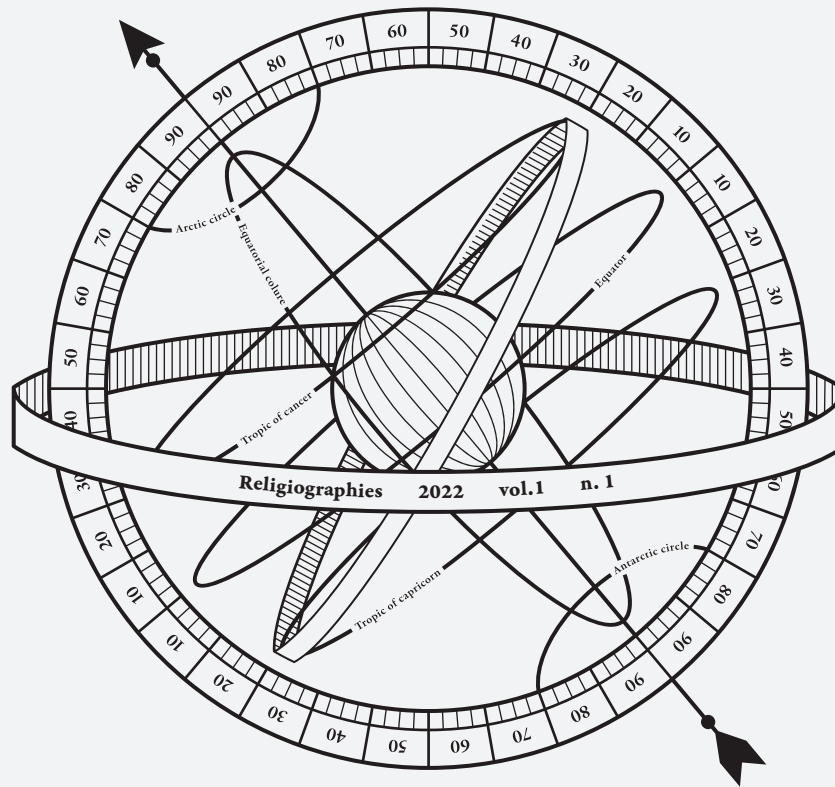


Religiographies



Special Issue

“Holy Sites in the Mediterranean, Sharing and Division”

edited by

Dionigi Albera, Sara Kuehn and Manoël Pénicaud

*The Seven Sleepers between
Christianity and Islam:
from Portraits to Talismans*
Thierry Zarcone



CENTRO STUDI
DI CIVILTÀ E SPIRITUALITÀ
COMPARATE

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Keywords:

Seven Sleepers, talisman, resurrection, Qitmīr/dog, circle, image-object, calligraphy, Solomon

To cite this:

Thierry Zarccone, 2022, "The Seven Sleepers between Christianity and Islam: from Portraits to Talismans," *Religiographies*, vol.1, n.1, pp. 48-62

Abstract

This article deals with the particular role played by the "Companions of the Cave" (*Ashāb al-Kahf*) in saint veneration, considering that they were among the first figures in Islam to be regarded as "friends of God" (*walī, awliyā*). Particularly interesting is the case of the dog Qitmīr who protects them and was regarded by some authors as a manifestation of some great figures, such as the Prophet Khidr, 'Alī ibn Abū Tālib, or Salmān. This study also explains why the portraits (drawings, paintings, miniatures) of these saints were so attractive, to the extent that they became protective objects or talismans. Though these talismans are geometrical figures (with a focus on circle and/or hexagon), and more precisely "geometric portraits," they take shape in a variety of ways, especially in the form of ships or trees, all being explained by the Qur'ānic story of the Companions or by the Muslim tradition about them. No wonder that Qitmīr is given a key position in this talismanic art.

1

François Jourdan, *La Tradition des sept dormants* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1983), 58-68.

2

Sidney Griffith, "Christian Lore and the Arabic Qur'ān. The 'Companions of the Cave' in *Sūrat al-Kahf* and in Syriac Christian Tradition," in Gabriel Said Reynolds, ed. *The Qur'ān in its Historical Context* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 122-124.

3

Manoël Pénicaud, "Réflexions sur la diffusion géographique des Sept Dormants," *Aurora*, annexe to the *Cahiers d'Orient et d'Occident* 4, part 6 (Spring 2008): 2-13 (<http://www.moncelon.fr/index.htm>; accessed June 2009).

According to some Christian hagiographies of the Seven Sleepers, of which the earliest version was written by the Syrian bishop Jacob of Sarug (ca. 451-521), seven young people living in Ephesus (on the Aegean coast of Anatolia) fell asleep and were walled up in the cave where they had hidden in order to escape the persecution of the pagan king Decius (third century). Then, at the time of the Christian emperor Theodosius II (fifth century), the Sleepers returned to life, in order to confirm the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body and the victory of monotheism over idolatry.¹ Christian in origin, this legend – through the Christian Jacobites of the Arabian peninsula – strongly inspired the Prophet of Islam and many Muslim writers. A sura of the Qur'ān (sura al-Kahf, 18:8-26) deals with this event, wherein the Sleepers are called the "Companions of the Cave" (*Ashāb al-Kahf*). However, the legend is reinterpreted in a way that goes against the very foundations of Christianity, that is, against the divine filiation of Christ and his messianic mission. The Qur'ān gives also a prominent role to a dog – named Qitmīr according to tradition – who accompanied the Companions and who stayed at the door of the cave to protect their sleep.² The miracle of the resurrection of the body within the monotheist faith shared by both Christians and Muslims is the central element of the narrative.

In the fifth century, a Christian shrine was built in front of a cave near Ephesus where the perfectly preserved bodies of seven young men were discovered. This shrine inspired the Muslims, who in turn built mausoleums near sacred caves on many sites in the Muslim world, all allegedly being the genuine cave of the Sleepers.³ One of the earliest sites in Andalusia (Loja, north of Malaga), in a remote place named "Los Siete Durmientes" (The Seven Sleepers), was abandoned by the Muslims when they left Spain. Nowadays, the most active sites, with sanctuaries open to

devotion and visits by pilgrimage groups, dedicated to the Seven Sleepers are situated in Asia: two in Turkey (Afşin, Tarsus) and the others in the Nakhichevan province of Azerbaijan, in Afghanistan and in the Xinjiang province of China. Many sites in Northern Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) and in the Middle East were frequented by both Christians and Muslims, and some in Morocco by Muslims and Jews. Some sites in Turkey (Afsin, Tarsus) have replaced old churches and were up to the beginning of the 20th century visited by both Christians and Muslims.⁴ This was also the case at a similar sanctuary in Amman, Jordan.⁵

Furthermore, for several reasons explained below, the legend of the Seven Sleepers has considerably inspired Christian and Muslim art, miniatures, icons, and the visual representation in general, not in the Mediterranean only but in places as far away as Africa, the Silk Road and the Malay Archipelago. It is still very influential upon the Muslim mind today.

