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In Revue d’assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale Volume 106, Issue 1, 2012, Pages 45 to 63

Publishers P.U.F.

ISSN 0373-6032
ISBN 9782130593768
DOI 10.3917/assy.106.0045

Article available online at
https://www.cairn-int.info/revue-d-assyriologie-2012-1-page-45.htm

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IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR.
THE TRUCE BETWEEN EBLA AND MARI (*ARET* XVI 30)
AND THE RANSOM OF PRISONERS

BY
Amalia CATAGNOTI

1. This article will first discuss (§ 2) a III millennium chancery text found at Tell Mardikh. This text is important as it aids in the understanding of the political relationship between Ebla and Mari, and sheds light on the juridical habits in Early Bronze Syria. The occurrence of the term for ransom in it, motivates the discussion of the dossier concerning the redemption of prisoners in the Ebla texts, a topic which is developed in the second part of the article (§ 3).

2. TM.75.G.10195, published as *ARET* XVI 30,1 is a medium sized tablet (118x112x25 mm.) found in the main Ebla archive, L.2769 (North A 2). It bears a chancery text written in eight columns on the obverse and in one column on the reverse. A second column on the reverse was left unwritten by the scribe, and is next to a large blank space. Unfortunately, the incipit of the text has been lost. Furthermore, the large lacuna on the left part of the reverse make it impossible to know if more text was written there. Some redactional features could be clues to the influence of the Mari scribal school.2 The manuscript found at Ebla is rather inelegantly written and is also characterized by several erased signs and some cursive shapes. It could have been a draft written, probably by a Palace G scribe, in the area implied by its content (outside Tell Mardikh).

As shown by the only two geographical names present in the text, *ARET* XVI 30 deals with the relationship between Ebla and Mari. The content of *ARET* XVI 30 looks peculiar when contrasted with the dossier concerning this relationship, which is very broad and varied, including chancery, administrative and lexical texts. In fact, this document is likely a part of a larger set of political measures, and may be considered to be an attached text or a summary of an agreement between the two Syrian capitals after a war.

*I am pleased to dedicate this work to Paolo Matthiae, director of the archaeological Ebla Mission, in hopes that a contribution discussing the texts found at Tell Mardikh, which are an interesting element in relations between Ebla and Mari, will be appreciated.

The present article has been redacted in the framework of the project “The Prosopography of Ebla” (http://www.unifi.it/ebla/mdswitch.html). I wish to thank Pelio Fronzaroli and Marco Bonechi, who read the manuscript and gave various insights. Note the following abbreviations: AAM = Annual Account of Metals; MAT = Monthly Account of Textiles; Arr. = ArruLUM; Ibr. = Ibrium; IZ. = Ibbi-zikir.

After having delivered my paper, Dominique Charpin kindly put his unpublished article “Le prix de rachat des captifs d’après les archives paléo-babyloniennes” (Mémorial P. Vargyas) at my disposal. Observations and conclusions found in it are important complements to my article.


*Revue d’Assyriologie, volume CVI (2012), p. 45-63*
It is possible that *ARET* XVI 30 was written during the 32nd year of the reign of Ebla king *Isar-damu*, which would have been the year Ibbi-zikir 14. This date comes after the Ebla victory over Mari and after the subsequent ceremony of the offering of the oil by Mari mentioned in the dating formula DIS mu nidda 1-giš *Ma-raš* of the administrative text TM.74.G.102 and in the § 2 of the chancery text *ARET* XVI 20 ([... n]idda 1-giš *Ma-raš*).  

*ARET* XVI 30 states what reciprocal actions should be taken in problematic cases such as assault, kidnapping, injury, escape and redemption, and, in addition, issues that could have arisen regarding animals and their hire or theft and also theft of goods. It seems reasonable to associate these examples with the border areas between Ebla and Mari, although no specific location is given, and no toponyms are mentioned (perhaps intentionally).

Some clues, however, point to the area along the Euphrates between Emar and Tuttul. Riverine trade is implied by the mention of “raft (gurša)” in obv. VI 7 (probably an abbreviated form of má-gurša, “barge”). This would also fit with the presence of “seminomads (sa-gáš)” and “tribal groups (da-mi)” mentioned respectively in rev. I 2, 4, 6 and obv. III 7. It should be noted that the area at hand was populated by “settlements (uru-kī)” and not by “fortresses (bâdu)”, which instead occur in *ARET* XIII 5, the Treaty between Ebla and Abarsal, where matters concerning border areas are also regulated.

