

MAGIC AND DIVINATION AT IIIRD MILLENNIUM EBLA, 1. TEXTUAL TYPOLOGIES AND PRELIMINARY LEXICAL APPROACH*

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In memoriam Johannes J.A. van Dijk

Investigation on the written materials concerning magic and divination at IIIrd millennium Ebla requires a definition of them and a description of the relevant sources.

As for the first point, J. Bottéro's article in *RIA* is the classical reference about magic. As for the divination, a main avenue of research may be that of the comparison of the Ebla materials with those of the Old Babylonian Mari texts, where this activity is now very largely documented¹.

As for the written Ebla sources concerning magic, it is well known the first bulk is composed by incantations. However, other information on magic and divination may be found in administrative records and in lexical lists. Aim of this paper is, firstly, to point out the available corpus of incantations, and, secondly, to discuss some lexical aspects of this matter as documented in the textual sources that are not incantations.

1. Incantations.

The Ebla tablets that document incantations have been published by G. Pettinato², D.O. Edzard³ and M. Krebernik⁴. These tablets were stored in the shelves of the northern side of the Archive L.2769⁵.

We can follow P. Michalowski's recent catalogue⁶, to which some texts can be added (75.1501 means TM.75.G.1501, etc.):

* G. Cunningham, *'Deliver me From Evil'. Mesopotamian Incantations 2500-1500 BC* (= *Studia Pohl, Series Maior* 17), Roma 1997, appeared to late to be taken into consideration in the present study.

1 See basically J.-M. Durand, *ARM XXVI/1*, 1 ff.

2 G. Pettinato, *Le collezioni en-é-nu-ru di Ebla*, OA 18, 1979, 329 ff. Previously, P. Mander, *Presenza di scongiuri en-é-nu-ru ad Ebla*, Or 48, 1979, 335 ff.

3 D.O. Edzard, *Hymnen, Beschwörungen und Verwandtes*, ARET V, Roma 1984.

4 M. Krebernik, *Neue Beschwörungen aus Ebla*, VO 10, 1996, 7 ff.

5 See ARET II, p. 12; recently, see also A. Archi, *Il sapere e la scuola scribale del Periodo Protosiriano*, in P. Mathiae - F. Pinnock - G. Scandone Mathiae (edd.), *Ebla. Alle origini della civiltà urbana* (hereafter *Ebla. Alle origini della civiltà urbana*), Milano 1995, 122.

6 P. Michalowski, *The Early Mesopotamian Incantation Tradition*, in P. Fronzaroli (ed.), *Literature and Literary Language at Ebla*, QuSem 18, 1992, 322.

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|----------------------------|---|
| 1. 75.1501 | (ARET V 12) |
| 2. 75.1519 | (ARET V 13) |
| 3. 75.1619 | (ARET V 8) ⁷ |
| 4. 75.1627 | (ARET V 14) |
| 5. 75.1649 | (ARET V 1) |
| 6. 75.1722 | (ARET V 10) |
| 7. 75.1816 | (ARET V 15) |
| 8. 75.2038 | (ARET V 16) |
| 9. 75.2192 | (ARET V 3) |
| 10. 75.2195 | (ARET V 11) |
| 11. 75.2217 | (ARET V 9) |
| 12. 75.2459 | (ARET V 19) |
| 13. 75.3216 | (ARET III 186) + 11748 (ARET V 2) + 18214 |
| 14. 75.4715+4743+4744+4751 | (ARET V 17) ⁸ |
| 15. 75.10186 | (ARET V 18) |
| 16. 75.1315 | (Krebern timer, VO 10, 7-9, Tav. I) |
| 17. 75.1601 | (Krebern timer, VO 10, 14-19, Tav. I) |
| 18. 75.2303 | (Krebern timer, VO 10, 21-27, Tav. II) |
| 19. 75.2194 | (ARET V 4) |
| 20. 75.1217 | (ARET V 5). |

The classical philological study about these materials is M. Krebern timer's BFE⁹ together with his recent paper in VO 10¹⁰. Importantly enough, these tablets may contain more than one incantation; moreover, they do not present any colophon where the scribe's name is mentioned.

1.1. As for the incantations in themselves, we can establish the following catalogue, according to the language in which they are written:

A. Sumerian Incantations¹¹:

A1. BFE 1. Two redactions are attested:

A1a: 75.1619 = ARET V 8 obv. I:1 - II:5

⁷ In ARET V, Taf. XLVIII, obverse and reverse must to be inverted.

⁸ As for the join with TM.75.G.4715 see A. Archi, *Transmission of the Mesopotamian Lexical and Literary Texts from Ebla*, QuSem 18, 1992, Pl. 1, fig. 2. It may be supposed that only one column is lacking at the beginning of the obverse.

⁹ M. Krebern timer, *Die Beschwörungen aus Fara und Ebla* (hereafter BFE), TSO 2, Hildesheim 1984.

¹⁰ Previously see G. Pettinato, OA 18, 1979. P. Fronzaroli's works on this field will be quoted *infra*. Also C.H. Gordon consecrated some papers to our topic: HBY, *Possessor of Horns and Tail*, UF 18, 1986, 129-32; *The Ebla Incantations and Their Affinities with Northwest Semitic Magic*, Maarav 7, 1991, 117-29; *The Ebla Exorcism*, Eblaitica 3, 1992, 127-37.

¹¹ Due to the competence of the present Authors, the Ebla Sumerian incantations are here considered only in a cursory way (deeper analyses are found in the above-mentioned works by Pettinato, Edzard and Krebern timer).

A1b: 75.1722 = ARET V 10 obv. I:1 - III:1

The text is also attested in VAT 12597 obv. I:1-9, from Fara. It concerns the scorpion (gr). A1b is a syllabic version of the composition¹².

- A2. BFE 9. It is the only text of the following tablet:

75.2195 = ARET V 11 obv. I:1 - rev. III:5

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. The incantation is written in syllabic Sumerian. It regards men (lú) and bile (ze for zé). Note NE-du-ga for UD-du₁₁-ga.

- A3. BFE 10.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 obv. IV:4 - V:2

This short text has no known Mesopotamian parallels. It concerns the inner parts of the body (ša).

- A4. BFE 19. It is the only text of the following tablet:

75.1501 = ARET V 12 obv. I:4 - rev. II:3

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. It concerns the tamarisk, g^{is}šinig, and it mentions Enki and Ninki.

- A5. BFE 20. Two redactions are attested:

A5a: 75.1519 = ARET V 13 obv. I:1 - IV:1

A5b: 75.1627 = ARET V 14 obv. I:1 - IV:1

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. The incantation concerns the tamarisk, g^{is}šinig, and it mentions Enki and Ninki.

- A6. BFE 23. Two redactions are attested:

A6a: 75.1619 = ARET V 8 rev. V:1 - IV:6

A6b: 75.4743+ = ARET V 17 [obv. I:1] - III:3

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. It mentions Enlil (ama ambar den-líl) and then animals.

- A7. BFE 24. Two redactions are attested:

A7a: 75.1722 = ARET V 10 obv. III:2 - rev. I:1

A7b: 75.2459 = ARET V 19 obv. VIII:1 - IX:3

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. A7a is a syllabic version of A7b. The *incipit* is UDUG-hul¹³.

- A8.? BFE 25¹⁴. Two redactions are attested:

A8a: 75.1816 = ARET V 15 obv. I:1 - III:1

A8b: 75.2459 = ARET V 19 obv. VI:3 - VII:1

¹² Recently see P. Fronzaroli, in *Ebla. Alle origini della civiltà urbana*, 287.

¹³ Recently see id., *ibid.*, 287.

¹⁴ M. Krebernik, BFE, 127: «Sumerisch?».

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. In 75.1816 the incantation is the only text of the tablet. It could be a composition concerning Enki in syllabic Sumerian. Note the opposition ZU -- SU in A8a // SU -- ŠU in A8b.

However, as a guess, at the end of the composition the sequence «GÚ 2 DU EN UM/UM¹(MEŠ)», lexically could be explained as *gú-ii du-ru₁₂-um*, with reference to two items that are well attested in the Ebla administrative texts: on one side the *kulflum*-bracelets (*gú-li-lum*, also written in shortened forms, *gú-li* and *gú*) with a double morphology (-ii)¹⁵, and on the other the *turum*, the «stole»¹⁶. In this case, the incantation could be Semitic.

A9. BFE 27.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 obv. I:1 - III:2

A partially parallel text exists at Lagaš (2 H-T 6). The Ebla *incipit* is é en in-dù, «The en builds the House».

