



## "INNOVATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS IN SCIENCE 2026"

### THE SYMBOLIC EXPRESSIONS IN THE EPIGRAPHIC DECORATIONS OF TILLAKORI MADRASASI

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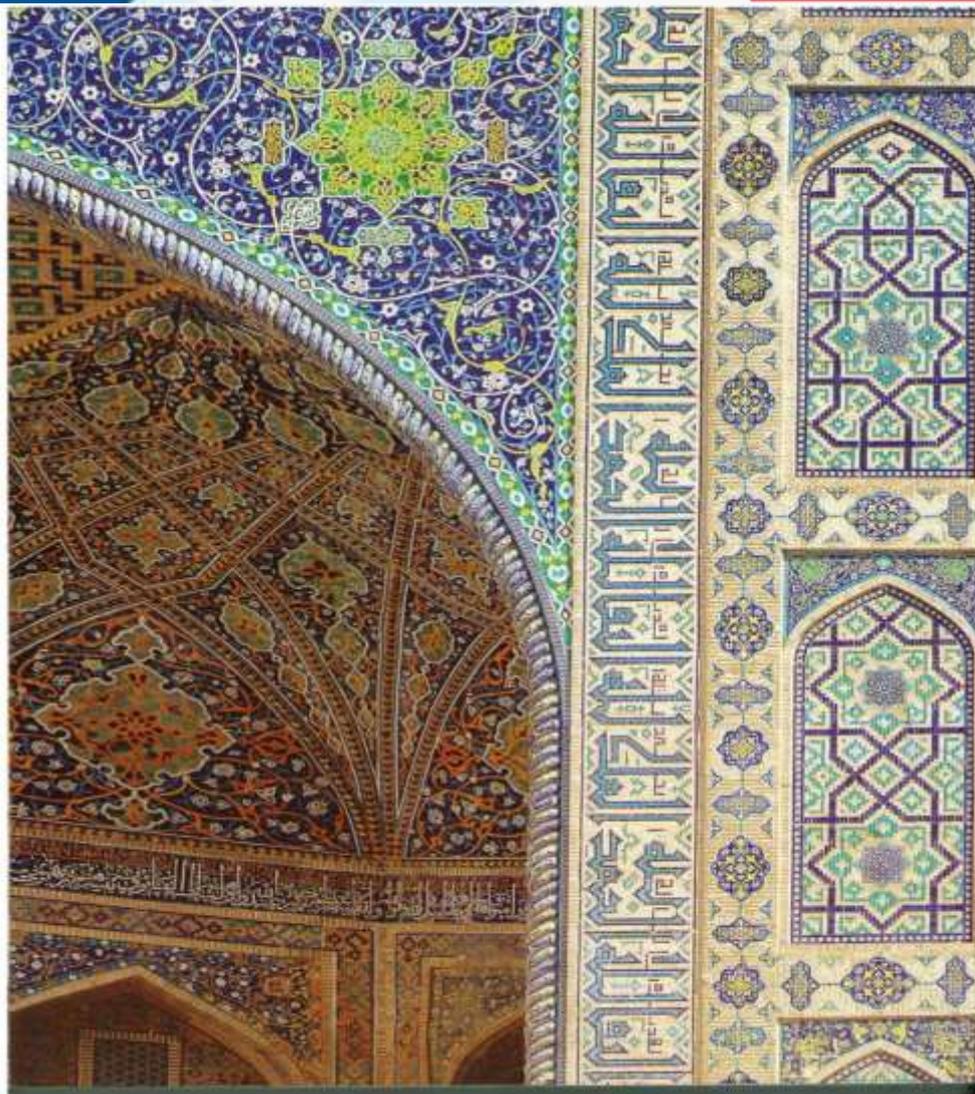
**Abstract:** *This article examines the symbolic and semantic meanings embedded in the epigraphic decorations of Tillakori Madrasasi, a 17th-century architectural monument in Samarkand. Constructed between 1646–1660 under the patronage of Yalangtosh Bahodir, the madrasah is distinguished by its richly ornamented interior, extensive use of the kundal technique, and the harmonious integration of calligraphy and ornamentation. The study analyzes inscriptions rendered in Kufic, Thuluth, and other scripts, focusing on their theological, aesthetic, and spiritual functions. The article also highlights modern efforts in Uzbekistan to research, preserve, and revive epigraphic heritage, including the contribution of Habibulloh Solih and the publication project “Epigraphs of Architectural Monuments of Uzbekistan.” The research demonstrates that epigraphy in Tillakori Madrasasi serves as both sacred text and symbolic ornament, embodying the unity of faith, art, and architecture.*

**Key words:** *Islamic epigraphy, Tillakori Madrasasi, kundal technique, Kufic script, Thuluth script, symbolic ornament, Samarkand architecture, golden decoration, Islamic calligraphy, Uzbek heritage.*

#### INTRODUCTION

Islamic architectural decoration represents a profound synthesis of text, geometry, color, and spiritual meaning. In Central Asia, particularly in Samarkand, religious monuments became visual embodiments of theological principles. Tillakori Madrasasi, located in the Registan ensemble, occupies a special place among these monuments due to its lavish interior decoration and extensive use of gold embellishment.

Unlike many other madrasahs, Tillakori combines educational and congregational mosque functions, resulting in a uniquely ornate interior. The epigraphic program, executed in various calligraphic styles and enriched with gilded ornamentation, transforms sacred text into a dynamic artistic expression. This article explores the symbolic dimensions of these inscriptions.



