Reshaping Religious Traditions: 
The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus and the 
Zoroastrian Golden-Eared Dog

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Some people do not get to sleep; others easily do it for several hours a 
night; and there have been special cases in which people have remained 
asleep for very long periods. The literary motif of long-sleepers who 
miraculously arise after many months, or even years, is widespread 
and especially famous through folktales like Sleeping Beauty (Uther’s 
motif 410), and texts of religious inspiration, like the Seven Sleepers 
of Ephesus (Uther’s motif 766).¹ Heir to this tradition is the story of 
the Golden-Eared dog guarding the sleeping body of Adam, which is

¹A. Aarne and S. Thompson, The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography: Antti Aarne’s Verzeichnis der Märchentypen (FF Communications No. 3), 2nd rev. (Helsinki: 
Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1964), 137–38, 265. See also H. J. Uther, The Types of International 
Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography: Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith 
Thompson (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 2004).
transmitted in the Zoroastrian New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci, written in AY 938/AD 1569. As I will show in this contribution in honor of Professor Maria E. Subtelny, this Zoroastrian text incorporates older motifs from different religious traditions to create a reshaped Zoroastrian narrative in a cultural and religious hybridity characteristic of that period.

The literary motif of the long-sleeper begins in the standard Babylonian version of the Epic of Gilgameš, 11.209–41. According to this text, in his search for life, the hero meets Ūta-napišti, who recommends that Gilgameš stay awake for six days and seven nights if he wants the gods to meet him. Gilgameš falls asleep instead and finally awakens on the seventh day. To make him aware of the long time he was sleeping, Ūta-napišti shows him the seven breads that were baked for him every day until he eventually awoke. The fact that the hero does not pass the sleep test that would enable him to meet the gods confronts him with the difficulty of achieving his goal.

This Babylonian textual material was unknown to Rohde and Koch, but also to modern scholars like van der Horst, who claim that the motif of the long-sleeper was first found in ancient Greek literature in Aristotle’s (Physics, 4.11, 218b 23–26) brief reference to the heroes of Sardinia, who do not realize how much time has elapsed when they are awakened.

Other ancient Greek and Roman authors after Aristotle, particularly the Stoic philosophers, were very fond of similar paradoxographical accounts (Gr. παράδοξα, θαυμάσια; Lat. [ad]mirabilia), which they used as

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exempla to wrap a truth or a moral teaching in contradictory and marvellous stories.\textsuperscript{5} Of such accounts, the one about Epimenides of Crete should be highlighted. He miraculously sleeps in a cave for forty years, according to Pausanias 1.14.4, or for fifty-seven years, according to the biographer of Greek philosopher Diogenes Laertius 1.109, who referred to a quotation by Theopompus (fourth century BC) and other writers.

As van der Horst has stressed, Epimenides was very much loved by the gods (Gr. θεοφιλέστατος), a topic repeated in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic stories about long-sleepers.\textsuperscript{6} In the Jewish tradition, God also loves Abimelech, Jeremiah’s son, who sleeps for sixty-six years, according to 4 Baruch 13:19 (second century AD). Abimelech is sent away by his father to collect some figs and give them to the sick people he will meet on his way back. He falls asleep under a fig tree, and after awakening, he thinks he has lost his trail, because he does not recognize his city (Jerusalem) or his people. He then asks an old man for directions, who tells him that Jerusalem has been conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, and that the Jewish people were taken captive to Babylon sixty-six years ago. When Abimelech tells this man his own story and sees that the figs are still fresh, the man praises him because of his having been blessed and miraculously saved by God from the calamity.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{5}See Cicero, “Paradoxa Stoicorum ad M. Brutum Prooemium 4: quae quia sunt admirabilia contraque opinionem omnium ab ipsis (sc. Stoicis) etiam παράδοξα appeliantur” (“since these things are remarkable and contrary to everyone’s opinion [they themselves even call them “paradoxes”]”) in E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, Cicero, De Oratore, De Fato, Paradoxa Stoicorum, Partitiones Oratoriae (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), 256–57; M. O. Webb, “Cicero’s Paradoxa Stoicorum: A New Translation with Philosophical Commentary” (PhD diss., Texas Tech University, 1985), 14. These paradoxographical accounts are called in NP ‘ajāyeb-nāme (wondergraphy), as noted by M. Ebrahimi, “Buḥaira, the Lake of Demons,” Iran and the Caucasus 16 (2012): 91–147. Reference on p. 97.

