Feminine Wisdom in Near Eastern Mythologies: Nisaba and Seshat*

Yakın Doğu Mitolojilerinde Dişil Bilgelik: Nisaba ve Seshat

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Abstract: *The ancient civilisations of the Near East have captured the attention of modern-day researchers. In these societies, "wisdom" is a particularly important concept in both their pantheons and their societies. Although wisdom is usually considered to be masculine, it has occasionally acquired feminine traits as well. However, female deities associated with knowledge, writing and wisdom did not play prominent roles within these pantheons. Nevertheless, literary works, cuneiform documents and visual artefacts explicitly mention these deities and their duties. This study aims to explore the roles, similarities, and differences of two female deities representing "knowledge", "intellect", and "writing" — Nisaba from Mesopotamia and Seshat from Egypt — in mythology. To this end, literary texts referencing these goddesses and visual artefacts were examined and evaluated.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dişil bilgelik, Mezopotamya bilgelik tanrıçası, Mısır bilgelik tanrıçası, Nisaba, Seshat

Özet: Eski Yakındoğu'nun kadim uygarlıkları günümüz araştırmacılarının dikkatlerini çekmektedir. Bu uygarlıkların pantheonları ve toplumlarında bilgelik, oldukça önemli bir kavram olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Eril bir karaktere sahip olan bilgelik kavramı, yer yer dişil özelliklere de sahip olmuştur. Bilgi, yazı ve bilgelikten sorumlu tutulan dişil tanrılar, bahsi geçen panteonlarda ön planda olamamışlardır. Buna rağmen, edebi eserler, çivi yazılı belgeler ve görsel buluntular onlardan ve görevlerinden açıkça bahsetmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, "bilgi", "akıl" ve "yazı"yı temsil eden Mezopotamya'dan Nisaba ve Mısır'dan Seshat adlı iki dişil tanrının mitolojideki konumları, benzerlikleri ve farklılıklarını belirlemektir. Bu bağlamda, tanrıçaların adlarının geçtiği edebi metinler ve görsel buluntular incelenmiş ve değerlendirme yapılmaya çalışılmıştır.

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Introduction

The ancient Near East encompasses Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, ancient Iran, and the Levant region. Western researchers initiated the exploration of the Near East in the nineteenth century, but it was in the twentieth century that the scientific nature of the research was achieved (Bordreuil *et al.* 2015: 10). Archaeological data indicate that Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilisations existed simultaneously in this important region, where civilisation began to develop, and that they contributed to its development in many ways. Long-term research has revealed that the writing found in Mesopotamia around 3000 BC reflected the development of human thought. This writing was adopted by Egypt around two centuries later, where it developed independently (Bratton 1995: 13, 61; Bottéro 2005: 25–26; Sivas 2019: 129).

Interaction between ancient Near Eastern civilisations led to similarities in their religious beliefs, myths, and cult activities (Eliade 1993: 49; Bratton 1995: 13). Religion, the original environment of mythology, defines people's attitudes towards an order that they instinctively fear because it is radically superior to everything around them. Religion emerges from this search for the supernatural (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 55). The concept of "mythology" encompasses the beliefs of the ancient Near Eastern peoples. Over time, these beliefs have been transferred into teachings and rituals, including stories about supernatural beings and the origin of things (Black, Green 1992: 14–15; Bonnefoy 2000; Demirci 2013: 3; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 84; Çayır 2020: 99). Myths are a complex cultural reality, so they are not easy to define. Researchers specialising in mythology have attempted to define them. According to Eliade (1993: 13), myth tells how a reality comes to life and includes real and sacred creation stories of supernatural beings. Additionally, myths reveal the two opposing aspects of divine beings (Eliade 2009: 373 ff.). By contrast, Bratton argued that myths are tales passed down from generation to generation, becoming simplified or altered with each retelling, and that mythology is the science of ancient man (Bratton 1995: 19).

Although mythological themes seem universal, it is the myths that distinguish one civilisation from another (Murray 1968: 20; Bratton 1995: 27; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 86). Indeed, despite their geographical and economic similarities, the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilisations differ in their mythologies, despite having very similar authoritarian theocratic management systems, deities, festivals and pictograph systems. Egypt has been the most stable and continuous civilisation in history because it is a homogeneous country protected by natural barriers against external invasions. Conversely, Mesopotamia, lacking natural protection, was vulnerable to external invasions and could not achieve political stability. In this context, interaction with foreign societies was very important for Mesopotamia. This important difference had a significant impact on the formation of their myths (Bratton 1995: 33–34).

Sumerian mythology, from which Mesopotamian mythology originated and which became the source of others, is full of gods, goddesses and sacred beings, as well as their stories, which were sanctified by society and proven by written documents. The importance of the gods is reflected in the size and grandeur of the temples built for them (Landsberger 1944: 422; Beaulieu 2007: 165–167; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 11; Köroğlu 2019a: 29–30). In the Akkadian mythology, which preserved the Sumerian cultural tradition, deified kings feature prominently in both written documents and art (Beaulieu 2007: 167; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 12; Köroğlu 2019b: 36–43). The Babylonian and Assyrian mythologies, which are of Semitic origin, continued the deep-rooted traditions that they had received without interruption until around the seventh and sixth centuries BC (Mackenzie 1915; Lambert 1999–2000: 149–155; Bratton 1995: 35; Demirci 2013: 16; Gökçek 2015: 39; Pekşen 2017: 7; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 12–13; Köroğlu 2019c: 56; Rochberg 2024: 25). The concept of a common religion did not emerge from the Sumerians; instead, great importance was given to the chief god of each state, and literature was formed from mythological stories about them (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 103, etc.; Köroğlu 2019d: 99).

Religious documents that gained importance from the Old Kingdom period onwards reveal the richness of Egyptian mythology. These documents masterfully narrate the festival rituals of Egyptian gods, the magnificent life stories of the deceased, the autobiographies of important figures, and the wars and great deeds of kings. Indeed, Egyptian religion has attracted the attention of the West for nearly two thousand years (Müller 2023: 10) and encompasses the entirety of Egyptian culture (Sivas 2019: 131–133). Egyptian religious teachings are especially evident in Egyptian art. When the local Egyptians lost faith in their ancestors, they turned to the "wise priests" of Egypt. The "wisdom of Egypt" survived even after the collapse of pagan religions (Müller 2023: 9–10).

