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Item Type	article;article
Authors	Cappozzo, Valerio
DOI	<a href="https://doi.org/10.7275/cmr5-9d72">https://doi.org/10.7275/cmr5-9d72</a>
Download date	2024-07-13 14:04:18
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/47985">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/47985</a>

*Translat Library*

2020 | vol. 2, no. 1

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*How to Cite this Article*

Valerio Cappozzo. “The Transmission of the *Somniale Danielis*, from Latin to Vernacular Italian (Laurenziano Martelli 12 and Riccardiano 859).” *Translat Library* 2, no. 1 (2020).



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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7275/cmr5-9d72>

ISSN: 2604-7438

The Transmission of the *Somniale Danielis*,  
from Latin to Vernacular Italian  
(Laurenziano Martelli 12 and Riccardiano 859)

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ABSTRACT: The *Somniale Danielis* is a dream manual widely circulated in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It is structured through dream symbols and their concise explanation. Medieval manuscripts of the *Somniale*—from the ninth century to the end of the fifteenth century—generally bear the same dreams, but show changes in the structure of their entries. The coherence of its symbology throughout several centuries allows for a linguistic analysis across these dream manuals that situates them in specific cultural contexts. This article focuses on two manuscripts, each containing a Latin and an Italian version of the *Somniale*, and aims to show how the Italian versions develop, and vary from, the Latin texts, as the vernacular versions simplify the language of their source text in order to create shorter entries.

KEYWORDS: *Somniale Danielis*; Dream Interpretation; Medieval Symbolism; Dreams; Daniel the Prophet; Dante Alighieri.

The *Somniale Danielis*, or *The Dream Book of Daniel the Prophet*, is a manual of dreams and their interpretation, the most popular of its kind in the Middle Ages. It consists of a list of dream symbols, arranged in alphabetical order and interpreted as portending something good or evil for the dreamer. The manual was usually structured so that key terms in the text corresponded to the subject of a dream, to which a

concise explanation was provided. The system established both quick and easy access to terms, symbols, and their meanings, and functioned as a convenient guide to dream interpretation. It serves us, too, as an important tool to understand medieval dream imaginary as well as literary visions, and to identify and describe traditional dream images. The structure of the *Somniale Danielis*, as it appears in its manuscript sources, originated in early fourth-century AD Greek manuscripts, and thrived in the Middle Ages, mainly in Latin, Arabic, and in the European vernaculars. Since the earliest Egyptian dream manuals, these books have not changed much; indeed, their structure, surprisingly, has remained the same, drawing a red thread of dream symbology through 3,200 years of history.<sup>1</sup>

The first translation from Greek into Latin of this kind of dream book occurred, most likely, in the seventh century, but the first known witness is dated to the ninth century: Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, MS C 664 (Grub 1984). Since that moment, and up to the mid-fifteenth century, these codices proliferated and were consistently copied. In my recent monograph, *Dizionario dei sogni nel Medioevo: Il Somniale Danielis in manoscritti letterari (The Medieval Dream Dictionary: The Somniale Danielis in Literary Manuscripts)*, I have reconstructed the *Somniale Danielis*'s manuscript transmission with a specific focus on the Italian vernacular tradition, which had thus far been overlooked. My monograph also presents a dictionary of medieval dream symbols based on the edition of a number of codices in Latin and in vernacular Italian. It compiles around 650 symbols and thousands of interpretations. It includes a critical apparatus with

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of dream interpretation from Egyptian dream manuals to the 2020 webpages, including a critical edition of Latin and Italian manuscripts and printed editions from the ninth century to 1550, see: Capozzo 2018. On the transmission of dream manuals in the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century, see: Chardonnens 2018: 23–52; DiTommaso 2005: 378–89; Bach 2007. On the manuscript tradition of the *Somniale Danielis* from its Byzantine origins, see: De Stoop 1909: 93–111; Thorndike 1923: 290–302; Guidorizzi 1977: 135–55; Guidorizzi 1980; Mavroudi 2002; Oberhelman 2008; Naether 2010. For the editions and collations of one or more *Somnialia*, see: Martin 1981; Fischer 1982; Grub 1984; Berriot 1989; Wittmer-Butsch 1990: 172–81; Epe 1995; Gejrot 1995: 173–202; Semeraro 2002; Chardonnens 2007; Birrer 2008–2009: 31–55; Liuzza 2011; Harrington 2015: 315–67.

manuscripts ranging from the ninth to the fifteenth century and the first printed editions of the *Somniale* from 1475 to 1550.

Indeed, dreams were common to every individual—rich or poor, learned or illiterate—and were seen as important keys to interpreting the future of people of all classes. The *Somniale Danielis* thus gathers some traditional beliefs, first transmitted orally, that transcend social classes and specific moments in time. We may notice a consistent use of the dream symbol across time and geographical areas, as well as similar interpretations. These manuals explain dreams with very realistic descriptions, in short and simple sentences. This is why dream books are so interesting: they allow us to look at the Middle Ages through the most common aspects of its everyday life. In order to enter medieval times through its dreams and analyze its imaginary, we do not have to visualize a fantastic world. Indeed, the dream book helps recreate a world made of ordinary objects, common actions, people and professions, drinks and food, shared across time and places (Appendix 1).

The selection of the manuscripts for *The Medieval Dream Dictionary* was based on how much those manuscripts were circulated and studied, eventually creating micro-traditions that stemmed from the one that was mainstream. Another important feature of the study has been the codicological description of the manuscripts, which allowed me to highlight the specific position of the *Somniale* in relation to other texts and helped me explain the copyist's choices. I have aimed to include all the textual variants in my edition in order to offer a systematic and comprehensive approach to the medieval dream manual. The geographical provenance of the manuscripts is another important aspect of the manuscripts. A study of their linguistic variations provides an understanding of the *Somniale Danielis*'s transmission from Northern to Southern Europe (Appendix 2).

