

Original article

DIVINE ME

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Article history: Received: 14-8-2023 Accepted: 29-5-2024 Doi: 10.21608/ejars.2024.361178	Abstract: <i>The Sumerian concept of "me" represents a complicated and multifaceted group of cultural and religious norms that were paramount to the Sumerian worldview. The term "me" contains a range of meanings, including divine orders and divine regulations, which governed Sumerian life. These "me" were believed to be granted by the gods and were important for preserving order and harmony in the universe. Comprehending the "me" reveals how the Sumerians sensed the complex relations between the divine and human existence. This paper focuses on carefully chosen examples taken from Sumerian myths, hymns, and royal inscriptions. These examples represent only a fraction of the total existing examples, as the entire collection is a challenge for this brief study. Therefore, this paper discusses the term from the literary and religious perspective, as its linguistic aspect has been well-established by Sumerologist.</i>
Keywords: Me Concept Divine Functions Powers-abilities	

1. Introduction

The Sumerians thought that this universe was managed and directed by a pantheon of living eternal gods who managed everything according to their schedules: heaven, earth, planets, sun, moon, rivers, mountains...etc. Every single element, even brick mold, falls under the authority of one of those mighty ones. Those divines were not equal in importance and like the political institution of humans. It was natural to suppose that the head of the pantheon was the king creator god. The gods in this community were divided into groups: Seven gods who decreed the destinies were the most influential group and another fifty gods known as the grand ones, the *Anunnaki*. The most notable division among gods was between creative and non-creative deities. The primary creative gods were the gods of heaven, earth, water, and air. These four principal gods created all other universal beings based on their respective plans; the mechanism of creation was attributed to the belief that the divine word had the power to create. Through the making of plans, the speaking of words, and ensuring that the universal beings and phenomena run constantly in harmony without inconsistency and collapsing, they create the "me" [1].

2. The Me

In the most enigmatic terms of Sumerology, most of the scholars in this field commented on it or at least translated it. The term me is traditionally translated as "divine forces,"

"divine ordinances," "divine functions," "divine orders," "divine word", "and "divine essence". It is usually explained as a set of rules and regulations, even in some cases, sacred words. It is ingrained in every good and bad phenomenon and concept and can be lost and reintroduced but not eliminated. True, each god, each city, but collectively, they are assumed to be in the possession of the god Enki in the depths of the Abzu. The Sumerologist has dealt with the term *me* for about a century. Each one of them, when he translated a text, gave his own translation and understanding. The first translation of the Sumerian word *me* was in 1907 by Thureau-dangin. In the translation of the Gudea statute B was (decisions, conclusions) [2]; in the translation of cylinder A, translated as "requirements, fate, predestination: occupations, positions; standards, legal requirements" in the plural form. In 1924, Landsberger highlighted the connection between the Akkadian word *paršu* and the two Sumerian *garza* and *me*. At the same time, he translated *me* as "cult custom, rite, religious obligation" and understood *me* as (a specific divine power or sacred power) [3]. In 1949, Falkenstein presented a grammar study of Gudea inscriptions and translated "me" as divine power [4]. According to Castellino's definition in 1959, "me" refers to the ideal and unchanging divine law that governs the world and all its manifestations, including vital activity [5]. In 1967, van Dijk described *me* as the central concept of

Sumerian religion ... the uncreated divine essence of everything, unchangeable, subsisting, which only the great gods have [6]. In 1968, Hallo & van Dijk noted that "it belongs to the great gods who gather numerous of *me*'s to themselves.... It is better to explain the *me*'s as 'divine attributes' [7]. Jacobsen, in 1970, described *me* as a set of behavior patterns (norm) or as a noun (being) related to the verb *me* (to be) [8]. Alster, in 1974, clearly showed that *me*, *me-te* more archaic reflexive pronouns (me, myself) [9]. In 1978, Cavigneaux conducted a study on the relationship between the two terms "*me*" and "*ni*" in early Sumerian texts. Initially, "*me*" or "*ni*" denoted the self as vital energy, but later, "*me*" was associated with a supernatural being or divine essence, which identified the bearer [10]. In 1992, Glassner described *me* as a concept associated with *garza* whose Akkadian correspondent is *paršu*, "rite," which is usually understood as "rule" or "principle" that would designate the great principles that allow the regular functioning of the cosmos [11]. Böck, in 2021, defined the term *me* as real power and efficiency, which also refers to the divine idea ingrained in everything. This divine essence provides meaning and purpose to presence. Other translations contain "form, image, shape, figure, and symbol". Though every god, city, temple, or any item has its proper *me*, the *me* is belonging to Enki. This power is imagined and indicated in "Enki and the World Order" [12]. Some theories suggest that the noun "*me*" is related to the verb "to be". This argument is based on the consonance between the two and the idea that "*me*" represents the divine concept that brings everything into existence rather than just existing itself. However, the different phonetic treatment of the two words "*me*" in the Emesal dialect is against this for sure. While the noun *me* is never written differently from *me*, the verb *me* is in the 1st and 2nd personal suffixes in Emesal [13]. Despite all these efforts and many others that we don't review here, the word is so affluent that the argument is probably far from over, and it is linked with more terms that we are not able in this brief study to discuss. Our purpose here is to shed new light on the meaning of the word *me*. The cuneiform sign of the Sumerian *me* 𒄠 is encountered already for the first time in the pictographic texts of the periods of Uruk, Jmdet-nasr, and archaic Ur. This cuneiform sign is defined by Daimel as (a mouth with a tongue hanging out) [14-16]. There are two texts devoted directly to *me*: "Enki and the World Order" and "Inanna and Enki". Many other texts mention *me* as a part of the course of the events.

