert provided the most philosophically extended

¹⁵ For Albert see below, footnote 18. Petrus Iohannis Olivi, *Commentarius in Iob*, Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Conv. Soppr. 240, fol. 12ra: «Adducit ad hoc auctoritatem diuini oraculi sibi per uisionem reuelati, in quo primo ostendit quali modo peruenitur ad eum hoc oraculum, secundo ponit uerba huius oraculi ibi *Numquid homo* (Jb 4:17), tertio, quia forte Job posset dicere hoc non fuisse reuelatum ipsi Eliphaz, dicit quod peccat si uult huius rei ueritatem a deo et a sanctis angelis eius, ibi *Voca ergo si est* (Jb 5:1)».

¹⁶ «Auctoritatem non suam quam inducit commendat a quatuor: primo a modo quo reuelata est, quia in occulto; secundo ex tempore quo reuelata est, quia in nocte quod est tempus reuelationis aptum, ibi *in horrore* etc.; tertio ex magnitudine uisionis {idest rei uise}, ibi *porro* etc.; quarto ab ipsa reuelatione ibi *et cum spiritus me* etc. (...) – *uene* possunt esse occulti modi quibus fiunt reuelationes; uel *uene* sunt uox et lingua et similitudo rei que sunt significatiua, per que uenit agnitio rei ad animam; figura est enim nota uocis, uox intellectus qui est similitudo rei. (...) – *ymago*: per hoc ultimo dicitur quod fuit uisio corporalis, non ymaginaria secundum quod narrauit.» Guericus a Sancto Quentino, *Commentarius in Iob*, Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, VII. A. 16, fol. 6va-6vb. Cfr. SMALLEY, «Some Thirteenth-Century Commentaries on the Sapiential Books», *Dominican Studies*, 2 (1949) 348-355. Smalley quotes another paragraph of Gueric's commentary on Jb 4:9 in which he explained—relying on Aristotle's *De somniis*—the physical and biological origin of dreams as a consequence of digestion and vapors ascending into the brain. This topic recurs also in the Job commentaries of the other Dominicans Roland of Cremona, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. On Gueric as a exegete see B. SMALLEY, «A Commentary on Isaiah by Gueric of St. Quentin O.P.», *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, Roma 1946, pp. 383-397 (*Studi e Testi*, 122).

¹⁷ Thomas de Aquino, *Expositio super Iob ad litteram* Roma 1965, pp. 29-31 (Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia, 24).

¹⁸ «Notat, quod per oraculum accepit, quae reuelatio certior est, quam ea quae est in somnio, ut dicit Martialis (!) super somnium Cipionis.» Albertus Magnus, *Commentarii in Iob*, M. WEISS (ed.), Freiburg i. Br. 1904, p. 75a; cfr. Macrobius, *Somnium Scipionis* 1,

solution. During deep sleep the power of imagination as well as the power of the senses is bound completely, whereas the intellect, which is not a potency of the body, does not suffer any limitations by sleep. Quoting Aristotle's *De somno et vigilia* (ch. 1) Albert specifies that the intellect can be highly active during sleep because it is not hindered by the senses. Biblical examples for such *sopor* are Adam, but also the prophet Balaam (Num 24:3f). The more passive the senses, the clearer the intellect; the deeper the sleep, the purer the intellectual perception. Following Aristotle's scientific writings about sleep and dream rather than Gregory the Great's monastic model Albert understood *sopor* not as a simile for religious retreat and contemplation, but more literally as a psychological fact with cognitive significance. Hence, Albert stressed the necessarily passive role of the senses during the process of revelation¹⁹. Revelational dreams as described in the Scriptures are according to him the results of a total standstill of the senses (*abstractio sensuum*). Paradoxically people are the more perceptible for the divine the more the natural activity of sensual perception ceases. Revelation, however, can occur either by heavenly signs or by angels or by immediate inspiration.

III. THOMAS AQUINAS

Among all medieval commentaries on Job Aquinas' *Expositio in Iob* manifests the greatest interest in our topic. The interpretation of Eliphaz' vision is accompanied by an excursus on visions in general, in which we find many former elements combined and systematically ordered²⁰. For

3, 8; Albertus Magnus, *Summa Theologiae* 2, 6, 27, 1, 2. On Albert's Job commentary see A. JUTRAS, «Le Commentarium in Job d'Albert le Grand et la disputatio», *Études et recherches*, 9 (1955) 9-30.

