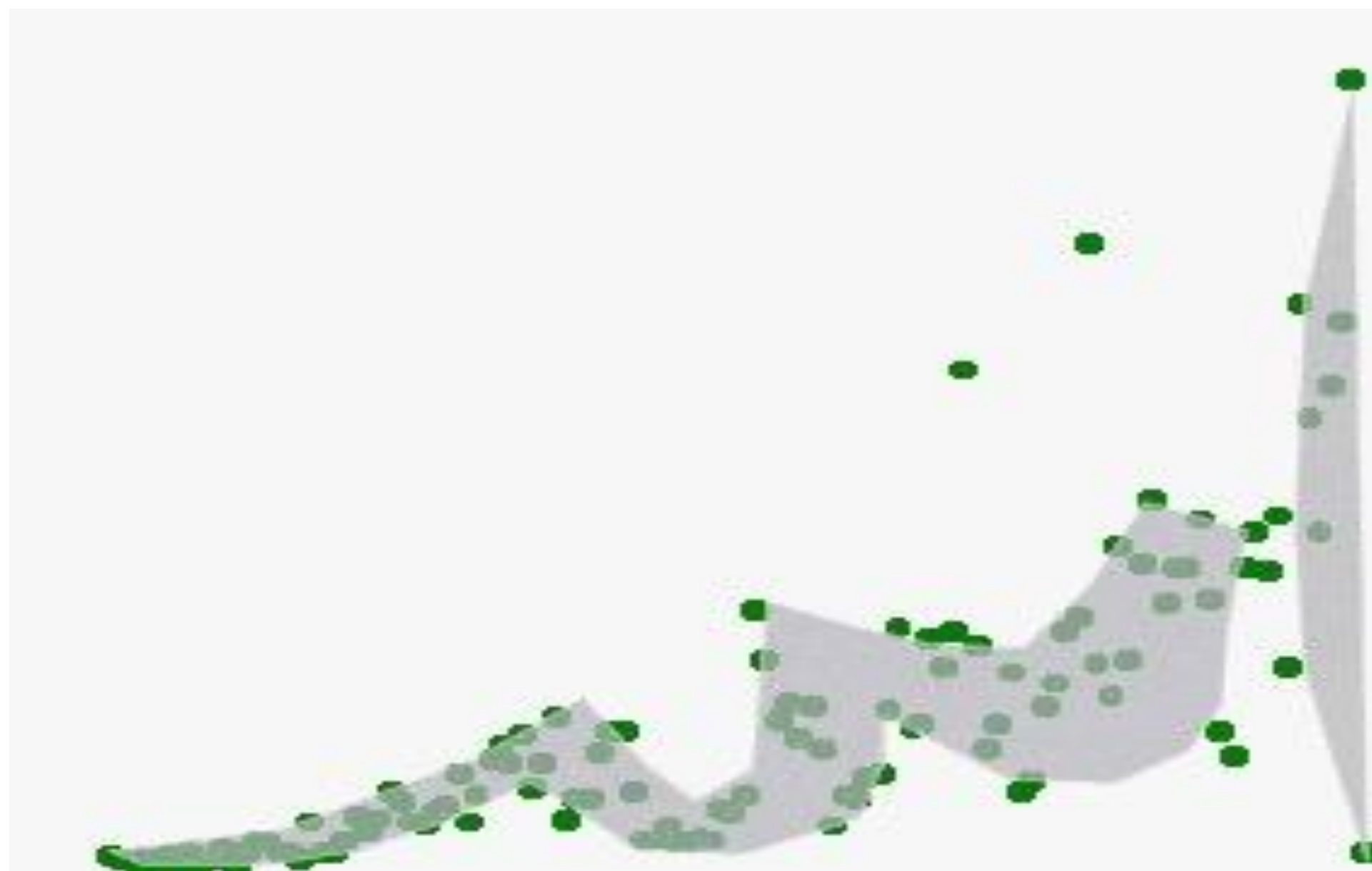
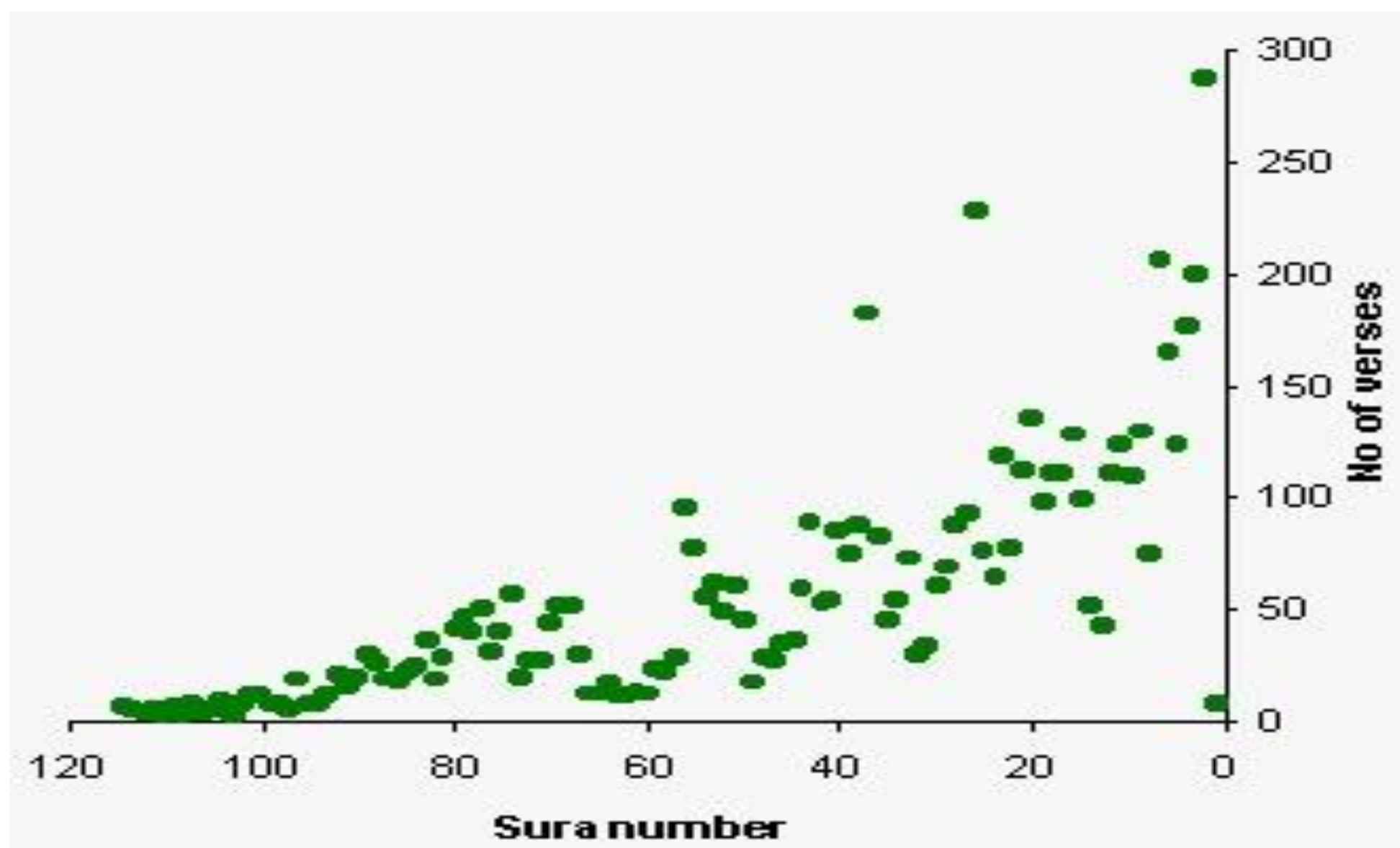