The text can be subdivided into 28 sections (section [0] at the beginning has been lost) which reference seven thematic parts. Part one concerns measures to be taken if an act of violence is carried out, by someone from Ebla against someone from Mari, in an Ebla-controlled area, as well as in the opposite case (§§ 0–10). Part two deals with the hiring of animals (mules, oxen and donkeys) (§§ 11–15), while in part three the focus is on personal injuries and the escape of slaves (§§ 16–20). Part four expands upon a topic which was dealt with in a previous part and concerns another case of personal injury (§ 21). Part five and part six deal with, respectively, stolen goods and animals (§§ 22–25 and 26–27). The seventh, and last part, mentions the release of a man (§ 28).

Completely impersonal (personal names never occur in this text, unlike what is seen in the administrative text TM.74.G.2250, obv. V 5–7, has been dated to the year Ibbi-zikir 13 in Archi - Biga 2003:17 (“Ingar, who has brought the news” that a peace has been agreed upon with “(the ceremony of) the offering of oil of Mari”), but the text has been dated to Ibbi-zikir 15 in Biga 2008:296. Alternatively, *ARET* XVI 30 could have been written after one of the previous pacts between Ebla and Mari, mentioned in other Ebla administrative texts (Archi - Biga 2003:10f. and 12). These texts are currently dated to the third year of *Isar*-da-*mu*, corresponding to the year Ibbium 3 (in und nidda 1-giš *Ma-raš* ... 50 gin DILMUN babbar-kā mu1;ra 1 dub lu nam-kāš *lb-laš* wa *Ma-raš* 1 4*KU-ra*, TM.75.G.2464 obv. III), or to the 18th year of *Isar*-da-*mu*, corresponding to the year Ibbium 18 (in und nidda 1-giš *lb-laš* wa *Ma-raš*, TM.75.G.1923 obv. XII 12–17 // TM.75.G.1261 = *MEE* 2 1 rev. II 4–9). Given that *ARET* XVI 30 lacks of any prosopographical information, it is presently difficult to decide between the various possibilities.

5. For these terms see Catagnoti - Fronzaroli 2010:38 and 192 (gurša), 194 (sa-gáz), 192 (da-mi).


8. They are “eye (igi)” in obv. VI 11, “hand (ša)” in obv. VI 15 and “foot (DU)” in obv. VI 19.
but also many terms for names of functions, actions, financial activities and legal measures. Furthermore, ARET XVI 30 is among the few texts found at Tell Mardikh in which the preposition bar-à-ti, “between, among”, 10 the conjunction u-â-mu, “and so”, 11 and the writing u-â-mu for *yəwam= “day” 12 occurs. Moreover, this document gives relevant information on what the amount of silver was for indemnifying attacks, injuries, abductions and thefts, and for hiring animals. Of particular interest are the attestations of silver used for ransoming (a topic that will be fully addressed in the last part of this paper)

Each of the seven thematic parts of ARET XVI 30 mention amounts of silver. It is possible that the ordering of the parts in the text was dependant on the amount of silver referenced, based on the fact that the largest amount one mina (= 60 shekels = 470 gr.) occurs in the elaborate first part §§ 0-10. This particular part deals with a man from one of the two kingdoms who has attacked (gú-gi) a man from the other kingdom, striking (šu-ra), but not abducting (kar) him. The end of this part includes the punishment of the aggressor, penalizing him with the due payment (hi-til) of the argent, taking into account the kidnapping of the assaulted person.

The text defines how functionaries, culprits and victims should behave. A functionary is the “keeper of each settlement (igi-ME-sig / 1 uru)” (§ 2), and was probably a local authority, while the LÚ×TIL (§ 3), was probably someone installed in the occupied territories. The text does not say if they belong to the Ebla or Mari administration. Since § 8 states a principle of reciprocity (clarified by the symmetrical content of §§ 9-10), it seems probable that they belonged to both the kingdoms. The lower ranking functionary (igi-sig) had to swear (nam-ku₄) to the higher ranking one (LÚ×TIL) that he would be responsible for the payment due. If the culprit had abducted the victim, his sons would have had to pay, if necessary with the help of the tribal group (da-mi). The son of the victim would then have had to declare (c zé-SU) that the established sum had actually been paid and delivered in full (si-gi [igi]-du₄). 13

In part two (§§ 11-15) the price (níg-sa₇) of one mule is quoted as 20 shekels, and that of one oxen or of one donkey is 10 shekels. These prices are not for the sale of the animals, but, as indicated by the low amounts of silver, for disbursements (til) incurred during their rental (še-ḪA-mul). 14 This part also introduces a third functionary: the “inspector” báriyum (bar-i I-b₅₅₃₅ wa Ma₉₃₃, obv. V 5-8), 15 who belonged to both the Ebla and Mari administrations. Unattested to in other published Ebla texts, báriyum also occurs in the Nabada (Tell Beydar) documents, under the forms ba-₉₁ udu, ba₃₅ udu nita, ugula ba-₉₁ udu. 16 It could be that, contrary to the igi-sig and the LÚ×TIL, who dealt with security issues in the settled areas, 17 the báriyum operated in the countryside, and was in charge of different matters.

