

Divination at Ebla

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It is possible that those who *išīmū šīmat* for Gernot Wilhelm to direct studies on the Boghazköi/Hattusa archives at the Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur – Mainz did not consult any omens. Theirs was, however, a happy decision. At Ebla of the 3rd millennium, instead, every single important decision required an omen, following a tradition that in Syria, as in Mesopotamia, would last for the next two thousand years.

It was Pelio Fronzaroli who noted that, in the letter TM.76.G.86 the term *igi-gar* has the technical meaning of “to inspect” a victim in order to observe the omens; sections [1] (5)-(6) *wa Īr-am₆-ma-lik nídba-ma nídba wa igi-gar gú-šum ug₇ áš-dag igi-gar* “And PN has performed the sacrifice, and he observed the victim, he observed death by you (/ašda-ka/)”; sections (15)-(16): *wa igi-gar nídba-nídba wa du₁₁-ga ħul ù-ma du₁₁-ga sa₆* “And he will observe the sacrifices. And he will say: (the omen) is unfavourable, or he will say: (the omen) is favourable” (Fronzaroli 1997).

1. “to inspect” a “victim”

The Bilingual Lists give two glosses to *igi-gar*: *ba-la-um* /barāyūm/ from **bry*, cfr. Akkadian *barû* “to inspect, to observe”, *bārû* “diviner”; *ma-da-u₉*, cfr. Akk. *naṭālu* “to see” (Conti 1990: 86-87, with previous bibliography).¹ The meaning “victim” for *gú-šum* is confirmed by the gloss: *al₆-gír-šum* = *gu-šum* / *gu-wa-šum* / *guwšum* / “killing by means of cutting, slaughter/throat-cutting” (Fronzaroli 1997: 14-15).

The omen requested by the minister Ibbi-zikir related to certain requirements for a military expedition, *níg-ka s₄*: sections (12)-(13). The technical term for observing omens, evidently by examining the liver or entrails of a sheep, is the same as that found in Mesopotamian tradition (and in second millennium Syria). With regard to this tradi-

¹ The term *igi-gar* has not always this technical meaning, see *MEE* XII 35 obv. XXI 7-12: (gifts) *Ti-ša-li-im šè DU.DU igi-gar Da₅-du-da-mu* “(to) Tiša-lim, because she went to visit Dadu-damu”. There is no evidence that the act of inspecting, /mapqadum/, performed by the king and the queen in the temple of the god Kura could concern divination; the documentation is collected in Archi 1997.

tion, instead, it would appear anomalous to consider the victim inspected to be “offered; sacrificed”, *níd ba*. The Sumerian-Akkadian term *níd ba*, *níd ba*, *nindabû* refers to “cereal offering, food offering, provisions”, CAD N/2: 236.² At Ebla this term is used to denote “the act of presenting a good to the god” (Pettinato 1979: 123), that is to say, an “(animal) offering (Pettinato 1979: 123-124, *ARET* XI: 163); (bread) offering (*ARET* IX: 399); (oil) offering (*ARET* I: 299)”.³

2. “diviner (*Opferschauer*)”; “sheep”; “act of divination, omen”

In the letter [1] TM.76.G.86, Iram-malik, who posed the oracular question, is not qualified by any title. Other documents, however, specify that he is a *lú-máš(-máš)* (*ARET* VIII: 63 “exorcist”) (§ 3, below).³ The Eblaite word for *lú-máš(-máš)* “diviner (*Opferschauer*)” is probably *bārû* as in Akkadian.⁴

Along with A. Falkenstein, we must presume that *máš* = *urīšu* “buck, he-goat” “verweist auf das Tier, aus dessen Eingeweiden die Orakeldeutung gewonnen wurde. Verwaltungsurkunden der III. Dynastie von Ur, die Auslieferungen an den *máš-šu-gíd-gíd* buchen, nennen allerdings unter den Zuteilungen nur Schafe und Lämmer” (Falkenstein 1966: 46). We can see the same situation in Ebla. The term *udu* can stand for sheep or goats of either sex and of any age. The lists of deliveries of *udu* to the central administration often record animals for divination through extispicy, [2] TM.75.G.1764 rev. I 5-17: *6 udu šu-duḡ máš Īr-am₆-ma-lik šu-duḡ / 7 udu šu-duḡ máš Ar-ḥa-du_{ki} šu-duḡ / 5 udu šu-duḡ máš en Ġār-mu_{ki} šu-duḡ* “6 sheep (for) taking omens: Iram-malik has taken possession. 7 sheep (for) taking omens: (someone of) GN has taken possession. 5 sheep (for) taking omens: the king of GN has taken possession” (transliteration of the text by Pettinato 1979: 137; see also § 7, below). In only one case it is specified that the animals used for extispicy were lambs, [3] TM.75.G.10148 obv. II 10-12: [x] *gín D(ILMUN) kù-babbar níg-sa₁₀ sila₄ lú šu-duḡ máš* “[x] shekels silver: price of lamb(s) which are (for) taking an omen”.

If *lú-máš* was *bārû*, *máš* was probably *bīru* “an act of divination (*Opferschau*)”. In several passages *máš* is written in the line following *šu-duḡ*, which points to the meaning: “to take an omen”.⁵ Sometimes *máš* is reduplicated (e. g. in no. [10], below).