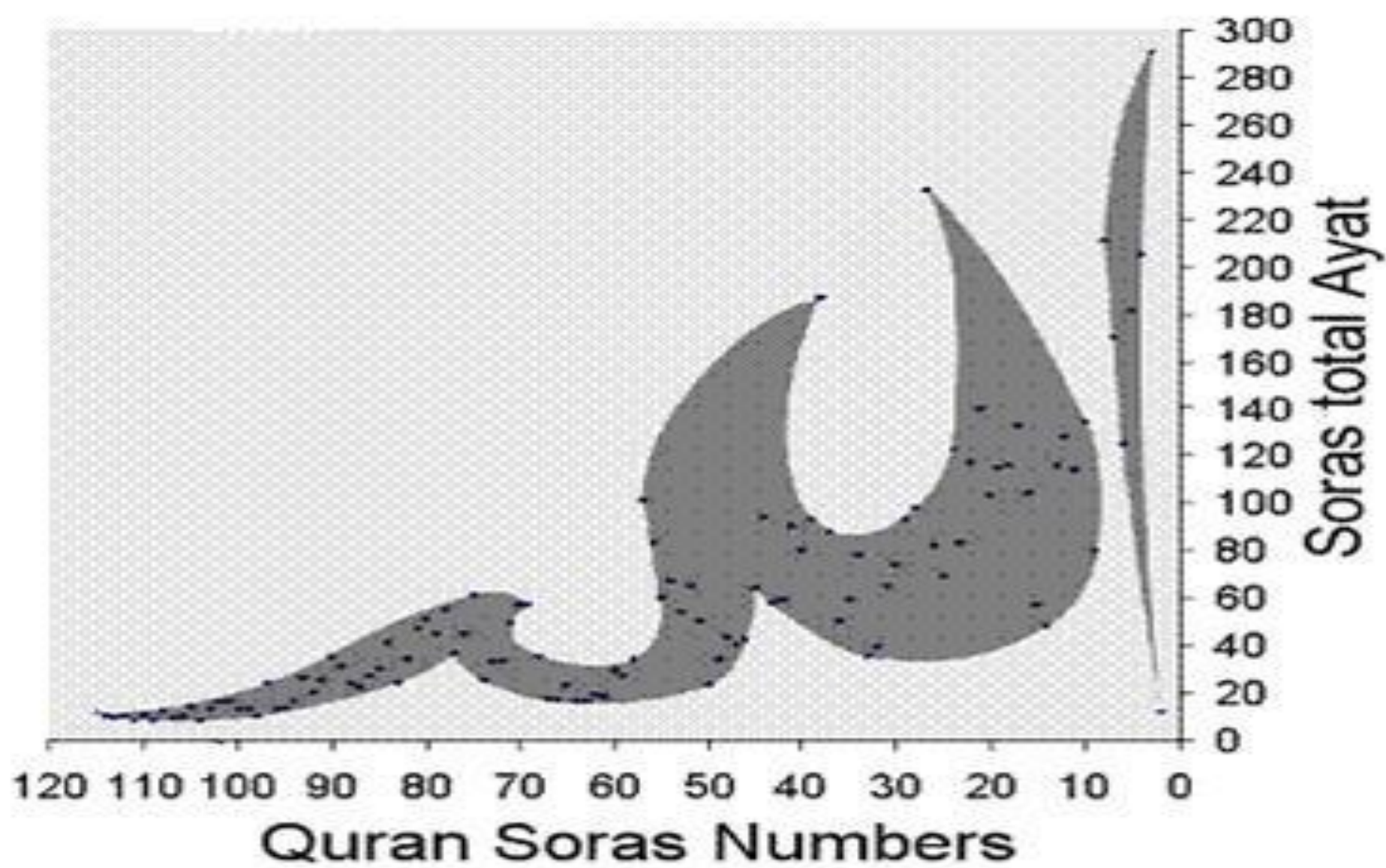








