



## The Content of Quranic Inscriptions Used in Ilkhanid Altars

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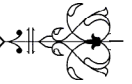
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### Abstract

In Islamic architecture, especially in mosque, the main consideration is to the prayer spirit. For this reason, Quran inscriptions cover the most parts of the decorations of architecture. Altars are always one of the elements with full of motifs decoration because of dignity and its position. The decorations are including Quranic verses and themes. Mosque decorations inscriptions are a main source to investigation the views and religious thoughts. Identifying the Quranic Inscriptions of stucco Ilkhanid alters and understanding their contents are the aims of this paper. Totally, decorative inscriptions of Altars are divided to four groups; date, signature (name of the architect and artist. Etc.), supplements and endowments, religious phrases (names of God, the Quran verses, Hadith, name of the prophet and Imams). The present study focuses on the themes of Quranic verses and the contents of them that used in Ilkhanid stucco altars. Altar Stucco decorations consist mainly of arabesque motifs, geometric and inscriptions. One of the visual characteristics of Ilkhanid stucco altars is “decorative inscriptions” that widely have been performed in different styles and forms at the altars, so far the inscriptions become the basic elements of altar decorations in the Ilkhanid Altars, the Oljayto altar and the Jame-bastam altar are perfect examples that their design have been formed on inscription style. Perhaps the importance of calligraphy in the seventh and eighth centuries AH, or a plurality of skillful calligraphers- such as Yaghout Mosta`sami- caused further manifestation of calligraphy and extension of Quranic inscriptions in decoration of buildings. Earlier Kufic script has been used in decorating architecture at fourth century, Moreover Kufi script, other inscription styles such as “Sols”, “Reqa’e” and “Solse-mos`als`al” as well as ‘B`anaiee’ and ‘M`agheli’ in content of religious phrases become popular in stucco decoration at Ilkhanid era.

In this study, some investigations were done with using descriptive-analytical method, to achieve content of Quranic verses and their relations to the place application. The results of twenty-one altars indicate that one to four suras of Quran used in an altar, for example the Jame-Save mosque and the Jame-Bastam Mosque contain four different suras, meanwhile, just the Oljayto altar have no “Quranic” inscriptions! Ilkhanid altars consist of twenty-one different verse from suras that the first verses of “Mo`menoun”, 1 to 4 verses of “D`ahr”, 1 to 4 verses of “Fat`h”, 255 vers of “Baghare”, 18 to 19 verses of “Tobeh”, and sura “Fateha” completely, were the most used. Content of the altar inscriptions are grouped in few categories; “Tohidi verses”,

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“prays”, “characteristic of the believers”, “describe the characteristics of mosque authors”, “Muslim victory over enemies”. Sometimes the inscriptions are used beside each other and referring to essence of Allah, worshipping, and Allah praying. The contents of some verses are the oneness of God and the worship of God, as well as the other verses reveal “characterization of believers” that specify the qualities of ways and the path of believers. Praying is also one of the first characteristics of the Muslims in Tohidi verses and also is specified rules of the pray conduct, in order to guide believers on a direction and builds up a unity of Muslims with the aim of achieving victory and pride.

In addition to the above, some features are stated to those build the mosques because the mosque is the sacred in Islam and everyone does not deserve to enter in this way. Generally, verses of the “Tohidi”, “prays”, and “authors of mosques” had the most usage. Hence, the content of altar Quranic inscriptions is related to the application place and their dignity in the mosque, to lead up the prayer spirit and richness up the people.

**Keywords:** Islamic Architecture, Quranic Inscription, Altar, Ilkhanid Stucco.