Three significant cases in which it is held necessary to use divination have already been quoted by M. G. Biga (Biga 1999). Of particular interest we have the omen requested of the God of the father for the king's mother on the marriage of king Išar-damu with Dabur-damu. [4] TM.75.G.2417 rev. VII 6-18: (garments) *Ti-ti-nu maškim*

² Behrens, Steible 1983: 257: “Speiseopfer”; Kienast, Sommerfeld 1994: 259: “(Opfer)gabe, Abgabe”; Selz 1995: 151 note 635: “der Ausdruck *níd ba-kéš* (‘Fischbündel’) ist in unseren Quellen auf Fischopfer beschränkt”.

³ For *maš-pà* “durch Eingeweideschau bestimmen” in Umanšé 24 III 6, see Steible 1982: 7-8.

⁴ For a first study on the *lú-máš(-máš)*, see Bonechi, Catagnoli 1998: 33-35. P. Fronzaroli, *ARET* XIII: 15, suggests that at Mari a priestess (*ama dingir-dingir-dingir*) performed incubation.

⁵ In the passages quoted in this study, this is marked by the sign / before *máš*.

Ib-rí-um níg-“mul” *ama-gal en máš sa₆ lú dingir a-mu Da-bur-da-mu ma-lik-tum Ib-la_{ki}* “(for) Tiṭinu, the representative of (the minister) Ibrium, (who) brought the news (to) the king's mother that the omen (was) favourable: that of the God of the father (concerning) Dabur-damu, (who can become) queen of Ebla”. [5] TM.75.G.2503 obv. V 9-19: (garments) *I-ti-d² Ā-da maškim I-šar níg-*“mul” *máš Dar-ib-da-mu sa₆ in ud tar₆-bí(BAN-NE) bur-kak-sù* “(for) Iti-Hadda, the representative of Išar, (who) brought the news that the omen (for) Darib-damu was favourable on the occasion of the elevation (in relation with) her bur-kak vase.” [6] TM.75.G.10078 rev. III 1-9: (garment) *EN-da-za Gi-ti-ne_{ki} níg-*“mul” *máš Ib-rí-um è al₆ A-da-ra-du_{ki}* “(for) EN-daza of GN, (who) brought the news of the omen (that) Ibrium should move concerning GN”. To these can be added a further two passages: [7] *ARET* XV 30 (39) (minister Arrukum): (garment) *šu-duḡ / máš Dag-“mul”-da-mu* “(for the diviner who) took the omen (concerning the princess) Dagmul-damu”; [8] TM.75.G.10013 rev. II 5-11: *níg-mu-sá bur-kak¹(MU) Ti-iš-te-da-mu dumu-munus en DUḡ:TÚḡ šu-duḡ máš* “(for) the marriage (through the anointment with the oil) of the b.-vase of Tište-damu, the daughter of the king, (for whom) TÚḡ-DUḡ took an omen”.

⁶ The Annual Account of Delivery of Metals of the 17th year of the minister Ibrium dates this event, TM.75.G.10210 rev. III 14-24: *l kù-sal níg-ba Dar-ib-da-mu dumu-munus en^d BAD-munus si-in Lu-ba-an^{ki} in ud tar₆-bí bur-kak-sù^{d2} Ā-da-“ba^r”* “1 buckle: gift (to) Tarib-damu, the daughter of the king, (for) the Lady (i. e. the spouse of the god² Adabal) to GN (the god's sanctuary), on the occasion of the elevation of her vase b. (to) the god² Adabal”. *bur-kak* (var. *bur-NI*) is a small vase, often decorated with gold or silver, see *ARET* VII: 207-208; *MEE* XII: 404-406. It is often related to *níg-mu-sá*, see *ARET* I: 300; *ARET* VII: 230 (two passages with: *níg-mu-sá l bur-kak FPN*). In Ebla, *níg-mu-sá* means “marriage ceremony”, see the passages listed in *ARET* XI: 164. For passages like: *níg-dé i-giš al₆ sag FNP in ud níg-mu-sá* “to pour oil on the head of FPN on the occasion of (her) marriage”, see Archi 1980: 20-21. The *bur-kak* had to be the container of the oil for the anointing the bride; cfr. *ARET* IV 23 (29): 38 (*gín*) *kù-gi l bur-kak i-giš lú I-bí-zí-kiri-na-sum níg-ba lugal Ma-ri^{ki}* “38 (shekels) gold (for) 1 b. of oil, which Ibzi-zikir gave as a gift (to) the king of GN”.

tar₆-bí is /*tarbīy-um*/ means, according to Fronzaroli as “elevation in rang”, cfr. the stem 0/2 of *rabū* (Fronzaroli 2008). Tarib-damu was priestess, *dam dingir*, of the god² Adabal of Luban already from the 12th year of the minister Ibrium, TM.75.G.1464, in second position after her sister Tinib-dulum, and after Amaga from the 6th year of Ibzi-zikir (Archi 1998: 48-49). The event of the /*tarbīy-um*/ of her *bur-kak* vase (although important because mentioned only in these two passages) seems not to refer, therefore, neither to her consecration as a priestess, nor to the annual gift of a *bur-kak* to² Adabal, which fell on the XI month MAXGÁN² *Atenū-sag* (the /*tarbīy-um*/ of Tarib-damu, TM.75.G.2503, is dated to the IV month *gi-NI*). Here is a list of this annual gift to² Adabal:

minister Arrukum: *ARET* XV 12 (11).