The purpose of this article is to explain, on the one hand, why the portraits of the Seven Sleepers/Companions of the Cave were so attractive in Islam and praised by all, to the extent that they came to be represented upon talismans. On the other hand, I will analyse the close link existing between the pictorial representations of the Companions of the Cave and the talismanic art, in order to demonstrate that the high sanctity of the Companions and of their holy dog was transferred to these talismans, making such apotropaic objects and drawings the most efficacious amulets in the field of magical healing and protective art. This study aims also to emphasise the pictorial strategy adopted by the Muslim artists who have elaborated particular geometrical figures to represent the Companions (particularly in the talismanic art), and brought to birth an unexpected kind of portrait of these seven saints and of their dog, that I would like to label “geometric portrait.”

The reasons for the success of the narrative of the Seven Sleepers and its adoption by the Qur’ān are well known. The French orientalist Louis Massignon, in several seminal studies of this legend and the cult of the Seven Sleepers, has demonstrated that the sura of the Cave should be depicted as the “Sura of the Apocalypse,” and that its reading every Friday in mosques, as suggested in several hadiths, delays the coming of the last days and permits the hearers to avoid the trap set by the Antichrist.⁶ From this we must understand that the high virtue of protection of the sura, and consequently of the names of the Companions, has been universally recognised by Muslims. This is only one of the reasons, and there are some others.

The link of this legend with the cult of saints is especially noticeable, since the Companions of the Cave have occupied and still occupy nowadays a major place in saint veneration in the Muslim world. They were, for example, clearly and very early depicted as saints (*walī*, *awliyā*), that is, people doing miracles (*karāmat*), in the *Kash al-Mahjūb* of al-Hujwiri (11th century), the oldest Persian treatise on Sufism.⁷ The Companions are also the prototypes of the knights of the spiritual chivalry (*Futuwwa*),⁸ and the model of the “perfect man” (*insān-i kāmīl*) for the Gnostics and Sufis. Finally, due to the celebrity of the Companions, many pilgrimage sanctuaries with a cave, from Northern Africa to Chinese Turkestan, were dedicated to the Companions. In addition, we find images, miniatures and paintings representing their story, and also many amulets and talismans bearing their names.

4

Ahmet Eyicil, “Afşin Ashab-ı Kehf,” *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 14 (2005): 269-287.

5

Roger Lescot, “Un sanctuaire des Dormants en Jordanie,” *Revue des Études Islamiques* 1 (1968): 3-9.

6

Hadith mentioned by Ibn Mardwiyya, Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī, al-Nasā’ī, al-Baihaqī etc. The text related by Ibn Mardwiyya and attributed to Ibn ‘Umar is the following: “Whoever recites the sura al-Kahf on Friday will be blessed with a light that will rise from underneath his feet to the peak of the sky. This will be a light for him on the day of resurrection, and he will be forgiven for what is between the Friday and the next Friday.” On this hadith, see also Louis Massignon, “Les Sept Dormants, Apocalypse de l’Islam,” *Écrits Mémoires* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2009 [1950]), I, 321-33.

7

Al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (edited by Reynold A. Nicholson, London: Luzac and Company LTD, 1976), 230.

8

According to two treatises on the Futuwwa written in the 14th century; see Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, “İslam ve Türk illerinde Fütüvvet teşkilatı ve kaynakları,” [Organisation and Sources of the Futuwwa in Islam and in the Turkish regions] *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* XI (1949-50), 315 (1-354) and Ayhan Pala, “Türk kültür tarihinin bir kaynağı olarak Burgazi Fütüvvetnamesi,” *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* 44 (2007): 201-2 (183-238.) See also Ö. Sert, *Yedi Uyuurlar Efsanesi*, 75-8, 88-90 and Asadullāh Wāhid, “Tatbīq-i Awliyā’ullāh ba Ashāb-i Kahf dar mutūn-i ‘irfānī farsī,” [A comparison of the saints of God with the Companions of the Cave in Persian mystical texts] *Zabān va ādab-i farsī*, Tabriz, 53:220 (2010): 123-4 (119-7).

Both are in the 'Maqāmāt of Abū Muhammad al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī al-Harīrī', Ms n° 3929, f. 66v, and Ms 5847, f. 89 (the painter is Yahyā ibn Mahmūd ibn Yahyā ibn Abū'l-Hasan ibn Kuwarriha al-Wasīfī), Bibliothèque nationale de France, section of oriental manuscripts, Paris.

10

The miniatures and paintings analysed in this article come from the following manuscripts: "Rawdha al-Safā"; "Zubda al-tawārikh"; "Jāmi' al-Tawārikh" of Rashīd al-Dīn; a picture from a collection attributed to Siyāh Qalam (Museum of Topkapı, Istanbul); several exemplars of the "Qisas al-anbiyā" of Ishāq bin Ibrāhīm bin Mansūr bin Halīf al-Nishābūrī. They are reproduced in M. S. Dimand, "Persian and Indian miniature paintings," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 30:12 (December 1935): 248-50; Sarwat Okasha, *The Muslim Painter and the Divine* (London: Park Lane, 1981): 91-3; *The St. Petersburg Muraqqa'*. *Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures from the 16th Through the 18th Century and Specimens of Persian Calligraphy by 'Imād al-Hasanī* (Lugano-Milano: Leonardo Arte, 1996); Metin And, *Minyatürler Osmanlı-İslam Mitolojyası* [The Ottoman-Islamic Mythology in Miniatures] (Istanbul: Yapı kredi Y., 2007), 232-7.

11

Jalāl Sitārī, *Paḥūbish dar Qissa-yi Ashāb-i Kahf* [Research on the narrative of the Companions of the Cave] (Tehran: Nashr-i Markaz, 1931), 27.

12

Carl Gustav Mannerheim, *Across Asia from West to East in 1906-1908* (Helsinki: 1940, reprinted Oosterhout - The Netherlands: Anthropological Publications, 1969), 360-1.

13

Giovanni Canova, "Animals in Islamic paradise and hell," in *Proceedings of the Colloquium on Paradise and Hell in Islam, Keszthely, 7-14 July 2002*, eds Kinga Dévényi and Alexander Fodor (Budapest: The Arabist, 2008), 63 (55-81).

14

Shams al-Dīn Ahmad-e Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God (Manaqib al-'Arifin)*, trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 658. See also 112.

15

Ibid., 658-9.

How to represent the miracle of the Seven Sleepers

Muslim painters and miniaturists have particularly enjoyed the theme of the Ashāb al-Kahf, at least since the 13th and particularly after the 14th century in the Turco-Persian area. The artists were influenced by the 18th sura of the Qur'ān and by a long and rich tradition of hagiography and commentaries (*tafsīr*) on this sura. The principal episode of the Ashāb al-Kahf narrative, which has inspired many artists, is the miraculous sleep in the cave, where the Companions were nestling against each other, under the protection of the dog Qitmīr. This episode hints particularly, more than the rest of the story, at the main message of the legend, the miracle of the resurrection. There are two old images in Arabic manuscripts, dated 1250 and 1236-37, which show the seven youths sleeping all together; in the first image, the Sleepers are not located in a well-defined place, unlike the second illustration where they are situated in front of an edifice, a church, monastery, or palace.⁹ More interesting are some Turkish and Persian miniatures produced after the 14th century, since the youths are represented inside the cave, which is represented in the form of a circular figure or a great jar model.¹⁰ Perspective was unknown to the artists and the circle was the best way to suggest a cave.