2.1. Me in Sumerian myths

2.1.1. Enki and the world order

This myth handles the origin of the "*me*" and how *Enki* obtained them from his father, *Enlil*, and used them in organizing the world order. *Enki* and the World Order is a very long and well-preserved Sumerian mythical text (about 472 lines), split into four divisions. First, there is praise for *Enki* (lines 1-60). Second, *Enki* praises himself (lines 61-139) and recounts how *Enlil* gave him the gift of the "*me*", (lines 61-85), and in the second self-praise, *Enki* takes a journey via Sumer on his ship to set order and prosperity in Sumer (lines 86-139). Third, the major section of

the myth is about *Enki*'s journey through the land, deciding the destiny of the Sumerian world (lines 140-386). *Enki* begins with Sumer as a whole, and especially *Ur*, and proceeds from there to *Magan*, *Melubba*, and *Dilmun* (lines 140-249). Then, he returns to the Sumerian land, where he designates deities to take obligation for the functions of several regions and elements of the Sumerian world order (lines 250-386). Finally, *Inanna* whines to *Enki* that he has not rationed her any powers in his determining of the destinies, and *Enki* responds to her (lines 387-471) [17-19]. In this text, *Enki* is described as the one who was loved by *Enlil* the Great Mount, beloved by holy *An*, king, *me* tree planted in the *Abzu*, rising over all lands (lines 3-4) [18,20], he is the king of all the lands, gathered all the *me* together, and placed them in his hand (lines 64-65) [19,20]. Then, the *Anunna-gods* speak with fondness: Lord who rides the great *me* ...the pure *me*. Who stands watch over the great *me*, the myriad *me* (lines 134-136 [18,20]. Who fixing the *me* upon the people from sunrise to sunset, your *me* is the greatest inaccessible *me*. (lines 193-194). He can well direct the *me* that has been perfected for you (line 215). The great *me* of the gods will be perfected for him (line 227) [12,20].