minister Ibrium: *ARET* I 11 (15) (*Puzur₄-ra-BAD*); *ARET* III 136 III 3-5 (*En-na-i*); 335 VI 8-10 (*Puzur-ra₄-BAD*); *ARET* XII 389 III 1-4; 465 I 7-9 (*Puzur-ra₄-BAD*); TM.75.G.1524 obv. V 4-8 (*I-rí-ig-i*); TM.75.G.1706 obv. VI 14-VII 4 (*I-rí-ig-i*); TM.75.G.1795 obv. IX 5-9 and rev. II 2'-6' (*I-rí-LUM*); TM.75.G.2233 obv. XII 20-rev. I 1 (*I-rí-LUM*); TM.75.G.2476 obv. III 9'-11' (*I-rí-ig-i*); TM.75.G.10151 obv. IV' 13-V' 2 (*I-rí-LUM*).

minister Ibzi-zikir: *ARET* IV 14 (16); *ARET* VIII 532 VII 14-17 (read: *l bur-kak* instead of *l nar¹*); 540 (18); *MEE* VII 50 obv. VII 11-14 (*I-rí-ig-i*); TM.75.G.2474 obv. V 3-6.

3. The diviner (*Opferschauer*)

The cases in which an individual is qualified as a *lú-máš* are very rare. [9] TM.75.G.1894 rev. VI 16-17 (I.Z.): *A-ba-da-mu lú-máš*. [10] *ARET* VIII 525 (27) (last years of the minister Ibbi-zikir: I.Z.): *Du-bí lú-máš-máš níg-* “mul” GN₁ GN₂ til “Dubí, the diviner, who brought the news that GN₁ (and) GN₂ were destroyed”. [11] TM.75.G.10019 rev. II 5-7 (I.Z.): 2 *dumu-nita Puzur₄-ra-BAD lú-máš* “two sons of Puzurra-BAD, the diviner”.

Iram-malik, who performed the oracular questions in [1] and [2], appears in some other documents, all of the time of minister Ibbi-zikir. [12] TM.75.G.2088 rev. I 1-3: (20 shekels gold) *Ír-am₆-ma-lik lú-máš*. [13] TM.75.G.10056 obv. II 7-9: (30 shekels gold) *Ír-am₆-ma-lik lú-máš*. The Annual Account of Delivery of Metals (AAM) of the 13th year of minister Ibbi-zikir and the monthly lists of deliveries of sheep (§ 7, below) confirm that he was active in the years immediately preceding the destruction of Ebla,⁷ [14] TM.75.G.10202 rev. XII 16-19: 40 gín D. *kù-gi l dib Ír-am₆-ma-lik šu-du₈ / máš* “40 shekels gold (for) 1 plate (for) Iram-malik who took an omen”. The meaning of the passage that follows is not certain (*i-giš-sag* is the ceremony performed in the case of the death of a relative), [15] TM.75.G.10127 obv. VI 5-9: (garments) *i-giš-sag Ír-am₆-ma-lik šu-du₈ / máš-máš* “(for) the purification of Iram-malik, (who) took omens”. [16] *MEE* VII 48 obv. V 10-13: (garments) *Ír-am₆-ma-lik šu-du₈ / máš*. [17] *ARET* XII 747 IV 1-5: (garments) *Ír-am₆-ma-lik šu-du₈ máš in Dur-NE-du_{ki}* “(for) Iram-malik (who) took an omen in GN”.

Amur-damu is another well-known diviner from the time of the minister Ibbi-zikir (active until the 13th year of the minister, together with Iram-malik). [18] *ARET* I 4 (66’): (garments) *maškim A-mur-da-mu šu-du₈ máš*. [19] *ARET* I 15 (2): (garments) *A-mur-da-mu šu-du₈ máš*. [20] TM.75.G.10074 obv. VIII 6’-IX 3 (I.Z. 6th year): 12 gín *kù-gi A-mur-da-mu šu-du₈ / l máš* “12 shekels gold (for) A., (who) took 1 omen”; rev. XII 17-27: 15 shekels gold for (the decoration of) a belt ... 2 reins (*níg-anše-ak*) *A-mur-da-mu šu-du₈ / máš*. [21] TM.75.G.2426 obv. IV 12-17 (I.Z. 13th): 3;06 minas gold for 2 reins and their decorations *A-mur-da-mu šu-du₈ / máš* concerning the expeditions against Mari (*níg-kas₄ Ma-ri^{ki}*: IV 7-9; Archi, Biga 2003: 21). [22] TM.75.G.2330 rev. VI 7-15 (I.Z.): 10 íb xIII-TÚG sa₆ gún *dumu-nita-dumu-nita sikil lú áš-da A-mur-da-mu máš šu-du₈ níg-kas₄ Za-bur-rúm^{ki}* “10 kilts (to) the pure young men who assisted Amur-damu, (who) took an omen (for) the expedition (against) GN”.

⁷ The letter [1] TM.76.G.86 has been found in the vestibule (L.2875) of the central archive, where some of the most recent documents were kept; the addressee, Ruzi-malik, could be a son of the minister Ibbi-zikir (Fronzaroli 1997:1-2).