The libraries that preserve ancient Near Eastern cultures contain a wide variety of literary and informational texts. These texts, particularly those found in the palaces, temples, and private residences of Nineveh, Alalah, Ugarit, and Uruk, demonstrate the value that Mesopotamian people and nobles placed on knowledge. The adjective *ummanu* was highly valued in Mesopotamia and is defined as "deeply knowledgeable, enlightened and wise" (Bordreuil *et al.* 2015: 320; Ponchia 2024: 199). It is also defined as "the capacity to acquire knowledge, comprehend, display good manners and common sense, and adapt intuition to life" (Walsh 2015: 179). Wise people are a recurring theme in Mesopotamian literature. Wisdom texts advise people to pray to the gods in order to lead a good life, and texts dedicated to the gods were considered to be of great importance in rituals (Bordreuil *et al.* 2015: 320–322, 416; Solak 2021: 425). These ancient wisdom texts, which literally mean "teachings", can be considered the equivalent of today's "personal development books" (Solak 2021: 425). Numerous Egyptian texts, written in different scripts on papyrus, clay and stone, clearly demonstrate the importance that the ancient Egyptian royal family and people attributed to knowledge (Sivas 2019: 130–131). Egyptian wisdom

texts, in the form of religious texts and teachings on daily life, bear a strong resemblance to their counterparts in Mesopotamia and occupy a significant place in literature (Solak 2021: 427). The importance given to these texts reflects Egypt's reverence for wisdom. According to Egyptian religious thought, the further back in history one goes, the happier and wiser their ancestors become (Müller 2023: 14).

Traditionally, wisdom (*ḫasīsu*) was attributed to figures of authority such as old man, father and king, and was considered necessary for peace and the welfare of society (Cohen 2021: 168). In mythology, the chief gods in the pantheon were accepted as "wise", and access to wisdom, or *nēmequ*, was considered a defining characteristic of the gods Ea (E/A-DURU), Nabû (^{d}NA-BU-UM), Nisaba (^{d}NANNA), Asalluhi/Marduk (^{d}AMAR.UD/UTU), Šamaš, and Adad (Rochberg 2024: 27). The Sumerian god Enki/Ea (Kramer 1967: 377; Colless 1970: 30; Black, Green 1992: 75; Kramer 1999: 12; Çığ 2013: 66; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 66; Etgü, Pekşen 2023: 515), the Babylonian gods Marduk and Nabu and the Assyrian god Assur (Mackenzie 1915: 22, 84; Langdon 1964: 158; Colless 1970: 130; Black, Green 1992: 129, 133; Lambert 1999–2000: 149, etc.; Pekşen 2017: 7; Halton 2018: 22; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 71) and the Egyptian god Thoth (Wainwright 1941: 32; Colless 1970: 131; Baines 1983: 591; Meier 1993: 543; Jasnow 2011: 301; Miatello 2016: 112; Miatello 2023: 139) were considered wise deities.

The concept of wisdom is clearly masculine in Near Eastern mythologies. Given that wars, heroism and legends are largely the domain of men, this is seen as normal. Therefore, the presence of goddesses of wisdom in these mythologies is surprising. Some of these goddesses occupy a very important place, with some even belonging to the category of chief gods. However, unfortunately, feminine gods of wisdom have remained in the shadows, despite elite women always being associated with wisdom during the Ur III kingdom (c. 2112–2004), Old Assyrian (c. 1900–1830), Old Babylonian (c. 1880–1550) and Neo-Assyrian (c. 900–612) periods (Halton 2018: 21).

A Brief Look at Mesopotamian and Egyptian Mythologies and the Concept of Wisdom

According to Mesopotamian mythology, the universe is governed by a hierarchy of gods and is overseen by a supreme authority. The helplessness of humans in the face of cosmic forces results in devotion to the gods (Bratton 1995: 35; Beaulieu 2007: 165; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 88). These mythologies were created through the collective imagination in an attempt to provide religious explanations for the world and its phenomena, such as the characteristics, duties and relationships of the gods, the origin of the world and humanity, and death and the afterlife. This religious ideological system, which emerged over time, provided a logical explanation for everything, and the causes and effects always remained the same. In this world, where everything depends on nature, religious belief is the only system of thought. However, even if everything we currently define as Mesopotamian

mythology is true, most of the myths could not be written down and were preserved in oral tradition (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 88–100).

For the Mesopotamian people, who had a polytheistic religious system, the gods were beings of a very high order, far removed from humanity, who were worthy of devotion, deep admiration and respect. Although there were many of them, each god had a specific duty and position, as well as certain privileges. There was clearly a division of labour within the pantheon, which had a certain order and structure. The organisation of the gods' hierarchical structure resembled that of a patriarchal family: the chief god was at the top, followed by his first wife, then his other wives, and finally his children. This organisational structure of the gods mirrored the country's administrative tradition. Each city's ruler had powers and a separate local pantheon, but none of them could conflict with the common pantheon. The "supreme gods" in the common pantheon were An(u) (god of heaven and sky), Enlil (god of the earth and storms) and Ea/Enki (god of water). Although a feminine being with different tasks is occasionally mentioned alongside these three masculine powers, it is not known whether this being is the wife of one of them, the mother of all, or the ancestor of all (Bottéro 1985: 175; Bratton 1995: 35–36; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 59–65).

Enki/Ea is known as the most intelligent, knowledgeable, competent, cunning and wise of the supreme gods, with the titles of "Lord of Wisdom" and "God of Civilisation" (Bratton 1995: 36; Lambert 2013: 337–398). Considered the most influential and knowledgeable god in every subject, Enki helps rulers find solutions and guides them in all matters. He ensures that their authority is used efficiently and effectively (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 66). There are many written documents mentioning Enki. For example, a forty-piece tablet found in Nippur describes Enki's journey to Nippur, bearing the titles "Enki, the supreme wise ruler" and "The source of knowledge for the whole country!"[1]. The characteristics of Enki, the chief god in the Sumerian pantheon, influenced Babylonian and Assyrian belief systems. The chief god of Babylon was Marduk, who was the son of Enki; later, his son Nabu took this position. The chief god of Assyria was Assur, who was considered to be a continuation of Enki (see, for example, Mackenzie 1915: 84; Bratton 1995: 37; Hout *et al.* 2000: 254–336; Lambert 2013: 484, 490; Pekşen 2017: 96; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 71). In texts from Assurbanipal's palace (7th century BC), Enki/Ea is referred to as *"nēmeq Ea"*, meaning "wisdom/skill of Ea", "a scholarly tablet", and "the scribe"; Nabu is referred to as *"nēmeq Nabû"*, meaning "the wisdom/skill of Nabû", and "the patron deity of writing" (Hunger 1968, no. 330: 5, 331: 6; Lambert 2013: 276; Rochberg 2024: 28).