A10. BFE 31¹⁷. Two redactions are attested:

A10a: 75.2459 = ARET V 19 obv. IX:4 - rev. I:4

A10b: 75.1601 = Krebernik, VO 10, 14 ff., obv. I:1 - II:3

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. The composition regards the šudun / gu₄ babbar gi₆ of Enlil, and then some rituals with water (a) and likely flour (zi for zì, following Krebernik).

A11. BFE 34.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 rev. IV:2 - V:7

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. The *incipit* is den-ki ma-gurg.

A12. BFE 36.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 rev. VI:8 - VIII:5

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. It speaks of snakes and Enki.

A13. Krebernik, VO 10, 7 ff.

75.1315 obv. I:1 - IV:1

No Mesopotamian parallels are known. It is a composition in syllabic Sumerian, with a problematic Semitic notation at the end: lú ḥa-ba-ga-bù-um. NE, perhaps izi, «fire», seems to be the key-word; also the scorpion (gír) is mentioned. Note AL₆-du-ga syllabic for UD-du₁₁-ga.

¹⁵ As for this item see P. Mander, *The gú-li-lum (Bracelets) in the Economic Texts from Ebla*, *Oriens Antiqui Miscellanea* II, 1995, 41 ff.

¹⁶ See J. Pasquali, *La terminologia semitica dei tessili nei testi di Ebla*, *MisEb* 4, 1997, 224 ff. (admittedly, this writing *du-ru₁₂-um* is lacking in the administrative records concerning the *turum*).

¹⁷ According to M. Krebernik, BFE, 160 f., the language of the incantation is difficult to ascertain, but see id., VO 10, 1996, 14.

B. Semitic Incantations:

B1. BFE 21. Two redactions are attested:

B1a: 75.1619 = ARET V 8 obv. III:1 - rev. I:1

B1b: 75.2217 = ARET V 9 obv. I:1 - rev. II:3

The second redaction is the only text of the small tablet. No other attestations of this composition are known. An analysis of this important document (in which also plants and stones are mentioned) is offered elsewhere¹⁸. Particularly, we can note here that B1a obv. IV:1 // B1b obv. III:1-2 may be read in the following way:

na₄(UD.NI) ^{nig}DU // kam₄-kam₄-za¹⁹ / ša-na-da-na.

B2. BFE 22.

75.1619 = ARET V 8 rev. I:2 - III:4

No other attestations of this composition are known. People defined as ù-lu-ù-lu²⁰ are mentioned. The meaning of *i-da-ḥa-ú* can be that suggested by Gelb and Krebernik, who explain it through Akk. *ṭeḥû* (Krebernik: «sie nähern sich»). Then we suggest the following readings for the part of the text introduced by du₁₁-ga, «say!»:

[x1-...] šu-li / si-ba mun²¹ / šu-ri ti-ʾà-ma-tim / la si-ba(-)du-ne-a / si-<ba?>(-)du-na / igi ús-sa SU ús-sa / da-ra-da-bi^{nig}NE / ḥa-da-ra GAR.KA.

As a consequence of such an interpretation «salt» (mun) and «sea, body of water» (ti-ʾà-ma-tim) are mentioned. The writing *si-ba* may be interpreted as «swear!»²², while *šu-ri* (and *šu-li*) is to be compared with *šu-lu* (attested in ARET V 2+), a term that, given the context, has been interpreted by P. Fronzaroli²³ through Ar. *ṭr* («fornire acqua abbondante»). According to M. Krebernik the last part of B2 documents the key-word *qarbum*, «Inneres», since he reads «*gar-bi*» and «*gar-bu_x*(KA)» (note šà in other incantations). However, even in peculiar texts as incantations, at Ebla a value *gar* of GAR turns out to be unsure (cf. below, B4). Thus, even if *ḥa-da-ra* GAR.KA remains unclear to us, we prefer *da-ra-da-bi^{nig}NE*, with reference to a /ta-/ form (from **rṭb*, «to be humid», well attested at Ebla²⁴, or from a verb

¹⁸ M. Bonechi, *Studies on the Architectonic and Topographic Terms in the Ebla Texts*, 3, in print, where funerary connotations are discussed.

¹⁹ See M. Civil, *The Early History of HAR-ra: The Ebla Link*, in L. Cagni (ed.), *Ebla 1975-1985*, Napoli 1987, 147.

²⁰ A. Falkenstein, *Sumerische religiöse Texte*, ZA 55, 1962, 52.

²¹ The sign is DIMgunû. Krebernik reads *si-ba-tim_x* (without translation); as for mun at Ebla see lastly M. Bonechi, *Lexique et idéologie royale à l'époque proto-syrienne*, MARI 8, 1997, 524, n. 348.

²² M. Krebernik *apud* D.O. Edzard, ARET V, 27.

²³ P. Fronzaroli, *Tre scongiuri eblaiti* (ARET 5, 1-3), VO 7, 1988, 20.

²⁴ See the evidence gathered in M. Bonechi, in preparation.

*rBH?), and to an item called ^{nig}NE that could be the potash or something like this²⁵.

B3. BFE 26.

75.2038 = ARET V 16 obv. I:1 - rev. II:7

No other attestations of this composition are known. The incantation is the only text of the tablet. It is a very important document, where several Semitic Syrian deities are mentioned (^dba-li-ḥa-a, ^dšara¹(SIG7.AMA), ^dʾa-da, ^dʾa-ma-ri-ig, ^da-dar-wa-an and ^dga-mi-iš). Certainly this *enenuru conveys mythical materials (as B14-16), and it requires a new autonomous treatment after the preliminary works by Pettinato and Krebern timer²⁶.

B4. BFE 28.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 obv. III:3 - IV:3

No other attestations of this short and fragmentary composition are known. Semitic terms seems to be *ga-za sa-gar-ti*, but we wonder whether the value *gar* of GAR is acceptable for Ebla (cf. above, B1 and B2).

B5. BFE 29²⁷. Two redactions are attested:

B5a: 75.2459 = ARET V 19 obv. V:3 - VI:2

B5b: 75.10186 = ARET V 18 rev. II:5 - III:7

No other attestations of this difficult composition are known. If it is a Semitic composition, Semitic terms may be *birbirrū*, «splendour» (*bir5-bir5-ra* and *bir5-bi-ra-an*) and, we suggest, a form of *grš, «to drive away» (*kar-rf-si-a* and *ga-rf-šè-an*). As for NI-TI, it might be *ni-ti*, a weapon²⁸.

B6. BFE 30.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 obv. VII:2-9

No other attestations of this composition are known. The incantation regards at least one animal, namely the NE.SUḪUR, a kind of snake of the cane-brake (*hūrum*, *u9-rūm*).

B7. BFE 32. Two redactions are attested:

B7a: 75.2459 = ARET V 19 rev. I:5 - III:3

B7b: 75.1601 = Krebern timer, VO 10, 16 ff., obv. II:4 - IV:4

No other attestations of this composition are known. At the beginning the animal «lu_x» is mentioned; it is qualified as *ná kisal* ^dutu, but it is unclear if there is here a precise topographical indication. It is also difficult to add something to Krebern timer's analysis of the text. However, readings and

²⁵ As for this term see J. Pasquali - M. Bonechi, in print.

²⁶ Important remarks in P. Fronzaroli, *Les combats de Hadda dans les textes d'Ebla*, MARI 8, 1997, 285 f.

²⁷ According to M. Krebern timer, BFE, 154 f., the language of the incantation is difficult to ascertain.

²⁸ See M. Bonechi, forthcoming.

interpretations such as *guruš* «Jüngling», *nigin du-lum-ma*, a paronomastic formation from **dwr* («Er kreist(e) immer wieder herum»), and *a-lum* are not so compulsory: *esi_x* (a stone or wood), *lagab* (a basin or container), and *a-gúm* or more safely *a-LUM*, could be taken into account.

B8. BFE 33.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 rev. III:4 - IV:1

The incantation speaks of fish and Enki, lord of the Apsu. It may be considered a copy of an Old Akkadian (or in any case an East Semitic) composition, and not an Eblaic one (see below).

B9. BFE 35.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 rev. V:8 - VI:7

No other attestations of this composition are known. The incantation begins with the mention of the «snake of Enki» (*muš den-ki*). Then *utu* is mentioned, but in a context whose comprehension is hampered by an unclear sign, possibly a variant of GUL. However, at the end of the composition *a-ba-i* is likely to be the same noun as it is attested in the following passage taken from some administrative Ebla records:

(*tot wool*) / *l-giš sag* / *ga-na-na* / *in ud* / *a-ba-i*²⁹.