4. *gír šu-du₈ máš* “dagger for taking omens (*extispicy*)”

Extispicy requested particular daggers. These were made of bronze and sometimes decorated with silver. [23] TM.75.G.2507 obv. VII 13-20: 12 gín D. 1/2 *an-na šub si-in l ma-na tar 7 1/2 a-gar₅-gar₅ 10 [gír-gír] l [ú] šu-d [u₈] / máš šú-ša gín D. kù-babbar *zi-du-sù* “12 1/2 shekels tin to be melted in 1;37 1/2 mina refined copper (for) 10 [daggers] (for) taking omens; 20 shekels silver for their hilts”. [24] TM.75.G.2464 rev. XVI 16-18: 4 (gín) *an-na kin_x-ak 4 gír šu-du₈ máš* “4 (shekels) tin for making 4 daggers (for) taking omens”. [25] TM.75.G.2464 obv. XV 21-22: 8 gín *kù-babbar nu₁₁-za 4 gír šu-du₈ máš* “8 shekels silver (for decorating with) a sheet 4 daggers for taking omens”. [26] TM.75.G.10077 obv. VIII 1-3: 8 gín D. *babbar:kù zi-tum 4 gír-gír šu-du₈ máš* “8 shekels silver for the hilts⁸ of 4 daggers for taking omens”. [27] TM.75.G.10077 rev. III 7-12: 4 g [in D. *babbar:kù*] *ni-zi-mu nu₁₁-za 2 gír šu-du₈ máš lú Ib-rí-um* “4 she[kels silver] (for) laminating (with) a sheet 2 daggers for taking omens of (the minister) Ibrium”. [28] *MEE* XII 36 (15): 10 gín D. *kù-babbar níg-sa₁₀ l gír mar-tu ti kù-gi Du-bí šu-du₈**

⁸ The form *zi-tum* is attested also, e. g., in TM.75.G.2464 obv. V 21-VI 2: *l ma-na kù-babbar zi-tum 20 gír mar-tu ba-du-u₆ kù-babbar kù-gi*, and TM.75.G.10144 obv. I 16-19: 7 gín D. *zi-tum l gír mar-tu en*. The usual writing is *zi-du*, see *ARET* VII 43 (1)-(2): 19 1/2 (gín) *kù-gi zi-du* (correct the edition!) 2 gír mar-tu; 62 (7): 22 (gín) *kù-gi zi-du gír mar gír mar*. Quoting a passage where *zi-du* seems to interchange with *nu₁₁-za*, P. Fronzaroli translates “ornament” (Fronzaroli 1996: 64). *nu₁₁-za*, however, is related to several kinds of objects; its meaning is “shiny covering”, i. e. a gold or silver sheet for covering an object (Archi 1988: 54). *zi-du*, on the contrary, is found only in relation to *gír* “dagger”, see *ARET* VIII 537 (8); *ARET* XII 1120 rev. III 1-3; *MEE* VII: 386; *MEE* XII 35 (28), or K.A.SI (see below). The only passage where *zi-du* is not related to these objects is *MEE* II 36 obv. II 5-6: 33 *ma-na tar kù-babbar zi-du* “33;30 minas silver (for) *zi-du*”.

zi-du is never preceded by a numeral. The most frequent sequence is the following: tin and copper for making x dagger(s) - gold for its *zi-du*, see e.g. TM.75.G.2622 rev. 22-XXIII 1: 2 (gín) 4 *NI an-na šub si-in* 18 (gín) *a-gar₅-gar₅ l gír mar-tu 4 gín D. kù-gi zi-du-sù* “2 shekels 4 NI tin to be melted in 18 shekels of copper (for) 1 dagger m.; 4 shekels gold (for) its z.” A description as “a dagger (decorated with) gold”, *gír kù-gi*, can simply mean that its *zi-du* was decorated with gold, TM.75.G.1860 rev. XXI 15-24: 50 gín D. *an-na šub si-in* 6;20 *ma-na a-gar₅-gar₅ kin_x-ak 20 gír mar-tu ti kù-gi ʾa-lum ... 1;20 ma-na kù-gi zi-du-sù*. The meaning “hilt, grip” for *zi-du* seems evident (1 dagger and its hilt). Hilts of daggers were in wood or other materials, decorated with metals. The hilt of the gold dagger of the Cemetery of Ur is in lapis lazuli decorated with gold nails. A dagger from Byblos presents a silver blade laminated with gold crossed by four lines in niello; its wood hilt is decorated with silver and covered with gold (Montet 1928: 180, no. 655 with plate CII).

The meaning “handle, grip” could fit also the few passages where *zi-du* is related to K.A.SI. See TM.75.G.2023 obv. I 1-II 5: 1;40 *ma-na kù-gi zi-du 4 K.A.SI* 1;20 *ma-na kù-gi 4 kù-sal 20 (gín) 40 (gín) kù-gi 2 níg-anše-ak 12 kù-gi 4 zi-kir-ra-tum* “783 gr of gold (for) the grips of the 4 straps; 624 gr of gold (for) 4 bosses of 156 gr (each); 313 gr of gold (for) 2 bridles; 94 gr of gold (for) 4 z.”.

