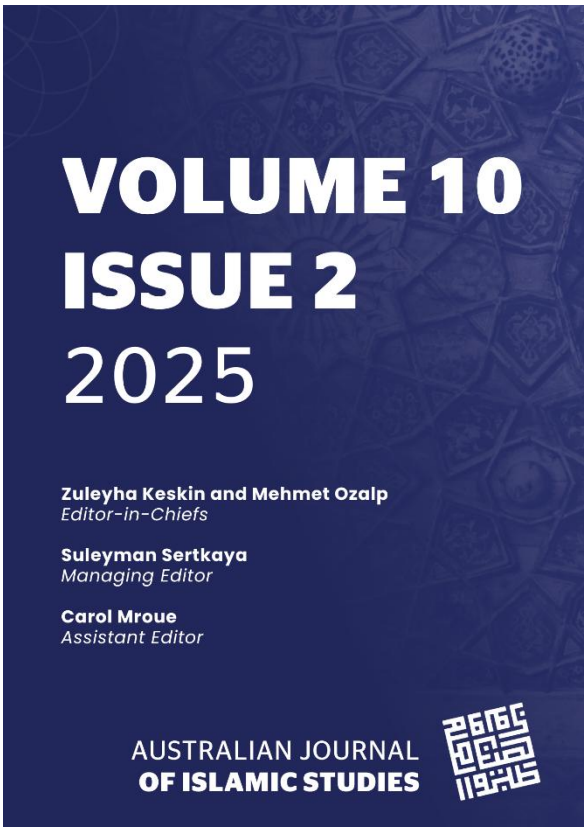


Published online: 5 September 2025



# Dual-Trunk Wāq Tree in the Demoote Shāhnāma: Kabbalastic Reflections in Zaragoza Bible

Fariba Azhari and Mehdi Mohammadzadeh

To cite this article:
Azhari, Fariba, and Mehdi Mohammadzadeh. "Dual-Trunk Wāq Tree in the Demotte Shāhnāma: Kabbalistic Reflections in Zaragoza Bible." *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2025): 49–73. https://doi.org/10.55831/ajis.v10i2.871.

# DUAL-TRUNK WĀQ TREE IN THE DEMOTTE SHĀHNĀMA: KABBALISTIC REFLECTIONS IN ZARAGOZA BIBLE

Fariba Azhari* and Mehdi Mohammadzadeh**

**Abstract:** This study explores shared Jewish-Islamic thought through the dual-trunk *Wāq tree* in the *Demotte Shāhnāma* (circa 735 AH/ 1335 CE) and the Trees of Life and Knowledge in the Zaragoza Bible (806 AH/1404 CE). *Ilkhanid* religious tolerance fostered Jewish-Muslim cultural exchanges, while Sephardic Jews in Iberia, influenced by Islamic thought, produced manuscripts like the Zaragoza Bible, where the trees' common trunk reflects the concept of unity found in a 13th century text, *Shajarat al-Kawn*. In Persian literature, the *Wāq tree* symbolises fate, appearing in the *Demotte Shāhnāma* with dual trunks bearing human fruits. Using a descriptive-analytical and comparative approach, this research examines Iranian literary texts, Islamic sources (Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*), Jewish texts (Torah, *Zohar*) and Islamic philosophies like Ibn Sīnā and Ibn ʿArabī to uncover Kabbalistic influences on an Islamic artwork. The dual-trunk motif underscores a shared moral framework of good and evil, reflecting broader Jewish-Islamic symbolic thought. This analysis highlights a medieval Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cultural dialogue, addressing a gap in scholarship on Jewish-Islamic artistic interactions.

**Keywords:** *Jewish-Islamic dialogue*, *Ilkhanid art*, *Wāq tree symbolism*, *Demotte Shāhnāma*, *Zaragoza Bible*, *Trees of Life and Knowledge*

## INTRODUCTION

In the early 14th century, the Ilkhanid realm in Iran (653–753 AH/1256–1353 CE) and the Iberian Peninsula offered fertile ground for cultural exchanges between Jewish and Muslim communities, shaping a shared artistic heritage across the medieval Mediterranean and Middle East. During the Ilkhanid period, a climate of religious tolerance[1]—evidenced by the appointment of the Jewish minister Khwāja Rashīd al-Dīn Fażlullāh under Ghazan Khān and Öljeitü—enabled Jewish participation in interfaith dialogue and cultural production. During this era, Ilkhanid Jews actively participated in cultural exchanges between Judaism and Islam,

* Fariba Azhari, lecturer at Tabriz Islamic Art University, is a specialist in the field of the influence of religions on the production of illustrated manuscripts in Islamic lands, in particular Judeo-Persian illustrated manuscripts. Corresponding author contact: f.azhari@tabriziau.ac.ir.

** Mehdi Mohammadzadeh, a specialist in Islamic arts, especially the field of imagery in the Islamic world, was formerly a professor at Tabriz Islamic Art University and is now a professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Ataturk University, Türkiye.

1 Florence Hodous, "Faith and the Law: Religious Beliefs and the Death Penalty in the Ilkhanate," in *The Mongols' Middle East*, ed. Bruno De Nicola and Charles Melville (Brill, 2016), 106.

facilitated by the Ilkhanids' role in broader interfaith networks.[2] Meanwhile, Sephardic Jews in Iberia, benefiting from centuries of coexistence with Muslims and Christians, produced sacred manuscripts that reflected the legacy of Umayyad Andalus, where Middle Eastern Islamic artistic traditions had taken root.[3] Additionally, the viewpoints like Ibn ʿArabī's (d. 638 AH/1240 CE) Sufi cosmology enriches the Islamic symbolic framework explored in this study. These interactions fostered a convergence of artistic traditions, evident in the integration of Islamic and Jewish symbolic motifs[4] in illustrated manuscripts like the *Great Ilkhanid Shahnama*, known as the *Demotte Shāhnāma* (circa 735 AH/1335 CE) and the Zaragoza Bible (806 AH/1404 CE), which exemplify a wider Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cultural network. The production of the Zaragoza manuscript by Sephardic Jews[5] reflects shared characteristics with Islamic painting.[6] In the *Demotte Shāhnāma*, the different religious concepts are not presented directly and explicitly. However, references to the religious beliefs of the kings have led to a visual representation in *Demotte*.[7]

This 14th century Ilkhanid manuscript, the *Demotte Shāhnāma*, features a striking depiction of the *Wāq tree*.[8] This tree is a symbolic element in Persian literature, tied to fate and mortality. It appears in the story of Alexander the Great. This study examines the *Wāq tree*'s dual-trunk

---

2 Jonathan Brack, "Ibn Kammūnah is Going to Hell! Muslim-Jewish Polemics at the Ilkhanid Court," *Mamluk Studies Review* 27 (2024): 202, https://doi.org/10.6082/zm07-fy73.

3 Jerrilynn D. Dodds, ed., *Al-Andaus, The Art of Islamic Spain* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), 19–20.

4 Shohreh Birouti et al., "Reading the Iconological of the Ruling Visual Elements in the Ilkhanid Coins from a Perspective: The Discourse of Religion," *Journal of Islamic Crafts* 6, no. 2 (2022): 90, http://jih-tabriziau.ir/article-1-200-fa.html.

5 For the Jews of Iberia, the cultural assimilation to Islam was easier than to Christianity because Islamic culture also had secular aspects that Jews more readily accepted. The assimilation of Jewish culture to Islam reached its peak in the 10th century when Jews played an active role in Islamic society. Katrin Kogman-Appel, "Hebrew Manuscript Painting in Late Medieval Spain: Signs of a Culture in transition," *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 2 (2002): 248, https://doi.org/10.2307/3177268.

6 In the following sections, this topic will be discussed in more detail.

7 Sepideh Hedayati Zadeh, et al., "The Impact of Iranian and Byzantine Religions on Ilkhanid Paintings (Case Study: Mostofi's Shahnameh)," *Negarineh Islamic Art* 9, no. 23 (2022): 196, 201, https://doi.org/10.22077/nia.2022.5542.1638.

8 It is sometimes said that *Wāq Wāq* was a local place in the southern part of Ghainistan. The king of that region was called Faqfur Chīn and considered a descendant of Fereydun [Vladimir Minorsky and Vasily V. Barthold, Trans., *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam: The Regions of the World: A Persian Geography, 327AH–982AD*, ed. Clifford E. Bosworth (Oxford University Press, 1937), n102, n103]. The research by Minorsky and Barthold in Islamic geography highlights the mythical and symbolic status of the *Wāq* tree in Iranian art. The *Wāq* trees, in addition to the illustrations predicting Alexander's death, are also found in geography and cosmology books, folk and romantic tales, divination texts, legendary stories of kings, and the *Wāq Wāq* islands introduced by *Qazwīnī*.
In Iranian miniatures from the 13th and 14th centuries, the *Wāq* tree is depicted and it appears in Indian carpets in the 16th century, later reaching Iran during the Safavid period [Enza Milanesi, *The Carpet: Origins, Art and History* (Firefly Publishing, 1999), 27]. It is also said the appearance of this tree in paintings coincided with the introduction of human-shaped and human-headed letter in inscriptions, especially those found in metalwork from Afghanistan and later in northern Iraq [Sheila R. Canby, *Islamic Art in Detail* (Harvard University Press, 2006), 27]. The studies by Canby and Milanesi indicate the role of the *Wāq*, in addition to its intercultural significance, demonstrates its widespread use in various media.
In addition, the *Wāq* motif has been abundantly illustrated, often appearing in the margins of Islamic manuscripts or occupying the entire text (such as pages (35–36) from the *Divan of Sūltan Hussein Bayqara* (1470–1506), in the Metropolitan Museum) or part of the text (like the *Divan of Sultan Hussein Bayqara* (10th century AH) with a romantic theme, in the Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg)).

design, adorned with human fruits representing male and female figures, and draws a compelling parallel with the Zaragoza Bible, where the Trees of Life and Knowledge are illustrated with intertwined twin trunks symbolising life and death. In Islamic tradition, the *Wāq tree* is a recurring motif in poetry and prose, suggesting the artist of the *Demotte Shāhnāma* drew on Iranian literary sources. Similarly, Jewish texts like the Torah and *Zohar* elaborate on the Trees of Life and Knowledge, emphasising their dualistic symbolism.