Before this term in our incantation we find *si-im*, and *si-im a-ba-i* may be a construct state. As for the regens, note the writing *si-mi* in some formulas as *in ud* / *ir-kab-da-mu* / *si-mi* / *ug-SÙ* (MEE 10 4), and *ski-za* / *ir-kab-da-mu* / *si-mi* / *ug-SÙ* (75.1462), together with the derivation from **šym*, «to establish», suggested by P. Fronzaroli³⁰.

B10. BFE 37.

75.2459 = ARET V 19 rev. VIII:6 - IX:5

For a Mesopotamian parallel of the AN-*ma-na*-AN-*ma-na-mu* formula at the beginning of the incantation see BFE, p. 185.

B11. BFE 38³¹.

75.4715+ = ARET V 17 obv. II:4 - III:[5]

No other attestations of this fragmentary composition are known. It is a difficult text (without **enenuru* at the beginning), in which perhaps, if *ga--kú* means «to drink!(eat) milk», 'GA GABA' in III:1 may be *ga-dug*, «wet-nurse».

²⁹ ARET I 17, III 256, IV 13. For an interpretation of this writing see lastly (with the previous literature) P. Fronzaroli, *Fonti di lessico nei testi di Ebla*, SEL 12, 1995, 59 s.; cf. also G. Pettinato - F. D'Agostino, TIE A 1/1, 4 («né è da collegare ad esso M. Krebernik, BFE, 176 ad XV 5»). As for the goddess *ga-na-na* see now J. Pasquali, NABU 1998/1.

³⁰ P. Fronzaroli, *The Ritual Texts of Ebla*, in P. Fronzaroli (ed.), *Literature and Literary Language at Ebla*, QuSem 18, 1992, 182, n. 69.

³¹ The language is «Semitisch?» for M. Krebernik, BFE, 189, who rightly notes an «eblaitischen Charakter» of the composition.

B12. BFE 39.

75.10186 = ARET V 18 obv. [I:1] - VI:4

No other attestations of this composition are known. In IV:3 *ir-me* may be the same term well attested in the Ebla administrative texts³².

B13. Krebernik, VO 10, 21 ff.

75.2303 obv. I:1 - rev. II:4

The incantation (without **enenuru* and UD-du₁₁-ga) is the only text of the tablet. No other attestations of this composition are known. Section (c) in Krebernik's edition, however, finds a parallel in B14 and B15. The impression is that some ritual acts are performed on holy pieces of furniture and images.

B14. ARET V 4³³.

75.2194 obv. I:1 - rev. III:9

No other attestations of this composition (which compose the entire text of the tablet) are known. See B13 for its last part. It is a local (note the use of the preposition *si-in*) composition (without **enenuru* and UD-du₁₁-ga), since it mentions some Syrian deities (^d*ba-li-ḥa*, ^d*utu*, ^d*sa-nu-ga-ru*₁₂ and ^d*ʾà-da*). The *incipit* speaks of snakes (*ba-ša-nu*), while it is unclear why two sections begins with *en-ma*, like the Ebla letters. Like B3 and B15-16, mythical materials are embedded in the text.

B15. ARET V 5³⁴.

75.1217 obv. I:1 - rev. I:10

No other attestations of this local composition (which compose the entire text of the tablet) are known. The mentioned gods are ^d*utu*, [^d*ʾà-da*], ^d*l-lam* and 2 ^d*ba-li-ḥa*. See the commentary to B13-14.

B16. ARET V 1, ARET V 2, ARET V 3

B16a: 75.1649 obv. I:1 - rev. IV:2

B16b: 75.3216+11748+18214 obv. I:1 - III:13

B16c: 75.2192 obv. I:1 - rev. III:1

The compositions compose the entire texts of these tablets. Only exception in the available materials, B16a ends with the colophon UD-du₁₁-ga / 1 SUD. A full treatment of the three texts in P. Fronzaroli, VO 7, 11 ff.³⁵ (see also A. Catagnoti, VO 7, 243 f.), where a tripartite structure is pointed out («formule esorcistiche ... didascalia ... mito istitutivo»)³⁶. The mentioned gods are ^d*ʾà-*

³² It has been discussed in M. Bonechi, MARI 8, 1997, 508 ff.

³³ Cf. C.H. Gordon, *Eblaïtica* 3, 1992, 135 ff.

³⁴ Cf. C.H. Gordon, *Eblaïtica* 3, 1992, 137.

³⁵ See moreover P. Fronzaroli, MARI 8, 1997, 286 and n. 23.

³⁶ For a more recent evaluation of these texts see P. Fronzaroli, in *Ebla. Alle origini della civiltà urbana*, 286. Cf. also C.H. Gordon, *Eblaïtica* 3, 1992, 127 ff.

-da, the goddess ^dutu³⁷, ^dsa-nu-ga-ru₁₂, SUD // ga-ba-ga-bù = Kabkab, and ^di-li-lu = Enlil.

Given these materials, some remarks may be put forward.

1.2. Firstly, it appears that we can distinguish between, on one hand, small tablets that contain only one incantation, and, on the other hand, tablets that contain more than one composition.

1.2.1. Examples of the first kind (small tablets that contain only one incantation) are:

A2	= ARET V 11
A4	= ARET V 12
A5a	= ARET V 13
A8a	= ARET V 15
A13	= Krebern timer, VO 10, 7 ff.
B1b	= ARET V 9
B3	= ARET V 16
B13	= Krebern timer, VO 10, 21 ff.
B14	= ARET V 4
B15	= ARET V 5
B16	= ARET V 1, 2, 3.

Considering the shape of these tablets, they are almost all larger than higher; A2 = ARET V 11 is different, having a very rounded shape. Frequently the reverse and sometimes also the last part of the obverse in these tablets are uninscribed.

Considering their texts, two of them (A8a and B1b) find duplicates in bigger tablets (that are collections³⁸ of incantations), while a section of another one (B13) is duplicated elsewhere; the incantation A5 is attested in two tablets that contain only that composition.

1.2.2. As for the second kind (tablets that contain more than one composition), the available collections of incantations are six. They may have Sumerian and/or Semitic compositions.

We have 1 collection of Sumerian incantations:

75.1722 (= ARET V 10): 2 incantations: A1b, A7a.

There is also 1 collection of Semitic incantations:

75.10186 (= ARET V 18): 2 incantations: B5b, B12.

Finally, 4 tablets are collections of Sumerian and Semitic incantations:

75.1601 (= VO 10, pp. 14 ff.): 2 incantations (1 Sum. + 1 Sem.): A10b, B7b

75.1619 (= ARET V 8): 4 incantations (2 Sum. + 2 Sem.): A1a, A6a and B1a, B2

³⁷ As for the sex of ^dutu at Ebla see lastly J. Pasquali - M. Bonechi, NABU 1998, in print.

³⁸ As for the Ebla evidence, the notion of collection of incantations has been introduced by G. Pettinato, OA 18, 1979, 331.

75.2459 (= ARET V 19): 14 incantations (7 Sum. + 7 Sem.): A3, A7b, A8b, A9, A10a, A11, A12 and B4, B5a, B6, B7a, B8, B9, B10

75.4743+ (= ARET V 17): 2 incantations (1 Sum. + 1 Sem.): A6b and B11.

1.3. It results that, considering the 20 tablets of the aforementioned catalogue in § 1, we have only one large-sized tablet (ARET V 19), many medium-sized tablets, and several small tablets. Also, the inner disposition of the incantations in the Sum./Sem. collections is irrelevant in respect to the language (as established above, A means Sum. and B means Sem.):

75.1619 (= ARET V 8): A1a - B1a - B2 - A6a

75.2459 (= ARET V 19): A9 - B4 - A3 - B5a - A8b - B6 - A7b - A10a - B7a - B8 - A11 - B9 - A12 - B10.

1.4.1. As already said, there are no colophons revealing the identity of the scribes who redacted the incantations. It is common opinion that several compositions are ultimately of Mesopotamian origin, but it is never clearly stated that (all) these tablets were written by scribes from Ebla. Thus, a deep analysis of the different shapes of the tablets and of the (different) ductus of the scribe(s) shall be welcome. However, judging from the available photographs, one has the rather clear impression that the tablets were written by more than one scribe.