2.1.2. Enki and Inanna

Despite the initial gap in the narrative, which makes the course of events hard to understand, we find that *Inanna*, the goddess of *Uruk*, decided to go to *Enki* in *Abzu-Eridu*, and, by availing her lure!!! obtained the "*me*" from him and brought them to *Uruk*. *Enki*, however, expects her intent and attempts to defend himself against her charm, but somehow at the welcome banquet, he gets drunken and delivers her his *me*: 1- *nam.en* (office of "en"), 2- *nam.lagar* (office of "lagar"), 3- *nam.dingir* (divine function), 4- *aga.zi.maḥ* (august legitimate crown), 5- *giš.gu.za.nam.lugal* (throne of royalty), 6- *gidri.maḥ* (august scepter). 7- *sibir.eškiri* (staff (and) bridle), 8- *tug.maḥ* (august garment), 9- *nam.sipa* (the pastorate), 10- *nam.Jugal* (the royalty), 11- *nam.egi.zi* (office of egizi), 12- *nam.nin.dingir* (office of *nin.dingir*), 13- *nam.išib* (office of *ishib*), 14- *nam.lu₂.maḥ* (office of *lumah*), 15- *nam.gudu₄* (office of *gudu*), 16- *ni₃.gi.na* (justice or stability), 17- *si.TUR*, 18- *si.é¹⁴*, 19- *kur.e₁₁.de₃* (the descent to the kur), 20- *kur.e₁₁.da* (the ascent from kur), 21- *kur.gar.ra* (the kurgara), 22- *gir₂.ba.d.ra* (dagger and knife), 23- *sag.ur.sag* (the sagsursag), 24- *tug₂.GL₆* (the black garment), 25- *tug₂.gun₃-a* (multicolored garment), 26- *gu₂.bar* (the hair thrown on the back), 27- *gu₂.X* (nape the hair...), 28- (*giš*) *šu.nir* (the standard), 29- *mar.uru₅* (the quiver or the deluge), 30- *giš₃.du₁₁ du₁₁* (make love), 31- *giš₃.ki².su.ub* (...the phallus...), 32- *nam.kar.kid* (*karkid*'s office), 33- *nam.ḥub₂.dar* (burst), 34- *nam.eme.di* (talk it up), 35- *nam.eme.sig* (gossiping), 36- *nam.še.er.ka.an* (flattery(?)), 37- *Xa* ... (Term lost in a gap), 38- *Amalu₉* (servant of the cult of *Inanna*), 39- *eš₂.dam.ku₃* (the priest *ešdam*), 40- *nigin.gar.ku₃* (the holy *nigin.gar*), 41- *Xan* ... (Term lost in a gap), 42- *nu.gig.an.na* (the woman of rank *nugig.ana*), 43- *giš.gu₃.di* (the sound instrument), 44- *nam.nar* (the cantor's office), 45- *nam.ab.ba* (the office of *abba*), 46- *nam.ur.sag* (the office of warrior), 47- *nam.kala.ga* (vigor), 48- *nam.ni₃.erim₄* (betrayal or aggressiveness), 49- *nam.ni₃.si.sa₂* (correcting

things), **50-** *uru.lah₂.lah₂* (plundering cities), **51-** *i.si.iš.ga₂.ga₂* (sing laments), **52-** *ša₃ ħul₂.la* (pleasure of the heart), **53-** *lul.da* (The lie), **54-** *kur.ki.bala* (the rebel country), **55-** *nam.du₁₀.ge* (prosperity), **56-** *Kas₄.di.di* (movement), **57-** *ki.tuš.gi.na* (the stable residence), **58-** *nam-nagar* (the craft of the carpenter), **59-** *nam-tibira* (the craft of the coppersmith), **60-** *nam-dub-sar* (the craft of the scribe), **61-** *nam-simug* (the craft of the smith), **62-** *nam-acgab* (the craft of the leather-worker), **63-** *nam-azlag₂* (the craft of the fuller), **64-** *nam-cidim* (the craft of the builder), **65-** *nam-ad-KID* (the craft of the reed-worker), **66-** *geštu₂* (the understanding), **67-** *gi.zal* (knowing), **68-** *šu.luĥ.ku₃ga* (pure ablution), **69-** *e_g.DAG.KISIM₅.x X.ra* (the paddock to fatten), **70-** *ne.mur .dub* (mound of embers?), **71-** *ga₂.udu* (the sheepfolds), **72-** *nis₃.te.ga₂* (respectful awe), **73-** *ni₃.me.gar* (the silence), **74-** *kur.Ku* (the desire; glory), **75-** *pirig.zu₂.ŠEŠ* (the lion with furious teeth), **76-** *izi.mu₂.mu₂* (the kindling of fire), **77-** *izi.te.te* (the extinguishing of fire), **78-** *a₂.kuš₂, u₃* (tiredness), **79-** *KA.GANA₂.ge* (.....), **80-** *im.ri.a.gu₂.gar.ra* (the family reunion), **81-** *lu.lu. bu.na* (the descendants), **82-** *du₁₄sar SAR* (the strife), **83-** *u₃.ma* (victory), **84-** *ad.gi₄...gi₄* (counselling), **85-** *Ša₃ kuš₂ u₃* (comforting), **86-** *di.kus₅* (judging), **87-** *ka aš. bar* (deciding). This set of *me* had never been listed or enumerated in any other Sumerian source [11,20-24]. In the lost parts that follow, Enki falls asleep. She has already taken away his *me* and succeeded in escaping. Enki then wakes up and tries to return her. But she manages to escape with "the boat of heaven" with her vizier. Finally, *Inanna* reaches *Uruk*, from where she initially set out... (This part of the text is damaged). Then, *Inanna* discharges the cargo at the "Great Gate Joy(?)", in a magnificent procession, then the *Uruk* people keep the *me*. As for Enki, we should expect him to appear on the scene to blame *Inanna* for her deeds. Determining the punishment shall be so and so [20,25]. Based on the context of the text, it seems obvious that the *me* that *Inanna* received in the myth of Enki and the world order were not sufficient from her point of view, so she desired to get more powers and abilities by deceiving Enki and stealing them. We don't allege that she got all the *me* that he had, but she managed to get enough of them.