\textsuperscript{6}van der Horst, “Pious Long-Sleepers,” 95–96.

\textsuperscript{7}The story of Abimelech shares some elements with that of Gilgameš and contradicts some others. On the one hand, the sexagesimal numerical base of the duration of their sleep is common to both, but the former slept sixty-six years and the latter only six nights. On the other hand, the food as touchstone to prove the veracity of the long sleep is also a shared motif. Nevertheless, the figs brought by the former remain fresh while the bread baked for the latter is progressively rotten. Notwithstanding, the role of sleep is totally different in these two stories: it hampers Gilgameš’s meeting the gods, but is revealed to be a sign of God’s favor for Abimelech, like in the case of Epimenides.
Another famous long-sleeper of the Jewish tradition is Choni the Circle-Drawer (Heb. *choni ha-me’aggeλ*), or his grandson, who sleeps for seventy years and finds the world completely changed when he awakes, according to the earliest version in *Talmud Yerushalmi, Ta’aniyot* 3.9.66d, and to later ones in *Midrash Tehilim* 126.1–2 and *Talmud Bavli, Ta’anit* 23a.8

Probably the most widespread story with this motif is contained in Christian sources under the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, which was deeply studied by Koch and Huber.9 According to its oldest version, preserved in two recensions of a metrical liturgical homily (*mêmrâ*) in Syriac which were attributed to the bishop Jacob of Sarûḡ (ca. 450–521) and were edited by Allgeier,10 some young Christians escaping from persecution by the emperor Decius (r. 249–51) hide inside a cave near Ephesus. They fall asleep therein and awake more than three hundred years later. When one of them, Iamblichus, comes back to the city to buy some food, he does not recognize it, because Christianity is no longer persecuted. Then, he tries to pay with coins from the time of Decius, and the astonished inhabitants inform the bishop (Stephanus or Māres) and the proconsul about it. They and the emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–50) meet the sleepers in the cave and recognize the miracle that, according to the sleepers, demonstrates the truth of the resurrection.11 Thereafter, the sleepers die.

The story of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus was very famous in late antiquity, as its many retellings prove. Indeed, at least ten parallel Syriac versions in manuscripts dated between the fifth and the nineteenth century are known.12 One of these Syriac texts was rendered into Greek

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8van der Horst, “Pious Long-Sleepers,” 104–5.
11The date of their awakening obviously does not match the reign of Theodosius II.
by Simeon Metaphrastes, whose text was in turn rendered into Latin by Laurentius Surius (both texts are in *Patrologia Graeca*, 115.427–48). Gregory of Tours (538–94) referred to a Syriac original in his Latin version called *Passio septem dormientium* (in *Anal. Bolland.*, XII, 371–87). Another Latin version is Paul the Deacon’s (720–99) *History of the Lombards* 1.4, but the most famous one by far appears in Jacobus de Voragine’s (ca. 1230–98) *Legenda aurea*. An Anglo–Norman version by Chardry (thirteenth century) and an Old Icelandic one are also extant. A Sogdian translation of a Syriac version, edited by Nicholas Sims-Williams, is also preserved in the Christian Sogdian manuscript 2, found in a Nestorian monastery at Bulayïq, north of Turfan.13

The legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, called in Arabic *ashab al-kahf* (Companions of the cave) pervades Islamic sources and even gave the name *al-kahf* (the cave) to the eighteenth sura of the Qur’an.14 This legend is alluded to in verses 9–26, of which I will quote just 18 and 22:

18.18. You would have thought they were awake, though they lay asleep. We turn them over, to the right and the left, with their dog stretching out its forelegs at the entrance. If you had seen them, you would have turned and run away, filled with fear of them. [. . .]