The fundamental concept in Egyptian mythology was the immutability of the universe, or Maat. This refers to the unchanging cosmic order of truth and goodness. The

[1] The first fragments of the 129-line poem were discovered in 1914 and translated by Kramer (1944: 62 ff.) and Falkenstein (1951: 119 ff.). The most recent translation is available in Al-Fouadi's unpublished thesis (1959); see Bottéro, Kramer (2019: 157).

god-kings who maintained this order were the Egyptian pharaohs, who were considered immortal and were seen as the embodiment of both the universe and the state. This feature of their mythology was reflected in all aspects of their lives, including architecture, literature, art and religion. Thus, Egyptian myths established a connection between humans and gods, facilitating a way of life based on trust. Indeed, the ancient Egyptians relied on symbols and myths to explain everything that was uncertain and unknown. All events relating to each god and the afterlife were expressed through symbols, stories, rituals, or a combination of these. (Bratton 1995: 62–66).

Egyptian religion is polytheistic and dates back to a time when people had a sense of respect and peace towards the sky, the beings in it, and the way nature functioned. As historical periods followed this prehistoric era, gods began to be depicted with animal heads, and Egyptian religious thought evolved. For instance, the god of the dead, Anubis, was depicted as a jackal, while the god of wisdom, Thoth, was depicted as animals such as the ibis (a heron-like bird) and the baboon (a short-tailed monkey). The Egyptian pantheon, also known as the "Great Ennead", features the sun god Re (Ra), the air god Shu, the rain god Tefnut, the earth god Geb, the sky goddess Nut, the god of the dead Osiris, his wife Isis, his enemy and brother Set, and his wife Nephthys. In addition, the "Second Ennead" pantheon features Thoth, the god of writing; Anubis, the god of mummification; and Horus, Osiris's son. (Bratton 1995: 60–67). Despite being predominantly masculine, the Egyptian pantheon also featured prominent feminine deities.

Like Enki, Thoth is considered the "god of wisdom" and is worshipped as the "god of learning/writing" because he is known as the "scribe of the gods" in Egyptian mythology. In this respect, he embodies reason and intelligence. His temple, which housed a live ibis bird, was located in Hermopolis (Bratton 1995: 64, 166; Müller 2023: 33–35). Thoth is also known as the "god of the moon", and is the assistant most closely related to the sun god. He heals the sun when its eye is injured. In Egyptian mythology, dog-headed monkeys greet the sun with prayers at sunrise and bid it farewell at sunset. Furthermore, Thoth accompanies the sun during its nightly journey through the underworld (Müller 2023: 34–35). In this context, Thoth is considered the "arbiter between darkness and light" (Bratton 1995: 166). In Egyptian mythology, the local deity of Hermopolis was initially identified with the sun but was actually the white serpent god Thoth. Consequently, Thoth became the god of writing and was accepted as ruler of the gods and humans thanks to his role as the "assistant of the union of gods" (Müller 2023: 35). For instance, in the myth recounting the conflict between Horus and Set, Thoth is portrayed as the "Scribe of the Ennead" who resolves their dispute (Bratton 1995: 71-72). Thoth was depicted in various ways in Egyptian art: as an old bird, a white serpent, a dog-headed monkey greeting the sun, and sailing on a ship like the sun (Müller 2023: 34–36, figs. 13-17).

Feminine Wisdom in Mesopotamian Mythology: Nisaba

There are many common views about a female deity, whose name has been known since the Early Dynastic period and who has various names (Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 44). Akkadian lexicons confirm the name Nisaba, writing it as "ni-sa-ba" in one syllable (Michalowski 1998: 575; Civil 2017: 422). Nisaba's name is derived from nin-sab(a).ak, meaning "Lady of Saba" (Lambert 1983; Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 44). Nisaba(k)'s name derives from Nin-saba-(ak) or Nin-se-ba-(ak), meaning "Lady of Grain Rations" (Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 44). Some prominent Assyriologists preferred the word "Nidaba" (Mackenzie 1915: 188; Van Buren 1955: 360; Langdon 1964: 193; Hammadioğlu 2023: 29). However, this is now considered unlikely, as clearer evidence would also detect repeated scribal errors (Lambert 2017: 452). The name of the Sumerian goddess Nisaba was written using a combination of the cuneiform sign NAGA and the sign for "god" (dingir) (Rochberg 2019: 266; Sironi 2024: 56). These signs are supposedly divine identifiers that later became the names of different deities. The NAGA sign is thought to depict a plant and was later interpreted as a sheaf of barley (Michalowski 1998: 575). A separate identifier was added to this sign to write the name of Ereš, Nisaba's main cult centre (Hammadioğlu 2023: 29). NAGA is also considered to be the name of Nisaba, the goddess of writing (Rochberg 2019: 266). Given the spike signs used to write her name and the wheat spikes she holds in existing seals, it is likely that Nisaba originated as a grain/agricultural goddess (Langdon 1923: 13; Williams 1928: 234; Langdon 1964: 78, 158; Jacobs, Jacobs 1945: 83; Black, Green 1992: 143; Hansen 2003: 30; Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 43; Taracha 2013: 119). Indeed, the Sumerians believed that Nisaba gave fertility to the wheat fields (Günaltay 1987: 457).