The problem of the place where the tablets were written must then taken into account. Let's consider the feature of the duplication of the compositions. Since several incantations are attested each in two different tablets, the following table accounts for the actual situation:

V 8 // V 9	B1
V 8 // V 10	A1
V 8 // V 17	A6
V 9 // V 8	B1
V 10 // V 8	A1
V 10 // V 19	A7
V 13 // V 14	A5
V 14 // V 13	A5
V 15 // V 19	A8
V 17 // V 8	A6
V 18 // V 19	B5
V 19 // V 10	A7
V 19 // V 15	A8
V 19 // V 18	B5
V 19 // VO 10 14	A10
V 19 // VO 10 16	B7
VO 10 14 // V 19	A10
VO 10 16 // V 19	B7

Moreover, ARET V 1, 2+ and 3 present three different redactions of the same compositions (B16).

Thus, the following 14 texts are involved: V 1, V 2+, V 3, V 8, V 9, V 10, V 13, V 14, V 15, V 17, V 18, V 19, VO 10 14 and VO 10 16.

Sumerian syllabic scripts are attested in ARET V 10 (A1b and A7a), V 11 (A2) and 75.1315 = VO 10, 7 ff. (A13). From the photographs, these three tablets appear to be rather different in shape and ductus. Considering the ductus, it could be suggested that ARET V 11 – as noted above, it presents a rather peculiar shape – was written outside Ebla; but, while also 75.1315 shows a coarse and perhaps foreigner ductus, ARET V 10 looks as a good and well written Eblaic document. Also the way in which syllabic writings are derived from Sumerian terms remains to be investigated.

If we consider the duplicates of the Semitic compositions, the tablets are ARET V 8, V 9, V 18, V 19 and 75.1601. 75.1601 deserves our attention. In this tablet the shape of the signs MA and perhaps also of HJA does not resemble as the current Ebla form(s). This is particularly evident for the sign MA in obv. III:3 (see also the copy): it is very flat, without the strong dislocation of the left wedges we observe in the typical Ebla MA. Since it is unlikely that a local scribe copied also the forms of the signs of the foreign tablets, we suggest at least 75.1601 is a product of a Mari scribe or of a scribe influenced by the late Pre-Sargonic Mari script, where the sign MA was written in that way³⁹.

At the present stage it is difficult to establish the precise relations between the different versions of these compositions. Many factors may be involved, such as the presence at Ebla of some tablets redacted outside of Ebla, or the feature of a continuous local elaboration of foreign compositions in order to establish more orthodox version according to local standards (and also the local compositions may have been elaborated during the last years of the Palace G); moreover, some tablets may be «scribal exercises» (whatever this means), but not all of them.

1.4. Sumerian incantations:

They are attested in the following 11 tablets:

ARET V 8	A1a, A6a
ARET V 10	A1b, A7a
ARET V 11	A2
ARET V 12	A4
ARET V 13	A5a
ARET V 14	A5b
ARET V 15	A8a
ARET V 17	A6b
ARET V 19	A3, A7b, A8b, A9, A10a, A11, A12
VO 10, 7 ff.	A13
VO 10, 14 ff.	A10b.

³⁹ As for the differences between the Ebla ductus and that of Mari see D. Charpin, *Tablettes pré-sargoniques de Mari*, MARI 5, 1987, 126 f. and 94 f.; M. Bonechi - J.-M. Durand, *Oniromancie et magie à Mari à l'époque d'Ebla*, QuSem 18, 1992, 151 f.

Some Sumerian incantations in «syllabic» script are attested: A2, A7a, A8, A13. The main subjects of all these compositions are dangerous and magical animals (scorpions, snakes), plants (tamarisk), diseases (concerning *zé, šà*), demons (UDUG-*hul*), perhaps fire (*izi*); besides Ningirima, the mentioned gods are Enki and Enlil. We also find the building of an house and the rich «seat» (*šudun*) of Enlil.

Probably the Ebla scribes copied⁴⁰ Mesopotamian incantations not only to improve their knowledge of foreign texts and their skills in writing cuneiform, but also (more practically) to dispose of a significant *corpus* of written sources coming from the *élites* of the countries – Central and Southern Mesopotamia – with which Ebla had fruitful commercial and cultural exchanges⁴¹.

Instead of thinking of a recent strong influence of the Central (and Southern) Mesopotamian culture(s) in Ebla, these cases could be explained inside a *longue durée* pattern as a feature of a traditional framework of *élite* trade: together with other precious items, up-to-date eastern written sources came regularly at Ebla, i.e. in a place perfectly equipped to accept these foreign works. All these Sumerian (and «Kishite») sources found at Ebla will be more comprehensively understood once the different scribal hands and habits are analyzed⁴².

1.5. Semitic incantations:

They are attested in the following 13 tablets:

ARET V 1	B16a
ARET V 2	B16b
ARET V 3	B16c
ARET V 4	B14
ARET V 5	B15
ARET V 8	B1a, B2
ARET V 9	B1b
ARET V 16	B3
ARET V 17	B11
ARET V 18	B5b, B12
ARET V 19	B4, B5a, B6, B7a, B8, B9, B10
Krebernik, VO 10, 16 ff.	B7b
Krebernik, VO 10, 21 ff.	B13.

⁴⁰ As for Mesopotamian literary and lexical texts copied at Ebla see lastly A. Archi, *QuSem* 18, 1992, 1 ff.

⁴¹ Certainly via Mari and Nagar: journey(s) of *i-bf-zi-kir* at Kish are documented, and a dynastic marriage of an Ebla princess with a Kish prince is known. Like other not-local Semitic incantations found at Ebla (see below), probably these Sumerian incantations belong to a Central Mesopotamia tradition of elaboration of materials (at least in part) ultimately coming from Southern Mesopotamia, see for ex. the frequent mention of Enki.

⁴² Note the trend remarked by A. Archi, *QuSem* 18, 1992, 20: «the <Ebla> scribes tended to keep also the external features of their originals. But when they wanted to write a cursive copy, they used smaller round tablets with smaller and not calligraphic signs».

Two kinds of Semitic incantations may be distinguished. Firstly, there are compositions with *enenuru at the beginning and UD-du₁₁-ga Ningirima at the end. Secondly, there are compositions that do not present such elements.

1.5.1. To the first typology the following incantations belong⁴³: B1, B2, B4, B5, B6, B8, B9 and B10. On the contrary, the incantation B3 begins with *enenuru, but the formula UD-du₁₁-ga Ningirima is lacking, while the incantations B7, B12, B13, B14, B15 and B16 have neither *enenuru nor UD-du₁₁-ga Ningirima.

This formal distinction allow us to search for a more important differentiation. A provisional conclusion is that two different traditions seem to be attested in the Semitic Ebla incantations.

A local one is to be recognized in those compositions that do not present *enenuru at the beginning and UD-du₁₁-ga Ningirima at the end. Moreover, many other clues point to the appartenance of these incantations to a Syrian cultural milieu⁴⁴. The compositions belonging to this group are B3 and B13-16; the position of B7 and B12 seems here uncertain. Considering only B3 and B13-16, a deeper analysis will probably ascertain if, as we are inclined to think, these compositions are parts of one (or more) «cycle(s)». With that we mean that the mythical materials mentioned in them may belong to a coherent picture concerning the *res gestae* of some main III millennium Syrian deities. If it is the case, these incantations must be included in any broader investigation concerning Early Syrian ideology and religion.

The presence of Enlil together with Hadda and the Sun-goddess in B16 has been explained by Fronzaroli as an Eblaic interpretation, in which, next to Mesopotamian elements (the construction of the House of Enlil, the hydra with seven heads), we find Syrian features, concerning Hadda⁴⁵. Thus, B16 could be, with strong western connotations, a product of the contacts between the «Eblaic» and «Kishite» cultures (if, as it seems, at that times Ebla and Kish were the political centers which controlled Aleppo and Nippur). Moreover, of special interest may be the tripartite structure detected by Fronzaroli in B16. It is possible this structure, composed by a magical formula, by a description of a ritual and by a myth, was at least typical of the Ebla and Mari⁴⁶ incantations around the middle of the III millennium, incantations that sometimes were written in a shortened way. Finally, this general analysis seems to be confirmed by the prepositions: in the incantations B14-16, in fact, we find the typical Early Syrian prepositions *si-in* and *mi-nu* (in B3 *al₆* and *'a₅-na* are also attested).

A not-local Semitic tradition attested at Ebla, however, may be suspected. For ex., B8 is a short composition with *enenuru at the beginning and UD-du₁₁-ga Ningirima at the end. The text runs as it follows:

NUN.NI.MAŠ-NUN.NI.MAŠ / *nu-nu* ^dnin-girima_x(DU.MUŠ.A.ĤA) / ^den-ki / lugal AB:SU-ta.