The basic harness for a pair of mules were: a) the reins: 1 band made by wool: 1 *eškir_x* (K.A.ŠÈ); b) 2 bridles: 2 *níg-anše-ak*, put on the mule's head, made by wool, sometimes decorated with gold; c) 4 bosses: 4 *kù-sal*, sometimes made by gold, one to each side of the mules' mouth (Conti 1997: 44-51, with previous literature). In few passages (as in TM.75.G.2023, quoted above), besides the 4 *kù-sal*, there are 4 K.A.SI and 4 *zi-kir-ra-tum*. Each K.A.SI can weigh even about 240 gr (TM.75.G.1481 obv. I 1-3: 2 *ma-na kù-gi zi-du 4 K.A.SI*) and more; they can be decorated with eagles (Conti 1997: 50; add, e. g., TM.75.G.10074 rev. XV 2-3: 4 *kù-sal te_g-MUŠEN*). It seems therefore probably that they were decorations applied to straps hanging from both side of the neck of the animal, kept together by a kind of grip.

máš “10 shekels silver value of 1 dagger m. ti (decorated with) gold (for) Dubi (see [10]) (for) taking omens”. [29] TM.75.G.2410 obv. XI 4-8: 14 gín D. kin_x-ak 7 gír šu-du_g / máš-máš “14 shekels silver for making 7 daggers (for) taking omens”.

5. The “month, moon(?)” of the diviner for the temple of Hadda at Ebla

In the Annual Account of Delivery of Metals of the 16th year of the minister Ibrium, “3 shekels gold (are employed to) replace 1 ‘month’ of the temple of Hadda of the diviner”, [30] TM.75.G.2465 obv. III 29-IV 7: 3 gín kù-gi lul-gu-ak liti lú é d²À-da lú-máš. Thirteen years later, according to the AAM of the 11th year of the minister Ibbi-zikir, this object had to be replaced once more because it was lost (z á h); the passage states that it concerns the temple of Hadda at the Palace, not that at Ḫalab, [31] TM.75.G.2507 obv. II 36-III 6: 3 gín D. kù-gi lul-gu-ak liti z á h lú-máš é d²À-da lú SA.ZA_x^{ki} “3 shekels gold to replace 1 ‘month’ (which was) lost, of the diviner, of the temple of Hadda of the Palace”.

A “month” could be represented by a moon. It was, however, a crescent moon, u_d-sakar, which was usually devoted to a temple. It is not clear precisely how a “Opferschauer” might have used it.

These are the only two passages which mention the temple of Hadda in connection with the diviner. The documents from Amorite Mari confirm the fame of the oracles of Hadda (Durand 1993: 43-45). Monthly documents show that some oracular observations were performed in the temple of Kura, the city-god of Ebla (see § 7 Text 3, below).

6. šu-du_g máš “to take an omen (extispicy)”

The Sumerian term lú-máš, “the man of the omen” is rare (note lú-máš-máš in [10]); far more frequent, instead, is the expression: šu-du_g máš “to take an omen” (máš is often written on a separate line; notice šu-du_g l máš in [20] “to take 1 omen”; šu-du_g máš-máš “to take omens” in [15]). Some passages ([7], [8]) demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that this is the meaning of šu-du_g máš. In [15]-[17] it is Iram-malik who acts, the person responsible for the oracular question in [1]; in other passages he is qualified as lú-máš. In [28] the expression šu-du_g máš also refers to Dubi, another lú-máš (no. [10]). Passage [22] shows that “pure young men” helped the diviner in taking an omen.

Since šu-du_g means “to hold in the hand, to possess”, and šu-du_g-a (Akk. *qātātu*) “guarantee, security, pledge”, the interpreters of the Ebla texts have taken šu-du_g máš to indicate “tax, Pflichtablieferung; (MEE XII: 111 ad § 18); deliver (what is due) (ARET XIII: 299)”.⁹

The fact that, in the administrative documents, šu-du_g máš refers to a limited number of people (see in particular the case of Amur-damu, [18]-[22]), obliges us to interpret this expression as “to take an omen”.¹⁰ This meaning is confirmed by the fact

that extispicy required a particular kind of knife, gír šu-du_g máš. The diviners generally received a garments or set of garments for having obtained an oracular response. In a few specific cases (during the last years of Ebla, when more valuable goods were in circulation) they received also objects decorated with gold (passages [14], [20], [21]).

a) minister Arrukum (all the diviners receive only garments)

A-bi-NAM lú I-ti^dAš-dar šu-du_g / máš: ARET XV 24 (22).

A-ti-Aš-dar šu-du_g máš A-bar-salki: ARET XV 24 (25) and 58 (9); A-ti-Aš-dar šu-du_g máš(-máš): ARET XV 32 (78) and 34 (67).

En-na^dRa-sa-ap šu-du_g / máš Ḫu-ḫur-du^{ki}: ARET XV 22 (39); En-na^dRa-sa-ap šu-du_g / máš: ARET XV 38 (71); šu-du_g / máš En-na^dRa-sa-ap: ARET XV 49 (101).

Gār-sa-ma-lik šu-du_g máš: ARET XV 35 (44).

Gú-nu-ga-Aš-dar šu-du_g / máš: ARET XV 21 (29). Iš_x(LAM)-a-da-mu šu-du_g / máš Ib-al₆^{ki}.

Kùn-na-Aš-dar šu-du_g / máš: ARET XV 21 (46).