Some researchers argue that the forms ^{d}Nisaba or ^{d}Nissaba are more accurate than Nidaba (Lambert 2013: 238, 358; van Buren 1955: 360; Black, Green 1992: 143). However, others suggest that she was mostly known as Nidaba (Jacobs, Jacobs 1945: 83; van Buren 1955: 360; Colless 1970: 121; Çığ 2012: 226). It is thought that the goddess Nidaba was originally a plant or grain goddess in the Third Early Dynasty and Akkadian periods (van Buren 1955: 360; Langdon 1964: 193; Michalowski 1998: 576; Hammadioğlu 2023: 29). In some Hittite texts, the logogram Nisaba is associated with the grain deity Halki (Taracha 2013: 119). The Akkadians used the name Nissaba, pronounced "ni-is-sa-ba" (Civil 1983: 43; George 2005: 308). The goddess also has different names. For example, in the myth of Enlil and Ninlil, her name is thought to be used in three different ways: Nidaba(k), Nanibgal, and Nunbarsegunu (Civil 1983: 43; McEwan 1998: 151; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 127–135). In one of the Shulgi hymns, the names Nidaba and Nanibgal appear together (Civil 2017: 421; Çığ 2012: 63).

In mythology, the goddess Nisaba began her existence as the daughter of An(u) and Uras, and her cult is attested from the Early Dynastic Period onwards. During this period, she was the personal goddess of the rulers of the Sumerian city of Umma (Lambert

1999–2000: 155; van Buren 1955: 360; Black, Green 1992: 143; Çığ 2012: 42). In Lagash, she was considered the daughter or sister of Enlil, making her the sister of Ningirsu (Lambert 2013: 238). Initially thought to be the wife of the god Haya, it was later believed that Nabû, the god of writing, was her husband, probably due to her association with the art of writing. She was also sometimes identified with the goddess Nanibgal (Ennugi) (Black, Green 1992: 143). However, following the unification of Umma and Lagash under a single authority, she was incorporated into the Lagash pantheon as the sister of Ningirsu and Nanshe, as well as the goddess of plants (van Buren 1955: 360). During the Isin-Larsa period, she became the patron goddess of the city of Ereš. She was also the patron goddess of the nearby city of Suruppag and the mother of Sud (also known as Ninlil) (Civil 1983: 43–44; Black, Green 1992: 143; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 128).

The most obvious example of power being transferred from a goddess to a god is Nisaba. The Sumerian goddess, who is associated with writing, accounting, measurement and administration, embodies qualities that many cultures traditionally attribute to men. However, the Sumerians attributed these vital civilisational skills to a female deity. Known by epithets such as "supreme" or "supreme scribe", Nisaba is also honoured as the "lady of wisdom" and "professor of great wisdom" (*geštu diru tuku-e*). With her mastery of mathematics, she counsels nations and oversees the economy, reflecting the high regard in which the Sumerians held feminine intellect and influence (Lambert 2013: 276; Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 19). As the goddess of wisdom, Nisaba is believed to have granted this skill to rulers. The right of scribes to teach their craft to others is also believed to have been granted by her (Robson 2007: 235–237).

Mesopotamian literary finds, scientific texts and archaeological artefacts have often been attributed to Nisaba. Scribes of the mid-third millennium BC dedicated their writings to the goddess Nisaba. In the doxologies at the end of literary works, the scribes would typically praise her for imparting the skills and knowledge necessary for transcribing the tablets.[2] Two objects attributed to Nisaba are a fragmentary mace head from the Old Akkadian period (YPM BC 005499, NBC 2526) and an inscribed clay jar mouth from around the end of the third or beginning of the second millennium (YPM BC 001820, MLC 1823, below) (Wagensonner 2020: 40, fig. 4.2). The existing Umma seals from the Ur III period show that Ur-Nisaba occurs three times on 909 seals (Waetzoldt 2009: 254–255, §5; 264-265, §12). During the Old Babylonian period, Nisaba was considered the personal goddess of many scribes, though she was not recognisably depicted on seals (Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 201).

[2] *Nisaba nu-diri men men azu-nun men nu-unx (UD)-ugx ! men-tuk [nisaba LUL] nisaba azu-ugx (EZEN×AN) ugx-ugx mulx (AN.AN)-ˀLAGAB(x[x]:* Nisaba, unexcelled, Crowned(?) one Princely scribe(?) Princely crown(?), lofty goddess Possessor of the crown, Nisaba Nisaba, the lofty scribe(?) The loftiest one {who consults}The stars of heaven....{praise be to her.} (NTSŠ 82, see Cohen, 1976: 88; Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013:47).

Among the literary texts, the Nimrud tablets from the Nabû temple library in the Assyrian town are regarded as an outstanding catalogue.[3] One of these tablets (CTN IV 168 I) is a compilation of prayers to the goddesses and clearly features the name of Nisaba. This prayer, which is believed to have been used in ritual performances, portrays Nisaba as the queen of wide knowledge, the daughter of Ea, and the goddess of abundance (Lambert 1999-2000: 153).[4]

During the Neo-Sumerian period, Nisaba was a very important goddess, especially in the city of Ereš, as evidenced by the following inscription: "How could you possibly consider practising sorcery in Ereš, the city of Nisaba, a city whose destiny was decreed by An and Enlil, the primeval city, the beloved city of Ninlil?" (Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 67).[5] Dating probably to the same period, the beginning of the Hymn to Nisaba A, which is preserved on a stone tablet from Lagash, depicts Nisaba as being syncretised with Aruru in terms of her position of authority rather than her birthing skills (Lambert 2013: 238; Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 68).[6]

The importance of Nisaba is clearly emphasised in the "Creation Myth"[7], which describes the period before humans built cities, sheep pens, and cattle barns. Nisaba is the goddess of grain who ushered in the age of civilisation (Langdon 1964: 193). *"The festivals of the gods will be celebrated day and night... Nisaba settled in the place where humans were created as their ruler. This is a secret doctrine: It should only be spoken of among the competent"* (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 576). The main purpose of the festivals, which continue to ensure the country's welfare and abundance, is to bless the most important work, agriculture and to show gratitude to the gods. Nisaba is responsible for the management of agriculture and the control of accounts. Indeed, Nisaba symbolises agricultural abundance (Hansen 2003: 30).