The dog is a . . . saint

It is also especially noteworthy that the dog, generally called Qitmīr, who plays a prominent role in the legend, is far from absent in the iconographies. According to the Qur'ān, the dog of the Companions "stretched out its two forelegs on the threshold of the cave" (18:17), and so it is in the images. From other sources, it is believed that the dog, speaking like a human, offered to protect the Companions against their enemies.¹¹ This role gave Qitmīr a predominant role in the narrative and it was reflected in the architecture of some sanctuaries of the Companions. As a protector of the Companions and the keeper of the shrine, Qitmīr used to stand at the entrance of the cave. At the sanctuary of Tuyuq, in Xinjiang (China), as observed by a western traveller: "The entrance to the cave in which they [the Companions] lie is said to be guarded by a dog wrapped, as they are, in eternal sleep [. . .] You see the dog in the shape of an elevation in the floor covered with glazed tiles."¹² It is no wonder that Qitmīr is believed to be one of the few animals who have entered Paradise, although the behaviour of the prophet Muhammad towards dogs was reportedly not benevolent.¹³

Qitmīr is venerated in the Islamic world, and especially in the Gnostic and Sufi movements. We could mention the Mevlevī Ahmad-i Aflāqī, who writes in his biography of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī that the dog of a Sufi shaykh possessed "friendship with God" and that he was "the very same dog as the dog of the Companions of the Cave."¹⁴ In addition, Aflāqī writes that this dog performed the dance of the Mevlevī dervishes, "entering the circle of the companions and turning with the noble disciples," and that dogs may be "spiritual guides."¹⁵ It is worth noting here that "friendship with God" is no more than the usually accepted translation of the term for a Muslim saint, *walī* or *awliyā*. Hence, the dog is a saint. And in many cases, he was and is still more venerated than the Companions themselves. (This is what is shown by the talismanic art, as explained below.)

The veneration of Qitmīr is reflected in a poem written by a Uyghur who authored a booklet on the sanctuary of the Companions of the Cave at Tuyuq, oasis of Turfan, Xinjiang (China):

*You came here, one thousand years before, my Qitmīr,
 You are living in one hundred thousand hearts, my Qitmīr,
 Your name spread all over the world, my Qitmīr,
 I came here to venerate your track, my Qitmīr.*

Abdulqadir, 2006¹⁶

This is one of the reasons why many Sufis and dervishes have loved to be accompanied by a dog.¹⁷ This fact is illustrated by several miniatures and drawings of wandering Qalandar dervishes travelling with this animal – the animal is kept on the leash, which is very unusual in Islamic culture.¹⁸ Without any doubt, their dogs remind them of Qitmīr. This is confirmed, for instance, by the Central Asian Qalandar Bābā Rāhim Mashrab (17th century) who met a shepherd going without a spiritual guide and offered to reveal the names of spiritual guides to him if he agreed to hand over his dog. Then Mashrab enumerated the names of the Seven Companions of the Cave and told the dog to travel with him. In a poem, Mashrab said to the animal that they would go together everywhere, in desert, in cities, and that they will share pain and happiness, and will remain always faithful to God.¹⁹ In addition, according to a hagiography collected at the end of the 19th century in Chinese Turkistan, Qitmīr is depicted as a creature able to speak, like a human, and to have a religious life. Qitmīr is, for example, like the Seven Sleepers, in search of God.²⁰

From all this, we can understand that sainthood is not embodied by humans only, but by animals as well, and the portraits of saints are not only those of men. This is, I suggest, the way we can interpret the Muslim drawings and miniatures that show dogs in the company of holy men or dervishes. Actually, both can be regarded as saints, as the Companions of the Cave and their dog were.

This view is strengthened by the fact that Qitmīr was also identified with some prominent and saintly figures of the Qur’ān and the Islamic tradition. According to an Ismā’īlī writer at the beginning of the 19th century, the dog of the Companions is none other than the Imām ‘Alī, and even the Prophet Khidr himself: “the dog of the Companions of al-Kahf was an impersonation of ‘Alī ibn Abū Tālib; he [‘Alī] appeared to the seven youths who had fled from the emperor Decian, in the form of a dog (*ba-sura kalb*), in order to prove them and to try their faith. . . .”²¹ The Druze tradition argues that Qitmīr is an impersonation of Salmān who is, in their view, the same as Khidr.²² Meanwhile, the Companions are seen as the seven Ismā’īlī imams or as seven prophets (Moses, Jesus, Noah, etc.). The importance of Qitmīr is exaggerated in these Ismā’īlī and Druze trends, since to him is attributed a quasi-divine nature; prophets and saints can be then portrayed in the form of a dog.

However, in the Sunni tradition, Qitmīr is a dog with a saintly nature and not a saint or a prophet who transformed himself into an animal, as is the case in numerous hagiographies. A saint and a protector of the Companions, Qitmīr plays in a sense the leading role in the legend, and appeared hence worthy of more veneration than the Sleepers. The amulet-makers were fully aware of this particularity and they gave, as demonstrated below, a key position to this animal in their talismans. Moreover, in the Malay world, in Iran, in the Caucasus, and in the Hijaz, writing the name of Qitmīr on an envelope would ensure the safe arrival of a letter.²³

16

Abdulqadir, *Junggo Muslimanlirining Āshabul Kāhf ghari* [The cave of the Companions of the Cave among the Muslims of China] (n.p. [Tuyuq/Turfan], n.d.), 2.r.

17

See Alexandre Papas, “Dog of God, animality and wildness among dervishes,” in *Islamic Alternative. Non Mainstream Religions in Persianate Society*, Raei Shahrukh, ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2017), 131-132 (121-138). On dogs and Sufism see also Süleyman Uludağ, “Tasavvuf Kültüründe Köpek” [Dogs in the culture of Sufism], *Dergah* 101 (July 1998): 17-20.

18

See two miniatures from the end of the 16th century in the Musée du Louvre (Inv. MAO 1219 and Inv. 3619, G, b), published in *L’Étrange et le merveilleux en terre d’Islam* (Paris: Musée du Louvre - Réunion des musées nationaux, 2001), 240-2. Another miniature from the 18th century (British Museum) is published in Javad Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Women* (London: Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi Nurbakhsh, 1990), 234.

19

Qissai Mashrab (Tashkent: Yazuchi Nashriyati, 1992), 25. On Mashrab’s life and ideas see A. Papas, *Mystiques et vagabonds en islam. Portraits de trois soufis qalandar* (Paris: Cerf, 2010), chapter 1.

20

V.I. Roberovskii, *Puteshestvie v Vostochnyi Tyan’-Shan’ i v Nan’-Shan’. Trudy ekspeditsii russkogo geograficheskogo Obschestva po Tsentralnoi Azii v 1893-1895 gg.* [Travels in the Eastern Tian-Chan and in the Nan’-Shan’. Works of the Expedition of the Russian Geographical Society in Central Asia in the Years 1893-1895] (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel’stvo geograficheskoi Literatury, 1949), 395-6.