The structural and symbolic resemblance between these depictions' points to the influence of Jewish Kabbalistic concepts—particularly the interplay of male and female principles—on the *Wāq tree*'s iconography in Islamic artwork. This interdisciplinary study explores these connections through Iranian literary texts, Islamic religious sources (Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*), Jewish religious texts (Torah, *Zohar*), and manuscript illustrations, revealing the presence of Jewish thought within an Islamic cultural context. Although the *Demotte Shāhnāma* predates the Zaragoza Bible, scholars suggest that such parallels may reflect shared cultural currents across the medieval Mediterranean.[9] Additionally, it has been previously proven that the book on jurisprudence compiled by Moses ben Maimon (d. 601 AH/1204 CE), an important Jewish thinker born in Córdova, Iberia, reached and became known in Iran through the Middle East.[10]

Several manuscripts containing *Wāq tree* illustrations have been selected and analysed from the *Shāhnāma* (three versions), *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* (three versions), *Dārāb-Nāma* (two versions), *Fāl-Nāma*, *Haft Peykar of Niẓāmī's Khamsa*, *Gharāʾib al-Funūn*, and *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh*, focusing on trunk design and symbolic motifs. The selection was based on availability in major collections (e.g., Freer Gallery, British Museum), relevance to dual-trunk depictions, and representation across Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid periods.

The analysis involved a comparative examination of visual elements and textual descriptions across 12 folios, with the *Demotte Shāhnāma* exhibiting the most evident parallels to Jewish thought, particularly its dual-trunk structure and anthropomorphic fruits. This research purposefully focuses on two case studies: a dual-trunk *Wāq tree* illustration from the *Demotte Shāhnāma* and a page from the Zaragoza Bible, crafted by Sephardic Jews in Christian-ruled Iberia yet bearing the imprint of Islamic artistic traditions. The selection hinges on their shared visual motif of intertwined twin trunks. The study addresses two key questions: What symbolic concepts underpin the dual-trunk *Wāq tree* and the Trees of Life and Knowledge in the Zaragoza Bible? How do the human fruits relate to the *Wāq tree*'s trunks in the *Demotte Shāhnāma*? The objective is to uncover shared Islamic and Jewish symbolic thought in the *Wāq tree*'s depiction, offering new insights into the dynamics of cultural exchange in the medieval Middle East. Despite extensive scholarship on the *Wāq tree* in Islamic works, no study has yet explored their connection to Jewish manuscript art. Employing a descriptive-analytical and comparative approach, this research examines manuscript folios, literary texts and religious exegesis, drawing on library-based resources to illuminate these cross-cultural interactions.

9 Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia IV. The Age of Shapur II* (E.J. Brill, 1965), 426.
10 Nahid Pirnazar, "Iranian History in Bābāī ben Lutf's Kitāb-i Anusī," *Iran Namag* 1, no. 2 (2016): 124.

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Research on the *Wāq tree* and related tree symbolism can be categorised into two main strands, each illuminating distinct facets while revealing significant gaps that this study addresses.

The first strand explores the *Wāq tree* within Islamic art and literature, often offering preliminary analyses of its depictions across painting, carpets, pottery and architecture. Scholars frequently highlight the *Wāq tree*'s fruit and the museums preserving these artworks, yet there has been limited exploration of the trunks' designs or origins. Several studies offer valuable insights. For instance, Noble Ross Reat's article examines the *Wāq tree* within Islamic tradition, underscoring its mythological role as a symbol of life and knowledge, often portrayed with human-like fruit in Islamic art. Reat also connects the Qurʾānic forbidden tree[11] in the Garden of Eden—termed the tree of immortality by Iblīs—to the tree of knowledge, noting its resemblance to the Jewish tree of knowledge, though Reat's article does not address any connection between the *Wāq tree* and Jewish traditions.[12] Sheila Canby, in her book, describes *Wāq trees* as "speaking trees," a concept rooted in Arabic and Persian literature, and highlights how arabesque patterns in Islamic art often incorporate animal and human heads, creating fantastical imagery.[13] Only one study, by Javani et al., discusses the restoration of *Demotte Shāhnāma* works during the Qajar period, including the painting of Alexander before the speaking tree, but offers no deeper analysis of its symbolism or connections.[14]

Similarly, Bacque-Grammont et al.'s study[15] surveys scholarly perspectives on the *Wāq tree* in Islamic sources, focusing on its fruit and the mythical *Wāq Wāq island*. Taheri's article explores the connection between trees and humans across various beliefs, referencing the Christian Jesse Tree, where a tree symbolically grows from a human trunk, and links the *Wāq tree* fruit to the human soul's faculties in Islamic mysticism.[16] Additionally, Tabatabaie's study delves into the presence of *Wāq trees* bearing women as fruit, drawing a comparison with Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428 AH/1037 CE) tale of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān and the exclusion of women from the narrative. In this study, women are portrayed as the Other, positioned at the boundary between culture and nature, with Ibn Ṭufayl linking the omission of the female figure to her association with the natural world.[17]

---

11 For example, Qurʾān 20:120.

12 Noble Ross Reat, "The Tree Symbol in Islam," *Studies in Comparative Religion* 19, no. 3 (1975): 8–13, http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/uploads/ArticlePDFs/277.pdf.

13 Canby, *Islamic Art in Detail*, 27.

14 Asghar Javani et al., *A Study of Unusual Elements in the Paintings of the Great Ilkhanid Shahnameh* 12, no. 42 (2017), https://doi.org/10.22070/negareh.2017.534.

15 Bacqué-Grammont et al., *L'Arbre Anthropogène du Wāq Wāq, les Femmes-fruits et les iles des Femmes* [The Anthropogenic Tree of Wāq Wāq, the Fruit-Women, and the Islands of the Women] (Università Degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale, 2007).

16 Alireza Taheri, "The Sacred Tree, the Talking Tree, and Formation of Wak Wak Motif," *Bāgh-e Naẓar* 8, no. 19 (2012): 45, https://www.bagh-sj.com/article_719.html?lang=fa.

17 Somayeh Tabatabaie, "The Presence of Woman-Fruits in Wâq and the Absence of Mother(s); Confliction or Adaptation. A Feminine-centered Reading of Hay Ibn Yaqzân treatise," *Sociological Journal of Art and Literature* 12, no. 1 (2020): 71, https://doi.org/10.22059/jsal.2020.78613.

Furthermore, a comparative study of various manuscripts by Qazwīnī,[18] *ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt* by Hosseini and Heidari (2020),[19] focuses primarily on surface-level descriptions, such as the use of colour in illustrations. Their findings reveal that the types of fruit depicted on *Wāq trees* varied across different periods: at times, the gender of the fruit is ambiguous; in other instances, the fruit is exclusively female or male or even takes the form of animals. In another article, the author compares the visual features of the talking tree with the story of *Mashī* and *Mashyānah*[20] and there is no description or interpretation regarding the fruits and trunks. A brief mention of the two-trunked nature of the tree in the *Demotte Shāhnāma* is found only in an article written by Qashqaie and Mohammad,[21] but there is no mention of its connection to Jewish thought.

The second strand addresses studies on tree symbolism in Judaism, particularly the Trees of Life and Knowledge in the Book of Genesis. One of the oldest research papers pertains to Zofja Ameisenowa's article, which interprets the dual-trunked tree in the Zaragoza Bible as the Tree of Life, citing visual elements like cherubic birds as guardians and mentioning the text of Zechariah around the work, despite most sources depicting the Tree of Life with a single trunk or as a cosmic structure.[22] In several articles, the tree of knowledge is mentioned as having the content of good and evil. Lewis Aron, in his article, discusses two interpretations of the trees in the Garden of Eden and considers the story of Adam and Eve eating from the tree of knowledge as a metaphor for humanity's quest for knowledge, which brings enlightenment and knowledge.[23]

Michaela Bauks, in one study, addresses the issue that trees have dual value and, in Hebrew, the knowledge of good and evil has not been understood as sin, and the phrase good and evil is a metaphor for it.[24] Bauks elaborates in another study, stating the Tree of Knowledge embodies opposing concepts, uniting good and evil in a holistic knowledge, and identifies three trees in Eden—the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of Life and a Middle Tree, likely one of the other two—ultimately concluding that only the Trees of Life and Knowledge stood in the garden's centre.[25] Many researchers acknowledge that the tree in the middle, or forbidden tree,

---

18 By *Zakarīyā Ibn-Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī* (d. 681 AH/1283 CE).

19 Reza Hosseini and Fatemeh Heidari, "Analytical Study of the Role of the Speaking Tree in the Persian and Arabic Manuscripts of Qazwini's ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt Illustrated in India," *Studies of Asian Culture and Art* 2, no. 1 (2020), https://doi.org/10.30465/acas.2020.5328.

20 Sahar Zekavat and Khashayar Ghazizadeh, "Comparative Study of the Visual Characteristics of the Wak Wak Tree in Demot's Shahnameh with the Story of Mashi and Mashianeh," *Journal of Graphic Arts and Painting Research* 4, no. 7 (2022), https://doi.org/10.22051/pgr.2022.40948.1139.

21 Parinaz Qashqaie and Mahdi Mohammad, "Iconological Analysis of the Transformation of Alexander's Painting and the Talking Tree from the Patriarchal Period to the Safavid Period," *Rahpooye Honarha-ye Sanaʾee* 2, no. 2 (2022): 85, https://doi.org/10.22034/rac.2023.560735.1028.

22 Zofja Ameisenowa, "The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2, no. 4 (1939), https://doi.org/10.2307/750042.

23 Lewis Aron, "The Tree of Knowledge: Good and Evil," *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 15, no. 5 (2005), https://doi.org/10.1080/10481881509348859.

24 Michaela Bauks, "Sacred Trees in the Garden of Eden and their Ancient Near Eastern Precursors," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 3, no. 3 (2012): 267, https://doi.org/10.13109/jaju.2012.3.3.267.