The first known Italian version of the *Somniale Danielis* is preserved at the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence. MS Laurenziano Martelli 12 was written at the end of thirteenth and beginning of fourteenth century, on parchment, in Latin and Italian, and by six different hands (*littera textualis*, A, fol. 1r–9v; B, fol. 12r–25v; C, fol. 26r–31v, 35r–51v; D, fol. 31v; E, fol. 32r<sup>a</sup>; F, fol. 32v<sup>a</sup>–34r<sup>b</sup>). It was probably copied in Um-

bria, Città di Castello, and Tuscany. It measures 273mm x 192mm and contains III+51+II' leaves. It was copied in double columns, with a few blue and red colored capitals. The binding is in red leather and cherry wood with golden ornaments, and dates to the nineteenth century. On the spine we can read: "Miscellanea di prose e versi del MCCC e *Vita Nuova* di Dante. M.S." Around the second half of the sixteenth century, the codex belonged to first Piero di Simone Del Nero and then to Paolo Cini. In the early seventeenth century it belonged to Francesco Nori, bishop of San Miniato al Tedesco in Tuscany. Vincenzo Martelli finally bought the codex from Nori's sister around 1630. It was preserved in Martelli's house in Florence until 1958, when it was donated to the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. The contents of the codex are as follows:<sup>2</sup>

fol. 1r–9v: *Conti di antichi Cavalieri* (acephalous).

fol. 12r<sup>b</sup>–14r<sup>a</sup>: *Proverbia Salomonis*.

fol. 14r<sup>b</sup>–21r<sup>a</sup>: *Liber filosoforum*.

fol. 21r<sup>a</sup>–22r<sup>b</sup>: *Nomina lapidum and virtutum*.

fol. 22r<sup>b</sup>–25r<sup>b</sup>: *Somniale Danielis* in Latin titled *La exposition de' sogni*.

fol. 25r<sup>b</sup>–32r<sup>a</sup>: lyrics by Dante Alighieri, Guido Cavalcanti, and Caccia da Castello.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> On MS Laurenziano Martelli 12, see: Castellani 1998: 85–97; Rao 2001: 791–96; Alighieri 2002: 167–69; Storey 2003, 16–34; Bertelli 2004: 369–75; Bertelli 2011: 120–22; Cappozzo 2014a, 77–90; Cappozzo 2018, 66–100.

<sup>3</sup> The lyrics are: Dante's second to seventh lyrics of the *Vita nova*: fol. 25r, *O voi che per la via d'Amor passate; Piangete, amanti, poi che piange Amore*; ff. 25r<sup>a</sup>–25v, *Morte villana, di pietà nemica*; fol. 25v, *Cavalcando l'altr'ier per un cammino*; fol. 25v–25v<sup>b</sup>, *Ballata, i' vo' che tu ritrovi Amore*; fol. 25v<sup>b</sup>, *Tutti li miei penser parlan d'Amore*. The *distese* by Dante, four *petrose* and the first and the third *canzoni* of *Convivio*: fol. 26r<sup>a</sup>, *Così nel mio parlar voglio esser aspro*; fol. 26r–26v<sup>b</sup>, *Io son venuto al punto de la rota*; fol. 26v–27r, *Al poco giorno e al gran cerchio d'ombra*; fol. 27r–27r<sup>b</sup>, *Voi che 'ntendendo il terzo ciel movete*; fol. 27r–27v, *Amor, tu vedi ben che questa donna*; fol. 27v–28r, *Le dolci rime d'amor ch'i' solia*. Two *canzoni* and four *ballate* by Guido Cavalcanti: fol. 28r–28v, *Donna me prega*; fol. 28v–29r, *Io non pensava che lo cor giammai*; fol. 29r<sup>a</sup>, *Perch'i' no spero di tornar giammai*; fol. 29r–29v, *Era in pensier d'amor quand'i' trovai*; fol. 29v, *La forte e nova mia disaventura*; fol. 29v–29v<sup>b</sup>, *Vedete ch'i' son un che vo piangendo*. One *ballata* by Caccia da Castello, *Poi a natura humana*, fol. 29v–30r; three *canzoni* by Dante plus one of the *Vita Nova*: fol. 30r–30v, *Tre donne intorno al cor mi son venute*;

fol. 32v<sup>a</sup>–34r<sup>b</sup>: *Somniale Danielis* in vernacular Italian, untitled (Figure 1).  
fol. 35r–51v: *Vita Nova* by Dante Alighieri.

As one might expect, copies of the *Somniale Danielis* are mostly bound together with religious, astrological, and juridical works in miscellaneous manuscripts. They also appear in literary manuscripts. In the process of tracing the presence of the *Somniale* in miscellaneous literary manuscripts, I have identified and transcribed eight traditions of the work which were bound together with icons of early Italian literature in six distinct and unrecognized Latin and vernacular Italian versions. MS Laurenziano Martelli 12 has a particular importance within the research on the *Somniale Danielis* in Italy, because it combines the dream manual with Dante Alighieri's lyric poetry and *Vita Nova*. Interestingly, on the same folio of the last letter of the *Somniale*, the same copyist transcribed Dante's poetry with the same ink and pen (Figure 2).

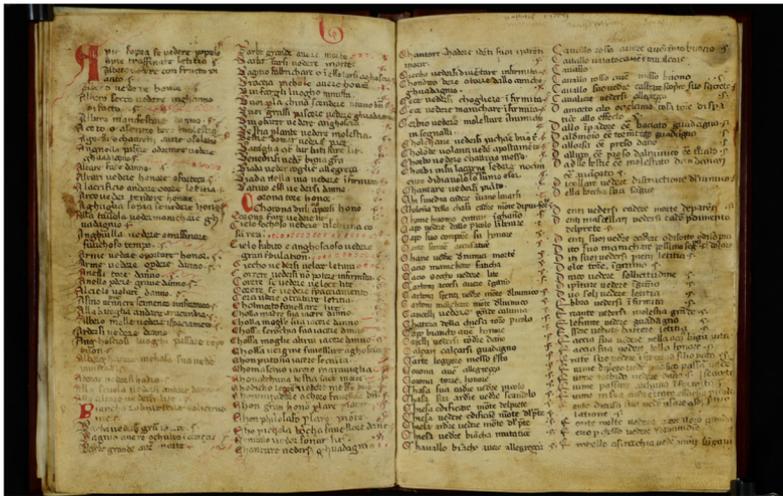


Fig. 1: Florence, The Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Martelli 12, fol. 32v–33r. Reproduced with permission of MiBACT. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

fol. 30v–31v, *Doglia mi reca ne lo core ardere*; fol. 31v<sup>a</sup>, *Io sento sì d'Amor la gran possanza*; fol. 32r, *La dispietata mente che pur mira*.