⁴³ The difficult composition B11 may also belong to this kind.

⁴⁴ A local tradition was already partially recognized by G. Pettinato, OA 18, 1979, 336, n° 12.

⁴⁵ See P. Fronzaroli, in *Ebla. Alle origini della civiltà urbana*, 162 ff.

⁴⁶ Note the remarks in M. Bonechi - J.-M. Durand, QuSem 18, 1992, 159, concerning the III millennium Mari incantation TH 80.111.

According to Krebernik's interpretation (BFE, p. 171: nun NI+MAŠ nun NI+MAŠ) it means: «Fische des/der ..., Fische der Ningirima! Hayyu, König des Apsu!». Accordingly, even if NI+MAŠ is unexplained, *nūnu*, «fish» (never explicitly attested at Ebla except perhaps in the PN of an important person from Kish, *iš-/uš-kūn-nu-nu*), is taken into account. Indeed, the Ebla equivalence VE 472, *ē^{is}nun* = *nu-nu-mu* (sources A, B), *nu-nu* (source D), *nunnum*, probably the «harpoon» (Akk. *nunnu*)⁴⁷ is not considered by Krebernik to explain the term in the incantation. The reduplicated form NUN.NI.MAŠ-NUN.NI.MAŠ, however, sets many problems. We wonder whether a reading *l:nun maš* is acceptable: in this case, given *l-nun*, the well known Ebla month name, *l:nun* could mean «ghee, butter»⁴⁸. However, the general meaning is not much clearer (and what to do with MAŠ?). The main problem is in fact the reduplication in NUN.NI.MAŠ-NUN.NI.MAŠ: can we accept that a plural of a construct state in the archaic Semitic scripts was expressed by means of the reduplication of the entire construct, in a quasi-logographic way? It seems improbable that at Ebla e.g. «the incomes of the lords / nobles» could be written *mu-DU-lugal-mu-DU-lugal, where on the contrary mu-DU-mu-DU lugal-lugal is conceivable. Perhaps NUN.NI.MAŠ is a Sumerogram whose Semitic equivalent was an unique term. In any case, it seems safer to follow Pettinato's reading NUN-NI+MAŠ-NUN-NI+MAŠ⁴⁹, and Krebernik's general interpretation concerning fishes; thus the incantation seems to belong to a not Eblaic tradition, probably a Kishite one.

Perhaps we can see the thing also in another perspective, i.e. considering once more the tablets in which these compositions are written. We can firstly distinguish the small but coherent group composed by tablets where only local incantations were recorded (only one in every tablet). Here local means not only a redaction by a local Eblaic scribe, but also a composition by a local Eblaic intellectual, written in the local Semitic language, and conceived in close relation with local ideology and religion as it is reflected by the proper names and by distinctive features in the administrative and ritual records. These tablets and compositions should be:

- B3 ARET V 16.
- B13 Krebernik, VO 10, 21 ff.
- B14 ARET V 4.
- B15 ARET V 5.
- B16 ARET V 1, ARET V 2, ARET V 3.

A second group may be composed by Semitic compositions belonging to a broader tradition. There are compositions that may be the Eblaic versions of these «international» incantations. This means we find in them many Eblaic features, even if the ultimate origin of the composition is not Eblaic. This also means that the redactional work of the Ebla scribes in order to «eblaitize» these texts may have been

⁴⁷ As for this tool see M. Krebernik, BFE, 244; G. Conti, *Il sillabario della quarta fonte della lista lessicale bilingue eblaita*, MisEb 3, 1990, 137.

⁴⁸ See lastly M.E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East*, Bethesda 1992, 27, where I. J. Gelb's interpretation is quoted.

⁴⁹ G. Pettinato, OA 18, 1979, 337.

in some cases deeper and more accurate than elsewhere, also according to the inner semantic relevance of the composition for the uses in Ebla.

According to their formal and semantic features, examples of the most «eblaitized» incantations could be:

- B1 ARET V 8 // ARET V 9
- B2 ARET V 8

According to their formal and semantic features, examples of the less «eblaitized» incantations could be:

- B4 ARET V 19
- B5 ARET V 19 // ARET V 18
- B6 ARET V 19
- B7 ARET V 19 // Krebernîk, VO 10, 16 ff.
- B8 ARET V 19
- B9 ARET V 19
- B10 ARET V 19
- B11 ARET V 17
- B12 ARET V 18.

The first and more important (since not-subjective) discriminant is constituted by the notion of «collection of incantations»: only texts that are not attested in these collections seem to have the necessary features to belong to the group of local, Eblaic compositions. Secondly, inside the group of texts that are attested in the collections, those in ARET V 8 and 9 seem to us to have a slightly different connotation, since they look to us more local than the others; conversely, especially the Semitic compositions in the large collection ARET V 19 seem to be more distant from the really local incantations. Thirdly, it also seems that only the incantations that present a mythical element may belong to the local group; the others may represent shortened forms of originally longer foreign compositions, or simply a different approach to the genre (of course, all depends from the actual use and *raison d'être* of the Eblaic versions). Finally, it seems that the presence of the clause UD-du₁₁-ga Ningirima at the end is a good clue to exclude a local origin of the composition.

2. *Lexical lists and administrative records.*

We have seen the Ebla incantations (**enenuru*) frequently present at their end the formula UD-du₁₁-ga Ningirima. The sumerogram is explained in the following way in VE 238:

UD-du₁₁-ga = *da-WA-um* (sources A, C; B does not translate), *da-WA-u₉* (source D).

Two interpretations of the Semitic translation are available⁵⁰: *tahwayum* (or *tahwiyum*), to be compared with Akk. *awātum*, Ug. *hwt*, «word» (from **hwy*)⁵¹, or

⁵⁰ It seems evident that here we find a *verbum dicendi* (therefore, there is no connection with ud-du₁₁-ga = *adannum*, a designation of a moment or period of time).

⁵¹ As for this root see DRS I, 386.

tawlum (or *tawīlum*), with comparison with Ar. *tiwala*, *tuwala*, «spell, witchcraft»⁵². The choice between the two meanings depends on the actual practices performed during incantations. If the verbal component was the most important, *tahwayum*, «formula» is likely to be preferred.

As for the reading of UD-, two different incantations (A2 and A13) show the (syllabic) variant NE-du-ga and AL₆-du-ga. Recently, discussing A13, Krebernik noted: «Der Schluss entspricht späteren tu₆-du₁₁-ga ⁴nin-girima 'Beschwörung der ningirima'. Anstelle von tu₆-du₁₁-ga schreiben Beschwörungen aus Fāra und Ebla KA+UD-du₁₁-ga bzw. UD-du₁₁-ga; letzteres ist in MEE 4, VE 238 mit *da-PI-um* geglichen <note: Vielleicht zu *h-w-y* 'sprechen' (Krebernik 1984, 209); oder ältere Form von sum. tu₆?>. TM.75.G.2195 schreibt syllabisch NE-du-ga. al₆-du-ga in vorliegendem Text wäre wörtlich 'Wunsch der Ningirima'. Möglicherweise liegt hier eine lexikalische Verwechslung vor»⁵³. We can also note that, in the Ebla texts, a value *il_x* of NE has been suggested⁵⁴, and that a value *al₅* of UD is known, but also that NE has a value *dē*, *tig*, and UD *tū*. Probably some synonyms are involved. Moreover, it is unclear if the variant NE-du-ga, from ARET V 11, was written by a scribe from Ebla (see above).

This term UD-du₁₁-ga, however, is also rarely attested in some administrative Ebla records:

[1] 2 gu-dūl^u_g 2 sal^u_g 2 ūb-iii^u_g gūn / DU-lu^{ki} / UD-du₁₁-ga / sim^{mu}_{šen}⁵⁵

[2] 2 sal^u_g / kak-mi-um^{ki} / wa / DU-lu^{ki} / UD-du₁₁-ga / sim^{mu}_{šen}⁵⁶

[3] 1 ūb-iii^u_g gūn / puzur₄-ra-ma-lik / DU-lu^{ki} / UD-du₁₁-ga / muš⁵⁷.

These passages refer to the allotment of some textiles to some people «(on the occasion of their performance of) the formula / spell, (that) of the muš / sim^{mu}_{šen}».