2.1.3. In the myth of Enki and Ninmah

In the myth of *Enki* and *Ninmah* [20,26-31], Enki is described as the *me* itself: *you are the one who has the me of deciding destinies; in fact, you are the me* (line 14B) [25].

2.1.4. In Enki's journey to Nippur

In Enki's journey to Nippur [18,20,22], *the temple of Enki was the residence of the ideal me. The temple was built on the edge* (line 52), *befitting the perfect me and bearer of the ideal me* (line 127) [18].

2.1.5. Inanna and Ebiĥ

Inanna and *Ebiĥ* [32,33]: After *Inanna* gets the *me* from *Enki*, we see her using it to defeat the mountain *Eibĥ* in this narrative. *The Goddess of the terrifying me, encased with fear, riding on the me powers* (lines 1-3) [34], *and she spread her me over the mountains* (line 150) [34]. As the owner of the perfect *me*, she gave herself the right to steal them, ride them, and spread them over mountains.

2.1.6. Inanna's descent to the nether world

Inanna's descent to the netherworld [24,29,35-40]: *Inanna* determined to descend to the netherworld, so she gathered

the seven *me* in her hand for the gates to help her to pass through. *She took the seven me. She collected the me and grasped them in her hand. She carried all the me in her possession* (lines 14-16) [21,35,38,39]. At the first gate, the gatekeeper informs his Mistress *Ereškigal* that *Inanna* gets her seven *me* in her hand, so she orders him that at every gate of the seven gates of the netherworld, *Inanna* has to remove one of her garments or ornaments to satisfy one the *me* of the Netherworld (the *šugurr* crown, small lapis-lazuli beads, the twin egg-shaped beads, pectoral, golden ring, lapis-lazuli measuring rod and measuring line, the pala dress) (lines 132-137-142-147-152-157-162). A *me* of the underworld has been fulfilled [38,39]. When *Ninšubur*, her messenger, asked *Enlil* and *Nanna* to rescue her, both stated that *the me of the underworld had to be respected and should not be craved* (lines 193-207) [37-39].

2.1.7. In Inanna and Shu-kale-tuda

In *Inanna* and *Shu-kale-tuda* [18,41,42], after the usual praise of Goddess *Inanna* in the first two lines as the possessors of the great *me that has all the me* (lines 1-2) [18,43], we have a weird mention of the goddess *Inanna putting the girdle of seven me over her genitals* !!(lines 118-119) [18].

2.1.8. In Ninurta's journey in Eridu

In *Ninurta's* journey in *Eridu*, *Ninurta*, lord of Nippur, restores the *me* of Sumer and leaves his city to *Eridu* to request the *me* from Enki. To see that, *the me of Sumer shall not be forgotten* (line 24.A) [44]. *Ninurta, the firstborn son of An, presented him with me for a lifetime; the lord of all me restored the ancient me to their places for him* (lines 11-12) *the fifty great me, the pure cleansing rites; fifty is the number of the me of the E-igi-šu-galam*, *in which you determine the fates; fifty is the number of the me of the hall of the evening meal, where your table is erected. No one can declare the great me; no one* *the good me* (lines 11-15) [44].

2.1.9. In lugal-e

In *lugal-e* [29,45,46], the *me* appears as a source of pride for *Ninurta* and relates to him or his mother in several mentions. *nin-urta me abzu-zu šu si sá-bi ġizkim i-im-tile. Ninurta, trusts that he can lay his hands on the me received by you in the Abzu* (line 54). *te-e-mu-da nin me mah mara-an-sum za-e hé-em-il-e. Lady, I have given you me: may you be exalted.*" (line 410). *me da-ra-šé dú-a ki ni dub-bus nin-hur-sag-ka-šé. in praise of the eternally-me in Ninhursaja's resting place* (line 591). *nin-urta dumu enlil-lá-ke₄ gur₇-du₆ gur₇-maš-a gú bi-in-gur-gur-ra-aš in-nin me á-bi-ta é-a du₁₁-ge mah dib-ba. Ninurta, son of Enlil, entrusted their keeping to the care of the lady who possesses the me which exists of themselves* (lines 709-710) [45,46].