21

Edward E. Salisbury, “Notice of the Book of Sulaimān’s first ripe fruit, disclosing the mysteries of the Nusairian religion,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 8 (1866): 303 (227-308); L. Massignon, “Les ‘Sept Dormants,’ apocalypse de l’Islam,” 109-10.

22

L. Massignon, “Les ‘Sept Dormants,’ apocalypse de l’Islam,” 110.

23

Tewfik Canaan, “The decipherment of Arabic talismans,” in *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, ed. E. Savage-Smith (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Canaan, 2004), 146 (125-77); Annabel Gallop, “The amuletic cult of Ma’rūf al-Karkhi in the Malay world,” in *Writings and Writings from Another World and Another Area. Investigations in Islamic Text and Script in Honour of Dr Januarius Justus Witkam, professor of Codicology and Paleography of the Islamic World at Leyden University*, ed. Robert M. Kerr and Thomas Millo (Cambridge: Archetype, 2010), 176-7, 183-5, 191-2 (167-96).

Museum of Topkapı, Istanbul, Ms 2160, f. 83. I want to thank here Manoel Pénicaud for giving me some pictures preserved in the Louis Massignon Archives in Paris.

Emel Esin, “‘Eren,’ les derviches hétérodoxes turcs d’Asie centrale et le peintre surnommé ‘Siyāh’Kalam,’” *Turcica* 17 (1985), 37 (7-49).

See Jean-Paul Loubes and Thierry Zarcone, *Uyğur Islam. The Seven Sleepers in the Silk Road* (in preparation).

David Talbot Rice, *The Illustrations to the ‘Word History’ of Rashīd al-Dīn* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976), 87; Faruk Sümer, *Eshabü'l-Kehf. Yedi Uyurlar [Companions of the Cave. Seven Sleepers]* (Istanbul: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1989).

Topkapı Saray, Istanbul, Ms 2654, fo 32a.

The saints and the cave

One of the more fascinating circular representations of the cave, with its occupants depicted with Turco-Mongol faces (15th century), is attributed to the Central Asian painter Siyāh Qalam (or to a painter of this school deeply influenced by Chinese art and nomadic themes) (Fig. 1).²⁴ Emel Esin, an art historian, considers that the Sleepers, in this drawing, are dressed in Qalandar/dervish garments.²⁵ In my opinion, there is no evidence to support her assertion, although the Seven Companions have sometimes been associated with the “Seven Qalandars” in Eastern Turkistan. This is the case for instance at the sanctuary of the Ashāb al-Kahf at Tuyuq in the Turfan oasis (Xinjiang, China).²⁶ There is an earlier image of the Sleepers in the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārikh* of Rashīd al-Dīn (13th century), which shows the Companions in a Central Asian environment. About this picture, David Talbot Rice writes that the Seven Sleepers here “wear Mongol dress, with gold embroidered panels on their chests.” The king Dākryanūs (Decius), persecutor of the Companions, is present in this picture, mounted on a Mongol pony, and also the dog, which “lies sleeping in a more natural position.” The landscape is inspired by Chinese painting style.²⁷ There exists a very similar painting, from another manuscript of the *Jāmi‘ al-tawārikh*, that is more marked by the Chinese influence (Fig. 2).²⁸ In summary, the theme of the Companions of the Cave has obviously fascinated the Muslim painters as a consequence of the popularity of the legend. But the legend has also left its mark upon the writers who produced a great number of hagiographies with several variants and in several languages.



Fig. 1. Siyāh Qalam. Ms 2160, f. 83, Museum of Topkapı, Istanbul. L. Massignon Archives, BNF, Paris.



Fig. 2. *Jāmi‘ al-tawārikh*. Rashīd al-Dīn, Ms 2654, Topkapı Saray Library, Istanbul. L. Massignon Archives, Paris.

We would like now to point to two details in the story of the Companions of the Cave which have influenced the pictorial representations. The first one is the number of the Companions, which varied already in the Christian versions of the legend and is not established with precision in the Qur’ān:

“They will say, ‘Three, and their dog was the fourth of them’. They will say, ‘Five, and their dog was the sixth of them’, guessing at the Unseen. They will say, ‘Seven, and their dog was the eighth of them’. Say: ‘My Lord knows very well their number, and none knows them, except a few’ (Q. 18:21).”

And yet, the iconographies show either seven or five Companions.



Fig. 4. The five companions and their dog sitting in front of Jesus/Isā. *Tarjama-i miftāh jifr al-jāmi'*, in M. And, *Minyatürler Osmanlı-İslām Mitolojyası*, 234–5.

The second point is the colour of the dog, which is at the centre of a debate among the commentators on the sura. The divergences are reflected in the images and we have found pictures of dogs with different colours (brown, white, yellow). In some cases, the choice could have come from the symbolism attached to the colour. For instance, Mawlānā (Rūmī) wrote that the dog was yellow because “it was a lover, and the colour (complexion) of lovers is always yellow (pale) like my colour.”²⁹ Furthermore, in another image from Afghanistan in the 17th century, the representation of the “dog of the Companions of the Cave” (*sang-i Ashāb al-Kahf*) appears isolated and its colours are, surprisingly, three: red for the head, the back black and the belly white (Fig. 3).³⁰

We can mention another episode concerning the Companions of the Cave, which appeared in one hadith and inspired a painter. This hadith, transmitted by al-Abbās, says that the Companions will waken and leave their cave when Jesus and the Mahdī will come to Earth in the End Times and that they will help them fight the Antichrist or Dajjal.³¹ Surprisingly, one miniature, the lone example to my knowledge, refers to this event and shows five companions and their dog sitting in front of Jesus/Isā (Fig. 4).³²

Concerning the images of the youths stretched out in the cave, the most common of the representations of the Companions, the likelihood is that the model for these images, and particularly the circular model for the cave, comes from the Byzantine world, where the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus were widely present in the Christian art of the icons (Fig. 5, next page).

Such images existed at least since the ninth century and continued to occur frequently in miniatures, sculpture and stained glass in the 13th and 14th centuries. Particularly striking is the resemblance between the circular representations of the cave in the Christian and Muslim iconography. The only difference is the presence of one or several bowls and sticks in the Christian images (usually one for each of the Sleepers), and of a dog in the Muslim images (Fig. 6, next page).

Although the dog is very rare in the Christian hagiographies and



Fig. 3. *Majma' al-gharā'ib*. Muhammad al-Mufṭī, f. 64 v°, in *L'Étrange et le merveilleux en terre d'islam*, 57.

29

Shams al-Dīn Ahmad-e Aflākī, *The Feats of the Knowers of God*, 202.

30

Muhammad al-Mufṭī, *Majma' al-gharā'ib*, manuscript Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 17th century, ms 9, f. 64 v°. This document is published in *L'Étrange et le merveilleux en terre d'islam*, 57.

31

Samuela Pagani, *Il Rinnovamento mistico dell'islam. Un commento di 'Abd al-Gani al-Nābulusi a Ahmad Sirhindī* (Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale', 2003), 102 footnote 80.