9. They are “fabrics (sum₄m(KAxKÁR))” in obv. VII 18, “quality wool (siki-sag)” in obv. VIII 1 and “bands used as a belt/skirt (b+III-TÜG)” in obv. VIII 11.
10. In obv. VII 12. At Ebla this preposition (Catagnoti 2012:95f.) only occurs in chancery texts.
11. In obv. III 8. At Ebla this conjunction (Catagnoti 2012:99) only occurs in chancery texts.
13. Compensation now looks more probable to me than ransom, and therefore in obv. III 10 I suggest [igi]-du₄ instead of [nig]-du₄.
14. This is a shortened writing of the Sumerogram še-SAG/K Ax-H₃₅-mul currently found in the administrative and chancery Ebla texts, also attested to in LL 674, and considered in Archi 2002:95 and 105 n. 1 as “a mere graphic variant” of LL 673, še-SU₂₄-H₃₅-mul = ḫabûlum (sources A, B, D), “interest-bearing debt”. The shortened writing še-H₃₅-mul also occurs in an administrative text (TM.75.G.2362, Archi 2002:102 [21]) dated to Ibrium 2 in Archi - Biga 2003:8 and Biga 2008:314 (another attestation, in TM.75.G.1485, Archi 2002:102 [25], cannot yet be dated with certainty).
15. At Ebla there is also a PN Bar-i, see Archi - Catagnoti - Corò - Fronzaroli 2008:27f.
17. As for one of the functions of the igi-sig, see below.
The functionaries appointed by Ebla or Mari in parts three, four and five (§§ 16-25) could be the LÚxTIL. §§ 16-18 state that the sentence (kuš)\(^{18}\) for injury to an eye, a hand or a foot is 10 shekels in each case.

While it is certain that §§ 19-20 deal with fugitive slaves (male in § 19, 10 shekels, female in § 20, 5 shekels), it is uncertain if the silver refers to penalties for the person in charge of an escaped slave or for the person who harbors the fugitive slave, or, if conversely, it refers to rewards for a person who returns the fugitive slave. In § 21 the lexicon used (giš šu-ra, mistbātu) suggests a purification rite for personal injuries caused by an edged weapon, which, naturally, has a higher, 30 shekels, penalty. Violence is also taken into account in the §§ 22-25. These paragraphs, reference extorted (al-bu, (PAD)) goods, Mari fabrics (20 shekels) and Ebla wool (20 shekels). The preliminary and provisory nature of the text ARET XVI 30 could be the reason for the hurried redaction of the §§ 24-25, which lack in reciprocity (they only sanction the illegal behaviour of someone from Ebla) and contain some grammatical abbreviations (2 is used for 2-SŪ, “twice”).

In parts six and seven, the functionary is once again the bāriyum, for both Ebla and Mari. In §§ 26-27 the theft (nu-zu) of cattle (sheep, oxen, mules, donkeys) is not punished by a pecuniary penalty; rather, the guilty party (in this case, a seminomadic shepherd (sa-gáz)), had to give five times as much (1 gu₃) to the inspectors of Ebla and of Mari\(^{19}\). The text ends (§ 28) quoting the amount of 20 shekels of silver for the ransom (níg-du₅) of one person.

3. Paragraph 28 (níg-du₅ / 1 lú / bar-i / Ib-lā₅ / wa / Ma-r₇ / šu+ša kū:ba:bar “as ransom of one man, 20 shekels of silver to the inspectors of Ebla and of Mari”) belongs to the dossier of ransoms in the Ebla texts discussed in detail by Alfonso Archi some years ago\(^{19}\). The attestation of níg-du₅ in ARET XVI 30 in addition to other occurrences of níg-du₅ in further chancery texts published after Archi’s paper\(^{20}\) has undoubtedly broadened and enriched this work, and allows us to gather some new insights on the important topic of ransom at the time of the Palace G archives. The question at hand is: ‘Who pays?’