¹⁹ On Albert's ideas concerning visionary dreams see SCHLOSSER, *Lucerna in caliginoso loco*, 92-96. A fuller treatment of Albert's views on dreams, prophecy and vision has to take into consideration of course his commentaries on Aristotle's *De somno et vigilantia*, his own *Summa de creaturis* and particularly his *Quaestio disputata de prophetia*.

²⁰ Thomas de Aquino, *Expositio super Iob ad litteram*, ed. cit. 29b-31b. On Aquinas' Job commentary see D. CHARDONNENS, *L'Homme sous la Regard de la Providence : Providence de Dieu et condition humaine selon l'Expositio littérale sur le Livre de Job de Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris 1997 (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 50). On Aquinas' scriptural exegesis see T. PRÜGL, «Thomas Aquinas as Interpreter of Scripture», R. VAN NIEUWENHOFE and J. WAWRYKOW, *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, Notre Dame 2005 (forthcoming).

Aquinas it makes no difference whether Eliphaz really received this vision or whether he feigned to. In retrospect nobody can prove it anymore. Hence Thomas preferred to investigate the general characteristics of visions and the possibility of revelation in dreams so as to criticize Eliphaz' argument. First of all he distinguished between those obvious revelations that are received clearly (*manifeste*) and those that are perceived obscurely and unprecisely (*occulte*). In Eliphaz' vision he observed three kinds of obscurization or occultation, which consequently weakened his argument. By the term *occultatio* Thomas found a criterion by means of which concrete revelations can be qualified objectively. Generally speaking, God always reveals himself as the truth which never deceives. If his message sometimes is perceived blurredly, nevertheless, this depends on the deficiencies of the human cognitive powers. As the truth God's word is *per se* rationally understandable and clear (*intelligibilis*). If it is transmitted by a vision (*visio imaginativa*), it suffers a first degree of occultation. As the biblical examples show there are differences, however. While Moses heard God's word *clara voce*, Eliphaz heard only a whisper (*sussurium*). Further occultation happens if a vision does not contain a clear message with unequivocal concepts, but uses figurative speech and symbols. While, for example, Isaiah received the unambiguous prophecy: «Look, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son» (Is 7:14), most other visions and revelations are hidden using metaphors and symbols. As these *locutiones figurativae* have derivative meanings, Thomas found good reasons to compare them to the «veins» in Jb 4:12, in which, like in a tube, the true meaning «flows» through figurative expressions²¹. And finally there is also a temporal aspect which can lead to further occultation of the divine word. While, for example, Moses was deemed worthy of communicating with God frequently and for a long time, Eliphaz' vision was fleeting and surreptitious (*furtive*). As a result Thomas qualified Eliphaz' account as a true vision. Because of the threefold occultation, however, its authority and revelational impact is only meager.

Thomas was also interested in the theological value of dreams. He distinguished three genera of dreams²². The first kind has only biological

²¹ «Figuratae locutiones sunt quasi quaedam venae ab ipsa veritate per similitudinem derivatae». Ibid. 29a.

²² Ibid. 30b-31a

or medical causes, e.g. feverish ravings; they lack any theological significance. The second kind are so-called quiet and ordered dreams (*somnia quieta et ordinata*) which contain some truth and stem from intellectual activity. The cause of such dreams lies within the human intellect which does not rest during sleep, but assimilates previous thoughts and events. Theologically such dreams are not very significant either, although Thomas calls them *somnia veriora*²³. Only the third group are the truly revelational dreams which do not arise from passed experience or intellectual effort, but reach the mind from a higher cause or divine source. Such true revelation, however, can happen not only during sleep and dreams but also - and even more frequently - to people awake²⁴. Hence for Thomas sleep or dreams are not necessarily conditions of revelation, just the opposite! The degree of truth and certainty is even higher if the revelation is received awake. The difference for Thomas between both states of consciousness is not the increased power of the intellect during sleep but the critical force of clear, "wakeful" reason (*ratio*). Although the intellect is unhindered during dreams, the power of reason (*ratio*) can operate much better when a person is awake. The *ratio* is the essential organ which is able to discern true and false, wrong and right. The *ratio*, therefore, is necessary to discern the correctness of the vision. It does not produce the content of revelation, but it is able to examine, to approve or to reject it. In that sense Gregory's category of *cogitatio* is taken very seriously by Thomas²⁵.