25 Michaela Bauks, "Der Garten in Eden und seine Bäume. Ein Beitrag zur Botanik aus Sicht der biblischen Symbolsprache" [The Garden of Eden and its Trees. A Contribution to Botany from the Perspective of

is the main tree, which gradually was initially the tree of life, then the tree of knowledge was added to it.[26] Then Bauks concludes, in the end, there were only two trees in the middle of the Garden of Eden: the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge.[27]

Howard Schwartz's study introduces another Jewish tree that bears "breaths" as fruit, with Rabbi Yose describing it as surrounded by four winds, its branches sprouting holy breaths.[28] Ariel Evan Mayse's article views the Trees of Life and Knowledge as esoteric symbols representing intertwined Torah interpretations.[29] In another article, the trees in the Qurʾān have been compared with the trees in the Torah. Sam Jaffe and Yousef Casewit, in their article, consider the trees of knowledge and life to be the cause of Adam and Eve's fall. Additionally, this article addresses the Qurʾānic reference to the tree that was forbidden to Adam and Eve, which is interpreted in the Qurʾān under the general title *the tree of immortality*[30].[31]

Across these strands, the dual-trunked nature of some *Wāq trees* and their potential links to Jewish thought remain unexplored. This study builds on this foundation, analysing the *Demotte Shāhnāma*'s *Wāq tree* and the Zaragoza Bible's dual-trunked trees to probe Jewish thought of mutual influence on Ilkhanid Islamic artwork, enriching understanding of Middle Eastern cultural exchange.

## LITERARY NARRATIVE OF THE *WĀQ TREE* IN FERDOWSĪ'S *SHĀHNĀMA*

The concept of the *Wāq tree* first emerges in early Islamic geographical and literary traditions, with its earliest known mention appearing in Ibn Khurradādbih's (d. 299 AH/912 CE) *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik*, where these trees are intriguingly described as ebony.[32] This text, dating to the 9th century, hints at the *Wāq*'s exotic allure, setting the stage for its evolution in Persian and Arabic literature. Building on this, Sheila Canby offers a compelling perspective, portraying the *Wāq tree* as a "speaking tree" deeply embedded in Arabic and Persian literary traditions. She connects it to a recurring motif in texts of world wonders, suggesting it echoes a Qurʾānic tree that, rather than bearing fruit, yields the heads of demons—an image that blends the mystical with the macabre.[33] These early depictions highlight the *Wāq*

Biblical Symbolism], in *Arbeiten zur Kulturgeschichte der Antike und des Nahen Ostens* 8 (Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2013), 38.

26 Ibid., 39.

27 Ibid., 63.

28 Howard Schwartz, *Tree of Souls the Mythology of Judaism* (Oxford University Press, 2004), v.

29 Ariel Evan Mayse, "Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge: Halakha and Theology in *Maʾor va-Shamesh*," *Tradition* 51, no. 1 (2019): 10, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26879523.

30 شجرة الخلد, *Shajarat Al-Khuld* (Qurʾān 20:120).

31 Sam Jaffe and Yousef Casewit, "The Blessed Tree in the Works of Ibn Barrajan of Seville (D.53/1141)," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 34, no. 3 (2023), 378–85, http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jis/etad015.

32 Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh Khurradādbih, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik* [The Book of Roads and Kingdoms] (Muʾassasah-i Farhangī Ḥanafī, Muʾassasah-i Taḥqīqāt va Nashr-i Mīrāth-i Mīllī, 1992), 51, 52.

33 The *Wāq* tree's rich literary and mythical heritage unfolds across a range of historical texts, each adding unique layers to its enigmatic presence. One of the earliest references appears in the *Burhān-i Qāṭiʿ* dictionary, which describes the *Wāq* as a tree in India that flourishes in the morning and sheds its leaves by

*tree*'s role as a symbol of the extraordinary, a theme that resonates through Ferdowsī's *Shāhnāma* and later visual representations like the *Demotte Shāhnāma*. The *Shāhnāma* of Ferdowsī, stands as a cornerstone of Persian literature, weaving together history, myth and cultural symbolism. Within this vast narrative, the *Wāq tree* emerges as a striking motif, often associated with wonder and the supernatural, reflecting broader traditions in Islamic and Persian storytelling. In Ferdowsī's (d. 416 AH/1025 CE) text, the *Wāq tree* is notably linked to the episode of Alexander the Great (Iskandar) encountering the speaking tree. Islamic descriptions of this story have even found their way into the Greek story of Alexander, and it has come to the Greeks through the popular lore of Islam because the Greeks lived for many centuries in close contact with the Muslim world. On his quest for the Water of Life and immortality, Alexander traverses numerous lands, journeying to the ends of the earth until he reaches India. Along the way, he encounters sacred trees that, with their magical voices, deliver the prophecy of Apollo, foretelling his imminent death—a haunting blend of Divine insight and fatal destiny.[34] In the *Shāhnāma*, it is also stated that:

شگفتی‌ست ایدر که اندر جهان کسی آن ندید آشکار و نهان
درختی‌ست ایدر، دو بُن گشته جُفت که چونان شگفتی نشاید نهفت
یکی ماده و دیگری نر اوی سخن گوی و با شاخ و با رنگ و بوی[35]

night, with some accounts suggesting it grows in a lush forest. This text marvels at its fruit, said to resemble humans and animals, capable of speech and notes its leaves stirring chaotically by day only to fall at dusk—a vivid image of nature's mystique [Muḥammad Ḥusain Ibn-Ḫalaf Tabrīzī, *Burhān-i Qāṭiʿ* [Conclusive Proof], vol. 4 (Ibn Sīnā, 1963), 2249]. The Anandrāj dictionary, compiled in 1892, similarly identifies the *Wāq* as a distinct tree species, reinforcing its legendary status [Muḥammad Pādshāh Shād, *Farhang-i Ānandrāj* [Ānandrāj Dictionary], vol. 3 (Nawal Kishore Press, 1892), 946]. *Nafīsī*, in his dictionary, embraces its mythical nature, depicting its fruit as human and animal forms that speak, further cementing its place in folklore [Aḥmad ʿAlī Nafīsī (Nāẓim al-Aṭibbāʾ), *Farhang-i Nafīsī* [Nafīsī Dictionary], vol. 5 (Khayyām, 1976), 3820].

These accounts reveal striking variations in the *Wāq* tree's fruit across literary sources. Some describe the fruit as animal heads, while in most cases, it takes human forms—sometimes male or female, and occasionally only women. An intriguing detail comes from Shawkat Toorawa, who notes a version where the *Wāq* tree bears fruit resembling a woman's head, uttering the word "*wāq*" when ripe, blending the eerie with the poetic [Shawkat M. Toorawa, "Wāq al-Wāq: Fabulous, Fabular, Indian Ocean (?) Island(s)," *Emergences: Journal for the Study of Media & Composite Cultures* 10, no. 2 (2000): 397]. Muḥammad al-Bīrūnī, in his writings, portrays the *Wāq* as a tree with human heads that cry out, adding a haunting dimension [Eduard C. Sachau, trans., *Al-Bīrūnī's India: An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030*, vol. 1 (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1910), 210]. Ibn al-Wardī's *Kharīdat al-ʿAjāʾib wa Farīdat al-Gharāʾib* (late 16th century) takes this further, describing an island with lush plants bearing women as fruit—beautiful figures with flowing hair, protected as long as their hair remains intact, dying if cut, and surviving only a day or part of a day once fallen [Sirāj al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn al-Wardī, *Kharīdat al-ʿAjāʾib wa Farīdat al-Gharāʾib* [The Precious Pearl of Wonders and the Unique Gem of Marvels] (Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥawādith, late 16th century), 74,75]. In the *Dārāb-nāmeh* of *Ṭarsūsī* (late 16th century), *Ṭamrūsīyah* rests beneath a tree and hears the *Wāq's* song, its fruit depicted as the heads of animals and birds, evoking a vivid auditory and visual spectacle [Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan Ṭarsūsī, *Dārāb-nāmah* [Book of Dārāb], MS Or. 4615, fol. 43v–44r (British Museum, late 16th century)].

34 Richard M. Dawkins, "Alexander and the Water of Life," *Medium Ævum* 6, no. 3 (1937): 175, https://doi.org/10.2307/43626046.

35 Abū al-Qāsim Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāma*, vol. 6, ed. Jalal Khaleghi-Motlagh (Iran Heritage Foundation, 2005), 102.

> Something amazing has happened in this place that has never been seen anywhere in the world, whether openly or secretly. Here is a tree with two trunks, and this is an amazing reality that cannot be hidden. One is female, and the other is male. This tree is Spokesperson and has color and scent.

From the poems, it is evident that the tree Alexander encounters is in pairs and has two trunks. By examining various literary texts regarding the description of the *Wāq tree*, it can be said only in the literary text of *Shāhnāma* by Ferdowsī, and specifically in the story of Alexander, mentions the duality and two-trunk nature of the *Wāq tree*, and it is not stated in any other source. Regarding the fruits of this tree, as mentioned, they sometimes are human heads, animal heads, human and animal heads, or human figures, but in most cases, the fruits are male and female. While Ferdowsī's depiction of the *Wāq tree* highlights its dual-trunk symbolism in Persian literature, similar arboreal motifs in Islamic religious thought—such as the Qurʾānic trees of *Zaqqūm* and *Ṭūbā*—offer a contrasting perspective, which the following section explores.