3.1. As recognized by Archi, in some cases Ebla does not pay. In fact, some texts regarding “incomes (mu-tūm)” ([1-5])\(^{21}\) record amounts of metals (normally silver, but also gold, bronze and copper) that the Ebla king received as payment for the release of foreign persons:

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2. TM.75.G.1587 = MEE 7 2 (mu-tūm, lbr. 12) rev. V 12-VI 10: 3 m[ä]-na [...] // 20 gín DILMUN kū:ba:bar / wa / 7 ma-na zabar / 4 ma-na 40 gín DILMUN urudu / lū níg-du₅ / 7 lū / Din-mi-zā-ēⁿ / wa / lū / Lu₇-a-tūm²⁴;
4. TM.75.G.2616 (mu-tūm, lbr.) obv. I 1-3: 15 gín kū-sig; lū níg-du₅ 3 dumu-mī Kab-lu₅-ud²⁴;

---

In two cases ([1] and [2]), the ransom is recorded in the part of the mu-tūm text in which the amounts of metals are qualified as níg-ki-za en wa níg-du₅, “competence of the (Ebla) king and ransoms”. It may be suggested that when these passages were written all the mentioned toponyms were independent centers:

18. Very likely to be an abbreviated form of di-ku₅..
22. Biga 2010a:49 dates this text to I.Z. 1.
in [1] (dated to Ibrium 7), Ga-rá-ma-anki is the same city mentioned in the unpublished text TM.75.G.1411 as an enemy of Ebla at the time of Ibrium;\(^\text{23}\)

in [2] (dated to Ibrium 12), Diin-mi-za-āb₄ and Lu₄-ta-sumki are towns at the north-eastern border of the Ebla kingdom, which, at that time, were not under Ebla control;\(^\text{24}\)

in [3] (dated to Ibrium 14), Kak-mi-unb₄ is the Syrian capital that was normally allied with Ebla, but, which, in that year was an enemy of Ebla;\(^\text{25}\)

in [4] (dated to the period of Ibrium), Kab-lu₄-ta₄ is the Syrian city that was dependent on Ebla at the time of the Treaty between Ebla and Abarsal, but which was, in this period, ruled by an independent king;\(^\text{26}\)

in [5] (dated to the first years of Ibbi-zikir), DUB₂ is the Syrian political entity that later (in the year Ibbi-zikir 8) swore a pact of alliance with Ebla.\(^\text{27}\)

3.1.1. The likelihood that Ebla detained all the people mentioned in these passages is suggested by [3], where the two men from Kak-mi-unb₄ are explicitly called “imprisoned men” (é-ēš-tu₄₄, lit. “the ones who dwell in the prison”).\(^\text{28}\) In addition the Ebla lexical lists attest both the ḫabba₄tu₄, “imprisoned man” (LL 318, ē-ēš-tu₄₄ = a-ba₄-lu₄₄-tu₄₄), and the “prison”, lit. “house of the rope” (é-ēš, MEE 15 9 obv. IV 5 and MEE 15 12 obv. III 5), both of which are also documented in administrative texts. In fact, according to a passage from an administrative text, one Gā-za₄ was a “warder” (lit. “guardian of imprisoned men”):

\[
\text{ARET XII 701 IV 6-101: 1 gu-dū₄₄ 1 aktum₄₄ 1 Ib-iv₄₄ 1 gū₄₄ / Gā-za₄ / i-ig(ME)-sig / a-ba₄-lu₄₄ / [x]₁₄⁻₁₄⁻[-] / [...].}
\]

Furthermore, a fragmentary passage must be read as follows:

\[
\text{ARET III 77 II 2⁻²⁻⁵⁻: 1 gu-mug₄₄ / LUXES / Ar-mi₄₄ / lā / é-ēš / [...].}
\]

It shows that the Ebla palace gave fabrics to foreign “prisoners (LUXES)”\(^\text{29}\) who were detained in prison, probably in Ebla. The personal name of this prisoner from Armi is not recorded. There are other passages in which anonymous foreign prisoners, probably detained at Ebla, are recorded:

\[
\text{MEE 2 41 = ARET XV 13 obv. VII 1⁻³⁻: 1 sal₄₄ / LUXES / Ķa-wa-₄₄-an₄₄;}
\]

\[
\text{ARET XV 31 rev. III 3⁻⁵⁻: 3 sal₄₄ 3 ḫb-Ib gū₄₄ / LUXES / Ķa-wa-₄₄-an₄₄;}
\]

\[
\text{ARET III 737 obv. II 1⁻⁴⁻: 1 x₄₄ / LUXES / I-bu₄₄₄-bi₄₄;}
\]

\[
\text{ARET III 882 II 1⁻⁻²⁻: ugula / KAK MI-unb₄₄ / ṣu₄₄-du₄₄₄ / w / 20 na₄₄₄₄ / LUXES / [...];}
\]

\[
\text{ARET IV 11 obv. IV 11⁻¹⁻⁶⁻: 1 gu-mug₄₄ / 1 ḫb-Ib / LUXES / Ķa-wa₄₄-an₄₄ / in₄₄₄₄₄₄ / en / Bur-ma-an₄₄;}
\]