[Some] say, ‘The sleepers were three, and their dog made four,’ others say ‘They were five, and the dog made six,’ – guessing in the dark – and some say ‘They were seven, and their dog made eight.’ Say [Prophet] ‘My Lord knows best how many they were.’ Only a few have real knowledge about them, so do not argue, but stick to what is clear, and do not ask any of these people about them.\textsuperscript{15}

The motif of the long-sleepers watched by a dog in the Qur’anic version of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus is also found in the story of the Golden-Eared dog guarding the sleeping body of Adam, which is found in the New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci (MU 1.256.4–57.8; New Persian text in Unvala: 1.256–57; English translation in Dhabhar; critical edition and German translation in König and Nejati).\textsuperscript{16} According to this text, written in AY 938/AD 1569, Urmazd created the body of Adam (NP. ādam), also called Gayumard, on the Alborz Mountains, and appointed the seven Beneficent Immortals to protect him from Ahreman, the Evil Spirit, also called Satan (NP. šeytān) in this text. The latter found the means to overcome them with stupor, and threw something on the body of Adam to make him perish. That thing was growing on Adam’s navel, and at Urmazd’s command, it was removed by the Beneficent Immortals with a spoon. Urmazd addressed that thing with the words “Golden-Eared, get up!,” and suddenly, a dog came into existence, the bark of which scared Ahreman and the demons and made them flee from Adam’s body. Urmazd appointed the Golden-Eared dog as sole guardian of that body, and thereafter, as keeper of the path to the otherworld. Because of this, if a Zoroastrian does not treat dogs properly in life, the Golden-Eared dog will neither protect that person from the demons’ attack when the individual dies nor let them pass through the


path leading to heaven. The moral of this story is that dogs must be treated well.

It is important to underline that the story of the creation of Adam/Gayumard and the Golden-Eared dog is not mentioned as such in extant Avestan and Pahlavi sources. The only thing we know about Gayumard (Av. gaiia-marətar-, Phl. gayōmard) from the Avestan literature, more precisely from Yašt 13.87 and 145, is that he was the first man and the origin of the Arian stock:

\begin{verbatim}
Yašt 13.87:
gaiiehe. marəϑnō. aϑsonō. frauuašim. yazamaide. yō. paoiriio. ahurāi. mazdāi. manasca. gištə. sas淞scə. yahmaŋ. haca. frāϑberəsaŋ. nāϑo. ariiranqm. daxiiunqm. ciϑrəm. ariiranqm. daxiiunqm. zarəϑuštərhe. spitəmahe. ida. aϑsonō. ašimca. frauuašimca. yazamaide. [.. .]
\end{verbatim}

We worship the frauuaši- of the righteous Gaiia Marətan, the first who listened unto Ahura Mazdā’s thought and teaching; of whom he created the stock of the Arian countries, the seed of the Arian countries. We worship the reward as well as the frauuaši- of the righteous Zaraϑuštə Spitəma here.\(^{17}\)

\begin{verbatim}
Yašt 13.145:
\end{verbatim}

We worship the frauuaši- of the righteous men of all countries. We worship the frauuaši- of the righteous women of all countries. We worship all the good, powerful, beneficent frauuaši- of the righteous that (reach) from Gaiia Marətan (= the first man) to the victorious Saoϑiιt (= the last man and saviour).\(^{18}\)

\(^{17}\)W. M. Malandra, Frawardīn Yašt: Introduction, Translation, Text, Commentary, Glossary, Ancient Iran Series 8 (Irvine: UCI Jordan Center for Persian Studies, 2018). Quotation on pp. 102 and 152.

\(^{18}\)Malandra, Frawardīn Yašt, 115 and 167. See also the parallels of Yasna 26.10 and 59.27. Gaiia
The Pahlavi literature gives more information about this first man, called Gayōmard in Pahlavi, and two elements connect his story with those of the long-sleepers: his designation as king of the mountain in the Pahlavi and Pazand translations of Aogəmadaēcā 85, in Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg 4.2, and in Dēnkard 3.35, on the one hand, and his association with sleep in Greater Bundahišn 1A.13 and 4.22–26 and in its parallel of Wizīdagīhā ī Zadspram 2.10–11, on the other hand.