2.1.10. Ninurta's return to Nippur (An-gim)

Ninurta's return to Nippur (*An-gim*) [47]: After his victory over the mountain's people, *Ninurta* requires the *me* for his city as a prize in *the mighty warrior had taken up the me which are like heaven, son of Enlil, he has taken up the me which are like the earth, he has taken up the me of the mountains, which are heavy as heaven, you have taken up*

the *me* of Eridu, which is massive as the earth, (lines 12-15) [18,47], the warrior, who destined with Enki to be suitable for the frightening *me*. (line 167), He went in procession to E-šumeša to manifest the eternal *me* (lines 192-193) [47]. Ninurta receives the *me* for himself and his city. His triumphs over the habitants of the mountains give him arrogance that leads him to put himself in conflict with Enki, the lord of the *me*, to regain the *me* that Anzu threw at Abzu.

2.1.11. In Ninurta and the turtle

In *Ninurta* and the turtle, Anzu speaks to him; *me šu-ga šu ba-ba-mu -dé me-bi abzu-še ba-an-gi₄. giš-ḥur šu-gá šu ba-ba-mu-dé giš-ḥur-bi abzu-še ba-an-gi₄. dub[nam-tar-ra-b]i abzu-še ba-an-gi₄ me ab-la₂-e-en. I let the me go out of my hand. This me returned to the abzu. As I let the divine plan go out of my hand, this divine plan returned to the abzu. This tablet of destinies returned to the abzu. I was stripped of the me* (lines 2-4) [20,48,49].

2.1.12. In the myth of the flood

In the myth of the flood, the *me* appears twice as a divine service or divine rites *garza me mah šu mi-ni-ib-šu-du₇*. The perfected *me* and exalted powers [50,52]. In addition to the Sumerian gods' myths, the *me* appears in the Sumerian legends of the kings of Uruk, as the legend of Enmerkar and Lugalbanda. Those legendary kings appeared in the Sumerian King List in the eighteenth-century B.C.

2.1.13. In the epic of Lugalbanda in the mountain cave

In the epic of Lugalbanda in the mountain cave Aratta, the faraway legendary city is mentioned as the mountain of the *me*. *Enmerkar, son of Utu, prepared an expedition against Aratta, the mountain of the me* (lines 21-22) [53]. The same description of Aratta comes in the epic of Enmerkar and *En-suḫgir-ana*.

2.1.14. In Enmerkar and En-suḫgir-ana

Enmerkar and En-suḫgir-ana [54-56] the mountain of the shiny *me* (line 261, 263) [53-54]

2.1.15. In Enmerkar and the lord of Aratta

Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta: Enmerkar receives his *me* from Eridu and asks Inanna, the great goddess who rides *me*. To suppress the people of Aratta to him for prosperity, she promises him that she will do that, and then he asks Enlil to build for him a mountain of shining *me* [53,57].

2.2. Sumerian hymn

The *me* appears in many rhetorical compositions in Sumerian hymnography, such as “manifest *me*”, “perfect *me*”, “extend *me*”, “to sit on *me*”, “to own *me*”, “to carry *me*”, “to be filled with *me*”, “to perform a *me* position”, “raise one’s head in great *me*”, and “return *me* to their place”. In many hymns, the hero of the hymn receives *me* from the ancestor who shares his *me* with him. *me* are either entrusted to the hero, hung on the hand, or hung on the chest by the hero himself. Then, the hero becomes the master of numerous means of power, according to the practice of possession of which he is invincible and cannot be overthrown from his throne, not only political power but also power over spells [58]. Certainly, in the same way, that the myths of Inanna were connected to the *me*, her hymns were associated with it. She was praised as mistress of all *me*, brilliant *me*, perfect *me*...

2.2.1. In a balbale of Inanna (Inanna a)

A *balbale* of Inanna (Inanna a), she was gifted with *me* like An king, and like Enlil, you are established in a place of honor (lines 14-15) [59].