In addition to these cases which concern prisoners from Syrian kingdoms (Ḫa-wa-₄₄-an₄₄, I-bu₄₄₄₄-bi₄₄, probably Kak-mi-unb₄₄) and other important cities (Ȁ₄₄₄₄₄₄₄₄₄), there are also those concerning prisoners from Mari. In some cases, the prisoner from Mari is once again anonymous:

\[
\text{TM.75.G.2400 rev. II 13⁻¹⁻₁⁻¹⁻: 1 Ib-Ib / Ķa-wa₄₄-an₄₄ / lu₄₄₄₄₄₄₄ / 1 x₄₄₄₄₄₄₄ / BUR-ma-an₄₄,}
\]

\[
\text{TM.75.G.2374 rev. IV 17⁻¹⁻₄⁻¹²⁻: 1 gu-mug₄₄ / LUXES / ĐU₄₄₄₄₄₄₄ / Ma₄₄₄₄₄₄₄;}
\]

\[\text{23. This text is quoted in Biga 2008:313.}\]

24. Archi 1989:13. It may be that Lu₄₄₄₄₄₄₄ and its 52 fortresses (ḥab₄₄) were, at first, under Abarsal’s control (cf. ARET XIII 5 [33], MEE 7 2) and then under Ebla’s control (cf. TM.75.G.2136, TM.75.G.1975).

25. As for this hostility see Archi 2011:13 and Biga 2008:314ff.

26. As for this political shift see Fronzaroli 2003:27ff. and 56. On the role of Kablul in the political and military events of the year Ibrium 18 see Archi - Biga 2003:12.

27. As for this pact see Catagnoti 1997:116f. and Fronzaroli 2003:152. Contrarily to the previous four passages, in [5] the payment was likely given to I-rī-ga-da-nu, very probably one of Ibrium’s sons (regarding this man see Archi 1988:234).


30. The role of the king of Bur-ma-an₄₄ is unclear in this record.

31. This passage is quoted in Archi1985:77.
The passage in TM.75.G.2400 is interesting, since it shows that prisoners of the LÚšEŠ-kind could “travel (DU.DU)” (in this case from Sī-bū to Ḥal-sum), unlike men imprisoned (tuš) in jails. This is also the case in the following passages:


TM.75.G.2464 (AAM, Ibr. 3) obv. XIII 4–10:šš 10 gín DILMUN kū:habbar / nig-kaskal / A-ā-lu / wa / Ū-da-alį / LÚšEŠ / DU.DU / Ma-štš;

ARET XII 1057 obv. II’ 1–6: [šš]bšii-gi[šš]šš / A-ā-lu / wa / Ū-da-a-ṣa / Ma-štš / LÚšEŠ.

These passages likely refer to silver (156,60 gr., 78,3 gr.) and fabrics given by the Ebla palace to two men from Mari, A-ā-lu and Ū-da-alį-a-ṣa, as “travel equipment (nig-kaskal)” for their “journey (DU.DU)” to Mari, on which there were also one (or more) prisoner(s), probably from Mari. If we correctly understand them, the last three passages imply a previous ransom (paid to Ebla by Mari), and also that foreign merchants35 could be paid by the person detaining the prisoners to cover their transportation back home.

Although rare, we sometimes see passages that speak about anonymous hostages (possibly prisoners of war) who are beheaded36 as shown by the following record:


Even more rarely, the personal name of a prisoner is recorded. One possibility is that this happens when the captive is not a foreigner and is detained by Ibruum, possibly in one of his secondary residences. Alternatively, it is also possible that Gī-i-šar was “(the man in charge of) prisoners” of Ibruum:

ARET XII 1287 V’ 15: 1 gu-muššššš 1 ššbšii-gi[šš]šš / Gī-i-šar / LÚšEŠ / Ib-rúšum / Šar-ra-mššššš / [...].

3.1.2. Returning37 to the discussion of [1-5], we note that all of the ransomed foreigners are anonymous: “women (dam’),” “girls (dumu-mī),” “boys (dumu-nīta),” “men (lī)” and “persons (aš-ti11),” and they are always carefully counted. The prices for ransomed people are as follows:

32. This passage is quoted in Archi 1985:77.

33. This passage is quoted in Archi 2010:32 ("20 shekels silver [as travel provision] (for) A’alu and Uduḫa of Mari, prisoners (who) went (to Mari)").

34. This passage is quoted in Archi 2010:32 ("Ten shekels silver as travel provision (for) A’alu and Uduḫa, prisoners (who) went to Mari"). According to Archi “These two men from Mari seem responsible for the redemption of prisoners taken to Mari after a war against Haddu”.

35. Ū-da-alį was a lú-kar Ma-štš, see ARET IV 2 obv. VI 1-2. As for the role of the merchants in ransom of detained people according to the Old Babylonian texts see LaFont 2002:84ff.