Fig. 2: Florence, The Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Martelli 12, fol. 25r. Reproduced with permission of MiBACT. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

et alibi f 12

Incipiunt somnia danielis p[ro]p[ter]

<p>                 Aquila sig. se volare honore sig                  Arare qui se vident Ingenium sig                  Astra celi videre magna lenitas sig                  Atrium sig sedere labore ut iustitiam sig                  Atrium q[ui] se vident exprobrat sig                  Atrium portare ut iustitiam desiderium sig                  Atrium tendere honore ut fortunam sig                  Atrium tractare fragora ut astra sig                  Atrium portare securitate sig                  Atrium ut signa miris lucra ee sig                  Atrium cerni comedere dapnum sig                  Atrium strentu videre lucra sig                  Atrium capere lucra sig                  Atrium se ip[s]o cu[m] rostro mordere dapnum sig                  Atrium videre et cu[m] eis pugnare lite sig                  Atrium h[ab]ere iudicia sig                  Anulus accipere gaudium sig                  Anulus p[ro]bere dapnum sig                  Adorare deum gaudium sig                  Atrium p[ro]bere egrotationem sig                  Atrium p[ro]bere laboris sig                  Atrium audire sig dapnum                  Admirari videre sig bonum cum                  sigt amplius de x. f. 13             </p>	<p>                 Capud lauari et cu[m] metu gerulo liberari sig                  Capud albu[m] videre lucra sig                  Capillos tondeos videre clementia sig                  Capillos accipere tolli dapnum sig                  Capud tonfari sicut lucra sig                  Candela parvas videre aliquid sumi sig                  Campana pulsare et ea audire lite sig                  Cantare i[n] s[er]m[on]ib[us] iracundia sig                  Caros latentes audire cu[m] minio sig                  Caros h[ab]ere sig                  Caros recentes manducare videre                  Atrium sig                  Caros streas comedere latationem sig                  Caros videre securitate sig                  Caros legere inimicitia h[ab]ere sig                  Calculamenta noua h[ab]ere lucra sig                  Calculamenta vetera h[ab]ere iram sig                  Camide vestri securitate sig                  Caros sua vclimari inimicos h[ab]ere sig                  Caros asptas comedere ira sig                  Casta eccentia videre ut comedere                  lucra sig                  Casta streu[m] videre nullu[m] bonu[m] sig                  Casta aculei videre magna honoris sig                  Celi radiu[m] videre lite graue sig                  Celi videre p[ro]p[ter] terraz expectationes sig                  Celi flammis videre impati sig                  Ceam tentare mortuos sig                  Cercos ardentes videre letitia sig                  Colubu[m] videre gaudium sig                  Codices videre ut leges bonu[m] sig                  Corona[m] videre honore sig                  Coronatu[m] se videre magna honore sig                  Coros angelozu[m] videre caritates h[ab]ere sig                  Corpus h[ab]ere valida bonu[m] sig                  Cu[m] gaudere p[ro]bere letam sig                  Cu[m] marito misser honore sig                  Celi ascendere honore sig                  Cafa[m] eccentia comedere magna bonu[m] sig                  Corona accipere ut h[ab]ere gaudium sig                  Cera ut cercos videre gaudium sig                  Cu[m] monu[m] leg bonu[m] p[ro]p[ter] sig                  Cantare no[n] posse iustitiam sig                  Cercos plures videre dapnum sig             </p>
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Fig. 3: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 859, fol. 52r, courtesy of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

Somnialis dormitior apphe que fent Tabulonia T diebus Nabubodanas  
 Combato li vechi se alcuno signa sea  
 1 Prendere li aucti .s. Guadagno  
 1 1 Veder li aucti .s. dano  
 1 1 Vendereli aucti .s. neuc  
 1 1 Veder auro sig Tuidia  
 1 1 Veder regento .s. Guadagno  
 1 1 Prendere ando .s. Securita  
 1 1 Vueri amelo .s. consplano  
 1 1 Vedar armo .s. dapno  
 1 1 Veder arboreu frui .s. Guadagno  
 1 1 Contrare arbore .s. Bon mollaro  
 1 1 Vedar lo aere chiaro .s. expedire  
 1 1 Vedar lo aere turbido .s. pperio  
 1 1 Estre ossegato dale bestie .s. seza ligato dal nemio  
 1 1 Secure areto .s. acceto .s. infirmia  
 1 1 Sacticare .s. suffica lenca  
 1 1 Vstire pianeda o delmantha .s. lenca  
 1 1 Veder arare .s. fanga  
 1 1 Vgnare la carne arrosta .s. dano  
 2 1 Vdar barba .s. sea pubblico  
 2 1 Vuer la barba longa .s. forza  
 2 1 Vdar la barba .s. dano  
 2 1 Vder la soa barba megner .s. dardero  
 2 1 Lavare nel bagno .s. ifera  
 2 1 Vder .s. ifera  
 6 1 Congere la spada .s. honore  
 6 1 Vuer la braga pazole .s. desolano  
 6 1 Vstire la brache .s. infirmia  
 6 1 Vuer grande braca .s. honora  
 6 1 Dormare la belua .s. colofra seaur  
 6 1 Vstire .s. dardero  
 6 1 Vder li boui passare .s. allegria  
 6 1 Vder li boui arare .s. allegria  
 7 1 Prendere corona .s. honore  
 8 1 Vder lo coruo .s. supadimero  
 13 1 Pacla a li maior .s. Expeditione  
 13 1 Vder el capelo .s. pirolo  
 13 1 Vuer lo capo biancho .s. Guadagno  
 13 1 Vder se lo capo a li capeli .s. forza  
 13 1 Lo capo tendere .s. ingano

Fig. 4: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 859, fol. 59r, courtesy of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism. Further reproduction by any means is prohibited.