In the myth of "Enlil and Ninlil"[8], it is narrated that the god Enlil of Nippur wanted to marry Ninlil but had to gain the approval of Nisaba (Black, Green 1992: 143; Bottéro, Kramer 2006: 127-134). As Ninlil's mother, the old woman of Nippur gives her daughter

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[3] Excavated by M. E. L. Mallowan in the 1950s, they reflect the corpus of Babylonian literary and scholarly texts circulated by Neo-Assyrian scribes in the first millennium BC (Lamber 1999-2000: 149).

[4] In lines 16-17, *én í>latl nu-uh-še dNissaba ša[r]-ra-rtú 1 mārat e-a, dnissaba sar-ra-tú r pal-kd'-tú ha-si-sa* (CTN IV 168 I, 16-47), see for the figure of the tablet in Lambert 1999-2000: 153.

[5] *a-na-gin7-nam ereš2 ki uru dnisaba-še3 uruki nam tar-ra an den-lil2-la2 uruki ul uru ki aĝ2 dnin-lil2-la2 nam-maš-maš ak-de3 a-gin7 im-da-ĝen-ne-en* (Enmerkar and Ensuḫgirana 251-254).

[6] *nin mul-an-gin7 gun3-a dub za-gin3 šu du8 dnisaba immal2 gal duraš-e tud-da ... me gal 50-e šu du7-a nin-ĝu10 a2-nun-ĝal2 e2-kur-ra ušumgal ezen-e dalla e3-a da-ru-ru kalam-ma:* Mistress colored as the stars, holding a lapis-lazuli tablet! Nisaba, great wild cow, born by Uraš .... Perfectly endowed with fifty great divine powers, My Mistress, the most powerful in E-kur! Dragon emerging in glory at the festival, Aruru of the Land! (Lambert 2013: 238; Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 68).

[7] The cuneiform version of this poem in Sumerian-Akkadian was published by E. Ebeling. Its written form dates back to before the 2nd millennium BC. The most recent edition was published by Pettinato in 1974 (Bottéro & Kramer 2019: 574).

[8] The poem was recognised in 1967 and published by M. Civil in 1983 (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 126).

Nanibgal/Nunbarshegunu advice on how to win Enlil's love. Thanks to this advice, Nanna is born from the union of the two (Civil 1983: 58-61; Kramer 1999: 89). The names Nidaba, Nisaba and Nanibgal are also frequently mentioned alongside the name Nunbarshegunu (Civil 1983: 58-61; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 127-134). The myth of Enlil and Ninlil plays a key role in establishing Nidaba's house as the "seat of wisdom" (Civil 1983: 59; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 130). The goddess, who is associated with learning (Pal 1996: 79), is also recognised as the "goddess of the art of writing" (Van Buren 1955: 360; Çığ 2012: 53; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 62; Ayali, Darshan 2020: 85). In this myth, the goddess is known as the goddess of writing and accounting knowledge (Van Buren 1955: 360; Black, Green 1992: 143). Clearly, the goddess, who is also known as the "Lady of Letters" (Langdon 1964: 158), is the guardian of the art of writing in this famous poem. Indeed, in the section explaining the things Ninlil will have after marrying Enlil, it states that she will also have the talents of her mother: "*... Moreover, the art of writing, tablets decorated with signs, the pen reed, the tablet, accounting, accounts, the cord of the yard, the measuring poles, the measuring rope... All these will be yours*." (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 134).

In the myth of "Enki, the World Organiser"[9], it is emphasised that Nisaba ensures everything related to writing, land measurement, accounting, and the spread of culture. *"My noble sister, the sacred Nisaba, took the measuring ruler, and with her the lapis lazuli calibration ruler. She disperses the great powers, she determines the borders, she sets the boundary marks: She became the minister of the country. Even the accounting of the sustenance of the gods was entrusted to her!"* (410- 416) (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 200, 209).

In the myth "Lugal.e or Ninurta and the Stone"[10], Ninurta explains that he is responsible for what he has brought to the world, praising her as he does so: *"... Nisaba, the holy woman, very wise and foremost everywhere, who holds the Great Tablet on which the privileges of the kings and priests are written, the woman who laid out the Sacred Mound, Enki gave an extremely advanced intelligence! Let us praise the glory of Nisaba!... Let us praise the glory of the Lady of Knowledge who distributes happiness!"* (712-717) (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 414). According to tradition, this myth demonstrates that the new king forms a partnership with a supernatural being. Under the leadership of Ninurta, this partnership establishes a relationship between the king and Nisaba, whereby Nisaba will protect the administration of the king's lands and Ninurta's planting and production using her "writing and accounting" skills (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 422). Another important point is that Nisaba determines a place in the name of the gods. This place, known as the sacred hill (du-ku),

[9] Most of the long poem, which consists of 10,450 lines, was found in Nippur. S. N. Kramer summarised it in 1944, and it was published in 1959 with the help of Bernard I. (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 183).

[10] This complex poem consists of 729 lines and has great verbal power. It is thought that the work dates back to the Ur III period and emerged during the reign of Gudea. It has Sumerian and Akkadian translations and was first published by T. G. Pinches after 1875. It was not published until 1983, when it was transformed into its current form by J. Van Dijk following extensive research (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 384–385).

is an eternal and supernatural realm where the gods reside (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 414).

A Lagash document written after the Flood explains how agriculture was practised, emphasising that Nisaba found the accounts and the edubba (tablet house), which were under her control. "*Written in the Academy. Praise be to Nisaba!"* (Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 597). In one of his hymns, King Shulgi of the Ur III dynasty attributes his skill as a scribe to the education he received in the "edubba" (tablet house) and states that he received this education from the goddess of writing, Nisaba. He adds that she taught him wisdom, using the title *"Nanibgal, who watches over the truth"* to express his gratitude to the goddess (Çığ 2012: 63). Similarly, in a text recounting a dream experienced by Gudea, the King of Lagash, Nidaba is depicted as "the guardian of writing and schools" holding a tablet inscribed with the constellations (Colles 1970: 126; Çığ 2012: 182).

In a text containing conversations between a teacher and a student, the teacher mentions Nidaba in his thank-you speech to the student. He describes the goddess as the *"guardian angel"* and *"queen of education"*, praying for her protection and the exaltation of his student (Çığ 2012: 72). In another conversation, this time between a landlord's steward and his clerk, Nidaba is referred to as the *"protective goddess of the school"*, and it is said that she gave the clerk the honour of becoming a teacher (Çığ 2012: 78).