**Figure 1. Illustration of the Zaqqūm Tree depicts its infernal growth, from Mīr Haydar, *Mir'āj-nāma,* 840/1436, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Paris, MS Supplément Persan, fol. 53v, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427195m/f112.item.r=%22turc 190%22.**

## THE TREE IN ISLAMIC THOUGHT

The Qurʾān references several trees, each shrouded in mystery and rich with symbolic meaning, inviting a range of interpretations. Among them are the *Ṭūbā tree*—known by names like the cosmic tree, the inverted tree, the blessed tree or *shajarat al-Ṭayyiba*—alongside the *Sidrat al-Muntahā*, the blessed *(Mubārak) tree* and the *Zaqqūm* (a tree of hell). These trees appear in the Qurʾānic text with an enigmatic allure, their ambiguous descriptions encouraging readers to explore diverse meanings.[36] In *Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt*,[37] the *Zaqqūm tree* is vividly depicted as an infernal growth, "bearing the heads of demons, springing from the roots of hell, its trunk resembling the heads of devils, from which they eat and fill their bellies."[38] This haunting image is brought to life in the *Mirʾāj-nāma* of Mīr Ḥaydar, and an illustration (see Figure 1) captures the scene's otherworldly terror. Yet, unlike the dual-trunk *Wāq tree* in Ferdowsī's *Shāhnāma*, Qurʾānic and other sacred Islamic texts make no mention of trees with two trunks nor do they describe the fruit as human. This contrast highlights a unique departure in Persian literary tradition, so the *Wāq tree*'s dual nature and anthropomorphic fruit (that are often male

[36] Mansour Pahlavan and Seyyed Abdol Majid Hosseini Zadeh, "The Forbidden Tree in Jewish and Islamic Texts," *Journal of Religions and Mysticism* 41, no. 1 (2009): 47, https://jrm.ut.ac.ir/article_22420.html?lang=en.

[37] The tree's description is also mentioned in Surah Ad-Dukhan, verse 43, and in Surah Al-Isra, verse 60.

[38] Qurʾān 37:60–64.

and female) stand apart from the Qurʾānic imagery, offering distinct cultural perspectives that may intersect with other influences. Also, in *ḥadīth*, the *Zaqqūm tree* bears a bitter fruit and it is narrated by Imam Baqir (d. 114 AH/733 CE) that "*Zaqqūm* is a tree that emerges from the depths of Hell, and its fruit is like the heads of devils."[39] Therefore, neither in the Qurʾānic trees nor in the mentioned *ḥadīth* example do the *Zaqqūm tree* or *Mubārak tree* (with different names) have double trunks nor are their fruits human.

The *Shajarat al-Kawn*[40] manuscript uses the metaphor of a tree to describe creation and many intertwined discussions of existence, the levels of existence, the perfect human and more. In this book, it is stated the *Shajarat al-Kawn*, which can be translated as existence and creation, has two different branches but a single root, which is will, and its branch is power. Sometimes, in *Shajarat al-Kawn*, "existence" has also been compared to a *Shajarat* (tree).[41] In the opinion of Ibn ʿArabī, in the book"*Mamad al-Himam* (*Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*), the perfect human, whether male or female, is the fruit of *Shajarat al-Wujūd* (the Tree of Being).[42] Sufi thinkers like Ibn ʿArabī view cosmic trees as profound symbols of Divine unity, reflecting the interconnectedness of all existence. In Ibn ʿArabī's cosmological framework, as detailed in works like *Futuḥāt al-Makkīyya*, he describes the universe as a manifestation of the Divine Breath,[43] where the tree symbolises the hierarchical order of existence—from the Divine essence to the material world. The dual-trunk *Wāq tree*, with its masculine and feminine branches, can be interpreted through Ibn ʿArabī's lens as an embodiment of the Divine names and attributes, balancing opposites like life and death, mercy and justice. This perspective parallels the Kabbalistic interplay of life and death in the Tree of Life and Knowledge, where the *sefirot* represent Divine emanations mediating between the infinite and finite world. For Ibn ʿArabī, the tree's unity underscores the Sufi concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd*[44] (Unity of Being), where all dualities are reconciled in the Divine reality.

## THE TREE OF LIFE AND KNOWLEDGE IN JEWISH THOUGHT

In Jewish tradition, two pivotal trees stand at the heart of sacred narratives: the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. The Torah paints a vivid picture of their origins in the Book of

39 Muḥammad Ṭūsī, *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* [Al-Tibyān in the Exegesis of the Qur'ān], vol. 9 (Āl al-Bayt, 2010), 239.

40 According to a 2010 study by a researcher named Alawi Madghari, it was claimed the manuscript "Shajarat al-Kawn" was written by Ibn Ghānim al-Maqdisī (d. 678 AH/1280 CE), not Ibn ʿArabī. For more details, see: Younes Alawi Madghari, "Critical Study of the Erroneous Attribution of the Book *Shajarat al-Kawn* to Ibn ʾArabī instead of to Ibn Ghānim al-Maqdisī," *Journal of Islamic and Social Sciences Rotterdam* 1, no. 1 (2010): 125.

41 Saeed Vaez et al., "A Look at the Use of the Metaphor of the Blessed Tree in Representing Mystical and Sufi Terminology with an Introduction to the Examples of the Word Ṭayyiba," *Journal of the Stylistic of Persian Poem and Prose (Bahar-e-Adab)* 7, no. 24 (2014): 353. Also, see: 'Izz al-Dīn 'Abd al-Salām ibn Aḥmad al-Maqdisī, *Šağarat al-kawn* [The Tree of the Universe], copied by 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-'Alqamī, 1698–1699, MS Arabe 5291, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, f. 279, 283.

42 Vaez et al., "A Look at the Use of the Metaphor," 355.

43 William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (State University of New York Press, 1989), 129–31.

44 Ibid., 100.

Genesis,[45] where God creates a paradise in Eden and places humanity within it, causing every fruitful and beautiful tree to flourish. Yet, amid this splendour, God issues a solemn warning: "You shall not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will surely die."[46] This prohibition introduces a profound tension, framing the Tree of Knowledge as a symbol of temptation and consequence, distinct from the life-giving promise of the Tree of Life. These trees, with their deep symbolic resonance, offer a crucial perspective for understanding the dual-trunk motif in the Zaragoza Bible, where Jewish iconography may intersect with the *Wāq tree*'s depiction in the *Demotte Shāhnāma*.

This tension deepens in Kabbalistic tradition,[47] and the Tree of Knowledge takes on a darker name: the Tree of Death. The *Zohar*,[48] a foundational text of Kabbalistic thought, explores this duality with striking intensity, presenting a stark polarity between the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death—a contrast that remains understated in the Book of Genesis narrative. According to the *Zohar*, the Tree of Knowledge is intrinsically linked to mortality: Its fruit is an elixir of death, for whoever takes it will surely die.[49] This ominous portrayal casts the Tree of Knowledge as a harbinger of doom, a far cry from the life-affirming essence of the Tree of Life. The *Zohar* further underscores this divide, declaring that "anyone who abandons the Torah has abandoned the Tree of Life,"[50] tying spiritual fidelity to the life-giving tree while associating deviation with death.[51] These Kabbalistic interpretations offer a profound framework for understanding the dual-trunk *Wāq tree* in the *Demotte Shāhnāma* and its potential echoes in the Zaragoza Bible, where the interplay of life and death, male and female, may reflect a shared symbolic language between Persian and Jewish traditions.

The Tree of Life in Jewish mysticism or Kabbalah is depicted as a diagram to facilitate the visualisation of the concepts contained within it, and this diagram is also a kind of map of the creation of the world.[52] The Tree of Life in Judaism originates from the realm of the heavens and from the essence and inner nature of Divinity, and it consists of ten aspects. According to Jewish belief, Divine forces manifest in the form of a supernatural human or tree, and simultaneously, Divinity exists in its outer and inner aspects. Sometimes, interpretations based on the spiritual powers of humanity have been made in the Tree of Life,[53] and from this perspective, it is similar to Islamic mysticism.

---

45 Gen. 2:9.

46 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī and Abū Zayd Aḥmad ibn Sahl Balkhī, *Kitāb al-Badʾ wa'l-Taʾrīkh* [The Book of the Beginning and History], ed. Clément Huart (Ernest Leroux, 1899), 37.

47 Jewish mysticism is known as Kabbalah and appeared in the Middle Ages around 1200. It is also said the Kabbalah draws from ancient Iranian theology, but this borrowing does not detract from its originality, for it replaced the dualism in God and nature with the absolute unity of cause and substance [Gershom Scholem, "Chapter One: The Problem," in *Origins of the Kabbalah*, ed. R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, trans. Allan Arkush (The Jewish Publication Society and Princeton University Press, 1987), 6–7].

48 *Zohar*, meaning "brightness," is the most famous and important book of the Kabbalistic tradition, which circulated as a collection of mystical treatises among the Castilian Kabbalists in the early years of 1280 CE [Shiva Kaviani. *Kabbalah, Jewish Mysticism, and Philosophy* (Fararavan, 2021), 28].

49 Schwartz, *Tree of Souls*, LXXXVI.

50 Rav Michael Laitman, *The Zohar*, trans. K. A. David Brushin (Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2007), 365.

51 Schwartz, *Tree of Souls*, LXXXVI.

52 Pahlavan and Hosseini Zadeh, "The Forbidden Tree," 32.

53 Shiva Kaviani. *Kabbalah, Jewish Mysticism, and Philosophy* (Fararavan, 2021), 36.

The description of the positioning of the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge relative to each other, by some Jewish thinkers, is such that the Tree of Knowledge, with its branches and leaves, surrounds the Tree of Life.[54] Many mediaeval commentators used the term "*bemitsiut*" to refer to the true centre of the garden and attempted to explain how both trees could be exactly in one place. A Jewish thinker named Rabbenu Bahya[55] (d. 741 AH/1340 CE) viewed the trees as two branches emerging from a common trunk and located in the centre of the garden. Another thinker named Rabbenu Asher Ben Yehiel[56] (Rosh) (d. 727 AH/1327 CE) states the Tree of Life was surrounded by the Tree of Knowledge. So, both trees stood next to each other, one inside the other, in the centre of the garden. R. Joseph Kimhi (d. 565 AH/1170 CE) offers an alternative interpretation; he states the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge occupied the same place because they were the same tree.[57] From a mystical perspective, the Tree of Knowledge is a female tree and represents basic knowledge. In contrast, the Tree of Life is a male tree and represents the highest forms of knowledge, merging with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, these two trees represent an ascending curve through which the process of human salvation is completed and true life is attained.[58] In the book of *Zohar*, it is written that the Tree of Knowledge is a small human from which death and life, representing the forbidden and the permitted, originate.[59] All goodness refers to the Tree of Life, which is entirely good[60] and has no evil.[61]

## THE TWO-TRUNKED TREE IN THE *DEMOTTE SHĀHNĀMA* AND THE TREES OF LIFE AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE ZARAGOZA BIBLE

The *Demotte Shāhnāma* is an exquisite and valuable work of the Ilkhanate period, created in the style of the first Tabriz school. One of the works depicted in this *Shāhnāma* is Alexander's encounter with a talking tree, which showcases its prominent narrative. These *Wāq trees* feature two main trunks that intertwine as they rise upward (Figure 2). Figure 3 presents an example of Jewish thought in the final form of a tree, depicted in a sacred Torah book called

54 Pahlavan and Zadeh, "The Forbidden Tree," 38.

55 Rabbenu Bahya Ben Asher wrote interpretation on the Book of Genesis. Most researchers believe his interpretation was not before 1291 CE [David Goldstein, "The Citations of Judah ben Solomon ha-Cohen in the Commentary to Genesis of Rabbenu Bahya ben Asher," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 26, no. 1-2 (1975): 106].