Mi-mi šu-du_g / máš: ARET XV 42 (45).

Za-mi-ga-ḫu šu-du_g / máš: ARET XV 55 (65).

See, further: ARET XV 16 (30): dumu-nita Íl-gú-uš-da-mu šu-du_g / máš-máš; ARET XV 19 (2): šu-du_g / máš Bur-ma-an^{ki}; ARET XV 57 (36): šu-du_g / máš-máš Da-ša-ba-ù^{ki}.

b) minister Ibrium

[32] TM.75.G.1324 obv. IX 18-21: (garments) A-NAM-uš-gú A-ba-ti-um^{ki} šu-du_g máš.

[33] TM.75.G.1324 rev. X 3-6 (Ibrium 1st year): Ír-am₆-ma-lik šu-du_g / máš.

[34] TM.75.G.1335 obv. X 2-4: (garments) šu-du_g máš Ar-ḫa-du^{ki}.

[35] TM.75.G.1834 rev. III 1'-7':] ní-g-“mu1” Ib-rí-um Ne-zi-ma-lik máš / šu-du_g in Zi-da-gú^{ki} “(who) brought the news (to) Ibrium (that) Nezi-malik has taken an omen in GN”.

[36] TM.75.G.1881 rev. VII 8-VIII 9: (6+6 garments) Íl-ba-ma-lik lú Ír-am₆-ma-lik Gi-ra-ma-lik lú I-bí-šum A-bù^dKu-ra lú I-bí-zi-[x] Ru₁₂-zi-ma-lik lú Dam-da-il [x]-^rx¹-zu lú Bíl-ma-lik Kùn-i-šar lú Du-bù-uš-da-mu šu-du_g máš si-in ní-g-kas₄ Kak-mi-um^{ki} “PN₁ of PN₂ - PN₁₁ of PN₁₂ have taken an omen for the expedition (against) GN”.

c) minister Ibbi-zikir

[37] ARET I 5 (70): (garments) 2 dumu-nita Puzur₄-ra-BAD 2 na-se₁₁ ʔÀ-za-an^{ki} šu-du_g máš “2 sons of Puzurra-BAD (and) 2 people of GN (who) took an omen”.

[38] ARET III rev. II 1-3: A-tar₆]-ma-lik Du-bí-šum šu-du_g / máš.

[39] ARET IV 18 (63): (garments) Dab₆-bí Du-bí šu-du_g máš.

[40] ARET IV 19 (15): (garments) Ru₁₂-zi A-du-úr^{ki} šu-du_g / máš.

⁹ Notice that according to P. Steinkeller, the meaning “interest” for máš is not recorded before Ur III (Steinkeller 1981: 140).

¹⁰ In the following list, the sections concerning the ministers Ibrium and Ibbi-zikir are not complete.

- [41] *ARET* IV 20 (22): (garments) 2 *Ar-ḥa-duki* šu-du₈ / máš.
 [42] *ARET* IV 22 (20): (garments) *Da-NE* šu-du₈ máš.
 [43] *ARET* VIII 521 (18): (garments) *A-bù-ma-lik Du-lu^{ki}* šu-du₈ / máš (wool) 1 *dam-sù*.
 [44] *ARET* VIII 523 (15): (2+2+2 garments) *Ar-si-a-ḥu Gār-ga-mi-iš^{ki}* maškim *Ru₁₂-zi-ma-lik A-si-ma-lik Du-lu^{ki}* šu-du₈ / máš “Arsi-ḥu of GN, representative of Ruzi-malik, (and) Asi-malik of GN (who) have taken an omen”.
 [45] *ARET* VIII 523 (19): (2+2 garments) 2 *dumu-nita Bù-^rx⁷* šu-du₈ máš.
 [46] *ARET* XII 93 obv. I 5-8: (1+1 garment) (unwritten) *Ar-ḥa-duki* šu-du₈ máš.
 [47] *ARET* XII 172 II 2-4: *Nu-wa-NE* šu-du₈ máš *Ar-ḥa-duki*.
 [48] *ARET* XII 184 rev. I 1-2:] *Ar-ḥa-duki* šu-du₈ máš.
 [49] *ARET* XII 239 III 1-4:] šu-du₈ máš *si-in níg-kas₄ Ma-nu-wa-ad^{ki}* “] who took an omen for the expedition (against) GN”.
 [50] *ARET* XII 719 II 1-4: *Puzur₄-ra-BAD* šu-du₈ máš maškim *Za-ba-rúm*.
 [51] *ARET* XII 977 obv. IV 6-8: (garments) *Bù-sum* šu-du₈ máš.
 [52] *MEE* VII 50 obv. XII 4-6 and TM.75.G.1643 obv. IX 13-X 3: (2+2+2 garments) *Ar-ḥa-duki* šu-du₈ máš.
 [53] TM.75.G.2270 rev. I 3-13: (4 garments) 1 *I-li-NE-lum^{ki}* 1 *Zu-ša-ga-bù^{ki}* 1 *Dara-sa-gá^{ki}* 1 *Sa-da-ba-sá-ù^{ki}* šu-du₈ máš “(for) 1 of GN₁, 1 of GN₂, 1 of GN₃, 1 of GN₄ (who) took an omen”.
 [54] *MEE* XII 36 (15): 10 gín D. kù-babbar níg-sa₁₀ l gír mar-tu ti kù-gi *Du-bí* šu-du₈ máš “10 shekels silver value of 1 dagger m. (decorated with) gold (for) Dubi (who) took an omen”.
 [55] TM.75.G.2285 obv. IV 9-11: (garment) *Da-bí* šu-du₈ máš; VII 5-7: 2 *Ar-ḥa-duki* šu-du₈ máš.
 [56] TM.75.G.2509 obv. III 10-IV 2: (3 garments) *Du-bí-šum A-tar₅-ma-lik I-ti^dGami-iš* maškim-maškim *I-bí-zi-kir* šu-du₈ máš “(for) Dubi-šum, Atar-malik, Iti-Gamiš, representatives of Ibbi-zikir, (who) took an omen”.
 [57] TM.75.2653 obv. XII 1'-12' (I.Z. 7th or 12th year):] *Íl-ba-ma-lik I-ti-NE* ²*À-da-ša lú Gú-ra-da-mu* šu-du₈ / máš *šè i-ti mi-nu níg-kas₄ Dur-du^{ki}* lú *Da-ù^{ki}* “(garments)] Ilba-malik, Iti-NE, ²Adaša of Gura-damu, (who) took an omen concerning the return from the expedition (against) GN₁ of GN₂”.
 [58] TM.75.G.10129 rev. VI 22-VII: (8 garments) *Íl-ma-lik Gú-ba I-nu-ud-Ḥa-lab_x* *I-da-NE A-bù^dÀ-da Ma-a-bar-zú* ²*À-da-ša Uš-ra-gal-lu* šu-du₈ máš.
 [59] TM.75.G.10229 obv. IX 15-17: (garment) *Kùn-LUM Ar-ḥa-duki* šu-du₈ máš “(for) Kun-LUM of GN (who) took an omen”.