2.2.2. In the exaltation of Inanna.

The exaltation of *Inanna* is a long praise to Inanna as the Lady of the *me*, the protector, the collector...etc. **1-** *nin me šar₂-ra u₄dalla é-a. 2- mi-zi me-lám gúr-ru ki ága an uraša. 3- nu-gig an-na suh-kešda gal-gal-la. 4- aga zi-dé ki ága nam-en-na túm-ma. 5- me₇-bé šu sá du₁₁-ga. 6-nin-mu me gal-gal-la sag-kešda-bi za-e-me-en. 7- me mu-e-il me šu-zu-še mu-e-lá. 8- me mu-e-ur₄ me gaba-zu bi-tab. 9-ušungal-gim kur-ra uš₁₁ ba-e-ši. 9- ^diškur-gim ki sig_x(K AxLI) ^dezinu la-ba-ši-gal₂. 10- a-ma-ru kur-bi-ta e₁₁-dé. 11-sag-kal an ki-a ^dinanna-bi-me-en. 12- izi ne-ne-ra kalam-e šég-gá. 13- an-né me. Mistress of all the *me*, bright light, a good woman, the darling of heaven and Earth, shine, the darling of An, mistress of all the fabulous ornaments, who love the fitting tiara, for the high priesthood whose hand has gained the "seven" *me*, Oh my lady, you are the protector of all the great *me*'s! You have selected the *me*'s, you have suspended the *me* on your hand, You have gathered the *me*, you have kept the *me* to your breast. Like a dragon, you have deposited venom on the foreign land. When you roar at the earth like Thunder, no vegetation can confront you. A flood fallen from its mountain, Oh first one, you are the Inanna of heaven and earth! Raining the burning fire upon the country, gifted with *me* by An (lines 1-13) [7,60], who seizes the most terrible of all the *me* (line 23). She appropriates the *me*'s, great queen of queens, the True goddess, fit for the *me*'s it is promoting to praise you, Compassionate one, fine woman, who gifted with *me* by An (lines 60-64-65-153) [7-60].*

2.2.3. In the Hymn to Inanna as Ninegala

Hymn to Inanna as Ninegala; Inanna is called the one who regulates the divine orders like the *me* of An and regulates the heavenly orders like the *me* of Enki and causes awe of you to reach to the heavens (lines 47-48), the lady of all the *me* (line 56,77) [61].

2.2.4. In the hymn, a tigi to Inanna

The hymn a *tigi* to Inanna, she was the one who received the *me* from the abzu and made it excel in heaven (lines 5-7-9-11) [62].

2.2.5. In Nisaba

Nisaba is also called the Perfected with (all) the fifty great *me* (line 5) [63,65].

2.2.6. In the hymn, a shir-gida to Ninurta

The hymn a *shir-gida* to Ninurta, Ninurta was the greatest one of the house of the excellent *me*..... (line 8) [66].

2.2.7. A shir-namshub to Ninurta

A *shir-namshub* to Ninurta and Enlil's gatherer of the numerous *me* in (line 1) [67]

2.2.8. Ninlil

Ninlil either was completely packed with numerous *me*, the lady with the royal *me*, the goddess who provides the *me* with joy and prosperity who exalted with great and terrifying *me* (lines 1, 3, 10, 12,24-25, 32) [68].

2.2.9. Nansha

Nansha, called *the lady of precious me* (line 9), *with her precious me, she made Gudea (a) perfect (ruler) sings of its royal me* (lines 37; 46). *The lady of the good word whose me cannot be taken away*, (lin92) who she has her eyes on her *me*, the *pure, the lady, her me* are *mighty me*, surpassing other *me*, Nansha, her *me* cannot be matched by any other *me* (lines 251-252) [69].

2.3. *me* in temple hymns

In the hymns of the temples, the use of the *me* was so limited, especially in the hymn *to the temple of Kish* [70,71] (line 58E), of which early copies came from Abu Salabikh, which is extremely limiting in its use of the *me*. This is characteristic since, in the old Sumerian texts, *me* was generally preferred to be written in encrypted form. Probably, for hymns, it was a word that was not recommended to be taken in vain. The context of the hymn to Kesh is extremely precise: The temple of Kesh is pre-eternal since it was planned along with the plans of heaven and earth; it has pure *me* [58]. In the *hymn to Ekur, the house by the great me raised its head high*. (line 43). *The house of Enlil, by the great me raised its head high*. (line 45), *the house of Nnlil, by the great me raised its head high*. (line 47), *the court of Enlil, by the great me raised its head high* (line 49) [72,73].

2.4. *In the lamentations for the cities*

In the lamentations for the cities, the *me* is first shown as changed, dispersed, destroyed, and forgotten. Then, the gods order the devout king to restore the *me* and return them to their places. Every attempt to terminate or remove the *me* from the city, change their number, or break their unity was impossible without destroying the city's life.

2.4.1. *In the lament for Ur*

In the lament for *Ur*, *the me of the city that was once frightening and terrifying the enemy turned into hostile me* (lines 69-70;386) [74].