32

Tarjama-i miftāh jifr al-jāmi', Istanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, Ms T. 6624; published by M. And, *Minyatürler Osmanlı-İslām Mitolojyası*, 234–5.



Fig. 6. *Zubdat al-tawarikh*. Ms 1973, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, İstanbul. In M. And, *Minyatürler Osmanlı-İslâm Mitolojyası*.

33

On this name see Gianroberto Scarcia, *Nelle terre dei (Sette) Dormienti. Sopralluoghi, appunti, spunti* (Perugia: Graphè.It Edizioni, 2018), 29-76.

34

See Isidore Lévy, “Le Chien des Sept Dormants,” in *Mélanges Bidez, Annuaire de l’Institut de philologie et d’histoire orientale* (1934), 579-584.

35

Özlem Sert, *Yedi Uyurlar Efsanesi* [The Legend of the Seven Sleepers] (Ankara: Phoenix, 2009), 97-8; Halil Virit, *Sufilerin Gözünde Ashab-i Kehf* [The Companions of the Cave as seen by the Sufis] (İstanbul: Buhara Yay., 2018), 119-22.

36

See footnote 8.

37

Serge de Laugier de Beaurecueil, “A l’Ecole des Sept Dormants. La Futuwwa chez ‘A. A. Ansārī de Herat (1006-1089),” in *En Hommage au Père Jacques Jomier*, ed. Marie-Thérèse Urvoy (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 49-60.



Fig. 5. Menologion of Basil II. Ms 11th century, Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome. L. Massignon Archives, Paris.

visual representations, not to say completely absent, it appears in one of the oldest narratives about the Seven Sleepers by Theodosius (mid-sixth century) and was named Viricanus (man-dog).³³ There is a great likelihood that it was under Indian influences that the dog was introduced into the story of the Companions of the Cave. There is a similar story in the *Mahabharata* about several members of the Pandava royal family who renounced the world and went to remote areas, accompanied by a dog, in search of the Absolute. It is revealed later that the dog was actually the god Dharma or Yama. This story probably reached the Mediterranean through Sassanid Iran.³⁴

There are also mystical interpretations of the sleep of the Companions in the cave. One interpretation reflects a Sufi idea cultivated in the brotherhoods milieu, according to which the world is divided between the inner, secret (*bāṭin*), that is symbolised by the cave, and the outer, the apparent (*ẓāhir*), which is the material world. While sleeping in the material world, the Companions are actually awakened to the spiritual world.³⁵ In addition, the Companions play an essential role in the spiritual chivalry, the *Futuwwa*, since they represent the spiritual model for the valorous young men (*fityān*, *javanmard*) who resisted the persecutions of the pagan king Decius, and then endeavoured to “sleep” and close their eyes to the world of ignorance and illusion.³⁶ As mentioned by the Sufi ‘Abdallāh Ansārī, in the 11th century, the Companions are the embodiment of the generosity (*muruwva*) of the heart, showing indulgence to everybody and seeking God without getting lost.³⁷

When the image becomes a talisman

The iconography of the Companions is an attempt to express artistically one aspect of sainthood which is without doubt one of the most important: that is, the miracle of Resurrection. Unsurprisingly, as in Byzantine Christianity, the images and the names of the Companions have undergone a process through which they were made into an object with prophylactic qualities. This process

has been well studied in the Christian West. Dominique Rigaux, for example, discusses the shift from the holy image to a drawing that one can carry with him like a talisman or an amulet, and he writes: “this is a borderline case where the use of the image gives the image the role of an object.”³⁸ We know many examples of Christian talismans bearing the names of the Sleepers and used in various charms against diseases (Fig. 7).³⁹ Actually, the protective virtue of the Seven Sleepers and of the (or their) dog – and this is a rare mention of this animal in the Christian legend – is quite ancient. It is mentioned in a fifth- or sixth-century Egyptian amulet against illness that is written on papyrus.⁴⁰



Fig. 7. A 13th-century cameo with the Seven Sleepers in low relief. Venice. British Museum, OA.835.

However, in the Muslim world, the talisman or “image-object” dedicated to the Companions of the Cave is non-representative and does not bear any portrait of the saints lying side by side in the cave, as in Christian talismanic art. On the contrary, the image is replaced by their seven names in a circular fashion, which is reminiscent – and this is my interpretation – of the circular form of the cave.⁴¹ This is probably one explanation of the choice of the circle instead of the quadrangle, which is the shape usually adopted by the amulet-makers.⁴² Actually, the circle is, in a sense, a portrait, but composed with the letters of their names. Although the circle is the shape usually adopted for amulets and talismans, the circle composed by the names of the Sleepers must be viewed as another circle in the talisman or, in other words, as a symbolic circle inside a circle.⁴³

The sacred power of letters in Islam has given a peculiar place to the names of the Companions and especially to sura 18, to its weekly reading and, furthermore, to its use as an image-object, actually an inscription/talisman to be hung on the walls of a house or a mosque. For example, a treatise on magic states that:

“It is told that the Prophet said: ‘teach your children the names of *ablu’-Kahf*, for if they are written on the door of a house that

38

Dominique Rigaux, “Réflexions sur les usages apotropaiques de l’image peinte. Autour de quelques peintures murales novaraises du Quattrocento,” in *L’Image. Fonctions et usages des images dans l’Occident médiéval*, eds. J. Baschet and J.-C. Schmitt (Paris: Le Léopard d’or, 1996), 162 (155-77).

39

W. Bonser, “The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in Anglo-Saxon and later recipes,” *Folklore* 56:2 (June 1945), 254-6; Ö. Sert, *Yedi Uyurlar Efsanesi*, 44-9.

40

Ove Ullestad, “Sources chrétiennes de la légende des Sept Dormants,” in *Les Sept Dormants ou les gens de la Caverne. Héritage spirituel commun aux chrétiens et aux musulmans*, eds Jean-François Bour and Marie-Laure Morbieu (Le Coudray-Macouart: Saint-Léger Editions, 2018), 85 (75-100).

41

See some examples of these talismans in S. Seligmann, “Das Siebenschläfer-Amulett,” *Der Islam* 5 (1914), 370-88, and Venetia Porter, “Amulets inscribed with the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in the British Museum,” in *Word of God, Art of Man. The Qur’an and its Creative Expressions*, ed. Fahmida Suleman (London: Oxford University Press - the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2007), 123-34.

42

Based on the symbolism of the number four that hints at the Four Angels, Jabrā’īl, Azrā’ī, Mikā’īl and Isrāfīl.

43

About the circle as a model universally adopted by the amulet-makers see Constant Hamès, “Mandalas et sceaux talismaniques musulmans,” in *De l’Arabie à l’Himalaya. Chemins croisés en hommage à Marc Gaborieau*, eds Véronique Bouillier and Catherine Servan-Schreiber (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2004), 145-59.

Muhammad Haqqī al-Nāzili, *Haẓīnat al-asrār jalīlat al-adhb̄kār*, quoted by T. Canaan, “The decipherment of Arabic talismans,” 90.

