

# The Place of the Letter as a Figurative Element in the Pictorial Structure of Art in Old Middel Eastern Civilizations Before Islam

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to follow the cultural path of the ancient civilizations of the Middle East before Islam, with emphasis on the role of writing in the arts of these civilizations and their importance in creating a stream linked to a unified system that culminated in the innovation of the alphabet, which worked to push the cultural and artistic movement in the region and led to its transfer to flourish to new dimensions.

Hence the importance of the study is emphasizing the status of the letter as a figurative visual element in the pictorial structure of art in the old civilizations of the region before Islam, occupying important spaces along with another visual forms: human, animal, plant and geometrical shapes, and often surpasses them, to have a spiritual position, sacred and magical in stylistic metaphors possessing different shapes, depending on the role of the various arts of the region in the social and religious life, in which the letter constituted a large ceremonial value that transcends the political conflicts, crystallizing a visual symbol -figurative, surpassing the parallels in the arts of other peoples outside the region.

**Keywords:** The Letter, Figurative Element, The Pictorial Structure of Art, Old Middle Eastern Civilizations, Islam.