56 Asher ben Yehiel was a German rabbi who was born in Cologne around 1250 CE [Rice Amran-Cohen, "A Russian Student at the Yesiba in Toledo in the Time of Asher ben Yehiel, ha-Rosh," *Yearbook of Medieval Studies* 20, no. 1 (1990): 9, https://doi.org/10.3989/aem.1990.v20.1140].

57 Maier Becker, "A Tree in the Garden," *Beloved Words: Milin Havivin* 6 (2012–2013): 2.

58 Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, "The Tree of Life and the Tree of Death: A Study of Gnostic Symbols," *Religion* 17, no. 4 (1987): 339, https://doi.org/10.1016/0048-721X(87)90058-3.

59 Shimon Bar Yohai et al., eds., *The Zohar* (Kabbalah Publishing, 2022), 118.

60 This is different to the view of Islamic thinkers. In this viewpoint, everything should be good and it is only human ignorance that calls some of it good and some bad [Rom Landau, *The Philosophy of Ibn ʿArabī* (George Allen& Unwin Ltd,1959), 45]. In Ibn ʿArabī's thought, there is no absolute duality and his perception of absolute reality is the same as absolute good [op cit., 44]. In Ibn Sīnā's depiction, God is the absolute good, and all His creations are inherently good [Jules Janssens and Daniel De Smet, eds. Ibn Sīna *and his Heritage: Acts of the International Colloquium Leuven--Louvain-la-Neuve* (Leuven University Press, 1999), 172]. Absolute evil does not exist because evil itself is a lack [op cit., 181].

61 Shimon Bar Yohai, eds., *The Zohar* (Kabbalah Publishing, 2022), 10.

the Zaragoza Bible, produced in 806 AH/1404 CE by the Jews of Iberia. The production of this work predates this event. The tree in the Zaragoza Bible also has two main branches, intertwined with each other, much like the *Wāq trees* in the *Demotte* illustration. The depiction of the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge in the Zaragoza Bible was illustrated after the pictorial example of the *Wāq tree* in the *Demotte Shāhnāma*.

**Figure 2. Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* (*Demotte*), Alexander and the Speaking Tree, 735/1335, Tabriz, Freer Gallery of Art, F1935.23, https://asia.si.edu/explore-art-culture/collections/search/edanmdm:fsg_F1935.23/.**

**Figure 3. A leaf from the Zaragoza Bible,** 806/1404**, Spain, BNF, Ms. Hébreu 31, f. 4r, p**hoto by the first author.

## THE CONCEPTS PRESENT IN THE TWO CASE STUDIES

In the painting of the *Demotte Shāhnāma*, it is likely the painters considered the literary text of the *Shāhnāma* in their illustrations of the introduced versions. It seems the type of colouring of the trunks of the trees also varies according to their feminine and masculine characteristics (Figure 4). In the illustration of the *Demotte Shāhnāma*, one branch is depicted with fruits shaped like women's heads (Figure 5) and another branch with fruits shaped like men's heads (Figure 6), and in both trees, animal heads are also seen. The painter has distinguished and separated the feminine and masculine characteristics (rough and delicate) with light and dark outlines. The dark green outline is for the branch with masculine fruits and the red outline is for the tree with feminine fruits. The concept of the tree having two trunks and two branches is only mentioned in Ferdowsī's poetry, and a complete representation of this can be found in *Demotte*'s illustration (Figure 4). This feature in the trees of the *Demotte Shāhnāma* aligns with the duality present in Ferdowsī's poetry regarding this tree. In the *Shahnama*, Alexander discovers the existence of the Water of Life during his sea voyage and Khiżr is with him. However, at a crossroads, they lose each other and Khiżr reaches the Water of Life, while

Alexander, who was greedy for eternal life, is deprived of it. Thus, Ferdowsī refers to the duality of benefiting from goodness and being deprived of evil. A significant aspect of contrast in ancient Iran and Jewish works is the shared concept of good and evil. The duality of the struggle is between good and evil forces that are situated in a concept higher than pugnacity.[62] The *Shāhnāma* frequently reflects the beliefs of the Iranian people from ancient times, who believed in the forces of good and evil, thus embodying the binary nature and dichotomy of life.

**Figure 4. Two feminine and masculine trunks in the *Wāq tree, Demotte Shāhnāma*, 735/1335, Tabriz, Freer Gallery of Art, F1935.23, https://asia.si.edu/explore-art-culture/collections/search/edanmdm:fsg_ F1935.23/**

**Figure 5. Fruits as woman in the *Wāq tree* in the *Demotte Shāhnāma***

**Figure 6. Fruits as man in the *Wāq tree* in the *Demotte Shāhnāma***

Furthermore, the conflict between good and evil forces in the Shahnameh text is indicative of the *Wāq tree* in the *Demotte Shāhnāma*. The *Wāq tree*, with its opposing polarity of good and evil, reflects both traits concurrently. This is evident in the existence of good and evil in two main branches, two main trunks or their fruits—man and woman. Considering literary narratives, apart from Ferdowsi's poems, few sources mention the paired nature of the *Wāq tree*'s existence. By examining the studies samples, it is observed that despite Ferdowsī mentioning two trunks and two roots, the artists took different approaches. Instead of depicting two roots, the artists illustrate two trunks, which could represent the trunks of good and evil or the trunks of men and women, as the fruits of these trees are often depicted as male and female. The issue of good and evil and its connection to feminine and masculine qualities also exists in the mysticism of Ibn ʿArabī. In the mystical tradition as well, Ibn ʿArabī, discussing femininity, masculinity and duality, sometimes considered women inferior to men and attributed evil to women, while at other times the feminine and masculine dimensions are

[62] Shaul Shaked et al., "Iranian Influence on Judaism: First Century B.C.E. to Second Century C.E," *Journal of Seven Heavens* 12, no. 48 (2010): 60–62.

complementary in achieving balance and harmony on the journey towards the Divine essence.[63] So, in Ibn ʿArabī's opinion, in every individual's being, feminine and masculine elements can be found.[64] This suggests the artists likely aimed to reflect the social or mystical dimensions and visible aspects of the struggle between good and evil.

In Figure 2, a tree has grown atop a hill piled with stones. The background is painted and separated with two colours, blue and red, which harkens back to the tradition of Sephardic Jewish illustration. Sephardic Bibles use limited colour palettes, often consisting of red, blue, gold and black.[65] This tree was probably green at first, but now its colour is blackish. On both sides of the tree, two large birds are flying, facing each other in profile. These birds are heavenly, and three long feathers in the tail of one of them can be seen (Figure 7), representing angels who protect the tree. Medieval Jewish painters often depicted angels as birds.[66] In Sephardic Bibles, human figures are rarely used in sacred scenes, which is in line with the prohibition of depicting humans in Judaism, as mentioned in the Book of Exodus.[67] Therefore, these two birds are cherubs. The trunk of this tree splits into two large branches, and the branches are covered with sharp, three-lobed leaves. The image in this Sephardic Bible prioritises symbolism over realism and reflects semi-aniconic[68] Jewish traditions, which are also observed in the stylised leaves of the Bible trees of Zaragoza. Additionally, the division of the background into two colours, blue and red, along with two birds and two trees, are reflecting a binary theme in the Kabbalistic tradition. In this tradition, the colour blue is a protection against evil forces,[69] and blue is a symbol of Divine mercy.[70] While the colour red represents harsh judgment.[71]. The two birds, alongside other symbols, not only contribute to the composition but also help in establishing a dual connection with other symbolic elements. The tree in this artwork has grown on the Mount of Olives. This contrast is even observed in the Hebrew text surrounding the artwork. The characteristic of including sacred text around the

63 Mohammad Rasool Imani Khoshkho and Fatemeh Mirrahimi, "The Duality in Ibn ʿArabi's Metaphysics and Gender-Related Problem of Evil," *Ayeneh Maʿrefat* 25, no. 1 (2025): 37, https://doi.org/10.48308/jipt.2025.237245.1569.

64 Ibid.

65 Sarit Shalev-Eyni, "Sephardic Book Art in Transition: The Biblical Codex and Mudejar Visual Culture," in *Sephardic Book Art of the 15th Century*, ed. Luis Urbono Afonso and Tiago Moita (National Library of Portugal, 2020), 53.

66 Ameisenowa, "The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography," 342. Also, the most famous phrase in the Bible regarding art limits the creation and use of artistic works. It is permissible to shape images of animals, living beings, birds and fish. Depicting forms in the realm of Shekhinah (Divine presence), such as the faces of seraphim and angels, and the depiction of humans alone is forbidden [Vivian B. Mann, *Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4, 30].

67 Exod. 20:4; Andreina Contessa, "An Uncommon Representation of the Temple Implements in a Fifteenth-Century Sephardic Bible," *Ars Judaica* 5 (2009): 40, 51.

68 The presence of two birds in the work that serve as cherubs allows us to use the term "semi-aniconic". "Aniconism refers to cults where there is no iconic representation of the deity (anthropomorphic or theriomorphic)" [Karel van der Toorn, ed., *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Peeters, 1997), 21].