2.4.2. *In the Lament for Eridu*

In the Lament for Eridu, that city with the purest and greatest *me* of all the *me* -its *me* was overturned and changed (lines 15-16 A). The great *me*, all the *me* (line 62), the *me* that once embellishes the Abzu (line 89) [75].

2.4.3. *In the lament for Uruk*

In the Lament for *Uruk*, it wasn't just the *me* of the city but also the... of heaven and earth put their *me*'s to sleep (line 1-2) (?) [76].

2.4.4. *The lament for Nippur*

The lament for Nippur: *the barn built for the me became a hangout* (line 1-2); *In the heart of Nippur, where the me were distributed and the blackheads proliferated, fate no longer decides* (line 16). *Ekur hopelessness of its me* (line 59). *Enlil makes all his me fly away* (line 114). *Enlil returned the rites which the enemy disordered and desecrated, along with the scattered me!* (lines 167-168) [58].

2.5. Sumerian royal inscriptions

In royal Sumerian inscriptions, the noun *me* appears to be less commonly used than in hymns and myths. However, I provided some selected examples of its use in royal inscriptions that may prove valuable.

2.5.1. Lagaš royal inscriptions (Gudea's inscriptions)

Lagaš royal inscriptions: The *me* appears in the cylinders of Gudea with its vague meaning, as in the Gudea statue B where the Ningirsu temple *me* includes a set of permanent offerings that provide afterlife nourishment for the temple builder through offerings to his statue A: **15-** *me-^dNin-ir-suka*. **16-** *ba-ni-ib-lal a*. **17-** *sá-dug-na*. **18-** *é-^dNin-gir-su-kata* [2,77]. *Me* Ningirsu will reduce his offerings from Ningirsu temple. *The me here is understood as "required offerings" for Gudea in the netherworld. The combination of me with the name of God Ningirsu suggests "enduring offerings" established by the god Ningirsu for Gudea's afterlife.*

2.5.1.1. *In cylinder A*

In cylinder A, the *me* is used to describe the strong beginning to Lagaš raised its head up to the sky in great *me* after the separation of the heaven and sky "which means "being in great strength". *On a day when destiny was being determined in heaven and earth, Lagaš raised (its) head in great me* (line A1.1-2). *The me of eninnu-temple in heaven and on earth he will manifest* (line A.1:1), *whose me is very great* (line A1.20), *the hero, whose me is the greatest* (line A7.7), *the me of the temple of that which exceeds the greatest of all the me* (line A9-12). *Its terrifying me reaches up to heaven* (lines 9-16). *Then, Enlil binds for his son Ningirsu 50 me at each end like a sheaf, which must require presenting offerings to his father* (line A10.6). From the context, it is about a holiday in honor of the God An in the temple on the day of the new moon. The perfection of temple *me* with the holiday means a set of sacrifices and ritual actions performed in a strictly defined order, thereby supporting the external existence of the temple. The "*Festival of An*" is performed in great *me*. (line A10.18), *the temple, whose radiance of heaven reaches, whose me heaven and earth embrace* (line A17.18-19) [78].

2.5.1.2. *In cylinder B*

In cylinder B, we see *Ningirsu raised up his head in great me* (line B6.8), *and the eninnu temple passed in review with his me before the lord Ningirsu* (line B6.23). The *me* of his (temple) in heaven and on earth are excellent-*me*, and the moon god (Nanna)it is he who caused its *me* to exceed (all others) in heaven and earth. (line B13.5). *The temple me raised its head high in great form, its radiant was perfected* (line B16.3-4). *Gudea had built the E-ninnu and made its me perfect* (line B17.13-14) [2,78].

2.5.2. *In Ur III royal inscriptions*

In *Ur III* royal inscriptions, the *me* occurs as far as we know three times. **1-** In inscription to *Shulgi*. It is mentioned as a name of *shulgi's* daughter (*me-^den-lil-kur-kur-ra*) *me* Enlil shepherd of all countries. Only the king's daughter could bear such a name. *me* in this context is best understood as a "position". **2-** In the inscription of the Umma ruler *lu-Utu*. *me-bi ša-bi-a si im-ma-ni-sá ...me* is it put in order as an honor to the mother goddess *Ninhursag*. **3-** In the inscription *Ibbi-Suen* A 9-10, *me* is dedicated to the offering of a golden vessel to the god *Nanna* on the new year's holiday "the bathing of Nanna" (*ezen-mah-za-mu-a-tu₅-a dnanna-ka*). Next comes the title *Ibbi-suen* A: 35 (*Nirgal, me-ni-*

nam-ma) chosen husband, of all *me!!*. In this case, *me* in the *Ibbi-Suen* inscription refers to all rituals and offerings in the territory that belongs to the king [58].