36. As for the marble inlays from Palace G with Ebla soldiers carrying the heads of beheaded enemies, see Matthiae 1995, Archi 1998b:393ff. and Dolce 2004:124ff. As for the decapitation of anonymous prisoners in the II millennium Mari texts see the lines 14-19 of the letter ARM II 48 = "LAPO 17 559" sent by Balḫš-lim to Zimri-lim, “À présent, s’il plait à mon seigneur, qu’on exécute un fautif dans l’ergastule, qu’on lui coupe la tête et qu’on la promène de ville en ville jusqu’à Hudnum et Appan” (Charpin 2012:21 n. 82, and see also Durand 1998:176f.). See also Tonietti 2013.

37. This passage is quoted, among others concerning further decaptations, in Biga 2008:307 ("1,1 tissus pour Išma-damu de la famille de Ubdamu qui a apporté des têtes (coupaés), 2,2 tissus [pour Išgī-barzu] et Ibdur-ṣarī, deux fonctionnaires-maššim de Išbi-zi-kir et Uti: (livraison) en échange des têtes de leurs prisonniers") and in Archi 2010:32 ("(clothes for) Išma-damu of Ubdamu, who has brought heads; (clothes for) Išgī-barzu and Ibdur-ṣarī, 2 representatives of Išbi-zi-kir and Uti (sons of the minister, who) consigned heads of prisoners") as quoted in Archi 1998:388ff.

38. As for the marble inlays from Palace G with Ebla soldiers carrying the heads of beheaded enemies, see Matthiae 1995, Archi 1998b:393ff. and Dolce 2004:124ff. As for the decapitation of anonymous prisoners in the II millennium Mari texts see the lines 14-19 of the letter ARM II 48 = "LAPO 17 559" sent by Balḫš-lim to Zimri-lim, “À présent, s’il plait à mon seigneur, qu’on exécute un fautif dans l’ergastule, qu’on lui coupe la tête et qu’on la promène de ville en ville jusqu’à Hudnum et Appan” (Charpin 2012:21 n. 82, and see also Durand 1998:176f.). See also Tonietti 2013.

39. The topic of the Ebla lexicon used to refer to prisoners and guardians cannot be here fully discussed. Notice, however, that according to Conti 1990:152, Steinkeller 1991:230 and Sjöberg 2003:549 LL 537, aš-lā = a-ba-
In [1]: 235 gr. of silver for each of 13 people (5 women, 2 girls and 5 boys) from Ga-ra-ma-an; in [2]: 197.75 gr. of silver, 411.25 gr. of bronze and 274.125 gr. of copper for each of 8 men from Din-mi-za-al and Luš-a-num; in [3]: 195.75 gr. of silver for each of 2 men from Kak-mi-an; in [4]: 39 gr. of gold for each of 3 girls from Kab-lu-š-a-lu; in [5]: 196 gr. of silver (and one fabric) for 1 person (most likely a man) from Duši.

These data show that Ebla demanded around 30 shekels of silver (234 gr.) for a woman, a boy or a girl, and 25 shekels of silver (195 gr.) for a man.

3.2. In many other cases, however, it was Ebla that paid.

In fact, in [6-12] various features, namely the different typology of the texts, the different amounts of silver and the different syntax, suggest that the ransoms of many people, either natives of Ebla, or from different places under its control, were recorded by scribes for the Palace G administration.

3.2.1. At least one “account of ransoms (duh-gar níg-duš-níg-duš)”, found in a still unpublished text (TM.75.G.1375), was kept in the Archive L.2769. It, as well as the fragment TM.75.G.3386 = ARET III 339, may date to king Igrí-Ḫalab, since both mention people related to the “lord (lugal)” Ti-ir, a contemporary of Arru-Lum:


v. I 1'-3': sikil / níg-duš / I-ti-gi-da-mu / 13 gín DILMUN kù:babbar / níg-saš / [...]

The same may be said for [7] (one I-ti-gi-da-mu);


In [6], the ransomed persons are clearly “boys from Ebla (dumu-nita-du-mu-nita Ib-laš)”, and therefore Ebla must pay the ransom of 40 shekels of silver (that is 313 gr.). Furthermore, [6] shows that Ebla paid 10 shekels of silver (78 gr.) for one “young boy (dumu-nita sikil)”. This amount is one-third of what Ebla had demanded to release a foreign boy detained by Ebla itself (see [1] above).