69 Gadi Sagiv, "Dazzling Blue: Color Symbolism, Kabbalistic Myth, and the Evil Eye in Judaism," *Numen* 64, no. 2–3 (2017): 183, https://doi.org/10.1163/15685276-12341459.

70 Ibid., 188.

71 Ibid., 190.

image is one of the features of Sephardic Bibles, which were written in gold or bright colours.[72] In the Zaragoza Bible, it is also executed in red. In the text surrounding the work, which is from the book of Zechariah in the Torah, dual symbols are used and it refers to the splitting of the Mount of Olives:

> In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.[73]

**Figure 7. Two birds in the work, a leaf from the Zaragoza Bible, 806/1404, Spain, National Library of Paris (BNF), Hébreu 31, f.4r, photo by the first author.**

Although the text surrounding the artwork mentions the Mount of Olives, the presence of two cherubs as guardians around the trees and the different shapes of the tree leaves indicate these are not olive trees (Figure 8). In medieval art, symbolism takes precedence over botanical accuracy and the shape of the leaves does not represent an olive tree. Additionally, in the Torah, cherubs are not associated with the protection of olive trees; rather, they protect the trees of life.[74] Therefore, the tree in the Bible of Zaragoza is not an olive tree and is related to the trees of life and knowledge. The trunk of the tree is singular and immediately splits into two strong branches. Considering the shape of the tree in the painting, one of the branches surrounds the other. The other branch also splits into two main branches facing east

72 Katrin Kogman-Appel, *The Kennicott Bible: A Masterpiece of Jewish Book Art* (Bodleian Library Publishing, 2023), 60.
73 Zech. 14:4.
74 Ameisenowa, "The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography," 330.

and west. According to the opinions of Jewish thinkers like Rabbenu Asher Ben Yehiel, as previously discussed, the Tree of Knowledge surrounds the Tree of Life,[75] and the Tree of Knowledge has good and evil aspects.[76] Therefore, in the image, the left branch belongs to the Tree of Knowledge and the right branch belongs to the Tree of Life. Additionally, according to the opinion, a Jewish thinker named Rabbenu Bahya observes that both trees have a single trunk, leaving no doubt that these are the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge.

**Figure 8. Leaves of trees, Zaragoza Bible, 806/1404, Spain, National Library of Paris BNF, Ms. Hébreu. 31, f.4r, photo by the first author.**

Additionally, the image of the bird on the left has been damaged. It appears the damage to the bird was intentional, as there are signs of deliberate abrasion. According to Figure 9, the blue space around the bird remains intact, while the entire body of the bird has been destroyed. In addition to Jews, Christians played a role in creating Jewish ritual art and illuminated manuscripts.[77] Therefore, it is highly likely this bird, which is in the role of a cherub, was deliberately destroyed and iconoclasted because it was considered a symbol of sin. The destroyed bird is placed in front of the Tree of Knowledge. In the sources, only cherubs protect the Tree of Life, not the Tree of Knowledge. This is because the Tree of Life is associated with Divine life and eternal life, while the tree of knowledge is associated with judgment, good and evil, and death.[78] Therefore, the Tree of Life and the cherub associated with it is considered sacred and have remained untouched. The type of dualism seen in Jewish texts is similar to Iranian dualism in that it contrasts the material and spiritual worlds.[79] In the comparison made between these two works, both depict the themes of good and evil, and there is a significant structural similarity between the two works, except for the details, which is evident.

**Figure 9. Damaged bird, Zaragoza Bible, 806/1404, Spain, National Library of Paris BNF, Ms. Hébreu. 31, f.4r, photo by the first author.**

75 Becker, "A Tree in the Garden," 2.
76 Joshua Hall McIlvaine, *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* (Dodd, 1847), 27, 28.
77 Mann, *Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts*, 4, 111.
78 *Zohar* 1:36b, Aryeh Kaplan, trans., *The Bahir: Illumination* (Samuel Weiser, 1997), 45.
79 Shaked et al., "Iranian Influence on Judaism," 61.

## COMPARISON OF STUDY SAMPLES

In the Torah, specifically the Book of Genesis, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life are placed together in one location; hence, there is also an indication of duality in the Torah text. Additionally, Kabbalists have attributed the prohibition of the Tree of Knowledge to the Tree of Death, thereby highlighting the duality of death and life in the Jewish trees. On the other hand, according to Jewish mysticism, these two trees are identified as one being female and the other male.[80] According to this perspective, the tree of death is female and equivalent to basic knowledge and the first human, while the tree of life is male and represents the highest knowledge.[81] In Islamic literary texts and in the *Shāhnāma*, the male and female natures of the trees in the story of Alexander are also mentioned. The image related to the *Demotte Shāhnāma* (Figure 2) and the illustrated example presented from the Torah (Zaragoza) (Figure 3) are similar in overall shape, and both trees, in terms of being male and female, are equal. In Ferdowsī's narrative, the female tree foretells Alexander's death. In the book of *Zohar*, the female tree is also equivalent to the tree of death. Therefore, both refer to the male and female natures of the tree. The reference in the literary texts of the *Shāhnāma* to the duality of the *Wāq trees* may have roots in a thought that prevailed in Iranian society since ancient times. Therefore, the existence of contrasts between death and life in the social thought of ancient times likely influenced how painters depicted the trunks of the *Wāq trees* and their human fruits. This thought probably entered Iranian society through Jewish teachings, as evidenced by Talmudic references to interactions between Persians and Jews during the Sasanian era.[82]

Islamic philosophies offer parallel insights to Jewish thought in conceptualising trees as symbols of existence and duality. Ibn Sīnā views the world as a hierarchical manifestation of Divinity. In his opinion, the tree metaphor signifies the orderly descent of existence from God as the absolute good, without inherent evil—contrasting with the Jewish Tree of Knowledge's association with good and evil.[83] Similarly, the *Shajarat al-Kawn* (Tree of Existence) is interpreted as a single trunk symbolising the Perfect Human, embodying the Unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), where dualities such as life and death are reconciled in the Divine essence.[84] This differs from the Kabbalistic dual-trunked Trees of Life and Knowledge, which represent opposing forces; however, both traditions use tree imagery to examine the human condition and Divine relationship, highlighting a shared intellectual heritage in Jewish and Islamic thought. Ibn Sīnā, in his *Ishārāt va Tanbīhāt*, believes that good is something that leads to

80 Gilhus, "The Tree of Life," 339.
81 Ibid.
82 There have been studies on historical Iranian-Talmudic interactions [for example, Shai Secunda, "The Talmudic Bei Abedan and the Sasanian Attempt to 'Recover' the Lost Avesta," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (2011), http://www.jstor.org/stable/41431612]. Babylonian rabbis participated in Sasanian culture [op cit., 343] and interfaith discussions were an important aspect of interactions between the Jewish communities in Sasanian Iran [op cit., 357].
83 Janssens and De Smet, *Ibn Sīna and His Heritage*, 172.
84 Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 129–31.

human perfection, while evil is a factor that hinders this perfection in humans.[85] Evil deprives perfection of what it deserves.[86] In some cases, gender discrimination can be observed in mystical literature, such as in *ḥadīth*,[87] which define women as being of a lower status than men and considers evil to be related to women. One factor is their way of looking at existence and humanity, which is influenced by the conditions of the time, philosophical ideas and religious interpretations of their contemporary society.[88]

Conversely, Islamic thought may have influenced Kabbalistic tree symbolism in the Zaragoza Bible. The Trees of Life and Knowledge in the Zaragoza Bible share a common trunk, mirroring *Shajarat al-Kawn* as a symbol of unity and the Perfect Human[89], likely due to Islamic cultural influences on Sephardic Jews in Iberia.[90] Thus, the *Wāq tree*'s dual trunks in the *Demotte Shāhnāma*, with separate female and male roots, may reflect Kabbalistic thought, while the Zaragoza Bible's common trunk embodies Islamic notions of unity. The intertwining of the *Wāq tree*'s trunks in the *Demotte Shāhnāma* represents unity and the Perfect Human in Islamic tradition, while the Tree of Knowledge encompassing the Tree of Life in the Zaragoza Bible reflects Kabbalistic thought in the *Zohar*, illustrating the interplay of these traditions.

In terms of appearance, the Tree of Knowledge in the Bible of Zaragoza has distinctly transformed into two main branches, one representing good and the other evil. However, the Tree of Life is not like this and thus aligns with the description in the Torah (Figure 10). The *Wāq trees* in the *Demotte Shāhnāma* initially has two separate trunks (Figure 11), with its fruits being male and female, which can be considered as good and evil. Therefore, the *Wāq trees* conceptually closely corresponds with the Tree of Knowledge in Judaism. The painter of the *Wāq trees* in this work has drawn on Jewish thought (Figures 10, 11).

Additionally, the fruits of the trees in the Islamic literary text (Ferdowsī) are human. Therefore, social feedback is also observed in the writing of the Islamic literary text, which is reflected in Islamic painting, particularly in the design of the fruits of the trees. On re-examining the Torah, in the Book of Genesis or other sections, the prohibition of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, or the Tree of Death (from the perspective of the *Zohar*), is mentioned. It should be noted that the manifestation of the characteristics of each of these two trees, death and life, is also hidden in the type of their fruits. The fruit of the Tree of Death was forbidden, unlike the fruit of the Tree of Life. This prohibition can be equated with good and evil. In Islamic literary works, the definition of the fruits of the tree of knowledge aligns with prevailing

85 Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt va Tanbīhāt* [The Book of Pointers and Reminders], ed. Ḥasan Mishkan Ṭabasi (Farabi Library, 1981), 160–61.

86 Shams C. Inati, *Ibn Sina's Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics: An Analysis and Annotated Translation* (Columbia University Press, 2014), 52.

87 For example, Al-Sayyid al-Raḍī, *Nahj al-Balāgha* [The Path of Eloquence], vol. 1 (Dar al-Kitab Lebanese, n.d.), 510.

88 Imani Khoshkho and Mirrahimi, "Duality in Ibn ʿArabi's Metaphysics," 25.

89 From the perspective of Ibn ʿArabī, men and women share in achieving all levels of perfection, one of which is the position of polarity according to a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet (pbuh), إن النساء شقائق الرجال (a man and a woman are two halves of each other) [Mohammad Javad Pashaei, "Differences and Similarities between Men and Women from Ibn Arabi's Point of View: Critical Study," *Journal of Women and Family Studies* 24, no. 93 (2021): 163, https://doi.org/10.22095/jwss.2022.308799.2812].