This textual fact underlines not only the contemporaneity of the two literary genres and their spontaneous association, but also the potential of the popular *Somniale* as a key to the interpretation of literary works.<sup>4</sup> It is, in fact, very noteworthy that in its most complete manuscript versions, the *Somniale Danielis* is bound primarily with Dante's lyric poetry, his *Vita nova*, the lyrics of Guido Cavalcanti, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Petrarch's sonnets, Cecco D'Ascoli's *L'Acerba* etc.<sup>5</sup> The reason for the integration

<sup>4</sup> At the end of the *Somniale*, "Zonam percingere se videre perfectionem significat," the copyist transcribed the second, the third, and the fourth sonnets of the *Vita Nova*: 25r<sup>b</sup>, *O voi che per la via d'Amor passate; Piangete, amanti, poi che piange Amore*; fol. 25r<sup>b</sup>–25v<sup>a</sup>, *Morte villana, di pietà nemica*. Among the *Vita Nova*'s poems, the first one, which speaks about Dante's dream, *A ciascun'alma presa e gentil core*, is missing in this selection. This sonnet inaugurated the theme of dream in Italian literature, and its absence is clearly important in this context. As it is widely known, this poem belongs to the literary genre of the *tenzone* and it is not a regular sonnet. Most likely, the copyist or the patron of Laurenziano Martelli 12 would have known this fact and consciously omitted the sonnet for the sake of coherence within the genre.

<sup>5</sup> The other Italian MSS on which I based my edition are: (1) Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Tempi 2: written in Latin and in Italian on paper, written mainly by Antonio Pucci in Florence and dated 1362 (II+169+II' leaves). It is an encyclopedic anthology of different literary, religious, and historical texts, such as: Marco Polo's *Il Milione*, Andrea Cappellano's *De Amore*, Brunetto Latini's *Trésor*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Cecco d'Ascoli's *Acerba*, *Libro di Sidrach*, *Fioretto della Bibbia*, Guido da Pisa's *Fiore d'Italia*, Giovanni Villani's *Cronica*, etc. On this MS and its copyist, see: Pucci 1957; Varvaro 1957a: 49–87; Varvaro 1957b: 148–75, 362–88; Robins 2000: 29–70; Bendinelli Predelli 2006; Cappozzo 2018: 101–11. (2) Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Rossiano 947: written in Italian on paper by Domenico Caronelli in Conegliano Veneto, north Italy, dated 1395 (XII+137+V' leaves). It contains one of the earliest witnesses of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, (fol. 13r–146v), Caronelli's *Epistola de una egregia, nobile e famoxa dona, mandada ad un so dolce amante D. di Karonelli* (fol. 147r–148r), and the *Somniale* in Italian (fol. 148r). On this MS and its copyist, see: Branca 1991: 129–32; Branca 1998: 35–43; Cursi 2006: 77–125; Cursi 2007: 53–56; Cappozzo 2014b: 163–78; Ferracin 2016: 3–170; Cappozzo 2018: 121–22. (3) Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashburnham 1724: written in Latin and Italian on paper, in Naples, dated 1455 (I+119+II'). It contains Cecco d'Ascoli's *Acerba*, one sonnet by Antonio da Ferrara to Francesco Petrarca and Petrarca's reply, the *Lamento di Bernabò Visconti*, the *Somniale Danielis* in Latin and seven couplets in Latin. On this MS, see: Martin 1981: 21–23; Limongelli 2008: 103–17; Cappozzo 2018, 126–27. (4) Florence,

of the popular-scientific genre of the *Somniale Danielis* in these authors' work can perhaps be explained by the fact that they valued, more than other writers, the oneirocritic tradition from Artemidorus Daldianus (second century CE) to the mystical theories of the thirteenth century.

The MS Riccardiano 859 offers a summary of this oneirocritic tradition and is the second manuscript to contain both a Latin and an Italian version of the *Somniale*. It will be used below in the analysis of the transmission of the work in both languages (Figures 3 and 4).

Noticeably, this mid-fifteenth century manuscript preserved in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence is entirely dedicated to dream interpretation. It contains three *Somnialia*: two in Latin (the second is a fragment of only four entries) and one in vernacular Italian. In both manuscripts, Laurenziano Martelli 12 and Riccardiano 859, the Italian version is a partial translation of the Latin text, and can be considered an evolution in which new entries were added while others were deleted.

Riccardiano 859 was written in Latin and Italian on paper, c. 1460, in northern Italy, in Lombardy and Veneto (II+62). The modern binding is made of cardboard with a dust cover. It contains the following works:<sup>6</sup>

fol. 1v: Alberto Magno, *De fato*, art. I, arg. 8.

fol. 2r–51v: the *Oniricriticon of Achmet* translated into Latin by Leo Tuscius in 1176.

fol. 52r–54r: *Somniale Danielis* in Latin.

fol. 54v–55v: Ali ibn Abīr-Rijāl, *De iudiciis astrorum*, III, 12-13; Catherine of Siena, *Legenda Minor*, ch. IX.

Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1258: written in Italian on paper at the end of fifteenth century, c. 1495, in Florence, Tuscany (III+136+II' leaves). It contains many literary, religious, prognostic texts and prophecies, such as: Domenico Cavalca's *Trattato della pazienza, Dcretionone de' dieci Comandamenti, Li sette Salmi penitentiali, Prophezie di Daniel propheta e di Sancto Giovanni Evangelista nello Apochalipse, et di Sancta Brigida e d'altri antichi propheti*, an Italian *Somniale Danielis*, and a *Lunario*. The florentine printed edition is based on the Italian version of the *Somniale Danielis* (Lorenzo Morgiani and Johannes Petri, c. 1496) owned by Leonardo da Vinci and used to interpret his dreams (Cappozzo 2018:1–6). On this MS, see: Morpurgo 1881: 320–24; Cappozzo 2018: 168–73.

<sup>6</sup> On MS Riccardiano 859, see: Martin 1981: 29–30; Cappozzo 2018: 144–67.

fol. 56r: Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, IV, ch. L.

fol. 56r–v: biblical passages on dreams: *Genesis* 28:12; 37:6–7, 9; 40:9–10, 16–17; 41:1–7; *Judges* 7:13–14; *Daniel* 2:28–29, 31; 4:1–2, 7–9; *Amos* 3:7; *Numbers* 12:6; *Jacob* 33:15, 16–17.

fol. 57r: Michael Scot, *Liber physionomie*, II, ch. XLV.

fol. 57v–58r: dream interpretation using *Psalms*; mantic alphabets; Roger Bacon, *Opus Maius*, *Causae erroris*, I, IV; tricks for dream interpretation using astronomy and alchemy.

fol. 58v: Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae ad fratrem Regynaldum*, I, CLXII; dream interpretation according to the influence of planets.

fol. 59r–60v: *Somniale Danielis* in vernacular Italian.

fol. 61v: *Somniale Danielis* in Latin, *Sopnia extrata per alfabeti* (fragment of four dreams).

fol. 61v–62: blank.

