

**EXTENDED  
ABSTRACT****The study of Kufic inscriptional elements (Surah Yasin) in Shoushtar Congregational Mosque**Sahar Salehi <sup>1\*</sup>Seyyed Abootorab Ahmad Panah <sup>2</sup>

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**Introduction**

Shoushtar Congregational Mosque is one of the oldest mosques in Iran. Al-Motaze-bollah, the 13th Abbasid caliph, order the construction of this monument in 254 AH, and it was completed during the reign of 23rd Caliph, al-Mostarshedobellah (512-529 AH). The mosque was later renovated. This mosque has several inscriptions written in Kufic script. One of these inscriptions is mounted on the wall of the mosque. The inscription is 32 meters in length, with some of the verses of Surah Yasin being rendered in Kufic script. The current study aimed to investigate the elements of this inscription and its rules of calligraphy and visual quality. The current study aimed to find out the details of this valuable inscription, thereby revealing the specific feature of these inscriptional elements and their quantitative diversity. Concerning this issue, "Abdollah Quchani and Mahnaz Rahimiifar" (2003) have addressed some of the existing inscriptions in a book entitled "Inscriptions of Mosques in Shooshtar Congregational Mosque and Imamzadeh Abdullah". Seyyed Vahid Mousavi Jazayeri (2016) in a book entitled "Kufic Stone Inscriptions 1" studied Kufic scripts of Shushtar Congregational Mosque. In 2015, the same author explored the conceptual meaning of the inscription and the reason behind the type of script in another book, "The Kufic Inscriptions of Shushtar Congregational Mosque 2. In addition, Ibrahim Delavaran (2016) investigated these inscriptions from the third century to the late Qajar Period in his thesis "The Aesthetic Study of Shushtar Islamic Inscriptions". Sara Omidbakhsh (2018) did an article entitled "A comparative study of mosques with an emphasis on Shushtar Congregational Mosque as Islamic-Iranian architecture". The difference between the mentioned study and the literature lies in the investigation of Kufic script elements of Surah Yassin in Shooshtar Congregational Mosque.

**Keyword:**Shoushtar Congregational Mosque  
Kufic Inscription  
Surah Yasin**Methodology**

This is a qualitative study presented in a descriptive-analytical method. The method of data collection included a library search, documentary, and field study. Analyzes were obtained using photographic images and a systematic drawing of the inscriptions.

## Results

The following results are obtained from the analysis of the inscriptional elements of Surah Yasin:

Letter (الف types, Letters (ب/ت/ث types, letters (ح/ج/خ types, letters (د/ذ types, letters (ر/ز types, (س/ش types, (ض/ص types, (ط/ظ types, (ع/غ types, (ف/ق types, (ك types, (ل types, (م types, (ن types, (و types, (ه types, (ی types, and (لا types. Figure 1 and tables 1 – 6 depict the general shape of the inscription, analytical review, and inscriptional elements.

## Conclusion




As evidenced by the obtained result, in total, the greatest variation in design was observed in two letters, namely (ن) and (و). The letters (ك), (ط), (د) were written very similarly, and the letters (ر) and (ن) were written similarly in some words. These similarities throughout the inscriptions have reduced the readability of the text. The circled letters, such as (ف), (ه), (م), (و), (ق), have equal circles throughout the inscription leading to the establishment of a relationship all thorough it. Letters (و), (ن), (ر/ز), (د/ذ) were written in both short and long letters resulting in creating harmony in words of Surah Yasin whose letters are of great variety due to the space of words.



**Figure 1.**

Sections of Surah Yasin on the Kufic inscription on Mihrab Wall, Shushtar Congregational Mosque  
Source: authors

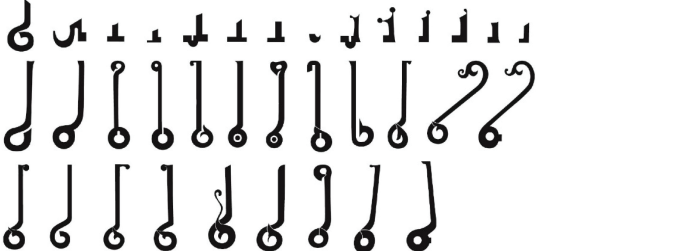
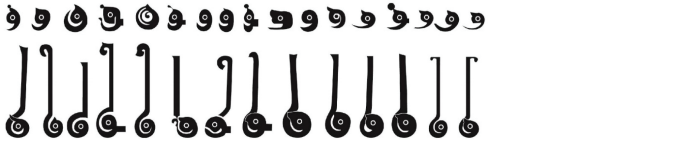
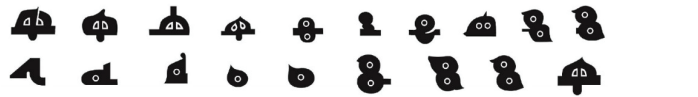

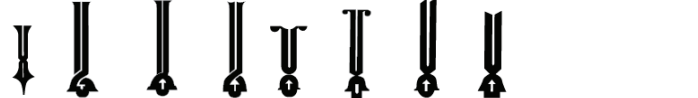
**Table 2.** Parts of the refurbished inscription of Surah Yasin, Shushtar Congregational Mosque, Source: authors