In the Pazand translation of Aogəmadaēcā 85 and in the Pazand text of Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg 4.2, Gayōmard is called gar-šāh/gal-šāh (king of the mountain).19 The first element of this compound in the Pahlavi versions of these two texts is written <gl>, an ambiguous form that can be read as gar (mountain) or gil (clay). In Dēnkard 3.35, on the contrary, the first element of Gayōmard’s epithet is written with the heterogram <TYNA>,20 which can be read only as gil (clay).21 This ambiguity was already known to Bal’ami (d. AD 974) and al-Biruni (AD 973–1048), who stated that the Persians called the first man, Gayōmard, either gar-šāh (king of the mountain) or gil-šāh (king of clay).22 On the one

Marətan is mentioned after the divinities and before Zaraϑuštra in the Avestan texts of Yasna 23.2, 26.5, and 67.2, and after the Ox and before Zaraϑuštra in Yašt 13.7. It is very likely, though not clearly stated, that he was understood as the first man in these passages as well.


hand, that Gayōmard is linked to the mountain recalls the cave of the mountain in which the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus hid. On the other hand, that he is made of clay recalls the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions about the creation of Adam.

On Gayōmard’s association with sleep, *Greater Bundahišn* 1A.13 narrates that Ohrmazd (NP. *Urmazd*) created Sleep as Gayōmard’s helper:

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šašom gayōmard brēhēnīd rōšn cīyōn xwaršēd u-š cahrār nāy paymānīg bālā būd pahnā cīyōn bālā rāst pad bār ī rōd ī dāītī [kū mayānag ī gēhān] ēstēd gayōmard pad höy ālag ud gāw pad daśn ālag u-šān dūrhī ēk az did dūrhī-iz ī az āb ī dāītī cand bālā ī xwēš būd cašmōmand gōšōmand uzwānōmand daxšagōmand būd [gayōmard daxšagōmandīh ēd kū mardom az ōy tōhmag pad ān hangōšidag zād hēnd] u-š dād ā ayārīh xwāb ī āsānīh-dādār cē ohrmazd ān xwāb frāz brēhēnīd pad mard kirb ī buland ī pānzdah sālag ī rōsn
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Sixthly he fashioned Gayōmard, bright as the sun, and his height was four reeds of average length; his width was equal to his height; he was on the bank of the river Dāitī [that is, the middle of the world]. Gayōmard (was) on the left side and the Ox on the right side. Their distance from each other, and their distance too from the water of the Dāitī, was as much as their own heights. He was possessed of eyes, ears, tongue, and a mark [“Gayōmard’s possession of the mark” means that mankind were born of his seed, in his likeness]. And he created for his help Sleep, the giver of rest; for Ohrmazd fashioned forth the Sleep in human form, tall, fifteen years old, and bright.

Before the demons attack the Primordial Ox, Ohrmazd gives it henbane as a narcotic, so that it suffers less, according to Greater Bundahišn 4.20. Before they attack Gayōmard, Ohrmazd brings Sleep over him for the same reason, according to Greater Bundahišn 4.22–26:

4.22. pēš az madan ī ō gayōmard ohrmazd xwāb abar gayōmard frāz burd and cand drahnā ī wacast-ē bē gōwēd čē-š brēhēnīd ohrmazd ān xwāb pad mard kirb ī pānzdah sālag ī rōšn ī buland
4.23. ka gayōmard az xwāb frāz būd dīd gēhān tārik ciyōn šab zamīg ciyōn sōzēnīd az dwārišn ī xrafstarān nē pargūd ēstēd spīhr ī gardišn xwaršēd ud māh ō ravišn ēstād ud pattānōmand gēhān az γarrānišn ī māzanīgān dēwān ud kōxšīn ī abāg axtarān
4.24. u-š menīd gannāg mēnōy kī-m dāmān ī ohrmazd hamāg agārēnīd hēnd jud az gayōmard u-š astwhād abāg hazār dēw margīh-kardārān pad gayōmard frāz hišt u-šān zamān ī brīn rāy ōzadan cār nē ayāft
4.25. ciyōn gōwēd kū pad bundahišn ka gannāg mēnōy  ā petyāragīh mad zamān ān ī gayōmard zīndagīh ud xwādāyīh  ō sīh sāl brēhēnīd [guft ciyōn pas az madan ī petyārag sīh sāl zīst]
4.26. u-š guft gayōmard kū nūn ka ēbgad mad mardōm az tōhmag ī man bawēnd ciš-ē ēn weh ka kār ud kirbag kunēd

24This gloss recalls Yašt 13.87.
25All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.
26Pahlavi text in Pakzad, Bundahišn, 62–64. See also the Pahlavi text and English translation
22. Before his (=Ahreman’s) coming to Gayōmard, Ohrmazd brought Sleep over Gayōmard, for as much duration as one recites a strophe; for Ohrmazd fashioned the Sleep in human form, fifteen years old, bright, and tall.