Notably, the goddess Nisaba was responsible for important tasks such as managing agriculture and overseeing accounts. Indeed, the prestigious profession of scribe was mostly associated with men among the Sumerian people, and there are few sources in the textual records regarding female scribes (Stol 2016: 367–71). However, until the mid-2nd millennium BC, the patron of this profession was a goddess named Nisaba, not a god (Lion 2011: 91–92). Literary compositions and other academic texts were often dedicated to her. Notably, the oldest writer mentioned in world literature is a woman (Wagensonner 2020: 39). Enheduanna, an Akkadian woman, wrote hymns praising the gods and goddesses of Sumer and Akkad in Sumerian, drawing on her higher education. A princess, she played the role of cultural ambassador in Mesopotamian society and pantheon, using her conciliatory role and effective communication to help her father expand his hegemony (Salvini 2003: 74; Bottéro, Kramer 2019: 255; Çığ 2013: 263; Wagensonner 2020: 39; Hasdemir 2021: 428; Lawrence 2022: 10).

Among her hymns, Temple Hymn 42 was written for Ezagin, "the House of Lapis Lazuli", "the temple of the goddess Nisaba in Ereš". *"O house of lapis lazuli, bright as the stars in the sky, Ezagin, who welcomes the temple in Ereš! Every month, all the ancient lords look upon you. Nanibgal, the goddess Nisaba, has sent divine powers from heaven to add to yours. Build your temple ready for praise*" (Glaz 2020: 33, 39). The closing lines of the hymn express Enheduanna's devotion to the goddess and her duties: *"True woman of matchless wisdom, who cools the eyebrows of the black-headed people, who consults the tablet of lapis lazuli, who gives counsel to all lands. True woman, pure as soapwort, who is the sprout of the sacred reed. She measures the heavens above and stretches the measuring line across the earth. Praise be to Nisaba."* (Glaz 2020: 33, 39). These lines are valuable in that they demonstrate the

goddess's responsibility for mathematical measurements on Earth. It would therefore be accurate to say that Nisaba is responsible for construction activities involving the determination of property boundaries and measurement rules (Glaz 2020: 40-42; Hasdemir 2021: 430). The hymn also clearly states that she used rope/cord for these measurements. These lines may refer to Enheduanna herself, as she describes the wisdom of the "real woman" in the final section. Indeed, this woman's description bears a striking resemblance to Enheduanna's qualities.

During the Middle Babylonian period, Nisaba is believed to have been the logographic name for Inana, written as ^{d}INANA.MEŠ (Asher-Greve, Westenholz, 2013: 94). In the second half of the second millennium, equivalences in the pantheon began to cross gender boundaries. For instance, the male god Ḫaja was equated with his spouse, the goddess Nisaba of Prosperity, *ša mašrê* (Litke 1998: 235, line 98; Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 99). By the New Babylonian period, Nisaba, like some other goddesses, appears in ritual incantation texts. In relation to her role, she is referred to as *"pitât pî* DIĜIR.MEŠ GAL.MEŠ", meaning "the opener of the mouth of the great gods" (Oppenheim 1959: 284, line 45; Asher-Greve, Westenholz 2013: 118).

Her visual image appears iconographically similar to the more well-known Inanna-Ishtar type. As she was said to have been born in the great palace of the Eanna temple, her relationship with Inanna was close, and it is possible that the assimilation extended beyond appearance. Occasionally, the goddess of vegetation exhibits all of Inanna's distinctive features, including her frontal stance, the weapons emerging from her body, the lion at her feet and the stepped altar in front of her. This lends Inanna the appearance of a vegetation goddess (Van Buren 1955: 360; Hansen 2003: 30). In the hymn "Pure Inanna", Nisaba is depicted as the protector of sheepfolds and flocks of all kinds. She is also the goddess who fertilises the land, springs, gardens, plants and fishponds. She is indeed considered the goddess of fertility and voluptuous growth (Van Buren 1955: 360). These traits are thought to be depicted on a vessel fragment dating back to the Early Dynastic III period (2400–2250 BC). The goddess appears stocky and clumsy, wearing a short garment beneath a cloak draped over her left shoulder. Her horned crown is adorned with feathers. Her long hair falls down to her shoulders and six stalks supporting poppy seed capsules rise from it. Her right hand holds a cluster of dates. These features suggest that she is the grain goddess Nisaba (André-Salvini, 2003: 77-78, fig. 36).

Nisaba is also known as the goddess of reeds (Jacobsen 1946: 14; Günaltay 1987: 475). Reeds were indeed very valuable to the Sumerians. They used reeds growing in marshes for building construction, for making baskets and mats, and for writing on tablets with pens made from their stems. It is therefore accepted that Nisaba lived in reed piles (Günaltay 1987: 475). This seems to suggest that, during the Early Third Dynasty and the Akkadian period, a vegetation goddess was often depicted seated with a wide variety of mythological associations. Apart from the horned headdress that identifies her as a deity, she has no distinguishing features, so it is not always clear whether the same goddess is being

depicted. Most of the examples are uninscribed, and the inscriptions that do exist are not helpful. In these scenes, the goddess, especially the one perched on a reed pile, was an important deity. She was enthroned rather than seated and venerated by mortals and lesser gods alike. She is therefore usually identified as Nidaba, based on strong circumstantial evidence (Van Buren 1955: 360).

Feminine Wisdom in Egyptian Mythology: Seshat

In ancient Egyptian society, "sesh" was a common male title, and it is believed that the feminine form of this word is "seshet" or "seshat". There are no depictions of female scribes working as Seshets from any period. Several women with this name are known to have existed, and it is thought that they may have worked in the royal household (Maher 2018: 57–68). In ancient Egyptian mythology, Seshat is the "goddess of writing" or "goddess of fate", and is believed to be connected to the stars (Wainwright 1941: 40; Wilkinson 2003: 166; Maher 2018: 57; Müller 2023: 53). She is a variant of Nephthys, an ancient sky goddess associated with kingship. She is known as the "Lady of Years" and the "Lady of Fate who calculates the length of life" (Wainwright 1941: 40). It is thought that her practice of counting by notching a stick earned her the epithet "Original One who began writing in the beginning" (Wainwright 1941: 40).