### Madrasah Tillakori

#### Architectural and Artistic Characteristics

Tillakori Madrasasi was constructed in the mid-17th century and financed by Yalangtosh Bahodir. The architecture emphasizes originality and magnificence. The interior of the mosque section is especially notable for:

- Extensive use of the kundal technique (gilded relief painting),
- Polychrome tile decoration,
- Abundant application of gold leaf,
- Harmonious integration of calligraphy and ornament.

In medieval Islamic architecture, kundal was primarily used in interior spaces. The letters of epigraphic compositions were often highlighted with gold, enhancing the spiritual luminosity of the space and reinforcing the sacred nature of the inscriptions.

#### Symbolism of the Epigraphic Inscriptions

The decorative inscriptions include Qur'anic verses, hadiths, sacred invocations, and names of revered figures.

##### 1. Sacred Phrases and Their Meaning



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Among the inscriptions are phrases such as:

- "Subhanallah" (Glory be to Allah),
- "Mulk is Allah's" (Sovereignty belongs to Allah),
- The names of the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs (Chaharyor),
- Hadiths such as: "Mosques are the houses of Allah, and those who frequent them are beloved by Allah."

These inscriptions serve multiple functions:

- Theological affirmation of divine sovereignty.
- Spiritual guidance for worshippers.
- Sanctification of architectural space.
- Moral instruction embedded within visual art.

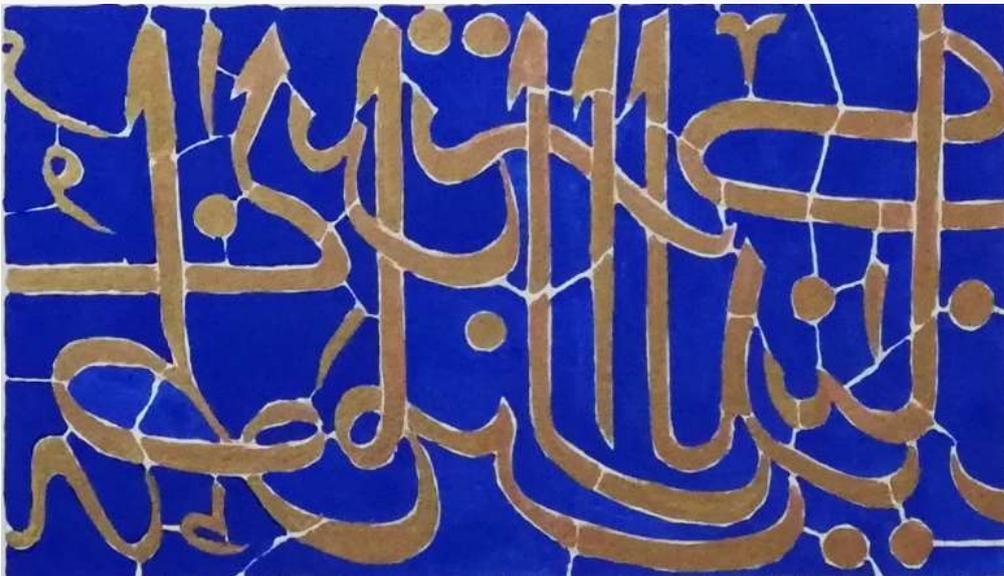
The repetition of names such as "Muhammad" and "Ali" inside the large arch (kufic inscription) reinforces devotional reverence and spiritual lineage.

### 2. Calligraphic Diversity as Symbolic Language

The inscriptions are executed in Kufic, Thuluth, and other scripts. Each script carries symbolic weight:

- Kufic script conveys monumentality, stability, and timeless authority.
- Thuluth script expresses elegance, fluidity, and spiritual elevation.

The coexistence of these scripts reflects harmony between structure and movement, permanence and dynamism — mirroring Islamic cosmological thought.



### Kundal Technique and the Symbolism of Gold

Gold decoration plays a central symbolic role. In Islamic art, gold represents:

- Divine light (nur),
- Spiritual illumination,
- Heavenly beauty,
- Eternity.



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The gilded letters transform written text into radiant visual forms. The viewer experiences not only intellectual comprehension of the message but also emotional and spiritual upliftment. Thus, epigraphy in Tillakori Madrasasi operates on both semantic and sensory levels.

### Modern Revival and Scholarly Contributions

Since Uzbekistan's independence, significant efforts have been undertaken to preserve and study architectural epigraphy. A notable achievement is the discovery of a new calligraphic style by the internationally recognized calligrapher and manuscript scholar Habibulloh Solih, named "Khatti Zuhrufi Habibiy" (or "Khatti Habibiy").

This innovative style integrates ornamental motifs, diacritical marks, and letterforms into unified decorative compositions. Unlike traditional scripts, it allows flexible scaling of text while maintaining aesthetic harmony. Readers not only grasp the meaning but also experience spiritual delight through visual beauty.

Furthermore, beginning in 2011, a comprehensive project titled "Epigraphs of Architectural Monuments of Uzbekistan" was launched. As a result, a 13-volume album documenting inscriptions across the country was published. Today, this initiative has been elevated to the level of a state program, reflecting rare global support for humanities-based research.

**Conclusion.** The epigraphic decorations of Tillakori Madrasasi represent a sophisticated integration of theology, aesthetics, and symbolism. Through gilded kundal compositions, diverse calligraphic scripts, and sacred textual content, the monument becomes a visual manifestation of Islamic spiritual worldview.

The inscriptions serve not merely as decoration but as:

- Sacred presence within architectural space,
- Moral and theological instruction,
- Symbolic articulation of divine light and authority,
- A bridge between text and ornament.

Despite significant research progress, many ornamental inscriptions in Uzbekistan remain unexplored or semantically unexamined. Comprehensive and interdisciplinary study of these symbolic systems remains an important scholarly task for the future.

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