3.2.2. The terms for “price (níg-saš)” and for “ransom (níg-duš)” also occur together in other passages. In [8-11] low amounts of silver (from 10 to 4 shekels) are the price paid by Ebla men (the king Yigri-Ḫalab, Ga-du-um, probably the “son of the king (dumu-nita en)”, and one I-in-žé) as ransom, each time, for an anonymous Ebla boy. The same may be said for [7] (one I-ti-gi-da-mu):


40. As for Ti-ir see Archi 2000b:21ff.
42. According to the interpretation in Archi 2000a.
43. See Archi - Bonechi - Catagnoti - Corò - Fronzaroli 2009:8ff.
[12] is different, since silver is the “price” an I-da-il from Mari paid to “ransom” one “girl”. This man is probably the same I-da-il who, in a more or less contemporary text (TM.75.G.1559\(^{45}\)) obv. IX 4-7, is named as a “(Mari) traveling agent of the long-distance trader (maššim ga:raš)”.\(^{26}\)


An important feature of [6] and [12] is the use of the preposition d₃-ti, “at, by, near; with”\(^{47}\) before a GN. It may be argued that the last part of [6] should be translated as follows: “26 shekels of silver (203.58 gr.) for the ransom of the Ebla boys, at Ma₇₅-r₆₈”. This would mean that the Ebla palace paid the silver to one or more Ma₅₇₈-r₆₈ persons, possibly the same ones who had detained the Ebla boys, and who were likely soldiers, functionaries or merchants, acting as intermediaries. [12] may also be translated as follows: “9 shekels of silver (70.47 gr.) for the ransom of (one Ebla) girl at Ḥ₈₈-su-wa-an₈, price that I-da-il from Mari (paid)”, during an I-da-il’s stay in Ḥ₈₈-su-wa-an₈.

3.2.3. This use of the preposition d₃-ti, found in [6] and [12], also occurs in several other passages concerning ransoms (13-21). In other cases, however, the preposition d₃-du (a variant of d₃-ti) occurs (22-26). A third group is formed by the passages concerning ransoms in which the preposition d₃-du is used ([27-28]).\(^{28}\)

Passages with d₃-ti:


[14] TM.75.G.1705 = MEE 7 29 (AAM, Ibr. 1) rev. VII 6-12: 12 gín DILMUN kù:babbar / níg-du₈ / 1 lā / štîm / Ab-ru₅₁₂-ti-un₅ // d₃-ti / Ir-i-d₂₈;\(^{26}\)


[16] TM.75.G.10148 (AAM, Ibr. 8) obv. VII 7-13: 15 gín kù:babbar níg-du₈ štî Ti-la-r₄-ti₂₈ ṭ₃-ti Ti₃-la-r₃-in₂₈;\(^{26}\)


[18] TM.75.G.2559 (AAM, Ibr. 9) rev. V 19-VI 6: 5 gín kù:babbar taḥ₄₈ níg-du₈ 1 guruṣ Lu-wa-tum₂₈ ṭ₃-ti Bu₇₅-n₈-ti-un₂₈;\(^{26}\)


Passages with d₃-du:

[22] TM.75.G.2558 = MEE 12 37 (AAM, I.Z. 9) rev. XVIII 20-25: 12 gín DILMUN kù:babbar / níg-du₈ / 1 dumu-nitu / Na₉-g₅₈ / d₃-du / D₈₈;\(^{26}\)

[23] TM.75.G.1436 (MAT, I.Z. 9) r. V 7-12: 30 g₁₈-mu₃₈ / dumu-nitu / Na₉-g₅₈ / lā níg-du₈ / d₃-du / D₈₈;\(^{26}\)

[24] TM.75.G.2429 = MEE 12 36 (AAM, I.Z. 10) obv. XX 4-12: 15 gín DILMUN kù:babbar / níg-du₈ / 1 dum / A₈₈-d₈₈ / ama-g₃₈ / dumu-nitu / n₈₈ / d₃-du / Ma₉-r₃₈;\(^{26}\)

[25] TM.75.G.2429 = MEE 12 36 (AAM, I.Z. 10) obv. XXII 4-10: 42 gín DILMUN kù:babbar / níg-du₈ / 3 dumu-nitu / 2₃-ba₃₈ / d₃-du / A₃₂-z₈ / Nab-ra-ra-d₈₈;\(^{26}\)

45. Published in Archi 1981a:155-161.  
48. The passages [13-22], [24-26] and [28] are quoted in Archi 2003a:79fl. The distribution of the three writings d₃-du, d₃-ti and d₃-di in the passages [13-28] is an interesting complement to the in-depth discussion of these propositions carried out in Tonietti 2013a:57ff. and 140ff. (where d₃-du and d₃-ti are considered variant forms).  
49. As for this term at Ebla see Krebernik 1983:41 (L.L 1148, ta₉₈ = we₃₈-bu₇₃) 
50. The passage is quoted in Pettinato - D’Agostino 1996:163 (s.v. MEE 6 12).

passages with dā-du.


Among these passages, the accounts of metals appear much more frequently than those of fabrics. When Ebla ransomed people, the administration (a) paid in silver (as recorded in the AAMs and in the other texts concerning expended (ظام) metals) and also (b) delivered fabrics (as recorded in the MAts). This is shown by [22] and [23] (passages from two contemporary documents),²² which deal with the same ransom: a boy from Nagar.