Ja’far Sharif, *Islam in India. The Qanun-i-Islam. The Customs of the Musalmāns of India*, [1921], (reprinted Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 242. The names of the Companions are also found on bracelets, see S. Seligmann, “Das Siebenschläfer-Amulett,” 375.

M. Aksel, *Türklerde Dini Resimler* (Istanbul: Elif, 1967; reprinted, Istanbul: Kapı, 2010), 68; Ö. Sert, *Yedi Uyurlar Efsanesi*, 123.

Qurbān ‘Alī Wālid-i Khālīd Hājī Ayaghūzī, *Tārīkh-i jarīda-yi jadīda* (Kazan: Qazān Univērsitī, 1889), 34; M. S. Andreev, “Chil’tany v Sredne-aziatskih verovaniyakh,” [The chil’tan in Central-Asian belief] in *Iz rabot Vostochnogo Fakul’teta Sredne-Aziatskogo Gos. Universiteta* (Tashkent: Izdanie Obshchestva dlja izuchenija Tadjikistana i iranskih narodnostej za ego predelami, 1927), 342 (334-48).

A section is dedicated to these seals in the catalogue of Halük Perk, a Turkish collector, see Halük Perk, *Osmanlı Tılsım Mühürleri. Halük Perk Koleksiyonu* (Istanbul: Halük Perk Müzesi, 2010), 92-103.

M. Aksel, *Türklerde Dini Resimler*, 66-70; *Cam Altında Yirmi bin Fersab. Geleneksel Halk Resim Sanatından ‘Camanlı Resimler?’* [Twenty thousand Parasang under Glass. Glass Pictures in Traditional Popular Pictorial Art] (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yay., 1997), 36-7; Jürgen W. Frembgen, “The symbolism of the boat in Sufi and Shi’ia imagery: some examples from the visual culture of Pakistan and Iran,” *Journal of the History of Sufism*, 6 (2013), 58-9 (85-100).

house will not be burned, or on an object, this object will not be stolen, or on a ship, this ship will not be drowned.’”⁴⁴

Precisely, it is known that in India, the names of the Companions with that of their dog are written and pasted on house walls.⁴⁵ The virtues of these talismans as a protection against fire, or during a journey on a ship, or against evil spirits are mentioned in many places, in Turkey,⁴⁶ and as far as in the oasis of the Silk Road.⁴⁷ Over time, the talismans with the names of the Companions of the Cave have become one of the most efficacious and widespread amulets in the entire Muslim world, from Morocco to the Malay archipelago.

The “image-object”: letters-portraits and geometric-portraits

As an image-object, the Companions of the Cave have been represented through different motifs and shapes, each highlighting in various ways their seven names: Yamlikhā, Maksilīnā, Maslīnā, Marnūsh, Dabarnūsh, Shazanūsh and Kafashtatayūsh. I would distinguish two categories that combine them: “calligraphic models” and “geometric models.” The first category is divided into two sub-categories: “the Companions in the form of a ship” and “the Companions in the form of a tree.” The second category is also divided in two sub-categories: “the Companions in a hexagonal fashion” and “the Companions in a circular fashion.” Actually, all these calligraphic and geometrical representations of the Sleepers are no more than symbolic equivalents of the portrait of these saints gathering in the cave and rising from the dead, and more precisely a symbolic projection of the resurrection. However, the most interesting category, for our purpose here, is the second, since the hexagon and the circle are more evocative than the first one of the image of the Sleepers.

Moreover, the hexagonal and circular talismans of the Companions have circulated all over the Muslim world, not only in manuscripts, but also in the form of prints on separate paper leaves. This is demonstrated by the fact that many seals bearing these hexagonal and circular motifs exist in several museums and in private collections.⁴⁸ These prints were reproduced by the thousand and increased consequently the popularity of the Companions.

Calligraphic models

The Companions in the form of a ship

The fact that God, in the Qur’ān, turns the youths sleeping in the cave to the right and then to the left reminds us of the movement of the waves in the sea, and links the Companions of the Cave with everything or every people concerned with sea and water: “Thou wouldst have thought them awake, as they lay sleeping, while We turn them now to the right, now to the left . . .” (Qur’ān 18:17). Their names are consequently protective for the sailors and for their ships. A particular genre of drawing and calligraphy called “Ship of the Companions of the Cave” (in Turkish, *Eshāb ül-Kahf gemisi*) emerged among the Ottomans. The names of the Companions are written in the form of different kinds of ships, rowing or sailing boats, written on their hulls or sails.⁴⁹ Some representations are quite simple but many others very sophisticated (Fig. 8 and 9, next page). In addition, this type of talisman is sometimes associated with many other talismanic motifs and printed in wide paper sheets (Fig. 10, next page).



Fig. 9. Ottoman calligraphy of the names of the Companions of the Cave in the form of a ship. Private collection, Istanbul.



Fig. 8. Ottoman calligraphy of the names of the Companions of the Cave in the form of a ship. Eshāb ül-Kahf gemisi, private collection, Istanbul.

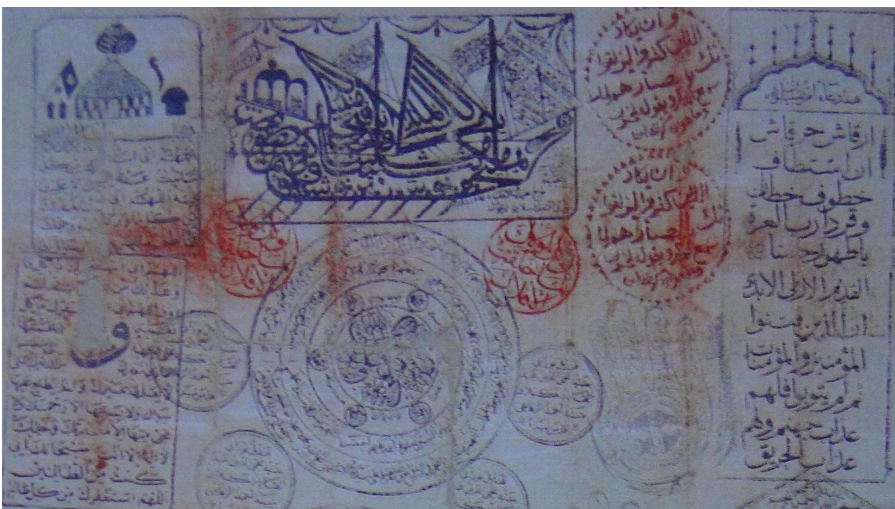


Fig. 10. Sheet with the ship of the Companions and several other talismanic images. No date, private collection, Istanbul.



Fig. 11. Ottoman calligraphy of the names of the Companions of the Cave in the form of a tree. Collection of the Eşrefzāde Qādirī Dergāh, Bursa.