 <p>أَحْسِبُهُ فِي يَوْمِ إِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١١﴾ وَأَنْشُرْتُمْ لَهُمْ خُزُقًا فَخَفَوْا بِهَا بِرَبِّهِمْ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَلِمَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۗ إِنَّهَا أَجْمَلَةٌ وَأَعْيَانٌ</p>
 <p>الْمُرْسَلُونَ فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْ هُمْ فِئَةٌ مِّنْ فَئَةٍ لَّا أَفْرَادٌ ۚ وَعُرِدُوا فِي الْكِبْرَةِ الْمَأْتُولَةِ ﴿١٢﴾</p>
 <p>تَنْتَهُوا لَنْرَجْمَتِكُمْ وَلِيَمْسَكُنَّكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ آلِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالُوا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ</p>

**Table 3.** Extension of letters (ك), (د), and (ط / ظ) in Surah Yasin Inscription, source: authors

Letters/Number of letters in the inscription	First / Middle / Last
(الف) Variety: 22 types	
(ب/ت/ث) Variety: 9 types	
(ح/ج/خ) Variety: 11 types	
(د/ذ) Variety: 12 types	
(ر/ز) Variety: 13 types	
(س/ش) Variety: 13 types	
(س/ش) Variety: 4 types	
(ط/ظ) Variety: 2 types	
(ع/غ) Variety: 12 types	
(ف/ق) Variety: 10 types	
(ك) Variety: 7 types	
(ل) Variety: 14 types	
(م) Variety: 10 types	

**Table 3.** Extension of letters (ن), (د), (ك), and (ط / ظ) in Surah Yasin Inscription, source: authors

Letters /Number of letters in the inscription	First / Middle / Last
(ن) Variety: 35 types	
(و) Variety: 31 types	
(ه) Variety : 19 types	
(ي) Variety: 17 types	
(لا) Variety: 8 types	

The correspondence between contrasting letters, round letters, and uppercase letters is most important in the script. The existence of a harmonious yet dynamic system plays an important role in the aesthetic structure of the inscriptions. Horizontal lines create a sense of relaxation in the text. Sometimes some horizontal edges of a word are stretched more than usual. The Kufic script has aesthetic values in many ways, including fine and perfect endurance of vertical and horizontal lines which are written with the most delicate curvature, scratch, or dentation. Moreover, special attention is devoted to perfect parallelism between the vertical and apical edges of the letters. The proportion in the combination of consecutive letters of a word in terms of distance, height, shape, as well as uniformity in discontinuous letters in this script, also contribute to this aesthetic value. The circles of Kufic letters are based on specific geometric rules. In addition, attention has been paid to the congruence and combination in line and page and the placement of vertical lines and circles creates visual balance and congruence in the inscription text. Letters, such as (ط), (ك), (د) can be extended to take all available space. The distance between letters is almost equal (Shamil, 1386:30). In Surah Yasin inscription in Shushtar Mosque, single letters of (و), (ي), (د), (ك), (ر), (ن) are written with the same height as high letters (vertical), such as (ل), (الف), and (ط / ظ).

**Table 4.** Extension of letters (ك), (د), and (ط / ظ) in Surah Yasin Inscription, source: authors

Extension sample (ط)	Extension samples (ك)	Extension samples (د)

The equal circles of (و), (ه), (ق), (ف), (م) in Kufic ornamental inscription on the wall of the main Mihrab of Shushtar Congregational Mosque are also one of the features of this inscription.

**Table 5.** Samples of equal eye circles in (م/و/ق/ف) in Surah Yasin Kufic inscription, source: authors

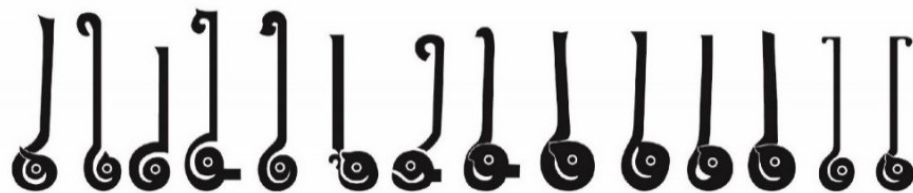
Sample of equal circles (ه)	Sample of equal circles (م)	Sample of equal circles (و)	Sample of equal circles (ق/ف)

In Kufic script, in addition to similar letters, some shapes are similar to others, which can be mistaken when reading, such as (ر) and (و) which are written similarly or (ع), (ف), (ق), and (م) which are slightly different in the first and the middle of the word. To solve this problem, the author needs to make a clear distinction between these similar letters. For instance, between (د) and (ذ), (ك) should be written short and (ك) should be written long (Fazaeli, 1982: 190). In Surah Yasin Kufic inscription, letters (د), (ك), and (ط / ظ) are very similar to each other; moreover, letters (ن) and (ر) are written very similarly which has reduced their readability. Letter (و) has been written in both short and elongated forms with the same height as (الف). The short (و) itself has 17 types of design variations and the elongated (و) is also of 14 types.



**Figure 2.**

Single letter (و) in short form in Surah Yasin Kufic inscription of Shushtar Congregational Mosque  
 source: authors



**Figure 3.**

Single letter (و) in the elongated form with the same height as (الف) in Surah Yasin Kufic inscription of Shushtar Congregational Mosque  
 source: authors

**Table 6.** High letters with the same height as (الف), source: authors

(و)	
(ط / ظ)	
(ذ / د)	
(ر)	
(ك)	
(ن)	

**Post script**

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