90 Kogman-Appel, "Hebrew Manuscript Painting in Late Mediaeval Spain," 248.

societal thought, with the fruits depicted as a contrast between man and woman, corresponding to good and evil.

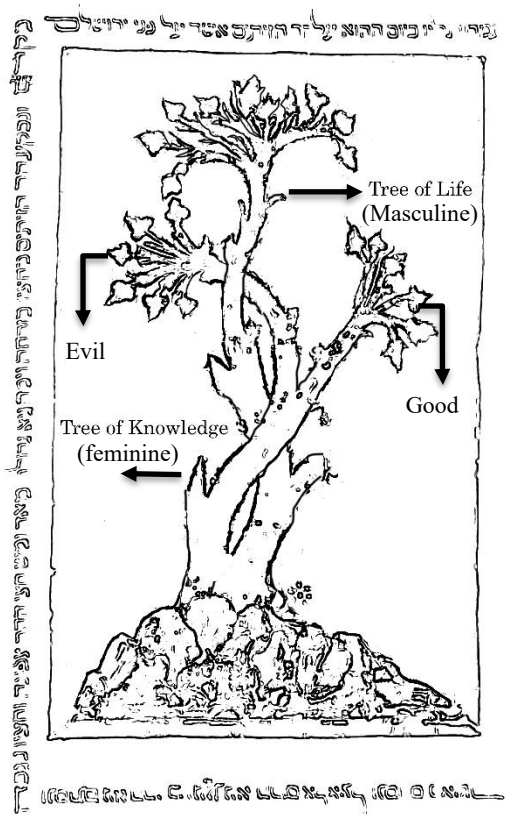


**Figure 10. Drawing the overall shape of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge**

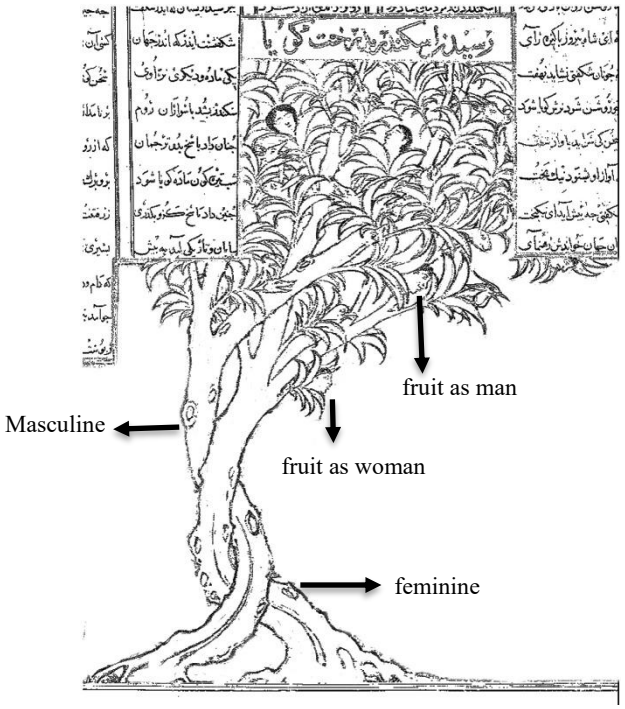


**Figure 11. Drawing the overall dual shape of the *Wāq tree* in *Demotte Shāhnāma***

Consequently, these literary definitions have entered Islamic miniature painting. The painter has also employed this approach in the illustration of some trees in his artwork. Therefore, by examining the introduced study samples, it becomes clear that the design of the trunks of the trees in *Demotte Shāhnāma*, through cultural influences, aligns with Jewish scientific texts such as the *Zohar*, and their fruits are a combination of Islamic and Jewish thought.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals a profound cross-cultural dialogue between Jewish and Islamic traditions, where the dual-trunk motif in the *Demotte Shāhnāma* and Zaragoza Bible reflects a shared moral framework of good and evil. Both works engage with Kabbalistic symbolism, notably the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge, and Islamic thought, as seen in the *Wāq tree*'s dual trunks interpreted through Ibn ʿArabī's Sufi cosmology of Divine unity. Ibn Sīnā's view of the tree as a metaphor for the orderly descent of existence from the Divine contrasts with the Jewish Tree of Knowledge's duality, while the Zaragoza Bible's common trunk echoes *Shajarat al-Kawn*, reflecting Islamic influences on Sephardic Jewish art. The deliberate destruction of the left cherub in the Zaragoza Bible, likely by a later Christian owner, highlights the manuscript's

complex reception history, as alterations to Jewish art were documented in later periods. The Sasanian-era Jewish-Persian cultural exchange likely shaped Persian literature's moral themes, influencing the *Demotte Shāhnāma*'s resonance with Kabbalistic thought, despite no direct impact in Ferdowsī's *Shāhnāma*. This comparative analysis underscores how shared theological concepts transcended cultural boundaries, producing rich artistic works. In both samples, the dual-trunk motif symbolises the enduring power of feminine and masculine, inviting future research into its evolution across other media to deepen understanding of Jewish and Islamic cultural heritage.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Taheri, Alireza. "The Sacred Tree, the Talking Tree and Formation of Wak Wak Motif." *Bāgh-e Naẓar* 8, no. 19 (2012): 43–54. https://www.bagh-sj.com/article_719.html?lang=fa.

Al-Maqdisī, ʻIzz al-Dīn ʻAbd al-Salām ibn Aḥmad. *Šağarat al-kawn* [The Tree of the Universe]. Copied by ʻAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʻUmar al-ʻAlqamī, 1698–1699. MS Arabe 5291. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Al-Muqaddasī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, and Abū Zayd Aḥmad ibn Sahl Balkhī. *Kitāb al-Badʾ wa'l-Taʾrīkh* [The Book of the Beginning and History]. Edited by Clément Huart. Ernest Leroux, 1899.

Al-Sayyid al-Raḍī. *Nahj al-Balāgha* [The Path of Eloquence]. Vol. 1. Dar al-Kitab Lebanese, n.d.

Ameisenowa, Zofja. "The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography." *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2, no. 4 (1939): 326–45. https://doi.org/10.2307/750042.

Amran-Cohen, Rice. "A Russian Student at the Yesiba in Toledo in the Time of Asher ben Yehiel, ha-Rosh." *Yearbook of Medieval Studies* 20, no. 1 (1990): 9–13. https://doi.org/10.3989/aem.1990.v20.1140.

Aron, Lewis. "The Tree of Knowledge: Good and Evil." *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 15, no. 5 (2005): 669–701. https://doi.org/10.1080/10481881509348859.

Bacqué-Grammont, Jean-Louis, Michele Bernardini and Luca Berardi. *L'Arbre Anthropogène du Wāq Wāq, les Femmes-fruits et les iles des Femmes* [The Anthropogenic Tree of Wāq Wāq, the Fruit-Women, and the Islands of the Women]. Università Degli Studi di Napoli L'Orientale, 2007.

Bar Yohai, Shimon, Moses de León, and Michael Berg, eds. *The Zohar*. 23 vols. Kabbalah Publishing, 2022.

Bauks, Michaela. "Der Garten in Eden und seine Bäume. Ein Beitrag zur Botanik aus Sicht der biblischen Symbolsprache" [The Garden of Eden and its Trees. A Contribution to Botany from the Perspective of Biblical Symbolism]. In *Arbeiten zur Kulturgeschichte der Antike und des Nahen Ostens* 8, 37–71. Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2013.

Bauks, Michaela. "Sacred Trees in the Garden of Eden and their Ancient Near Eastern Precursors." *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 3, no. 3 (2012): 267–94. https://doi.org/10.13109/jaju.2012.3.3.267.

Becker, Maier. "A Tree in the Garden." *Beloved Words: Milin Havivin* 6 (2012–2013): 1–12.

Birouti, Shohreh, Amir Bagheri Garmarudi and Parnaz Goodarzparvari. "Reading the Iconological of the Ruling Visual Elements in the Ilkhanid Coins from a Perspective: The Discourse of Religion." *Journal of Islamic Crafts* 6, no. 2 (2022): 81–97. http://jih-tabriziau.ir/article-1-200-fa.html.

Brack, Jonathan. “Ibn Kammūnah is Going to Hell! Muslim-Jewish Polemics at the Ilkhanid Court.” *Mamlūk Studies Review* 27 (2024): 183–203. https://doi.org/10.6082/zm07-fy73.

Inati, Shams C. *Ibn Sina’s Remarks and Admonitions: Physics and Metaphysics: An Analysis and Annotated Translation*. Columbia University Press, 2014.

Canby, Sheila R. *Islamic Art in Detail*. Harvard University Press, 2006.

Chittick, William C. *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-ʿArabi’s Metaphysics of Imagination*. State University of New York Press, 1989.

Contessa Andreina. “An Uncommon Representation of the Temple Implements in a Fifteenth-Century Sephardic Bible.” *Ars Judaica* 5 (2009): 37–58.

Dawkins, Richard M. “Alexander and the Water of Life.” *Medium Ævum* 6, no. 3 (1937): 173–192. https://doi.org/10.2307/43626046.

Dodds, Jerrilynn D., ed. *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992.

Ferdowsī, Abū al-Qāsim. *Shāhnāma*. Vol. 6. Edited by Jalal Khaleghi-Motlagh. Iran Heritage Foundation, 2005.

Gilhus, Ingvild Sælid. “The Tree of Life and the Tree of Death: A Study of Gnostic Symbols.” *Religion* 17, no. 4 (1987): 337–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/0048-721X(87)90058-3.

Goldstein, David. “The Citations of Judah ben Solomon ha-Cohen in the Commentary to Genesis of Rabbenu Bahya ben Asher.” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 26, no. 1-2 (1975): 105–12.