In both manuscripts, the most relevant differences between the Latin and the Italian versions of the *Somniale Danielis* are of three kinds: a) grammatical: vernacular Italian tends to reduce the length and complexity of the entries; b) changes in the interpretations; c) insertion of new entries not present in the Latin *Somnialia*.

The analysis of two similar versions of the *Somniale* in a same codex, in which the Italian version changes and expands the Latin work, illustrates the simplification of the language in the vernacular version and the creation of shorter entries (Appendix 3): “*Altare edificare sacerdotis exitum significat*” (“To build an altar means the death of a priest”), becomes in Italian something more generic and concise: “*Altare fare danno significa*” (“To build an altar means damage”). We can also notice the simplification of some symbols, from “*Barbam sibi tondere vel radere videre dampnum significat*” (“To shave or trim your beard means damage”) to “*Barba farsi vedere morte significa*” (“To see yourself shaving means death”). In this last Latin example, the term ‘damnum’ means ‘damage’ as well as ‘loss,’ while the Italian translates it with a more generic ‘death.’ A similar process can be seen in this other example, now involving variation both in the symbol and the interpretation: “*Cum mortuo loqui vel aliquid ab eo accipere bonum significat*” (“To talk with a dead person or to get something from him/her means something good”); “*Chol morto*

favellare lite significa” (“To talk with a dead person means an argument”).

Vernacular Italian translations of the *Somnialia* aimed to provide a simpler and more practical access to the manual, and are thus telling of its changing audience. The complexity of the Latin versions may imply a more straightforward and literal interpretation of dreams, linked to an ecclesiastical use of the book, whereas the vernacular texts would have been aiming at a larger, secularized, audience. This transformation, both linguistic and practical, may be illuminating of a growing need for individuals to come to terms with their own dreams through personal interpretation. This, in turn, may help understand why early Italian poets wrote about dreams in their poetry, as, indeed, both dreams and verses require interpretation.

## Appendices

### *Appendix I*

*Most common dream symbols and interpretations*

#### ANIMALS

Ant	Bear	Bee	Birds
Bull	Camel	Crane	Crow
Deer	Dog	Dolphin	Donkey
Dove	Dragons	Eagle	Eel
Elephant	Ermine	Firefly	Fish
Flea	Fly	Fox	Goat
Goose	Hare	Hen	Horse
Kite	Lamb	Lion	Lizard
Mouse	Mule	Octopus	Owl
Ox	Oyster	Pheasant	Pig
Ram	Rooster	Sheep	Snake
Sparrow	Toad	Wolf	

#### OBJECTS

Ball	Bell	Belt	Bowl
Bridge	Cable	Candelabra	Candle
Chair	Chalice	Charcoal	Clock
Codex	Coins	Column	Crown
Gate	Glass	Gravestone	Helmet
Iron	Keys	Knife	Lamp
Nail	Needle	Organ	Oven
Paper	Pitcher	Pitchfork	Plow
Pot	Ring	Shoes	Sickle
Sink	Stick	Table	Wax
Wheels			

FOOD AND DRINKS

Apple	Beans	Brad	Cheese
Chickpeas	Citrus	Eggs	Fava bean
Figs	Flour	Fodder	Grapes
Honey	Lard	Leek	Meat
Milk	Olive oil	Onion	Pasta
Pear	Pepper	Pickle	Polenta
Pomegranate	Pumpkin	Roots	Salami
Salt	Sugar	Sweets	Vinegar
Walnut	Water	Wheat	Wine

PEOPLE AND PROFESSIONS

Abbot	Ancestor	Barber	Brother
Castrato	Child	Companion	Cook
Criminal	Custodian	Dead	Doctor
Egyptian	Emperor	Enemy	Eunuch
Exile	Father	Fencer	Fighter
Fortune-teller	Friend	Gambler	Gladiator
Guard	Guest	Hermit	Husband
Innkeeper	Judge	Killer	King
Knights	Man	Master	Monk
Mother	People	Philosopher	Prisoner
Prostitute	Queen	Rude person	Sailor
Seducer	Sick person	Singer	Sister
Soldier	Thief	Virgin	Weaver
Wife			

ACTIONS

To argue	To arm	To avoid	To bandage
To be born	To be thirsty	To behead	To betray
To bless	To blush	To breastfeed	To build
To burn	To bury	To climb	To command
To commit suicide	To crown	To crucify	To cry

*The Transmission of the Somniale Danielis*

To dance	To deflower	To descend	To deteriorate
To die	To dress	To drink	To earn
To eat	To escape	To exalt	To fall
To fight	To fish	To fly	To fornicate
To fowl	To free	To get drunk	To get sick
To go	To go out	To graze	To grow
To guard	To harvest	To hear	To hit
To hoe	To hunt	To infest	To invoke
To judge	To jump	To kill	To kiss
To laugh	To lie	To lose	To make
To marry	To migrate	To mow	To note
To obey	To observe	To offer	To paint
To play	To plow	To praise	To pray
To provoke	To read	To reap	To rejoice
To ring	To rise	To row	To run
To rush	To sacrifice	To sail	To see
To seed	To shave	To shout	To sing
To sit	To sleep	To stone	To study
To swim	To talk	To tame	To tie
To undress	To venerate	To violate	To vomit
To walk	To wander	To wash	To weave
To wet	To win	To work	To wound

*Most common interpretations of dream symbols*

POSITIVE

Advantage	Cheerfulness	Consolation	Excitement
Friendship	Good	Good business	Good event
Good times	Happiness	Honor	Joy
Life	Peace	Profit	Prosperity
Release	Safety	Security	Strength
Thoughtfulness	To be aware of the enemy	To be freed	To be in grace

## NEGATIVE

Accusation	Anger	Anguish	Anxiety
Argument	Damage	Danger	Death
Deception	Decline	Detriment	Discord
Distress	Envy	Fight	Harshness
Ignorance	Illness	Infirmity	Injustice
Obstacle	Struggle	Trouble	Vanity

*Appendix 2*

*Selected manuscripts and printed editions of the Somniale Danielis*

LATIN VERSIONS OF THE *SOMNIALE DANIELIS* (ed. = edition)