It is believed that the goddess Seshet, also known as Sekha(u)it or Sekha(u)tet, altered the course of history with her pen. She was given the titles "existing before the divine place of the books" and "librarian of the gods" (Wilkinson 2003: 166; Müller 2023: 53). The epithets "Writing", "Lady of Hieroglyphs" and "Lady of the House of Books" reflect her role as the patron goddess of scribes, or educated and wise people (Wilkinson 2003: 166; Magdolen 2009: 173). Seshat is often depicted alongside ancient gods (Wainwright 1941: 40). She shares a special bond with Thoth, the god of writing. They both bear the epithet nb/nb.t sš, meaning "Lord/Lady of Writing", and are considered the "primordial" creators of writing and individual characters (Rechholz 2023: 219).

In Egyptian mythology, she is said to be located at the point where the upper and lower parts of the sky meet. This is considered the deepest part of the sky, or the "south" direction. The meaning of the epithet "existing before the library of the south" for the goddess is significant. It is thought that the region in question was in the old centre of Nekhbet, pointing to her home in the south, i.e. in the depths of the Earth. In other words, this is the base of the cosmic tree. It is precisely because of this tree that she is the goddess of fate and writing. Indeed, the goddess records future events, such as the lifespans of Egyptian kings and major historical events, on the cosmic tree for future generations to learn from. For instance, the symbolic representation of the goddess alongside Thoth and Atum writing a king's name on a tree is highly significant. When we consider that everything in the past and future is written in the stars, her interest in them becomes clearer. In this respect, the goddess was

sometimes depicted in the sacred Persea[11] of Heliopolis (Müller 2023: 54, fig. 51).

The goddess is depicted with two horns in an inverted form, indicating her connection to both the heavens and the underworld. Frequently featured in visual arts, she is also symbolised by a leopard-skin costume, a pen, and two interconnected inkwells hanging from her shoulder. She is dressed like a clergyman (Wilkinson 2003: 166; Müller 2023: 53). The star between the goddess's horns is the most important symbol and is seven-pointed. This unusual form in Egyptian mythology is thought to have originated in Asia. This symbol is often depicted in iconographic, epigraphic and paleographic records, and is associated with two main themes. The shape and symmetrical division of the upper part of the sign depicting the horns can be seen on seals dating back to the Old Kingdom. For instance, the seal found during the excavation of Neferefre's royal tomb in Abusir bore the hieroglyphic inscription "Šš3t nbt Šš", the name of the goddess and one of her epithets (Magdolen 2009: 171, fig. 2).

The goddess was often depicted alongside Thoth in temple wall scenes and inscriptions. For example, an inscription was found at the top of a register depicting Thoth and Seshat in the Temple of Seti I at Abydos. "*The words read by Seshat, the lord of Hermopolis: (I) gave you a million Sed festivals and half a million years (?) forever*" (Miatello 2016: 108). There is also a surviving fragment from an old temple wall in the Pyramid Temple of Senwosret I in Lishti, Egypt, showing a seated Seshat as a female scribe.[12] Together with Thoth, she is depicted performing the "cord/rope stretching" ritual, which symbolized the foundation of a building (Blackman, Fairman 1946: 78; Wilkinson 2003: 166; Magdolen 2009: 173). This technique, used in the construction of temples and pyramids, dates back to the 5th Dynasty[13] and possibly to the time of Imhotep.

Various reliefs depicting this ceremony show the king and the goddess Seshat facing each other, each holding a club in one hand and a pole in the other (Ishler 1989: 203). The typical depiction of this ceremony is usually accompanied by an epigraph similar to the one found at Edfu. "*I take hold of the point of the nail. I grasp the handle of the bench and Seshat and I grasp the measuring cord. I turn my eyes to the movements of the stars. I direct my gaze to the Great Bear...by his Merkhet. I am strengthening the corners of its warmth*" (Ishler 1989: 203, fig. 13).

Seshat's role in the Old Kingdom was to record the names of animals that had been

[11] "Persea", which is thought to be named after the Greek mythological hero Perseus, was considered a sacred tree by the ancient Egyptians (Schroeder 1977: 59).

[12] Brooklyn Museum, Charles Edwin Wilbour Fund, 52.129. It was found at the Pyramid Temple of Senwosret I, during Dynasty 12 and copied from a relief carved at least three hundred years earlier for Pepy II, the last great ruler of the Old Kingdom. https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3576. Accessed April 25, 2023.

[13] The goddess is known as the "Mistress of the Builders" from as early as the Second Dynasty, when she is recorded as having assisted king Khasekhemwy with the "Stretching of the Cord" ritual (see Wilkinson, 2003: 166).

captured as booty. In the Middle Kingdom, she also recorded the names of foreign captives, as well as their tribute. By the New Kingdom, she was depicted as recording the king's regnal years and jubilees on the leaves of the sacred ished or persea tree. Seshat and Nephthys were believed to renew the body of the deceased in the afterlife. She was also closely associated with other deities, particularly Thoth, who was sometimes described as her brother, consort or even daughter. During the New Kingdom, Seshat was equated with the goddess Sefkhet-abwy, whose attributes and symbols were almost identical to her own. Thus, Sefkhet-abwy is likely to be understood as simply another form of Seshat (Wilkinson 2003: 166). This ambiguous name, "Sefkhet (Safhet)-Abui", meaning "she who gives up or grows her horns", is a play on words[14] referring to both the seven "leaves" of her symbol and her inverted horns (Wainwright 1941: 40; Müller 2023: 54). Her main duty was to record the lifespan of the pharaoh. Under the influence of Re, Seshat was responsible for granting the king eternity; however, since her sevenfold symbol represented the concept of "Fate", it is believed that she initially provided the king with a seven-year cycle (Wainwright 1941: 40).