ARET XIII 18 (5) concerns an omen taken for a battle: šu-du₈ máš-gú-nu m^e. Some other passages in the chancery documents present problematic cases. A passage in the *Treaty of Abarsal* needs the meaning “to change, replace” (Edzard 1992: 207, 214), *ARET* XIII 5 (55): *an-da na g i-giš ḥul* máš šu-du₈ dūg “you will replace bad

drink and oil with good ones”. In this document the writing is always: máš / šu-du₈ (6x), as well as in *ARET* XIII 7 (1x), (the same as in [22] and [35], above). In these passages, the meaning “to take an omen” is not clearly requested.

The following passage is also obscure, [60] TM.76.G.92: cattle, asses, mules, 220 še-ú (“220 measures *gú-bar* of a feedstuff made by barley and hay” ?) PN “has ordered” (du₁₁-ga); 60 še-ú šu-du₈ máš “60 (measures) of a feedstuff made by barley and hay (for feeding animals for) taking omens”.

7. Sheep for extispicy and diviners of the last period

MEE XII 9 registers the sheep (udu) delivered over a period of 10 months, in a year that we cannot determine but shortly before the fall of Ebla. The sheep used for extispicy represent 8.43% of the animals delivered to the palace (Milano 1984: 222).¹¹

é dingir-dingir-dingir	for the temples of the gods (at Ebla)	2717
kú en	for consumption at the court	1382
kú guruš	for consumption by the workers	3062
kas ₄	as provision for travels	935
šu-du ₈ máš	for taking omens	795
al ₆ -du ₁₁ -ga	requested	512
		9423

The monthly documents concerning the deliveries of sheep give more details (the complete data will be given by the edition of the 22 documents of this genre; here below, are considered three of those published in Pettinato 1979).

a) Text 1 (TM.75.G.1764)

1st section (sheep for the temples, é-é dingir-dingir: rev. I 18-19)

6 udu šu-du₈ máš *Ír-am₆-ma-lik* šu-du₈

7 udu šu-du₈ máš *Ar-ḥa-duki* šu-du₈

5 udu šu-du₈ máš en *Gār-mu^{ki}* šu-du₈ (rev. I 5-17)

2nd section (sheep for consumption at the Palace, SA.ZA_x^{ki}: rev. IV 26-28)

1 udu máš šu-du₈ *I-bu₁₆-bu^{ki}* *I-bu₁₆-bu^{ki}*

2 udu šu-du₈ máš *Sar-mi-sa-du^{ki}* (rev. IV 23-25)

b) Text 2 (TM.75.G.2075)

2nd section (sheep for consumption at the Palace, SA.ZA_x^{ki}: obv. XII 1-3)

19 udu šu-du₈ máš en *Gār-mu^{ki}* šu-du₈

15 udu šu-du₈ máš *Sar-mi-sa-du^{ki}* šu-du₈

11 udu šu-du₈ máš *Ar-ḥa-duki* šu-du₈

2 udu šu-du₈ máš *Ír-am₆-ma-lik* šu-du₈ (obv. X 10-26)

¹¹ Consider, for comparison, that at Mari of the 2nd millennium, more than 4143 sheep were consigned over the space of nine months for extispicy, *nēpeštum* (Durand 1988: 37).