The illustration on the left shows a scatter graph of the number of verses in a sura against the number of the sura. The result resembles the word "Allah" in Arabic (right).

The Qur'anic revelation was made by Archangel Gabriel to Prophet Mohamnred (PBUH). It took place over a period of more than 20 years beginning with the first verses of sura 96. After a three year hiatus, the revelation continued up to the death of the Prophet (PBUH) in 632 C.E.

Whenever a fragment of the Qur'an was revealed,the Prophet (PBUH) called one of his literate companions and dictated it to him, indicating at the same time the exact position of the new fragment in the fabric of what had already been revealed. Extremely diverse materials were used for this initial record e.g. leather, parchment,wooden tablets, bones and soft stones for inscription. At the same time the Prophet (PBUH) recommended his followers to memorise the Qur'an, thereby doubly preserving the text.

Following the death of the Prophet (PBUH) in 632 C.E., Abu Bakr (RA), the first Caliph of Islam, asked the Prophet's (PBUH) main scribe, Zaid Ibn Thabit, to make a copy which he duly did. On Omar's (RA) initiative (the then future second Caliph), Zaid consulted all the information he could assemble in Medina and produced a very faithful copy of the book.

Omar, Abu Bakr's successor in 634 C.E. subsequently made a single volume (mushaf) which he preserved and passed on to Hafsa, his only daughter and the Prophet's (PBUH) widow. The third Caliph, Uthman (RA), entrusted a commission of experts with the preparation of the great recension that bears his name. The commission evaluated the authenticity of the document produced under Abu Bakr (RA) and which had remained with Hafsa until then. They also consulted Muslims who had memorised the Qur'an. The critical analysis of the authenticity of the text was carried out very stringently. The agreement of the witnesses was deemed necessary before the slightest verse containing debatable material was retained. The result was a text containing an order of sura that reflects the order followed by the Prophet (PBUH) during his recitals in Ramadan. The 114 suras were arranged in approximately decreasing order of length although there were exceptions.

The sequence of the suras in the Qur'an has proved to be of much interest in modern times. A young Turkish Engineering student at Istanbul Technical University was fascinated by this topic, so much so, that he plotted by hand, a graph of the number of verses in a sura against the number of the sura. The result startled him as it resembled the word "Allah" (God) in Arabic. His findings appeared in a Turkish national newspaper in February 1986.

At the beginning of this article is a computer generated scatter graph of "length of sura" (ie number of verses that it contains) against "number of the sura". The graph is provided both in its raw form and with added shading. There is a distinct similarity between the graph and the Arabic word "Allah". Is this a coincidence or something much more?