2.6. *me* and *ni*

There are indications in the early texts not for the etymology but for the original meaning of the term *me*. Although the sign *me* 𒄠 is already attested in the archaic texts, no statement about the reading or meaning can be made here. The earliest clear evidence of *me* as "divine powers" comes from Fara and Abu Salabikh. In these early texts, *me* is used as a variant of the reflexive pronoun *ni* "itself". *Ni* or *me* stands for the 1st pronoun suffix, and *ni-te* or *me-te* for the 3rd pronoun suffix [10,80].

2.7. Other compositions with *me*

Other terms formed with *me* are *me lam* "shine of terror", *ni-me-gar* "reverential awe", and *mudg-me-gar* "expectant silence/joy"; the special meaning "silence" should also be mentioned. What all these terms have in common is that *me* was understood as an individual divine power that was inseparably inherent in every person, everything, every action and, in its concrete manifestation, could spread awe, terror, but also joy [13].

3. Results

To conclude, **1)** The *me* grows in the depths of the Abzu, which makes it divine and associated with many holy epithets. **2)** *me* is a group or collection whose number is 7, 50, or more held in the hand of (*šu lá*) or like a garment (*il*). We ornament with it (*šu tag*), tied in bundles, or shipped on a ship. Most Sumerologist seem to find it most fitting not to use any plural ending when they refer to the *me*. **3)** Each realm - heaven, earth, and the underworld - has its own unique *me*, and it has to be respected. **4)** The *me* comes often with the great gods An, Enki, Inanna, Enlil, Ningirsu, and Nisaba and rarely with the Abzu and underworld. **5)** The *me* is inhabited in the temple or sanctuary and fills the thrones and palaces as if it was not an original part of it. **6)** "*me*" does not exist on its own. It is always connected to someone or something and is attributed to that entity. **7)** The *me* is associated with the gods, temples, and cities, but there is no mention of it in human society. **8)** The ancient Sumerian cities possess their own *me*, like Ur and Eridu. Uruk. -the *me* described as being desired (*al dug.*), given (*sum*), distributed (*bal, ba*), shared (*ba*). It is seized (*šá*), held (*šu it*), hidden, ineffable, furious, non-emerging, indestructible, true, righteous, great, high, perfect, shiny, changed, dispersed, destroyed, forgotten, and restored.

4. Discussion

The concept of "*me*" received a discussion in the context of Sumerian civilization and its connections to religious and philosophical thought. It highlighted the idea of a powerful word or concept with the ability to shape and organize the universe. Handling the Sumerian concept of "*me*" seems familiar from a religious or cultural perspective. This word or power is closely tied to the greatest god, An, who presented it to his beloved son Enlil, who was entrusted to the god

Enki. He commanded him to use it to initiate the organization of life in the whole universe. It seems that the Sumerian mindset somehow grasped the idea that there is a word of beginnings; from it, everything is created, and it can control all things with unlimited ability. Their attempts to show it tangibly appear undecided and inefficient. "*me*" here is an utterly godly affair, and it is not within human privileges to interfere in it or be distinguished by it. The *me* emphasizes the limitations of human understanding in grasping such abstract and profound concepts, suggesting that the idea of "*me*" is beyond human interaction and comprehension, much like the divine concept of the **Word** in certain religious texts like the Bible "*In the beginning, it was the Word, and the Word was with God*" (John 1:1) and the Quran "*only to say to it: Be, so it is*" (Ya-Sin 36:82).

5. Conclusion

The Sumerian "**me**" was a complicated concept in ancient Mesopotamia that included various aspects of life, civilization, and culture. The term "*me*" was often translated as "divine orders" or "divine laws". These were believed to be the essential regulations or rules of the aspects of Sumerian society and religion. Each "*me*" represented a specific aspect of divine authority. The "**me**" were believed to have been established by the gods and were controlled by Enki in Sumerian mythology. They covered a wide content of issues, including religious rituals, craft techniques, music, and even concepts like kingship and justice as seen in the myth of Enki and Inanna. The "**me**" was viewed as both tangible and intangible; it could be touched and carried or dropped, as well as concepts like loyalty and honesty. The concept of "**me**" highlighted the Sumerians' deep understanding of the interplay between the divine and the human.

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