The goddess Seshat had a special relationship with the king, which enabled him to rule. In ancient Egypt, the king was considered a descendant of Thoth and Seshat. From at least the Hellenistic period onwards, Seshat played a significant role in the education and training of the king and his children. She kept records of the royal children, noting their genealogies and respective claims to the throne (Wainwright 1941: 40). As well as her educational role, Seshat was also responsible for determining the king's lifespan and destiny by organising Sed festivals for him. Temple wall paintings depict these festivals, showing the goddess keeping records on behalf of the king. For example, the wall scene depicting Ramses II keeping records of his regnal years with Thoth is quite striking (Jasnow, 2011: 308, fig. 6). A very similar scene can be seen on the second panel of the north entrance wall of the Karnak-Amon temple (KB 15), in which Ramses II kneels under a tree receiving something from Atum in the presence of Seshat, who writes the king's name on a leaf. Similarly, on the north face of the Great Temple at Medinet Habu (MHA 33), Ramses IV is depicted kneeling under the same tree, receiving something from Amon-Re in the presence of Ptah, Thoth, and Seshat (Costa 2006: 64, 67).

Seshat is depicted several times sitting on a throne in front of a door, typically the entrance to a Sed festival. In these scenes, she provides the writing and record-keeping by directing a column framed by two palm branches on the right and left. The scene on the

[14] The habit of playing on words has a wide scope with homophones such as sfh, meaning "seven", and sfh, meaning "to take out" or "to subtract". The emblem usually found above the goddess's head is a reflective writing of this title. This emblem consists of two inverted horns and a seven-rayed star or rosette underneath them. The rosette means "I take out sfh"; the seven rays form the homophone "seven", and the inverted horns indicate that they have been taken out — that is, they are in the opposite position to normal. This play on the word sfh is also frequently seen elsewhere (Dawson 1927: 100).

inner (western) face of the Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu, for example, shows Seshat recording Ramses III's annals or Sed festivals on columns framed by palm branches. The accompanying texts indicate that Seshat attributed life, duration, and power to the king (Rechholz 2023: 221, fig.1).

The goddess of writing, Seshat, also appears in literary texts. For instance, in the myth of the conflict between Horus and Set, she is referred to as the "Great Powerful". A letter addressed to her describes the gods' rivalry and offers advice on how to resolve the situation (Bratton 1995: 71–72). It is also believed that Seshat's name is referenced in the renowned Book of Thoth[15] (Jasnow 2011: 308; Rechholz 2023: 219). In a tomb inscription, the "Lover of Knowledge" says "*The nets of Shentait and Shai ("Seshat" in the Book of Thoth) caught me. The nets of Shai trapped me*". In light of such references, it is highly probable that the confusing upper part of Seshat's headdress is a schematic representation of a bird or a fishing net (Jasnow 2011: 308).

Although Seshat is a deity of official building, recording and writing, she rarely appears outside of these contexts. It is thought that she did not have a temple of her own, but because of her part in the foundation ceremony, she is seen as an important part of every temple that is built. It is also believed that she was a kind of patron goddess among scribes and builders (Wilkinson 2003: 166).

Conclusion and Discussion

In the mythologies of the ancient Near East, wisdom was considered a natural attribute of the gods. In these pantheons, where goddesses were as important as gods, wise goddesses were not easily identifiable. This is precisely why we are conducting our study. Examining the existing findings made it clear that there are wise goddesses in both mythologies. Furthermore, their contributions to the religious and socio-cultural lives of their societies are undeniably significant. Archaeological, epigraphic and literary findings show that the goddesses Nisaba and Seshat are wise deities related to wisdom, writing and education. It has been determined that they have been called by different names over time.

Nisaba is mentioned frequently in literary texts and is depicted as the goddess of grain or vegetation. There is one surviving visual depiction of her. However, she is rarely depicted as the goddess of writing. Although it is known that she appears on scribes' seals, these depictions are not easily identifiable. This is surprising given the multitude of other goddess visuals. Was it challenging to depict a divine entity initially associated with grain and

[15] Although the goddess Seshat is believed to play a significant role in the Book of Thoth, she is only explicitly mentioned once in the title as "Seferkhabwy" (Sḫf-ʿb.wy), as discussed by Hart (2005: 141). Another deity mentioned in the title, however, is Shai (Šḏ), who appears frequently in the Book of Thoth. Rechholz (2023: 219) argues that Šḗy in the Book of Thoth should be considered another reference to Seshat, rather than being confused with the male god Šḗy (Fate).

later with wisdom and writing? Was the concept of wisdom not intended to be masculine, and did it not undergo a physical transformation to become a feminine entity? Although we cannot find answers to these questions, we are convinced that Nisaba deserves the title of feminine wisdom, as many literary works refer to her.

Unlike Nisaba, Seshat is a frequent subject of visual art. Depictions of her alongside male gods have often adorned temple walls. In this context, she is particularly likely to appear near Thoth, the god of wisdom. Her skills in writing and calculation must have formed part of her duties. Notable examples of these duties include taking measurements during the construction of the pyramids, converting these measurements into a festival ceremony and recording the royal annals, all of which make her stand out in mythology. She is also notable for her horned and seven-pointed headdress.

Clear literary evidence demonstrates that Nisaba was a goddess who calculated the necessary measurements for construction activities, accounts, and the determination of property boundaries, using a rope or cord for these measurements. Similarly, the Egyptian goddess Seshat is renowned for her role in calculation and measurement, employing the same technique. In this context, their duties in mythology and society are similar, as they are both referred to with the same epithets. However, it is difficult to predict which of these goddesses, who existed simultaneously, influenced the other. Although Nisaba was originally mentioned as the goddess of grain, Akkadian tablets show that she was also the goddess of writing. She therefore lived at the same time as Seshat, who was mentioned as the goddess of writing from the Old Kingdom onwards.

In conclusion, it is evident that there was strong interaction between these two goddesses, who represented wisdom in their pantheons. However, it is impossible to determine who initiated this interaction without examining the political, economic, military and religious relations between the two civilisations. Nevertheless, we can infer that Nisaba influenced the first Akkadian princess, Enheduanna, to the extent that she became known as the first poet. Therefore, it is likely that Nisaba is the earliest recorded female deity of wisdom in Near Eastern mythology.

New research to be conducted in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and other neighbouring Near Eastern civilizations, together with archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic evidence, is expected to significantly enhance our understanding of the interactions among goddesses of wisdom. Moreover, a detailed examination of Ancient Iran and the Levant within the scope of this inquiry will likely yield valuable and original insights.

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