23. When Gayōmard awoke from Sleep, he saw the world dark as night; the earth, like burned, did not remain free from the running of noxious creatures; the firmament was in revolution; the sun and the moon were in motion; the world was resonant owing to the roaring of the Māzanīg demons and their fight against the constellations.

24. And the Stinky Spirit thought: “I have rendered powerless all the creatures of Ohrmazd, except Gayōmard.” He let loose Astwihād on Gayōmard with a thousand death-doer demons, but, as the time determined (had not come yet), they found no means to kill him.

25. As one says: “At the Primordial creation, when the Stinky Spirit came up for his counter-creation, the time of Gayōmard’s life and rule was determined for thirty years” [in other words, after the coming of the counter-creation, he lived thirty years].

26. And Gayōmard said: “Now that the Adversary has come, mankind will be born of my seed; this is a good thing, as they will perform works and meritorious deeds.”

The motif of the creation of Sleep by Ohrmazd to help Gayōmard, who finds the world completely changed when he awakes, according to the Pahlavi text of the Greater Bundahišn, has parallels in earlier Jewish, Christian, and Islamic stories about long-sleepers. They all agree on the fact that a divinity or supernatural being sends sleep to protect a person, who finds the world completely changed after awakening. However, unlike the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic stories, the Zoroastrian New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci does not explicitly refer to sleep, but this is nevertheless implicit in the lethargic state of Gayumard; also unlike those stories, in the Zoroastrian version the main character

is protected by the seven Beneficent Immortals, who are absent in the other monotheistic traditions for obvious religious reasons. The fact that the Beneficent Immortals guarding Adam/Gayumard in the Zoroastrian text are seven, like the Sleepers of Ephesus according to the most widespread version of the Christian and later Islamic renditions of the legend, may be a mere coincidence. Actually, the seven Immortals taking care of Adam/Gayumard while he is sleeping rather recall the seven sisters of the righteous Wīrāz, who, according to the Ardā Wīrāz Nāmag, keep watch over him while he is sleeping and visiting the otherworld for seven days and nights. 27

Some motifs in the story of the Golden-Eared dog guarding Adam in the New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci have apparently been modified from earlier Zoroastrian texts. Besides them, there are other motifs which are not mentioned in earlier Zoroastrian texts and might have been introduced into the story from other traditions. The first of them concerns the names of the main characters: while Gayumard is usually called Adam, Ahreman is named Satan (NP. šeytān) in this text. As Hartman and Shaked have already noticed, Gayumard, the first man in the Zoroastrian tradition, was often translated as his equivalent Adam in the Persian Islamic context, without it necessarily implying syncretism between Zoroastrianism and Islam. 28 Indeed, as both Hartman and Shaked have pointed out, this type of translation was frequent during the Hellenistic period and was also familiar to Mani. In any case, the use of the proper names Adam and Satan reveals that the story was terminologically filtered through a non-Zoroastrian, and more specifically Persian Islamic, context. 29 The second motif of possibly a

27 We must also remember the parallel in the poem of Gilgameš.
29 However, this identification is not an isolated instance in Zoroastrian New Persian literature, because it is also found in the New Persian version of the Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg, where Gayumard is called Adam. For the New Persian text of the passage, see E. M. R. Unvala, Dârâb Hormazyâr Rivâyat, vol. 2 (Bombay: British India Press, 1922), 105; for its English translation, see Dhabhar, Persian Rivayats, 489.
non-Zoroastrian origin refers to the thing growing on Gayumard’s navel as a result of Ahreman’s attack. König and Nejati connect the mention of the navel in the New Persian Revāyat with the Av. nāfah- (family) in Yašt 13.87. If they are to be connected, this Avestan noun would have been reinterpreted as NP. nāf(e) (navel), perhaps through the mediation of a lost Pahlavi translation of this Avestan passage, where that Avestan word nāfah- was translated as Phl. nāfag (navel) instead of Phl. nāf (family). Nevertheless, as we will see, the creation of the dog from the navel of the first man is a motif in Islamic sources, a motif which dates back at least to a century earlier than the Zoroastrian New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci, and is possibly linked to the motif of the dog watching over the Sleepers of Ephesus in the eighteenth sura of the Qur’ān.