The Companions in the form of a tree

The names of the Companions are also written in the form of a tree with several leaves, each name being inside a leaf, and composed in mirror script. The meaning of this symbol is, according to Louis Massignon, that the Companions during their sleep were interlaced, as clearly shown in the miniatures and drawings, like the leaves of a tree.⁵⁰ Thus, the “tree of the Companions” is another way to remind us of the episode in the cave. In one Ottoman glass painting (19th century), the position of Qitmīr is notable since his name appears in two leaves situated at the bottom of the tree, near the earth. Obviously, Qitmīr is protecting access to the tree, as it was guarding the entrance of the cave in the legend and in the hagiographies (Fig. 11 and Fig. 12 in the next page).⁵¹ Furthermore, the Islamic model for this tree might be the “tree of life” of which several versions exist. This tree hints in general at the Sidra tree that one can see only in Paradise.⁵²

The calligraphic models (ship, tree) of the Companions of the Cave are usually used as apotropaic inscriptions to decorate and protect mosques, civil edifices, and private houses. Both hint at the movement or

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Manoël Pénicaud, *Le Réveil des Sept Dormants. Anthropologie d'un pèlerinage islamo-chrétien en Bretagne* (PhD, Université d'Aix-en-Provence-Marseille, 2010), 538 (edited as *Le Réveil des Sept Dormants. Un pèlerinage islamo-chrétien en Bretagne* (Paris: Cerf, 2014).

51

See another example, dated 1897-98, of this drawing of the Companions in the form of a tree in J. W. Frembgen, “Harmony of lines. Islamic calligraphies from Ottoman dervish lodges,” in *The Aura of Ali. The Art of Writing in Islam*, ed. J. W. Frembgen (Munich: Prestel, 2010), 86 (79-89).

52

B. Aminov, “La Symbolique musulmane,” *Oriente Moderno*, 26:1 (2007), 29-30 (21-33).

the spatial position of the Companions in the cave during their miraculous sleep; for this reason they may help the bearer of a talisman with such a motif to memorise these saints. Let us conclude this paragraph by mentioning that the calligraphies of the Sleepers in the form of a ship have particularly inspired the artists; some of their creations are marvelous and unique pieces sought by collectors and sold in the art markets.⁵³ Moreover, this calligraphy, together with that of the Companions in the form of a tree, has nowadays become popular to the extent that we find copies in many religious shops in Turkey, and even in tourist shops.

Geometric models

The Companions in a hexagonal fashion

The portrait and the images of the Companions when sleeping in the cave have close links with the talismans, amulets and inscriptions composed of geometric patterns, particularly the hexagon and the circle (Fig. 13 and 14). These two geometric figures are actually executed in arabesque with the Arabic letters of the names of the Companions and of Qitmîr. Both figures hint actually at the circular model of the cave.



Fig. 12. Ottoman calligraphy of the names of the Companions of the Cave in the form of a tree. Private collection, Istanbul.



Fig. 13. Ottoman calligraphy of the names of the Companions of the Cave in the form of a circle. Private collection, Istanbul.



Fig. 14. Ottoman calligraphy of the names of the Companions of the Cave in the form of a hexagon. Auctions, Istanbul, 2013.

54

M. Aksel, *Religious Pictures in Turkish Art / Türklerde Dini Resimler*, 65.

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Edmond Doutté, *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Alger: Typographie Adolphe Jourdan Doutté, 1909), 156-7.

Concerning the hexagon, the circular writing made with six names surrounds the name of God either in the form “*Yā Hafīz*” (“O Preserver”) or that of “Allah,” or, more frequently, the name of Qitmîr. Here, also, the dog occupies the first place.⁵⁴ No wonder that the choice of six points for the geometric model (hexagon), though the Companions are in general seven, is intended to favour an association with the seal of Solomon, which has six stars. Thus, there are some talismans with the letters of the hexagon and the Solomon seal overlapping (Fig. 15, next page). In fact, this hexagonal form is highly respected among both Jews and Muslims as the “seal of King Solomon” (*kbatm- Sulaymān*). This form is known also as the “star hexagon” (*musaddas*).⁵⁵ This form gives actually to the talisman of the Companions a double protective virtue, due to the well-known apotropaic quality of the seal of Solomon. We observe that in this case, only six names of the Companions are mentioned with that of Qitmîr, corresponding to the six points of the Solomon star (Fig. 16 and 17, next page).

We do know another example of an amulet in which the names of



Fig. 17. Ottoman seal bearing the names of the Companions of the Cave; the inverted letters of the name of Qitmīr occupy the centre. Collection of Halük Perk, *Osmanlı Tılsım Mübâhırleri*. Halük Perk Koleksiyonu, 95.

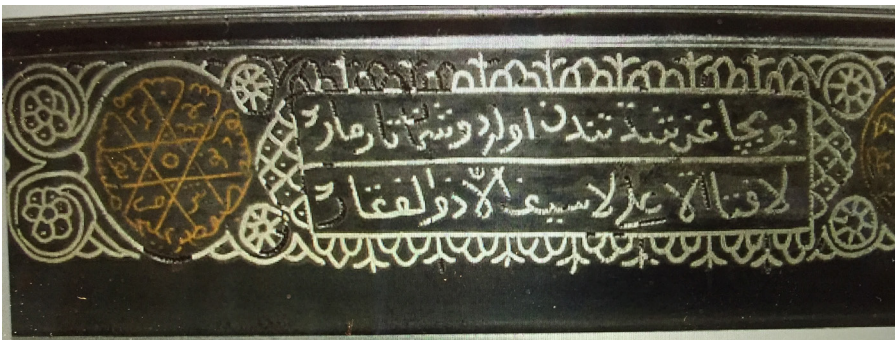


Fig. 18. A detail of the blade of a sword with an engraving of the names of the Companions of the Cave in the form of a hexagon. <http://yataghan3.blogspot.com> accessed May 2021.

the Seven Sleepers and their dog Qitmīr are also written in circular fashion to form a hexagon or Solomon's seal.⁵⁶ This hexagonal figure may be found in numerous inscriptions and artefacts, even non-religious ones: for instance, as noted by Seligman, it appears in talismans made by the impression of the seal of the Shaykh of the Mosque of the Rock in Jerusalem,⁵⁷ on the top of a religious skullcap, in a band around the edge of a mirror, etc.⁵⁸ One can find also the hexagon engraved on an Ottoman sword (*yataghan*) dated 1900-01 to protect the soldier who carried it. Such a practice is directly connected with the spirit of the Futuwwah, since the soldier might be also engaged in an inner battle against his ego. This spiritual dimension can be confirmed by the fact that the *yataghan* bears also, near the hexagon of the Companions, the well-known Shi'i formula *Lā fatā illā 'Alī, lā Sayfa illā Dhul'fiqār* ("There is no youth like 'Alī and no sword like *Dhul'fiqār*"), which hints at the fabulous sword of the valorous 'Alī, son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad (Fig. 18).⁵⁹ We do know an



Fig. 15. The hexagon and the Solomon seal overlapping. No date, private collection, Istanbul.



Fig. 16. Ottoman calligraphy (1863) of the names of the Companions of the Cave in the form of a hexagon; the name of Qitmīr occupies the centre. Collection of Ziya Sofu, Istanbul, auction in 2009.

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D. B. Macdonald, "Description of a silver amulet," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* vol. 26:1-3 (1911), 267 (267-69).

