

*Traumgesicht* (Dream face). Dürer records one of his nightmares. 30 x 42,5 cm, watercolour and ink on paper, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



**Text of the dream:** Im 1525 Jor nach dem pfinxstag zwischen dem Mitwoch und pfintztag in der nacht im schlaff hab ich dis gesicht gesehen wy fill großer wassern vom himmell fillen Und das erst traff das ertrich ungefer 4 meill fan mir mit einer solchen grausamkeit mit einem uber großem räuschn und zersprütz und ertrenckett das gannz lant In solchem erschrack ich so gar schwerlich das ich doran erwachett edan dy andern wasser filln Und dy wasser dy do filln dy waren fast gros und der fill ettliche weit etliche neher und sy kamen so hoch herab das sy im gedanken gleich langsam filln. aber do das erst wasser das das ertrich traff schir herbey kam do fill es mit einer solchen geschwindigkeit wynt und braüsen das ich also erschrack do ich erwacht das mir all mein leichnam zittret und lang nit recht zu mir selbs kam Aber do ich am morgn auff stund molet ich hy oben wy ichs gesehen hett. Got wende alle ding zu besten

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Traumgesicht\\_\(D%C3%BCrer\).jpg](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Traumgesicht_(D%C3%BCrer).jpg)

**Text of the dream:** In the year 1525 after day of whitsun / between wednesday and day of whitsun / at night during sleep I have seen this face (vision) where large waters fell from the sky. It met the soil about 4 miles away from me with such crudelity, with tremendous murmuring and splatter, drowning all the land. I was frightened by this so hard that I woke up while I could see other waters falling down. But I knew, the waters that fell there were so many. Some fell further, some closer. They came down from such a height that in my mind it seemed as if they were falling very slowly. But when the water hit the earth, it fell

with such speed, with wind and roar, that I was startled. When I awoke, my whole body trembled. For a long time I couldn't come to myself. But when I got up in the morning I painted it as I had seen it. Got to turn all things to best. // 8. Juni 1525

Dürer dreams this dream three weeks after the Battle of Frankenhausen, on May 15, 1525, the last and greatest battle of the Peasant Wars, in which the rebellious peasants were beaten and brutally executed.

You may remember how important the reference to the Peasant Wars was for us in the Principio Potosí Project. It was about primitive accumulation, about the simultaneity of land theft, impoverishment, expulsion and the revolts against it on both continents.

You may remember that the Caliban and the Witch book was very central for us.

Silvia Federici writes about the Peasant Wars: "The social struggles of the Middle Ages must also be remembered because they wrote a new chapter in the history of liberation. At their best, they called for an egalitarian social order based upon the sharing of wealth ... Instead of the heavenly kingdom, whose advent was prophesied in the preaching of the heretics and millenarian movements, what issued from the demise of feudalism were disease, war, famine, and death - the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, as represented in Albrecht Dürer's famous print - true harbringers of the new capitalist era."

She also writes about Dürer and the artists of his generation:

"During the Protestant Reformation some among the best 16th-century German artists abandoned their laboratories to join the peasants in struggle ... They drafted documents inspired by the principles of evangelic poverty, the common sharing of goods, and the redistribution of wealth. Sometimes ... they took banners in support of the cause. The endless list of those who, after the military defeat of May-June 1525, met the rigors of the penal code, mercilessly applied by the winners against the vanquished, includes famous names. Among them are Joerg Ratgreb quartered in Pforzheim (Stuttgart), [Philipp] Dietman beheaded, and [Tilman] Riemenschneider mutilated - both in Würzburg - [Matthias] Grünewald chased from the court of Magollza where he worked. Holbein the Young was so troubled by the events that he fled from Basel, a city that was torn apart by religious conflict."

And then we also read:

"Fears of floods were just as widespread as the fear of stellar catastrophes ... . In the years between 1519 and 1524 alone, 130 writings were printed about the imminent end of the world. In Dürer's circle of friends, the prediction of a Flood in 1525, which was made by Johannes Scheffler in 1499, was circulated. There was a dispute about the astrological calculations of Justus Schoffler and Jakob Pflaum from Ulm. Then again, a great conjunction of planets under the sign of Pisces announced threatening upheavals for the year 1524. Two years before, the "Prognosticatio und erklerung der großen wesserung" by Johann Carion was published..." and came across this great picture below.

But there are certainly much more ideas and images which are waking up in the mind, if you look at the image in the current situation.

**Practica vber die grossen vnd ma-  
nigfaltigen Coniunction der Planeten/die in  
jar M. D. XXXij. erscheinen/vñ vnge-  
zweiffelt vil wunderparlicher  
ding geperen werden.**

Auß Röm. Kay. May. Gnaden vnd freyhaiten/hüt sich meniglich/diese meine Pra-  
ctica in zwayen jaren nach zůtrucken bey verlietung. 4. Marck lörtigs Golts.