Scholars have differently interpreted the presence of this dog in the Qur’ānic text. According to Koch, it might derive from Christian sources, and more concretely from the Latin text De Situ Terrae Sanctae, composed by Theodosius ca. 520–30, in which a certain catulus Viricanus is mentioned. Nevertheless, Koch considered it more likely that Catulus was a proper name. According to Griffith, it originates in the Syriac version of Jacob of Sarūḡ, who, by means of a pastoral metaphor, alluded to a watcher sent by God to take care of the youths:

The Lord saw the faith of the beloved lambs, and He came to give a good wage for their recompense. He took their spirits and brought them up to heaven, and He left a watcher / angel to be the guardian of their limbs.

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30 König and Nejati, “Die Keule des Mehr,” 314. See also C. Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch (Strasbourg: K. J. Trübner, 1904), 1062, nāfah-.
33 Koch, Die Siebenschläferlegende, 63–64. Latin text quoted by Koch, 64: “In provincia Asia civitas Ephesus, ubi sunt septem fratres durmientes et catulus Viricanus ad pedes eorum” (“In the province (of) Asia, the city (of) Ephesus, where there are the seven sleeping brothers and the puppy Viricanus at their feet”).
Although this text does not explicitly refer to a dog, but to a watcher or even an angel, both Koch and Griffith insist on supposing a Christian origin of the dog’s presence in the Qur’anic passage. Notwithstanding, as Waldner rightly points out, this statement is hard to reconcile with the fact that the dog is never mentioned in any other Christian version of a such a widespread story.\textsuperscript{36} He also underlines that the fact that the dog is reckoned among the group of sleepers at the same level as a human in verse 22 of the eighteenth sura of the Qur’an is strange, so he proposes solving this problem by emending the Arabic kalbuḥum (their dog) to kāliʾuhum (their watcher) in this verse.\textsuperscript{37} Gobillot proposes a different interpretation, according to which the mythological influence of the Egyptian god Anubis would explain the presence of this dog in the Qur’anic passage.\textsuperscript{38}

Apart from these explanations, I would like to highlight the fact that the formulation of verse 22 of the eighteenth sura (“some say . . . others say . . .”) resembles the usual one in Sasanian commentaries on Pahlavi translations of Avestan texts (“there is [a commentator] who says,” “X said,” etc.). Moreover, that the dog is even reckoned in that verse as if it were a human is at odds with the general association of dogs with impurity in most Islamic sources, but it perfectly matches Zoroastrian doctrines, in which dogs have in many cases the same status as persons. Perhaps the traditions quoted in verse 22 had already been filtered by Sasanian Zoroastrian circles. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to prove this supposition.

Be that as it may, nonextant variants of the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, in which a dog watches over the sleepers, probably


\textsuperscript{37}Waldner, “Wie kam der Hund,” 427.

existed before the Qurʾan was composed. In any case, later interpreters of the Qurʾan and other Islamic authors never doubted that a dog was mentioned in the eighteenth sura, and they even discussed the name and color of such dog. For instance, the historian al-Yaʿqubi (d. AD 897) and the Persian writer at-Taʿalibi (AD 961–1038) called it qiṭmīr, a name explained by Waldner as a metathesis of qimṭīr, which would go back to Greek κοιμητήριον (sleeping-room). According to the account of the young ‘Ali to the Jews who questioned him, as reported by at-Taʿalibi, the color of that dog was piebald with black, but there were different opinions about it:

The Master said that scholars have differed about the color of the dog of the People of the Cave. Ibn ‘Abbās said that it was spotted; Muqātil said that it was yellow; Muhammad b. Kaʿb that because of its deep redness and yellowness it shaded into red; al-Kalbī said that its color was like snow. Some said, the color of a cat; others, the color of heaven. They also differed about its name. It has been related from ‘Alī that its name was Rayyān, but Ibn ‘Abbās said it was Qiṭmīr, and that is one of the tales of ‘Alī. Shuʿayb al-Jubāʾī said that its name was Ḥamrā, and al-Awzāʾī that it was Natwā. Ibn Fatḥawayh has informed us, on the authority of Abū Ḥanīfah, that the name of their dog was Qiṭmūr, others say Qiṭfīr. Abū ʿAlī al-Zuhrī told me, transmitting it from Ibn ‘Abbās regarding His word, “It is few that know,” (18.22) saying, “I am one of those few. They were Makslamīnā, Tamlīkhā, Martaliyūs, Baynūs, Sāwamūs, Dāwanūs, and Kashṭūs, who was the shepherd, while the dog’s name was Qiṭmīr, a spotted dog, bigger than a Qalaṭī, and smaller than a Karakī.” Muḥammad b. Ishāq said that a Qalaṭī is a little dog [. . .].