- 9<sup>th</sup> century                      Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, MS C 664, fragment D–Z, fol. 101r–111r, 312 dreams (Grub ed. 1984; Epe 1995).
- 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century              Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 271, fol. 76v–77v, 158 dreams (Förster 1911; Martin ed. 1981; Fischer 1982; Grub 1984).
- Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. Lat. 235, fragment A–F, fol. 39v–40r, 54 dreams (Martin 1981; Grub 1984).
- Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. lat. 567, fol. 34r–37r, 114 dreams (Grub 1984; Epe 1995).
- Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS LXII, fragment A–O, fol. 220r–221v, 110 dreams.
- London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. III, fol. 27v–32v, 302 dreams (Förster 1911; Martin ed. 1981; Fischer 1982; Grub 1984; Epe ed. 1995; Chardonnens ed. 2007; Liuzza ed. 2011).
- London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus D. XXVI, fol. 11v–16r, 159 dreams (Martin 1981; Fischer 1982; Grub 1984; Epe 1995; Chardonnens ed. 2007).

- 12<sup>th</sup> century Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 103, fol. 75r–77v, 144 dreams (Förster 1911; Grub 1984).
- 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86, fol. 34v–40r, 514 dreams (Förster 1911; Martin 1981; Fischer 1982; Grub 1984; Epe 1995).
- Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS T. 81 Sup., fol. 147r–151v, 141 dreams (Martin 1981).
- Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS Vittorio Emanuele 1511, fol. 241v–244v, 359 dreams (Semeraro ed. 2002).
- London, British Library, MS Royal 12.C.xii, fol. 81v–86r, 275 dreams (Martin 1981; Harrington 2015).
- Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Martelli 12, fol. 22r–25r, 355 dreams.
- Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, MS Holmiensis D4, fol. 207v–211r, 364 dreams (Gejrot ed. 1995).
- 15<sup>th</sup> century Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Ashburnham 1724, fol. 110r–118v, 1455, 495 dreams.
- Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 859, fol. 52r–54r, 311 dreams.
- Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, MS alfa.w.8.20, fol. 25r–27r, 181 dreams.

*The Transmission of the Somniale Danielis*

Oxford, All Souls College, MS 81, fol. 232r–238v, 716 dreams (Martin ed. 1981; Grub 1984; Epe 1995).

PRINTED EDITIONS IN LATIN

- 1475 *Somnia Danielis*, Padua, Albrecht von Stendal.
- c. 1475 *Interpretationes seu somnia Danielis prophete revelata ab angelo missus a deo*, Rome, Bartholomaeus Guldinbeck.
- 1478-79 *Interpretationes seu somnia Danielis prophete*, Rome, Johann Bulle.

ITALIAN VERSIONS OF THE *SOMNIALE DANIELIS*

- 13<sup>th</sup> century Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Martelli 12, fol. 32v–34r, 272 dreams.
- 14<sup>th</sup> century Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Tempi 2, fol. 144v–149r, 1362, 226 dreams.
- Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Rossiano 947, fol. 148v, 1395, fragment A–C, 87 dreams.
- 15<sup>th</sup> century Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Plut. 89 sup. 35, fol. 10r–19r, Giovanni di Ghirigoro, 1468, 432 dreams.
- Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 859, fol. 59r–60v, 191 dreams.
- Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1258, fol. 82v–88r, 446 dreams.

## PRINTED EDITIONS IN ITALIAN

- 1487 *De alcuni insonii de Daniel et li insonii de Joseph*, Bologna, Bazalerius de Bazaleriis e Angelus de Rugeriis.
- c. 1496 *E' sogni di Daniel profeta*, Florence, Lorenzo Morgiani and Johannes Petri.
- 1504 *Questi son gli insonii che quando l'homo se insonia de vedere la sua revolutione*, Milan, Ioannes Angelus Scinzenler.
- 1515-25 *Insonio de Daniel. Questo sie el modo de veder le significatione de Daniel propheta secondo li di dela Luna*, Rimini (reprinted c. 1550 in Venice by Giovanni Andrea Valvassori il Guadagnino).

Appendix 3

Below is a comparative table exemplifying the changes between the Latin and Italian versions of dream symbols in MSS Laurenziano Martelli 12 and Riccardiano 859. The table helps us visualize the development of the dream manual across centuries, and the tendency to simplification in the Italian version of each entry.

Laurenziano Martelli 12 Latin (13 <sup>th</sup> century) fol. 22r <sup>b</sup> –25r <sup>b</sup>	Laurenziano Martelli 12 Italian (14 <sup>th</sup> century) fol. 32v <sup>a</sup> –34r <sup>b</sup>	Riccardiano 859 Latin (14 <sup>th</sup> century) fol. 52r–54r	Riccardiano 859 Italian (14 <sup>th</sup> century) fol. 59r–60v
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**A**

Anulum accipere lucrum significat. <i>To receive a ring means profit.</i>	Anelli torre significa danno. <i>To receive rings means damage.</i>	Anulum accipere gaudium significat. <i>To receive a ring means joy.</i>	Prendere anello securità significa. <i>To take a ring means security.</i>
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Arma videre vel portare honorem significat. <i>To see or to carry weapons means honor.</i>	Arme vedere o portare honor significa. <i>To see or to carry weapons means honor.</i>	Arma portare securitatem significat. <i>To carry weapons means security.</i>	Vedere arme dapno significa. <i>To see weapons means damage.</i>
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**B**

Balneum fabricare vel in eo se lavare anxietatem significat. <i>To build a bath or to wash yourself in it means anxiety.</i>	Bagnio fabbricare o in esso lavarsi significa angohscia. <i>To build a bath or to wash yourself in it means anguish.</i>	Balneo facere tedium significat. <i>To have a bath means boredom.</i>	Lavare nel bagno significa tristitia. <i>To wash in the bath means sadness.</i>
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Barbam sibi videre  
magnam detrimentum  
significat.

*To see a big beard on  
yourself means damage.*

Barba grande avere  
significa morte.

*To have a big beard means  
death.*

Barbam magnam  
et prolixam habere  
lucrum significat.

*To have a big long  
beard means profit.*

Avere la barba longa  
significa forteza.

*To have a long beard  
means strength.*

## C

Cartas scribere  
accusationem significat.