We can firstly remark the constant mention of the GN DU-lu^{ki}⁵⁸, that, as it is well known, sets several problems (the main of that is its identification with Byblos) that we do not discuss here. However, while muš means «snake»⁵⁹, sim^{mu}_{šen} probably means the «swallow»⁶⁰. If this is true, the dating of the two documents these three passages come from is significant. Both ARET I 14 and ARET IV 15 are dated to the month *i-si*, that, following D. Charpin's reconstruction⁶¹, was the first month of the

⁵² See M. Krebernik, BFE, 208 ff.; G. Conti, MisEb 3, 1990, 104 f. where the previous literature is quoted.

⁵³ See also id., BFE, 208 ff.

⁵⁴ J.H. Platt, *Notes on Ebla Graphemics*, VO 7, 1988, 245; see also L. Milano, ARET IX, 363.

⁵⁵ ARET I 14 obv. II:4-7.

⁵⁶ ARET I 14 obv. VII:6-11.

⁵⁷ ARET IV 15 obv. VI:8-12.

⁵⁸ Note DU LU KI in B3 = ARET V 16 = BFE 26 V:2.

⁵⁹ See VE 742 (and cf. VE 1185), muš = *ba-ša-mu-um* (source B; A and C do not translate); the Semitic translation is to be interpreted as *baṣ(a)mum*, see P. Fronzaroli, *Problemi di fonetica eblaita*, I, SEB 1, 1979, 76. The variant *baṣ(a)mum* is attested in the incantation ARET V 4 (*ba-ša-nu*); the writing *ba-ša-nu-um* is also known in MEE 4 116, obv. III:9 (muš in III:6).

⁶⁰ See M. Bonechi, in preparation, where the relevant literature is quoted.

⁶¹ D. Charpin, *Mari et le calendrier d'Ebla*, RA 76, 1982, 1 ff.

year. Moreover, according to recent research, ARET IV 15 is to be dated to the same year of the plurimonthly account of metals TM.75.G.2462⁶², that is has been dated to the year «I.Z. 2»⁶³, during the reign of *iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, the last king of Ebla; ARET I 14, indeed, is more ancient, given it mentions *ib-rf-um*. We suggest that the very arrival of the swallows was the reason of the act which is referred to through the annotation UD-du₁₁-ga sim^{mušen}: thus, the period must have been March / April. This implication may be reinforced if we accept the idea that the UD-du₁₁-ga muš could be performed at the beginning of the season during which snakes are newly active after their hibernation, i.e. the end of April. If these inferences are correct, we can conclude ARET I 14 and ARET IV 15 were redacted around the 20 april or the 20 may of two different years, and that in these years month *i-si* arrived at the beginning of spring⁶⁴. However, we can note that, in the *corpus* of the Ebla incantations, the «swallow» apparently is not mentioned. Since birds are mentioned in divinatory texts, and since at the beginning of the II millennium B.C. ornithomancy was probably a Western feature (namely a Syrian feature)⁶⁵, we can observe that perhaps the translation «spell, witchcraft» for UD-du₁₁-ga at least in administrative records is not necessarily the only one to accept (see also below).

Secondly, the PN *puzur₄-ra-ma-lik* seems to occur only once in connection with *DU-lu^{ki}*⁶⁶. However, a *lú-máš* of *DU-lu^{ki}* is well known in a document from L.2712 (an archive in which, judging from ARET IX, this term is, in general, rather well attested):

[4] 2 sila (2 na-se₁₁) *lú-máš ar-ḥa-du^{ki} DU-lu^{ki}*⁶⁷.

It could be suggested that just *Puz(ur)ra-malku* was this «diviner»⁶⁸, but this sets a chronological problem. In fact, the temporal gap between ARET IV 15, ARET I 14 and ARET IX 82 is rather broad, if we accept (making reference to the current opinions about the relative chronology of the Ebla archives)⁶⁹ that the first quoted tablet was redacted while *ib-rf-um* was still alive, the second one during «I.Z. 2» and the third one at the end of the life of the Palace G archives. Consequently, we have to admit a time span of more than 12 years between the first and the third document. Moreover, *Puz(ur)ra-malku* is only mentioned in ARET IV 15, while in the successive documents we find only the GN (that implies a well known people) or the title *lú-máš*. Thus, without to be able to exclude totally their identification, we can suggest that

⁶² M.G. Biga, *Prosopographie et datation relative des textes d'Ébla*, *Amurru* 1, 1996, 45 f. («75.G.2362» is a typo).

⁶³ A. Archi, *Les comptes rendus annuels de métaux (CAM)*, *Amurru* 1, 1996, 87 f.

⁶⁴ Although these annotations may appear to be not significant, they imply important factors, e.g. the correspondence of *iti i-si* as the first month of the year with the beginning of spring (i.e. the astronomical and meteorological correctness of the calendar), the relevance of many actions referred to in the texts as performed during this period, and the problem of the intercalary month.

⁶⁵ See lastly J.-M. Durand, *La divination par les oiseaux*, *MARI* 8, 1997, 273 ff.

⁶⁶ ARET II, 207.

⁶⁷ ARET IX 82 (5), (7) (8), (9).

⁶⁸ L. Milano, ARET IX, 395, hypotetically translates *lú-máš* as «esattore», but see G. Pettinato, *MEE* 5, 109 («esorcista»).

⁶⁹ We refer to the conclusions presented by Archi and Biga in *Amurru* 1.

during the life span of the Palace G archives probably at least two diviners from *DU-lu^{ki}* were recorded by the scribes: firstly some Puz(ur)ra-malku, and then an anonymous person. Perhaps this continuity refers to the continuity of magic rituals which concerned at least snakes and swallows and were performed, probably at Ebla itself, by people coming from *DU-lu^{ki}*. This means this particular activity was peculiar to that city (and so was it, probably, to other Syrian kingdoms, *kak-mi-un^{ki}* and *ar-ḥa-du^{ki}*). This fits in well with what has been remarked by A. Archi, M.V. Tonietti and A. Catagnoti about other important activities – even if not magical – such as the performances of musicians and players the terms *nar*, *NE-di* and *húb(-ki)* referred to: at (the) Ebla (court) some foreign professional people performed important practices just because they were foreigners coming from regions where these activities were particularly flourishing.

Admittedly, however, we do not know if the not-explicit task of the diviner (*lúmaš*) in ARET IX 82 was the same of that of the people referred to in ARET IV 15 and ARET I 14. Thus a main problem arises. If UD-du₁₁-ga in incantations is the same UD-du₁₁-ga in the aforementioned two administrative records ([1-3]), was the actual referent a pronounced magical formula, a witchcraft or a kind of divination?

It is significant to note that UD-du₁₁-ga (with the important exception of UD-du₁₁-ga / 1 SUD in B16a) is almost always followed by the name of an animal:

UD-du ₁₁ -ga	Ningirima	(incantations)
UD-du ₁₁ -ga	muš	(administrative texts)
UD-du ₁₁ -ga	simmušen	(administrative texts).

Therefore the term has the same meaning in the two textual typologies. As for the enigmatic nature of the goddess Ningirima⁷⁰, the writing of this proper name described it as an aquatic (A) creature having the characteristic of the snake (MUŠ) and of the fish (KU₆).

Given the available evidence, it is more cautious to consider UD-du₁₁-ga to be at Ebla a term meaning «formula». It is likely to be a general term suitable to refer to magic formulas and to divination.

Another attestation of the name of profession *lúmaš(-maš)* may help here. It is found in ARET VIII 525 = MEE 5 5 (58):

[5] 1 ḡa-da-um^ug-2 1 aktum^ug 1 ḡb^ug-iii sa₆ gùn / du-bí / 1 lúmaš-máš / ḡgmul¹(AN.AN)-mul¹ / á-u₉ki / si-si-gúki / TIL.

Pettinato's recent translation is «(stoffe) per Tubi, l'esorcista, come offerta alle divinità (per persone) di A'u (e) Sisigu defunte». However, Pettinato's interpretations of 'til' as «defunto» and of ḡb^umul as «offerta alle divinità» are uncertain⁷¹. Note the evidence from the rituals of ARET XI, with the interpretation «(colui che) rende(re) splendente» of the latter Sumerogram (in comparison to mul = *nabāṭum*) by Fronzaroli⁷². This term ḡgmul¹-mul¹ (untranslated in VE 48) is one of the most difficult

⁷⁰ For which see M. Krebernik, BFE, 233 ff. It is the «mungo» for G. Pettinato, OA 18, 1979, 338.

⁷¹ As for til see already F. Pomponio, *Epidemie e revenants a Ebla?*, UF 21, 1989, 297 ff.