Hedayati Zadeh, Sepideh, Saman Farzin and Mohammad Amin Hajizadeh, “The Impact of Iranian and Byzantine Religions on Ilkhanid Paintings (Case Study: Mostofi’s Shahnameh).” *Negarineh Islamic Art* 9, no. 23 (2022): 195–208. https://doi.org/10.22077/nia.2022.5542.1638.

Hodous, Florence. “Faith and the Law: Religious Beliefs and the Death Penalty in the Ilkhanate.” In *The Mongols’ Middle East*, edited by Bruno De Nicola and Charles Melville, 99–126. Brill, 2016.

Hosseini, Reza, and Fatemeh Heidari. “Analytical Study of the Role of the Speaking Tree in the Persian and Arabic Manuscripts of Qazwini’s ʿAjāʾib al-Makhlūqāt Illustrated in India.” *Studies of Asian Culture and Art* 2, no. 1 (2020): 131–156. https://doi.org/10.30465/acas.2020.5328.

Ibn al-Wardī, Sirāj al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar. *Kharīdat al-ʿAjāʾib wa Farīdat al-Gharāʾib* [The Precious Pearl of Wonders and the Unique Gem of Marvels]. Maṭbaʿat al-Ḥawādith, late 16th century.

Ibn-Ḫalaf Tabrīzī, Muḥammad Ḥusain. *Burhān-i Qāṭiʿ* [Conclusive Proof]. Vol. 4. Ibn Sīnā, 1963.

Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt va Tanbīhāt* [The Book of Pointers and Reminders]. Edited by Ḥasan Mishkan Ṭabasi. Farabi Library, 1981.

Imani Khoshkho, Mohammad Rasool, and Fatemeh Mirrahimi. "The Duality in Ibn ʿArabi's Metaphysics and Gender-Related Problem of Evil." *Ayeneh Maʻrefat* 25, no. 1 (2025): 21–40. https://doi.org/10.48308/jipt.2025.237245.1569.

Jaffe, Sam, and Yousef Casewit. "The Blessed Tree in the Works of Ibn Barrajan of Seville (d. 53/1141)." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 34, no. 3 (2023): 363–88. http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/jis/etad015.

Janssens, Jules, and Daniel De Smet, eds. *Avicenna and his Heritage: Acts of the International Colloquium Leuven–Louvain-la-Neuve*. Leuven University Press, 1999.

Javani, Asghar, Reza Afhami and Seyed Mohammad Mehrnia. "A Study of Unusual Elements in the Paintings of the Great Ilkhanid Shahnameh." *Negareh* 12, no. 42 (2017): 111–121. https://doi.org/10.22070/negareh.2017.534.

Kaplan, Aryeh, trans. *The Bahir: Illumination*. Samuel Weiser, 1997.

Kaviani, Shiva. *Kabbalah, Jewish Mysticism, and Philosophy*. Fararavan, 2021.

Khurradādbih, Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh. *Kitāb al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik* [The Book of Roads and Kingdoms]. Muʾassasah-i Farhangī Ḥanafī, Muʾassasah-i Taḥqīqāt va Nashr-i Mīrāth-i Mīllī, 1992.

Kogman-Appel, Katrin. "Hebrew Manuscript Painting in Late Medieval Spain: Signs of a Culture in Transition." *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 2 (2002): 246–72. https://doi.org/10.2307/3177268.

Kogman-Appel, Katrin. *The Kennicott Bible: A Masterpiece of Jewish Book Art*. Bodleian Library Publishing, 2023.

Laitman, Rav Michael. *The Zohar*. Translated by K. A. David Brushin. Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2007.

Landau, Rom. *The Philosophy of Ibn ʿArabī*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1959.

Madghari, Younes Alawi. "Critical Study of the Erroneous Attribution of the Book *Shajarat al-Kawn* to Ibn ʾArabī instead of to Ibn Ghānim al-Maqdisī." *Journal of Islamic and Social Sciences Rotterdam* 1, no. 1 (2010): 125–139.

Mann, Vivian B. *Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Mayse, Ariel Evan. "Tree of Life, Tree of Knowledge: Halakha and Theology in *Maʾor va-Shamesh*." *Tradition* 51, no. 1 (2019): 1–25. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26879523.

McIlvaine, Joshua Hall. *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. Dodd, 1847.

Milanesi, Enza. *The Carpet: Origins, Art and History*. Firefly Publishing, 1999.

Minorsky, Vladimir, and Vasily V. Barthold, Trans. *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam: The Regions of the World: A Persian Geography, 327AH–982AD*. Edited by Clifford E. Bosworth. Oxford University Press, 1937.

Nafīsī, Aḥmad ʿAlī (Nāẓim al-Aṭibbāʾ). *Farhang-i Nafīsī* [Nafīsī Dictionary]. Vol. 5. Khayyām, 1976.

Neusner, Jacob. *A History of the Jews in Babylonia IV: The Age of Shapur II*. E.J. Brill, 1965.

Pādshāh Shād, Muḥammad. *Farhang-i Ānandrāj* [Ānandrāj Dictionary]. Vol. 3. Nawal Kishore Press, 1892.

Pahlavan, Mansour, and Seyyed Abdol Majid Hosseini Zadeh. "The Forbidden Tree in Jewish and Islamic Texts." *Journal of Religions and Mysticism* 41, no. 1 (2009): 29–52. https://jrm.ut.ac.ir/article_22420.html?lang=en.

Pashaei, Mohammad Javad. "Differences and Similarities between Men and Women from Ibn Arabi's Point of View: Critical Study." *Journal of Women and Family Studies* 24, no. 93 (2021): 159–76. https://doi.org/10.22095/jwss.2022.308799.2812.

Pirnazar, Nahid. "Iranian History in Bābāī ben Lutf's Kitāb-i Anusī." *Iran Namag* 1, no. 2 (2016): 106–124.

Qashqaie, Parinaz, and Mahdi Mohammadi. "Iconological Analysis of the Transformation of Alexander's Painting and the Talking Tree from the Patriarchal Period to the Safavid Period." *Rahpooye Honarha-ye Sanaʾee* 2, no. 2 (2022): 81–93. https://doi.org/10.22034/rac.2023.560735.1028.

Reat, Noble Ross. "The Tree Symbol in Islam." *Studies in Comparative Religion* 19, no. 3 (1975): 1–15. http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/uploads/ArticlePDFs/277.pdf.

Sachau, Eduard C., trans. *Al-Bīrūnī's India: An Account of the Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Geography, Chronology, Astronomy, Customs, Laws and Astrology of India about A.D. 1030*. Vol. 1. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1910.

Sagiv, Gadi. "Dazzling Blue: Color Symbolism, Kabbalistic Myth, and the Evil Eye in Judaism." *Numen* 64, no. 2–3 (2017): 183–208. https://doi.org/10.1163/15685276-12341459.

Scholem, Gershom. "Chapter One: The Problem." In *Origins of the Kabbalah*, edited by R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, translated by Allan Arkush, 3–48. The Jewish Publication Society and Princeton University Press, 1987.

Schwartz, Howard. *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

Secunda, Shai. "The Talmudic Bei Abedan and the Sasanian Attempt to 'Recover' the Lost Avesta." *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (2011): 343–66. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41431612.

Shaked, Shaul, Sayyed Saeed Reza Montazeri and Majid Tameh. “Iranian Influence on Judaism: First Century B.C.E. to Second Century C.E.” *Journal of Seven Heavens* 12, no. 48 (2010): 51–73.

Shalev-Eyni, Sarit. “Sephardic Book Art in Transition: The Biblical Codex and Mudejar Visual Culture.” In *Sephardic Book Art of the 15th Century*, edited by Luis Urbono Afonso and Tiago Moita, 37–58. National Library of Portugal, 2020.

Tabatabaie, Somayeh. “The Presence of Woman-Fruits in Wâq and the Absence of Mother(s); Confliction or Adaptation. A Feminine-centered Reading of Hay Ibn Yaqzân Treatise.” *Sociological Journal of Art and Literature* 12, no. 1 (2020): 69–90. https://doi.org/10.22059/jsal.2020.78613.

Ṭarsūsī, Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan. *Dārāb-nāmah* [Book of Dārāb]. MS Or. 4615, fol. 43v–44r. British Museum, late 16th century.

Toorawa, Shawkat M. “Wāq al-Wāq: Fabulous, Fabular, Indian Ocean (?) Island(s).” *Emergences: Journal for the Study of Media & Composite Cultures* 10, no. 2 (2000): 387–402.

Ṭūsī, Muḥammad. *Al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān* [Al-Tibyān in the exegesis of the Qur’ān]. Vol. 9. Āl al-Bayt, 2010.

Vaez, Saeed, Mostaali Parsa Gholamreza, Taefi Shirzad and Dadi Dastjerdi Zohrellah. “A Look at the Use of the Allegory of the Tayyiba Tree in the Representation of the Terms of Mysticism and Sufism by Introducing the Examples of the Word Tayyiba.” *Journal of the Stylistic of Persian Poem and Prose (Bahar-e-Adab)* 7, no. 2 (2014): 347–66. https://www.bahareadab.com/article/%D9%86%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87%DB%8C%20%D8%A8%D9%87%20%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%AF%20%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%AB%DB%8C%D9%84%20%D8%B4%D8%AC%D8%B1%DB%80%20%D8%B7%DB%8C%D9%91%D8%A8%D9%87%20%D8%AF%D8%B1%20%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%86%D9%85%D9%88%D8%AF%20%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%AA%20%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%86%20%D9%88%20%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%88%D9%81%D8%8C%20%D8%A8%D8%A7%20%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%81%DB%8C%20%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%DB%8C%D9%82%20%DA%A9%D9%84%D9%85%D9%87%20%D8%B7%DB%8C%D9%91%D8%A8%D9%87.

Van der Toorn, Karel, ed. *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Peeters, 1997.

Zekavat, Sahar, and Khashayar Ghazizadeh. “Comparative Study of the Visual Characteristics of the Wak Wak Tree in Demot’s Shahnameh with the Story of Mashi and Mashianeh.” *Journal of Graphic Arts and Painting Research* 4, no. 7 (2022): 28–40. https://doi.org/10.22051/pgr.2022.40948.1139.