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42W. Brinner, *ʻArāʻis al-majālis fi qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā‘, or, Lives of the Prophets as Recounted by Abū
Despite the diverse opinions, most Islamic authors quoted by at-Ta‘alibi agree on the fact that the dog watching over the sleepers was yellowish or whitish and brightly colored, which recalls the Golden-Eared dog guarding the body of Adam, according to the Zoroastrian New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci.

A golden-eared white dog (Av. spānəm. [. . .] spaētəm. zairi.gaošəm) was used since Avestan times to expel the corpse’s demon (Av. nasu-) from the dead body, as confirmed by the Avestan text of Wīdēwdād 8.16.43 This early reference might lead us to assume that the story of the creation of the Golden-Eared dog out of Gayumard’s navel continues an old, possibly Avestan tradition. However, this hypothesis is very unlikely, because the story of the dog’s creation out of the first man’s navel is never mentioned as such in any Zoroastrian source earlier than

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the New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci. However, it is found for the first time in the Pious Gatherings and the Select Precious Matters by the Meccan scholar ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Abd al-Salam al-Saffuri al-Saf’ii (d. AD 1489), as noticed by Minov.\textsuperscript{44} Al-Saf’ii reports that the Hadith, according to which angels do not enter a house where there is a dog, is to be explained because the dog was created from the spittle of Iblis/Satan mixed with the clay from the navel of Adam: “It is important to mention the reason that the angels refrain from entering a house in which a dog is present: because it was created from Satan’s spittle. This is because Iblis, may God curse him, spat on Adam, when he was still a piece of clay; the angels scraped it off, and it became the place of the human navel. Then God created the dog from the clay struck by Iblis’s spittle. And angels and satans do not mix.”\textsuperscript{45}

A parallel of this story is also given in the apocryphal Muslim Gospel of Barnabas\textsuperscript{39}, composed in Spain around the sixteenth century: “Whereupon God gave spirit to that unclean portion of earth upon which lay the spittle of Satan, which Gabriel had taken up from the mass; and raised up the dog, who, barking, filled the horses with fear, and they fled.”\textsuperscript{46}

This is exactly the same story that we find in the New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci almost a century later, and in a Slavonic version titled Narration on How God Created Adam, preserved in a manuscript dated to the middle of the seventeenth century, as Minov has already noticed.\textsuperscript{47} Unlike this author, however, I do not think that this legend, mentioned for the first time in Islamic sources, has Zoroastrian roots. In the Islamic stories about the dog’s creation, the motif of Satan’s spittle has a clear function: to explain that the dog has contained something evil and impure since the very beginning. This view clearly contradicts


\textsuperscript{47}Minov, “Muslim Parallels,” 353.
the high status of dogs in Zoroastrianism, and their use in purity rituals. In my opinion, that the story of the Golden-Eared dog and the sleeping Adam in the New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci does not have a purely Zoroastrian origin can be supported by these arguments: the chronological precedence of the Islamic versions; that Gayumard is called Adam, and Ahreman Satan; the fact, strange for a Zoroastrian, that the dog is created from a mixture of the evil and impure Ahreman, and the good and pure earth, out of which Adam is molded; and finally, that this dog matches the physical description of the one protecting the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, according to the Islamic versions of the legend. Therefore, I think that we should understand this legend in the New Persian Revāyat of Šāpur Bharuci and other Zoroastrian New Persian texts in a broader context of mutual and therefore enriching contacts and influences. Such influences were quite usual in a period of cultural exchange and sometimes even religious hybridity, in which Zoroastrian elements were mixed with those of other religions both in India and Iran, thus reshaping religious tradition.