*To write documents means  
accusation.*

Carte scribere significa  
accusatione.

*To write documents means  
accusation.*

Cartam scribere  
accusationem  
significat.

*To write a document  
means accusation.*

Leggere la carta  
negotio.

*To read a document  
means business.*

Cecum se videre fieri  
egritudinem significat.

*To see yourself becoming  
blind means illness.*

Ciecho vedersi  
diventare significa  
infirmità.

*To see yourself becoming  
blind means illness.*

Qui se viderit  
cecum seditionem  
significat.

*Who will see oneself  
blind means sedition.*

Vedere sé ceco  
significa cadere in  
peccado.

*To see yourself blind  
means to fall into sin.*

## D

Dentes sibi cadere  
alicuius parentis  
detestationem.

*Your teeth falling out  
means the hate of some  
relative.*

Denti vedersi cadere  
significa morte de'  
parenti.

*To see your teeth fall out  
means the death of your  
relatives.*

Dentes cadere  
morte aliquis  
significat.

*Falling out teeth means  
the death of someone.*

Cadere li denti de  
sopra significa morte  
d'altri.

*Falling out molar teeth  
means someone's death.*

[...]

[...]

Adorare Deum  
gaudium significat.

*To worship God means  
joy.*

Orare Deo significa  
alegreza.

*To pray to God means  
joy.*

E

Equum album se videre  
vel sedere negorium  
bonum significat.  
*To see or to seat on a white  
horse means good business.*

Cavallo bianco avere  
significa allegrezza.  
*To own a white horse means  
joy.*

Equum album videre  
et super sedere lu-  
crum significat.  
*To see a white horse  
and to seat on it means  
profit.*

Montare a cavallo  
bianco significa  
alegreza.  
*To straddle a white  
horse means joy.*

Equum rubeum se videre  
[e]ventum bonum  
significat.  
*To see a red horse means a  
good event.*

Cavallo rosso avere  
significa avvenimento  
buono.  
*To own a red horse means a  
good event.*

Equum russum vel  
flavum super sedere  
bonum significat.  
*To seat on a red or  
yellow horse means  
something good.*

Vedere cavalli rosati  
o flavi significa  
tristitia.  
*To see a red or yellow  
horse means sadness.*

F

Fatiam suam formosam  
videre actum novum et  
honorem significat.  
*To see that your face is  
beautiful means new deed  
and honor.*

Facia sua vedere bella  
significa honore.  
*To see that your face is  
beautiful means honor.*

Faciem suam videre  
formosam honorem  
significat.  
*To see that your face is  
beautiful means honor.*

Vederse la soa  
faza bella significa  
honore.  
*To see that your face is  
beautiful means honor.*

Flores accipere vel  
colligere inimicos cavere  
significat.  
*To receive or to pick flowers  
means being aware of the  
enemies.*

Fiori torre o cogliere  
significa il nimico  
guardarsi.  
*To receive or to pick flowers  
means being aware of the  
enemy.*

Flores in arboribus  
videre gaudium  
significat.  
*To see flowers in a tree  
means joy.*

Perdere fiori  
significa calopnia.  
*To lose flowers means  
calumny.*

G

Grandinem videre  
dampnum significat.  
*To see hail means damage.*

Gragnuola vedere  
significa danno.  
*To see hail means damage.*

Grandinem videre  
dampnum vel litem  
gravem.  
*To see hail means dam-  
age or a big argument.*

Vedere grandine o  
tempestate significa  
dapno.  
*To see hail or storms  
means damage.*

Gradus ascendere videre vel descendere letitiam significat. <i>To see someone climbing steps up or down means happiness.</i>	[...]	Gradum vel montem ascendere laborem significat. <i>To climb a step or a mountain means strain.</i>	Montare li gradi significa fatica. <i>To climb steps means strain.</i>
<b>H</b>			
Hortum habere letitiam significat. <i>To own a garden means happiness.</i>	Horto avere letitia sig- nifica. <i>To own a garden means happiness.</i>	Ortum videre gaudi- um significat. <i>To see a garden means joy.</i>	Fare orto significa alegreza. <i>To make a garden means joy.</i>
Hospitem in domo sua introire videre invidiam significat. <i>To see a guest entering your house means envy.</i>	Alberghatore in chasa sua vedere significa invidia. <i>To see an innkeeper in your house means envy.</i>	Hospites habere invidiam significat. <i>To have guests means envy.</i>	[...]
<b>I</b>			
Cum imperatore vel rege loqui dignitatem magnam significat. <i>To talk to the emperor or the king means great dignity.</i>	Chon imperadore o chon re favellare significa bene. <i>To talk to the emperor or the king means good.</i>	Cum imperatore habitare gadium significat. <i>To live with the emperor means joy.</i>	Parlare cum lo imperadore significa dignità. <i>To talk to the emperor means dignity.</i>
Incendia in quocumque loco videre tristitiam significat. <i>To see a fire in any place means sadness.</i>	Incendio in qualunque casa significa avrai vedu- to pericolo d'essa casa. <i>To see a fire in any house means you will see danger for that house.</i>	Incendium videre scandala vel pericula significat. <i>To see a fire means scandals or dangers.</i>	[...]

L

Lardum tractare  
aliquem parentum suum  
mortuum.  
*To handle lard means a  
dead relative.*

Lardo rimenare significa  
parente morto.  
*To handle lard means a  
dead relative.*

Lardum sepelire  
mortuum per an-  
num significat.  
*To bury lard means  
death in the course of  
the year.*

Tractare lo lardo  
significa superar la  
morte de altrui.  
*To handle lard means  
to overcome someone's  
death.*

Lunam sanguineam vid-  
ere dapnum significat.  
*To see a blood-red moon  
means damage.*

Luna sanguinosa vedere  
significa danno.  
*To see a blood-red moon  
means damage.*

Lunam sanguineam  
videre detrimentum  
significat.  
*To see a blood-red  
moon means damage.*

Vedere la luna  
sanguinea significa  
pericolo.  
*To see a blood-red  
moon means danger.*

M

Manus lavare molestiam  
significat.  
*To wash hands means  
trouble.*

Mani lavarsi significa  
molestia.  
*To wash your hands means  
trouble.*

Manus suas lavare  
molestiam significat.  
*To wash your hands  
means trouble.*