3rd section (sheep for travels, kaskal-kaskal: rev. VIII 1-2)

6 udu šu-duḡ máš *I-bí-zi-kir* šu-duḡ

14 udu šu-duḡ máš *Íl-ba-ma-lik* šu-duḡ

4 udu šu-duḡ máš *Sar-me-sa-du*^{ki} šu-duḡ (rev. II 16-III 2)

2 udu šu-duḡ máš *I-bí-zi-kir* šu-duḡ

8 udu šu-duḡ máš *Íl-ba-ma-lik* šu-duḡ

3 udu šu-duḡ máš *Ír-am₆-ma-lik* šu-duḡ (rev. IV 9-21)

2 udu šu-duḡ máš *Ír-am₆-ma-lik* šu-duḡ in NI-ab^{ki}

2 udu šu-duḡ máš *Sar-me-sa-du*^{ki} šu-duḡ in SA.ZA_x^{ki} (rev. V 21-26)

c) Text 3 (TM.75.G.2238)

1st section (sheep for the temples, é-é dingir-dingir: rev. IV 1-2)

7 udu šu-duḡ máš DUḡ:TÚḡ šu-duḡ é ^dKu-ra

2 udu šu-duḡ máš *Íl-ba-ma-lik* é ^dKu-ra

2 udu šu-duḡ máš *Du-bí* šu-duḡ *Ar-ḥa-du*^{ki}

2 udu šu-duḡ máš DUḡ:TÚḡ in *Háb-rí-ba-du*^{ki}

2 udu šu-duḡ *Íl-ba-ma-lik* in ^dLu-bù-ḥé^{ki}

20 udu šu-duḡ máš *Gàr-mu*^{ki} (rev. II 26-III 24)

The number of animals used varies greatly from month to month. Among the diviners we have TÚḡ-DUḡ (not a profession name!), who usually worked in the temple of Kura at Ebla, but who also appears in the temple of Hadda at Ḥalab and in the temple of ʔAdabal at Arugadu (see also no. [8] above). Iram-malik and Dubi are also recorded in certain different administrative documents (see § 6.). Moreover, Ilba-malik was also very active. The minister Ibbi-zikir, who is mentioned in text no. 2, 3rd section, was probably assisted by a professional diviner, as we can see in [61] TM.75.G.2516 rev. VIII 4-9: 13 udu šu-duḡ / máš DUḡ:TÚḡ [áš-]da [I-bí-zi-kir. Certain oracular questions were performed in small centres like Sarmisadu.

City-states such as Arḥadu, Garmu (together with its king, e n), GudadaLUM and Ibubu are mentioned for reasons that are not clear. The en of Garmu appears in various other monthly documents of this genre in connection with the taking of an omen (šu-duḡ / máš): TM.75.G.2397 obv. X 28-33; TM.75.G.2403 rev. VII 24-28; TM.75.G.2441 obv. VIII 13-16; TM.75.G.2517(+) rev. I 29-II 1; TM.75.G.10167 obv. V 6-10. The city-state of GudadaLUM is attested in similar contexts in [62] TM.75.G.2516 obv. XII 25-XIII 1: 9 udu šu-duḡ máš *Gú-da-da-LUM*^{ki} šu-duḡ, and [63] TM.75.G.10167 obv. V 11-15: 26 udu šu-duḡ máš *Ma-sa-ma-lik* *Gú-da-da-LUM*^{ki} šu-duḡ “n sheep (for) taking omens (someone)/Masa-malik of GN has received”.

The lists of deliveries of food to the king and the court show that representatives of those cities were present at Ebla (at least) during the last three years: *ARET IX* 61 rev. II 7-7: e n *Gàr-mu*^{ki}; 74 rev. I 2 and II 2: *Gú-da-da-LUM*^{ki}; 81 obv. I 8, II 1, II 7

and 82 obv. I 12, II 2-4: *Gàr-mu*^{ki}, *I-bu₁₆-bu*^{ki}, *Gú-da-da-LUM*^{ki}. The diviner from Arḥadu is also purposefully mentioned: *ARET IX* 77 obv. II 4-5, rev. I 7-8; 81 rev. II 8-9; 82 rev. I 2-3, II 13-14, VII 7-8; 83 obv. II 6-7; 84 rev. I 9-10, III 12-13, IV 16-17, VI 9-10: lú-máš *Ar-ḥa-du*^{ki}.

The diviner of Arḥadu must have enjoyed great authority. He was consulted already at the time of the minister Ibrium ([34]), and very frequently under Ibbi-zikir ([34], [41], [46], [47], [48], [59]). The minister Ibbi-zikir asked him (as well as a certain Iram-damu) to take an omen regarding his diplomatic mission to Mari, [64] TM.75.G.1945 rev. V 24-VI 24: 6 udu ^dKu-ra *I-bí-zi-kir* nídba in *Ma-rí*^{ki} 88 udu kú *Ib-bí-zi-kir* in *Ma-rí*^{ki} 2 udu šu-duḡ máš *Ír-am₆-da-mu* šu-duḡ in *Ma-rí*^{ki} 7 udu šu-duḡ máš *Ar-ḥa-du*^{ki} šu-duḡ *Ma-rí*^{ki} “6 sheep (to) Kura: Ibbi-zir has offered (for propitiating the gods) for (his travel to) Mari. 88 sheep (as) consumption of Ibbi-zikir for (his journey to) Mari. 2 sheep for taking an omen concerning Mari: Iram-damu has received. 7 sheep for taking an omen concerning Mari: (the diviner of) the city of Arḥadu has received.”

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