⁷² P. Fronzaroli, ARET XI, 35 and 164, and *Divinazione a Ebla (TM.86.G.86)*, MisEb 4, 1997, 5.

in the Ebla documents, and, since it is very spread and clearly very important, the incertitude about its meaning is rather disappointing.

Who was in [5] this man called *du-bí*, *Ṭūbī*? An answer may come from ARET VIII 521 = MEE 5 1 rev. V:4-12:

[6] 1 aktum^{túg} 1 šb^{núg}-iii sa₆ gūn / *du-bí* / lú *a-zi-kir* / *ma-lik-tum* / *ì-na-sum* / ^{núg}mul^l-mul^l / *ru₁₂-zi-ma-lik* / lú *ì-bí-zi-kir* / *šeš-ii-ib*.

This passage establishes a link between this *Ṭūbī* and *ru₁₂-zi-ma-lik*, *ì-bí-zi-kir*'s son whose connection with the divination is documented by the letter TM.76.G.86, quoted more largely below. Several administrative records relate some *Ṭūbī* and his agents (*maškim*) to the activity expressed by ^{núg}mul^l-mul^l⁷³; one text⁷⁴ qualifies *Ṭūbī* as a *šeš-ii-ib-priest*⁷⁵. We argue we are dealing with only one man, called *Ṭūbī*⁷⁶, who was a *šeš-ii-ib-priest*, and who also acted as a diviner (^{lú}*máš-máš*). The connection between this *Ṭūbī* and *Ruḥṣī-malku* seems to be confirmed by a passage from the same text as [5] derives (ARET VIII 525 = MEE 5 5 [37]), where *ru₁₂-zi-ma-lik*, son of *ì-bí-zi-kir*, is quoted as *šeš-ii-ib* in *á-a^{ki}*, and where ^{núg}mul^l-mul^l is attested: as it has been argued, *á-a^{ki}* and *á-u^{gi}^{ki}*, are variant spellings of the same GN⁷⁷. On the base of this parallelism, we claim at Ebla *šeš-ii-ib-priests* as well as ^{lú}*máš-máš-diviners* – they were sometimes the same person (as in the case of *Ṭūbī* and likely also *ru₁₂-zi-ma-lik*) – performed the ^{núg}mul^l-mul^l activity themselves. Thus, we wonder whether ^{núg}mul^l-mul^l may designate the divinatory practice, or at least something related to it. If it is the case, perhaps AN.AN.AN.AN might have the same value as we find in Lat. *divinus* in its meaning «inspired by the divinity», the adjective from which *divinare* derives.

Leaving aside for a moment divination (but see below), we can note that at Ebla there is another term that is here relevant, i.e. «magician», see VE 226:

KA-dib = *ga-šè-bù(-um)* (sources A, C and D), *wa-zi-um* (sources c, i).

The first translation is to be interpreted as *kāṭipum*, «magician», Akk. *kašāpum*, «to perform a charme»⁷⁸. From **kṭp* some Ebla writings, probably all PNs, could be derived: *ga-šè-bù* (ARET I 16), *ga-ši-bù* and *ga-šè-ba-šum* (ARET III 59; note *ši* vs.

⁷³ ARET III 31, 167, 215, 737 (period in which *ib-rí-um* is still alive; mention of a battle, *mè*); ARET VII 6 = MEE 10 37.

⁷⁴ MEE 2 25.

⁷⁵ As for this priest see P. Fronzaroli, *MisEb* 4, 1997, 6 ff.

⁷⁶ It is unclear if *Ṭūbī maškim ba-ga-ma* of MEE 10 2 is the same person we are here considering; some *ba-ga-ma* was one of *ib-rí-um*'s sons, see A. Archi, *ARES* I, 233.

⁷⁷ *ARES* II, 122; cf. RGTC 12/1, 34 (where, contrary to the claims by G. Pettinato, MEE 5, 109, *á-u^{gi}^{ki}* from this passage is clearly quoted).

⁷⁸ See lastly G. Conti, *MisEb* 3, 1990, 101 («mago»), where the previous literature is quoted (G. Pettinato, MEE 5, 86 f., translates «esorcista»; as for Ugarit note that DLU I, 229, has *kšp* for «conjurador, brujo»). The interpretation of the second translation in VE 226 is not completely assured, see Conti, *ibid.*, n. 172 (from **wsy* «to bind?»).

še in the same tablet), and *ig-še-bù* (ARET IV 24 = MEE 10 30)⁷⁹. As for the Sumerogram, KA-dib⁸⁰ is well known in some administrative Ebla records:

[7] 1 ʾà-da-um^{tug}-ii 3 ʾà-da-um^{tug}-i 1 aktum^{tug} 3 sal^{tug} 1 fb^{tug}-iii sa₆ gùn 3 fb^{tug}-iii gùn / *i-lum^{ki}* / KA-dib / lú i-ti / *mi-nu* / *ar-m^{ki}*⁸¹

[8] 4 gu-mug^{tug} 4 sal^{tug} 4 fb^{tug}-iii gùn / 1 sal^{tug} ku₅* 10* n^{gi}á-DU / 4 KA-dib / *i-lum^{ki}* / DU.DU / kaskal⁸²

[9] 2 gu-dùl^{tug} 2 aktum^{tug} 2 fb^{tug}-ii gùn / 2 KA-dib / i-ti / *mi-nu* / *ar-m^{ki}*⁸³

[10] 3 gu-mug^{tug} 3 fb^{tug}-iii gùn / 3 *zi-mi-da-nu^{ki}* / KA-dib⁸⁴.

[7], [8] and perhaps [9] refer to the same circumstance. The two GNs that connote these magicians, *i-lum^{ki}* and *zi-mi-da-nu^{ki}* do not present any particular feature in the available documentation⁸⁵, and they are likely to belong to the region of Ebla. However, passages [7-9] make reference to a journey (DU.DU / kaskal) and to the return from *ar-m^{ki}* (i-ti / *mi-nu* / *ar-m^{ki}*): what it exactly means is not clear to us, but we can infer not only the magician was «itinerante»⁸⁶, but also that their travelling was related to some particular historical events that involved *ar-m^{ki}*. However, KA-dib and *k_{tp} are not attested in the extant *corpus* of incantations, and thus we can assume that this kind of magicians (even if at Ebla they were connoted in a positive way) was not involved in the performance of incantations.

In the *corpus* of the Ebla incantations we can find a term that is relevant in this research. In a composition in ARET V 19 (B7 = BFE 32 = Krebern timer VO 10, pp. 16 ff.) the following clause occurs at the end:

in ʾnin-girima_x(DU.MUŠ.A.ḪA) / *mes-ma-si-gal-li* / *ga-li* / dingir-dingir-dingir.

Krebern timer⁸⁷ translates it as «bei/durch Ningirima, die Grossbeschwörerin aller Götter», making reference to

] / ʾnin-girima_x(KAR.MUŠ) / *maš-maš-ti* / dingir-dingir,

«... Ningirima, Beschwörerin der Götter» at the end of BFE 39 = B12.

Through the comparison with Sum. *maš-maš-gal*, the goddess is defined as the (female) exorcist of gods. It is uncertain, however, if this Sumerian loanword *mešmašigallu* / *mašmaštum* may describe the human performer of the incantations in Ebla. Thus, the profession name we are finding for the priest who actually performed incantations remains unclear to us.

Besides UD-du₁₁-ga and KA-dib, in the section KA of the Ebla bilingual lexical list(s) another term attests activities related to our topic, see VE 216:

⁷⁹ See dubitatively M. Krebern timer, *Die Personennamen der Ebla-Texte*, Berlin 1988, 46.

⁸⁰ Here KA-dib is likely to be the same as the KA-dib in VE 226, sources A, C and D, thus «magician», even if the possibility of another reading and meaning of KA-dib is not completely ruled out.

⁸¹ ARET IV 3 obv. VI:6-11.

⁸² ARET VIII 524 = MEE 5 4 obv. XII:12-17.

⁸³ ARET VIII 527 = MEE 5 7 obv. VIII:20-24.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, XII:4-6.

⁸⁵ See ARES II and RGTC 12/1, s.v.

⁸⁶ G. Pettinato, MEE 5, 87.

⁸⁷ M. Krebern timer, BFE, 167 f. and VO 10, 1996, 19.

inim-a:zu₅ = 'à-zi-um (source A), 'à-za-zu (source D).