Lavare le mano  
significa purgasse dal  
pretado.  
*To wash your hands  
means to confess your-  
self to the priest.*

Mare turbulentum et  
sanguineum videre  
dampnum significat.  
*To see a rough and  
bloodred sea means dam-  
age.*

Mare torbido vedere  
significa danno.  
*To see a rough sea means  
damage.*

Mare commotum  
videre tumultum  
significat.  
*To see a rough sea  
means disorder.*

Vedere lo mare  
turbolado significa  
tristitia.  
*To see a rough sea  
means damage.*

N

Navem ascendere  
honorem autem  
nuntium bonum.  
*To board a ship means  
honor or good news.*

Nave salire significa  
honore.  
*To board a ship means  
honor.*

Naves videre  
nuncium bonum  
significat.  
*To see a ship means  
good news.*

Vedere navilio signi-  
fica buon messaggio.  
*To board a ship means  
good news.*

<p>Nudum se currere videre expeditionem videre. <i>To see yourself running naked means release.</i></p>	<p>Innudo vedersi correre significa spacciamento. <i>To see yourself running naked means release.</i></p>	<p>Nudum se perfectum videre letitiam significat. <i>To see yourself com- pletely naked means happiness.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>
<p><b>O</b></p>			
<p>Oleum in domo sua ha- bere letitiam significat. <i>To have oil in your house means happiness.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>	<p>Oleum super se fun- di lucrum significat. <i>Oil being poured above you means profit.</i></p>	<p>Prendere olio significa allegrezza. <i>To take oil means joy.</i></p>
<p>Organum cantare videre amicum cavere significat. <i>To hear an organ playing means being aware of a friend.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>	<p>Organa audire litem significat. <i>To hear organs means an argument.</i></p>	<p>Tractare o audire organi significa ira. <i>To handle or to hear organs means anger.</i></p>
<p><b>P</b></p>			
<p>Panem candidum habere vel videre letitiam significat. <i>To have or to see white bread means joy.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>	<p>Panem album manducare lucrum significat. <i>To eat white bread means profit.</i></p>	<p>Magnare pane biancho significa guadagno. <i>To eat white bread means profit.</i></p>
<p>Pilosum se videre detrimentum significat. <i>To see that you are hairy means damage.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>	<p>Pilosum se factum videre incrementum significat. <i>To see that you are- hairy means increase.</i></p>	<p>Vedere piloso significa forteza. <i>To see that you are hairy means strength.</i></p>

**Q**

Quadrigas videre  
anxietatem significat.

*To see a horse chariot  
means anxiety.*

[...]

[...]

Cadere o scendere  
de la quadriga carro  
significa honore.

*To step or to climb  
down from a horse  
chariot means honor.*

[...]

[...]

[...]

Odire parlare i  
quadrupedi significa  
fuga de' nemici.

*To hear quadrupeds  
speak means enemies  
running away.*

**R**

Ridere aut gaudere  
se videre tristitiam  
significat.

*To see yourself laughing or  
rejoicing means sadness.*

[...]

Ridere in sompnis  
tristitiam significat.

*To laugh in a dream  
means sadness.*

[...]

Ripa ascendere  
infirmiorem significat.

*To go up a river bank  
means illness.*

Ripa salire significa  
infirmiorem.

*To go up a river bank  
means illness.*

Ripam descendere  
bonum tempus  
significat.

*To go down a river  
bank means good times.*

Scendere la ripa  
significa bon seguito.

*To go down a river  
bank means good con-  
tinuation.*

**S**

Sanguinem videre invi-  
diam significat.

*To see blood means envy.*

Sanguine vedere significa  
invidia.

*To see blood means envy.*

Sanguinem si videris  
de celo descendere  
dapnum significat.

*If you see blood fall-  
ing from the sky that  
means damage.*

Cadere sanguine de  
corpo significa  
dapno.

*Blood dripping from  
the body means dam-  
age.*

<p>Serpentes videre occidere inimicum cavere significat. <i>To see someone killing snakes means being aware of the enemy.</i></p>	<p>Serpenti vedere significa il nemico nuocere. <i>To see snakes means dam- aging the enemy.</i></p>	<p>Serpentes occidere inimicos superare significat. <i>To kill snakes means to overcome your enemies.</i></p>	<p>Incalsare lo serpente significa spartire o sperzare lo nemico. <i>To chase a snake means to split or to hit the enemy.</i></p>
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**T**

<p>In tabulam te pingere longam vitam significat. <i>To paint yourself on a board means a long life.</i></p>	<p>In tavola dipingere significa lunga vita. <i>To paint on a board means a long life.</i></p>	<p>Tabulam se pingere longam vitam significat. <i>To paint yourself on a board means a long life.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>
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<p>A tempestatibus se cedere vel videre honorem significat. <i>To remove yourself from a storm or to see it means honor.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>	<p>Tempestatem videre lucrum significat. <i>To see a storm means profit.</i></p>	<p>Vedere grandine o tempestate significa danno. <i>To see hail or storms means damage.</i></p>
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**U**

<p>Ungulas sibi videre magnas anxietatem significat. <i>To see your nails means great anxiety.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>	<p>Ungulas incidere molestiam et locum mutare significat. <i>To cut your nails means trouble and a change of place.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>
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<p>Uvam videre gaudium significat. <i>To see a grape means joy.</i></p>	<p>Uva vedere significa allegrezza. <i>To see a grape means joy.</i></p>	<p>Uvam claritatem videre incrementum significat. <i>To see a clear grape means increase.</i></p>	<p>[...]</p>
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**V**

Vestimenta sua perdere  
dampnum significat.

*To lose your clothes means  
damage.*

Vestimenti suoi perdere  
significa danno.

*To lose your clothes means  
damage.*

Vestimenta sua vide-  
re comburi dapnum  
significat.

*To see your clothes  
burning means damage.*

Vedere i suoi  
vestimenti bruciati  
significa inganno.

*To see your clothes  
burned means decep-  
tion.*

Vites plenas videre  
gaudium significat.

*To see a grapevine laden  
with grapes means joy.*

Vite vedere allegrezza  
significa.

*To see a grapevine means  
joy.*

Vites maturas videre  
letitiam seignificat.

*To see ripe grapevines  
means happiness.*

La vite cum la uva  
significa alegrezza.

*A grapevine with  
grapes means joy.*

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