²³ «...somnia quieta et ordinata quae cum sint magis spiritualia, intellectiva parte in quendam vigorem erumpente, huiusmodi somnia solent esse veriora. (...) et quia talia somnia causam habent ex nobis et non ab aliqua superiori natura, non sunt magnae significationis». Ibid. 30b-31a.

²⁴ «Tertio considerandum est quod huiusmodi visa quae ex aliqua superiori causa oriuntur, quandoque apparent dormientibus quandoque autem vigilantibus, et veriora solent esse et certiora cum vigilantibus apparent quam cum dormientibus, eo quod in vigilando est ratio magis libera et quia in somno spirituales revelationes minus discerni possunt a somniis frivolis et consuetis». Ibid. 31a.

²⁵ SCHLOSSER, *Lucerna, in caliginoso loco*, 99-102. Already the Apocalypse commentary of Gaufrid of Auxerre († after 1188) provided an interesting threefold distinction of *revelationes*. In the first kind angels talk to people *more humano*, as it happened to Abraham, Zacharias or the Virgin Mary. The second kind are visions, *imaginariae visiones*, received during dreams or awake, which require successive interpretation by a third person (e. g. the patriarch Joseph or king David). In the third kind the prophet receives immediate information (*protinus doceantur*), as e.g. Daniel, the major prophets, the magi, the apostles Peter, Paul and John. Gaufridus Autissiodorensis, *Super*

Interpreting Elihu's speech in chapter 33²⁶, Thomas returned to his threefold division of dreams, which differ by their respective causes. While the first group can be explained biologically, by heat ascending into the center of feeling, the second kind stems from the will. These two kinds of "natural" dreams, which occur frequently, differ from the third one which results from divine operation. Thomas specified the common Aristotelian opinion that the soul is particularly perceptive during dreams because it is not distracted by external impressions. Beyond this natural disposition, however, Thomas looked for further theological evidence, saying that God imparts a special perceptual power to the soul, preparing it to receive the divine message²⁷. The capability to receive divine revelations is not part of man's natural powers, but it is gratuitous. Not only the content of the revelation is by grace but also the ability to receive it depends on grace. Hence the specification that prophecy is a *gratia gratis data*.

However, in dreams God never teaches theoretical knowledge at which man can arrive by his own cognitive facilities with the help of philosophical principles and discursive thinking. Scripture rather shows that God uses dreams to give commands of concrete action or behaviour²⁸. Thus revelational dreams do not make humans more intelligent, but call them to decisions. In terms of cognitive theory a dream is perception, not

Apocalypsim, sermo 5, F. GASTALDELLI (ed.), Roma 1970 (Temi e Testi, 17), p. 100; cfr. T. RICKLIN, *Der Traum der Philosophie im 12. Jahrhundert: Traumtheorien zwischen Constantinus Africanus und Aristoteles*, Leiden 1998 (Mittelateinische Studien und Texte, 24), p. 25f.

²⁶ Jb 33:14-16: «(14) semel loquitur Deus et secundo idipsum non repetit (15) per somnium in visione nocturna quando sopor irruit super homines et dormiunt in lectulo (16) tunc aperit aures virorum et erudiens eos instruit disciplinam».

²⁷ «Tertio ponit operationem divinam circa dormientem, quae quidem attenditur primo quantum ad hoc quod, immobilitatis exterioribus sensibus per soporem et homine in lectulo quiescente, datur divinitus homini facultas quaedam percipiendi divinam instructionem eo quod eius anima circa exteriora non occupatur, und subdit *tunc aperit aures virorum*; et satis convenienter vim perceptivam divinae instructionis in somniis vocat *aures*, quia de huiusmodi instructione loquitur sicut de locutione quadam, eo quod non fit per inspectionem ipsarum rerum sed per signa quaedam sicut et locutio». Thomas de Aquino, *Expositio in Iob*, ed. cit. 176a...».

²⁸ «...et sumitur hic disciplina pro instructione eorum quae homini occurrunt agenda vel vitanda, non pro cognitione scientiarum speculativarum quae non consueverunt in somnio revelari, unde subdit ut avertat hominem ab his quae fecit: frequenter enim homo in somniis corripitur de peccatis commissis». Ibid. 176b.

intelligence. Insight into the significance of dreams results from signs which have to be interpreted or understood. Thus a dream never explains reality, but may stimulate to further insight.

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