These translations may be explained as *ḥāziyum* and as *ḥazzāzum*, «(fore)seer», from *ḥzy/w, «to see, to vaticinate; to be seer»⁸⁸. It has been convincingly argued that also the difficult term *u₉-zu*, documented in some administrative records⁸⁹, may derive from this root⁹⁰. In this case, *u₉-zu* = *ḥuzûm*, *ḥuzzum*, should be the Eblaic term for «vaticination». A confirmation to this interpretation came from MEE 7 14, where *u₉-zu* is followed by ovin (2 LAK-20 gi₆ 2 LAK-20 babbar), and thus extispicy may be involved. Moreover, in ARET IV 5 and in MEE 10 29, *u₉-zu* follows another difficult Semitic term, usually read UR-zi: perhaps it is to be read *daš-zi*, and subsequently a derivation from *šsy, «to pray», well attested in the Ebla onomasticon⁹¹, is possible (a noun *tašzi in construct state with *ḥuzûm*, «pray of vaticination»?).

Thus, the textual evidence concerning divination at Ebla appears to be rather rich. Besides the aforementioned examples, we have to remind the recently published important letter of *i-bf-zi-kir* to Ruḥṣī-malku TM.76.G.86 (see below). Another clue is that of the Ebla attestations of the root *bry, «to inspect, to see». It is documented in VE 145:

igi-gar(gurum₇) = *ba-la-um* (source A), *ma-da-u₉* (source D).

The two translations may be interpreted as *barāyum*, «to inspect», and *maṭṭalum*, «inspection» (*nṭl)⁹². In the administrative texts also the writings *ba-ra-i* and *ba-ra-u₉*, usually qualifications of wool, may derive from *bry⁹³. As for igi-gar see also its attestation, in a context of extispicy (thus igi-gar = *barû*), in TM.76.G.86, obv. III:7 - IV:1: *wa / igi-gar / gú-šum / u₉ / áš-dag / igi-gar*, that Fronzaroli translates⁹⁴ as «e (quando) ha osservato la vittima, ha osservato morte presso di te». Interesting here is the meaning of the PN *ib-rf-um*. Gelb's interpretation was 'Jibrijum/ «He has seen»⁹⁵, but, however, also a form with prosthetic /ʔ/ could be supposed (in this case, 'Ibriyum could be a PN celebrating a fact, or a «nomen - omen»). In any case, a derivation of the PN from *bry (from which also the first element of the PN *ab-rf-a-ḥu* derives) is acceptable. We wonder whether the name (if really it is a PN, and not a title) of the founder of the dynasty which cooperated with the last Ebla kings in the management of the Palace G power has something to do with his profession. To our knowledge, *ib-rf-um* is never explicitly qualified with a name of profession, and it is known that he is considered by someone as one of the kings of Ebla (but the documentation is

⁸⁸ See G. Conti, *MisEb* 3, 1990, 98.

⁸⁹ ARET IV 5; MEE 7 14; MEE 10 29.

⁹⁰ J. Pasquali, *MisEb* 4, 1997, 230 («potrebbe trattarsi di un sostantivo astratto indicante la «cerimonia del vaticinio»).

⁹¹ See P. Fronzaroli, *Typologies onomastiques à Ebla*, ARES I, 1988, 10.

⁹² Lastly G. Conti, *MisEb* 3, 1990, 86 f.

⁹³ G. Pettinato, MEE 2, 90; J. Pasquali, *MisEb* 4, 1997, 220 ff.

⁹⁴ P. Fronzaroli, *MisEb* 4, 1997, 9.

⁹⁵ I.J. Gelb, *Ebla and the Kish Civilization*, in L. Cagni (ed.), *La lingua di Ebla*, Napoli 1981, 34. See also M. Krebernik, *Personennamen*, 39, with literature.

against this interpretation), and by others as one of the «viziers» of Ebla⁹⁶. In few words, we wonder whether the source of *ib-rf-um*'s power was, first of all, his function of diviner. An historical parallel may be that of Asqudum at Mari during the Old Babylonian period (the meaning of the PN Asqudum is intimately related with his function of diviner). Admittedly, no punctual elements to establish for sure this alleged profession for *ib-rf-um* have so far pointed out. But it is certain at Ebla there was a deep change with the rising of *ib-rf-um* to a paramount position: discontinuity with the previous period (that traditionally is referred to through the PN *ar-ru₁₂-lum*) is evident⁹⁷. This change is really problematic, and some different solutions could be supposed. However, an indirect but important clue may come from the content of the aforementioned letter TM.76.G.86⁹⁸. Following Fronzaroli's interpretation, the letter begins with *i-bf-zi-kir*'s statement «the sacrifice has been sacrificed thanks to my initiative, and (the presage) has been bad» (nída / nída / áš-ti / wa / ħul). From the tone of the letter we have the strong impression that *i-bf-zi-kir* usually directed the divination at the Ebla court and in the sanctuaries in the region of Ebla; see particularly the end of the text: «and take care of the statue in the occasion of my offerings of meat» (wa / alan_x(KÍD.ALAM) / igi-sig / a / dab₆-su-a-a). *I-bf-zi-kir* was son of *ib-rf-um*, and all the available evidence points out he became the successor to his father's office. It is not impossible that *i-bf-zi-kir* was also a diviner, and that this depended on his father's original profession. Moreover, given TM.76.G.86, it is probable that also Ruḥṣī-malku, *i-bf-zi-kir*'s son, whose rank in the family was, in his generation, second only to that of Ṭubḥu-Hadda (*du-bù-ḥu^d-à-da*), inherited duties of diviner from his father.

Thus, we suggest *ib-rf-um*'s profession was that reflected by the etymology of his PN (and in this case divination seems to us more adequate than a simple administrative activity of inspection), and that this supposed profession (^lmaš = *bārū*?) was the reason or at least one of the main reasons of his tremendous increase of power from a precise (even if yet rather unclear) historical moment onwards.

To conclude, we want to stress the chance to find more attestations of magical practises may be found in the large administrative Ebla textual corpus.

See e.g. the case of a passage from TM.75.G.11010+, obv. V:19-25⁹⁹:

[11] 20 udu / ʾx^l-[...] / [ir-ʾa-a]g-da-mu / nída / in ud / gišzé / ba-za-um.

⁹⁶ The former hypothesis is still sustained by G. Pettinato (*passim*), while the latter has been favoured by A. Archi (ARES I, 1988, 220), once independently established, around ten years ago, by Pomponio, Archi and Michalowski that *ib-rf-um* was not one of the Ebla kings. According to Archi, however (*Ebla. La formazione di uno stato del III millennio a.C.*, PdP 46, 1991, 212 f.), «Ibrium aveva iniziato la carriera di 'signore', lugal, all'epoca di Tir ..., proseguendola con ArruLUM ... Il nome di Ibrium è raro, e pertanto non vi è ragione di dubitare dell'identità di questo 'signore' con quello che assumerà il controllo dell'amministrazione», e cf. also ARES I, 1988, 211 (Archi refers to some unpublished texts). W.W. Hallo, *Ebrium at Ebla, Eblaitica* 3, 1992, 147 f., advanced the hypothesis *ib-rf-um* was the sukkal-gal, 'vizier', of Ebla. According to M.G. Biga and F. Pomponio, NABU 1987/106, «Ebrium et ses descendants faisaient partie de la famille royale [d'Ebla]»; the name of *ib-rf-um*'s father, however, is unknown.

⁹⁷ See A. Archi, PdP 46, 1991, 212 ff.

⁹⁸ P. Fronzaroli, *MisEb* 4, 1997, 1 ff.

⁹⁹ G. Pettinato, *Il culto ufficiale ad Ebla durante il regno di Ibbi-Sipiš*, OA 18, 1979, 180.

It has been recently suggested that *ba-za-um*¹⁰⁰ is interpretable as a form of West Sem. **pšh*, «to break»¹⁰¹. If it is syntactically correct, then this passage deals with the breaking of a container (*giš-zé*), probably a cup, for magical purposes. In spite of the laconicity of [11], the *in ud* formula and the mention of the offering of the prince Yirḥaq-damu confirms the importance of this ritual.

¹⁰⁰ It is unclear for G. Pettinato, *ibid.*; A. Alberti, (giš)-gál-tak_x *nei testi lessicali e amministrativi di Ebla*, in L. Cagni (ed.), *Il bilinguismo ad Ebla*, Napoli 1984, 70, n. 17.

¹⁰¹ A. Catagnoli, *Les listes des HÚB(.KI) dans les textes d'Ebla et l'onomastique de Nagar*, MARI 8, 1997, 578.