⁵⁷

S. Seligman, "Das Siebenschläfer-Amulett," 377-78; T. Canaan, "The decipherment of Arabic talismans," 89.

⁵⁸

V. Porter, "Amulets inscribed with the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in the British Museum," 131.

Ottoman cane-sword or stick-sword (dated 1910) engraved with the names of the Companions.⁶⁰ However, the upper extremity of this stick sword has the form of a *miittakā*, that is, a chin support made of wood which is placed under the chin of the Sufi during the time of his sleepless retreat in a room of seclusion (*khalwa*). Thus, the names of the Companions are a protection for the man engaged in a spiritual activity. It fits the tradition according to which many caves dedicated to the Companions were used by Sufis as retreat or meditation rooms (*khalwakhana*, *chillakhana*).

The Companions in a circular fashion

There is another kind of figure wherein the circular writing of the names of the Companions constitutes a perfect circle, instead of a hexagon or a six-pointed star. This pattern is less sophisticated than the hexagon model, and permits the amulet-makers to draw it easily, without using a seal or a stamp. In 2008, in Tuyuq, oasis of Turfan, in Xinjiang (China), I observed the curator of the Ashāb al-Kahf shrine drawing such a talisman (called *tumar* in modern Uyghur)⁶¹ for the pilgrims coming to the place. He started by drawing the external circles composed with Qur'ānic verses, then he wrote one by one the names of the Companions, and finally he put the name of the dog Qitmīr in the centre of the circle (Fig. 19 and 20). Here also, the circle may remind the maker and the bearer of the talisman of the image of the Seven Companions in the cave, and the central place of the dog hints at the exceptional mission of this animal. The talisman is considered very sacred and the curator of the shrine told me that it must never be abandoned on earth, as indeed is the case for any document bearing Arabic letters. Note that this model of talisman, that is with the names of the Companions of the Cave written in a circle around the name of Qitmīr, is widespread throughout the Muslim world, from Africa, in Nigeria for instance (Fig. 21), to Turkey, the oasis of the Silk Road and the Malay Archipelago.⁶²



Fig. 19. Circular calligraphy dedicated to the Companions of the Cave. Tuyuq shrine, Turfan oasis, China, 2008. Collection Zarcone.

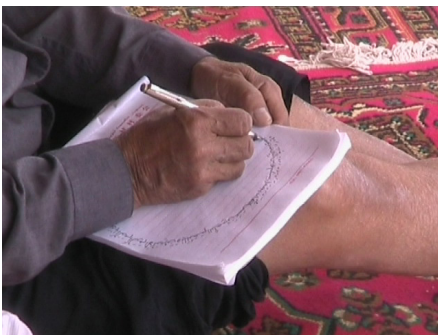


Fig. 20. A Uyghur curator of the shrine of the Companions of the Cave in Tuyuq, Xinjiang, making a talisman with the names of the Companions. Photograph © T. Zarcone, 2008.

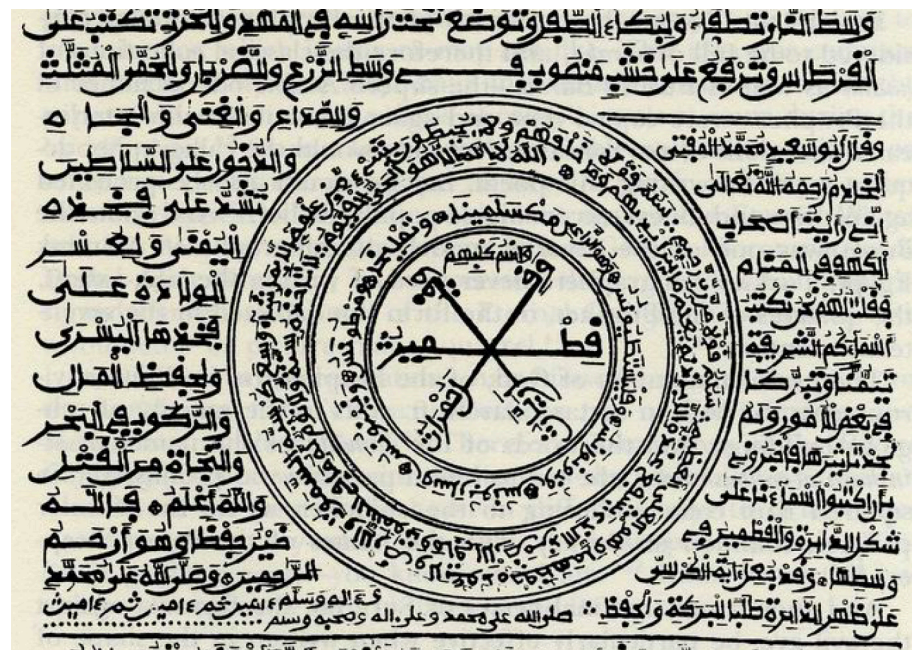


Fig. 21. Circular calligraphy dedicated to the Companions of the Cave. Nigeria. A. Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to comment on the process through which a saint's image, portrait or representation gain a prophylactic quality and become a talisman . . . The case of the Seven Sleepers/Ashāb al-Kahf is one of the best examples because of its strong influence and prominent place in talismanic art since the Christian era. More, the Companions of the Cave are frequently considered among the first saints of Islam and their place must be questioned when investigating saint veneration. (Their dog is also a saint.) The main difference however between Christians and Muslims regarding the veneration of the Seven Sleepers and their representation (including talismanic art) is embodied by Qitmīr. He was rarely, not to say never, represented by the Christian artists – although he was present in sixth century narratives – but, on the contrary, was omnipresent in Muslim miniatures and talismans. Moreover, his name has also inspired a spirit called Kitimiri in African rituals of exorcism in Zanzibar.⁶³

The talisman of the Companions is no more than an “image-object,” to quote an expression used by a specialist in saintly images in Christianity,⁶⁴ and, similarly to the Christian icon which plays the role of an “intercessor,”⁶⁵ this talisman of the Companions has also – like a saint – the ability to intercede with God. However, in Islam, in order to avoid the prohibition on representative art, the portrait of the Sleepers and that of their dog was replaced by a calligraphic and geometric symbolisation of the cave; the Sleepers being represented by the Arabic letters of their names. The exceptional power of the talisman lies finally in its association with the seal of Solomon, another very powerful protective symbol. To conclude, the conjunction of these two talismans may be interpreted as a successful attempt to combine in one symbol the geometric portraits of two major figures of the Islamic tradition: the very popular Solomon and the Ashāb al-Kahf, prototype of the Muslim saint, among whom the dog Qitmīr occupies a major position.

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See Edward A. Alpers, “Ordinary household chores: ritual and power in a 19th-century Swahili women's spirit possession cult,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 17, No. 4 (1984): 677-702.

64

Jérôme Baschet, “Introduction: l'image-objet,” in *L'Image. Fonctions et usages des images dans l'Occident médiéval*, eds J. Baschet and J.-C. Schmitt (Paris: Le Léopard d'or, 1996), 7-26.

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Olivier Boulnois, *Au-delà de l'image. Une archéologie du visuel au Moyen-Âge, V^e-XVI^e siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 194.