As a matter of fact, the passages in the accounts of metals ([6], [12], [13-20], [22] and [24-28]) show the following structure:

(a) an amount of silver,

(b) “ransom (níg-du₉).”

c) one or more persons, frequently qualified by one GN,

d) rarely one other person ([7], [19], [24]),

e) one of the three aforementioned prepositions (dā-ti, dā-da, dā-du),

(f) one GN or one or more PNs qualified by one GN,

g) further information is rarely given ([12], [20]).

The amounts of silver in (a) are small. 42 shekels in [25] (for 3 boys); 26 shekels in [6] (for more than one boy); 20 shekels in [13] and in [20] (for 3 persons) and in [28] (for 1 man); 16 shekels in [26] (for 2 boys); 15 shekels in [16], in [19] (for 1 boy) and in [24] (for 1 woman); 14 shekels in [27] (for 1 man); 12 shekels in [14] (for 1 man) and in [22] (for 1 boy); 9 shekels in [12]; 5 shekels in [18] (for 1 guruš) and in [17] (for 2 boys); 3 shekels in [15].

The ransomed people in (c) are frequently anonymous (as they were in the passages discussed above where ransoms of prisoners detained by Ebla occur, [1-5] and related texts).²³ They are people from Ebla (the 3 na-se₂₁ lb-la₂ in [20], and probably also the dam lugal bād₂ in [7] and the guruš Ru₂₁₂-bā-aš-li-im in [13]), and often boys and girls (dumu-nita-dumu-nita lb-la₂ in [6], 3 dumu-nita lb-la₂ in [25], 2 dumu-nita (Ebla) in [26], dumu-nita of I-ka-a-bi SA.ZA₂ in [21], dumu-mi (Ebla) in [12]). There are, however, also people from other places (1 dam A-dab₂ in [24], 1 dumu-nita A-ti-lum₂ in [19], 1 lu₂ štim Ab ru₂₂₂-ti-un₂ in [14], 2 dumu-nita Bar-ḫa-ā₂ in [17], the dam U₂₂₂-ḫu₂₂₂ Lu₂₂₂-ma-ur₂ in [7], 1 guruš Lu₂₂-wa-šum₂ in [18], the šeš Ti₂₂₂-la-ri-in₂ “A-ne-gi₂ in [16], the dumu-nita U₂₂₂-du₂₂₂-bi₂ in [15]; the case of 1 dumu-nita Na₂₂₂-gar₂ in [22-23] will be discussed below). More rarely, the personal names of the ransomed people are recorded: the “smith (simug)” La₂₂₂-ga-ma-al₂ is ransomed in [27], and one I-ṣar from Aleppo in [28].

The persons referenced in (d) are two men from Ebla (the maškin Ti₂₂₂-īr₂ in [7] and the maškım Za₂₂₂-ba-rûm₂ in [19]) and, surprisingly, one woman (the ama₂₂₂-gal₂ dumu-nita nar in [24]).

The GNs in (f) are in alphabetical order: Ba-na₂₂₂-i-un₂ in [18], Da-ra-um₂ in [26], Du₂₂₂ in [22] and [23], Ir₂₂₂-i₂₂₂ in [14] and [20], Ir₂₂₂-ku₂₂₂ in [19] and [21], Ku₂₂₂-i₂₂₂ in [15], Ma₂₂₂ in [13] and [24], Mu₂₂₂ in [6], Na₂₂₂-ra-ru₂₂₂ in [25], Ter₂₂₂-ḫa₂₂₂-ti₂₂₂-un₂ in [16]. Sometimes a PN(s) with a GN occur in this position: I-ṣar wa Da₂₂₂-nu₂₂₂-LUM dum-gár Da-ra-um₂ in [26], a member of the Mari elite as Mi₂₂₂-

51. The PN is read Du₂₂₂-nu₂₂₂-LUM in Waetzoldt 2001:426.

52. As noted in Biga - Pomponio 1993:125f.

53. The same is true for the passages regarding the purchase of people gathered in Archi 2003a:80 as 34)-39), where níg-du₉ is lacking and the key-word níg-sa₂₂₂₉ refers to 48 dam dumu-nita-dumu-mi (TM.75.G.1923, lbr. 18), to 2 dumu-mi (TM.75.G.1860 = MEE 10 20, I.Z. 1), to 15 dumu-nita “ur₂₂₂₂-ur₂₂₂₂” gùn-gùn dā-ti Gə₂₂₂₂-ga₂₂₂₂-d and to 3 dumu-mi 1 dumu-nita (TM.76.G.534+, I.Z. 12), to guruš (TM.75.G.1305 = MEE 2 18, to be collated) and to dumu-nita dumu-nita (TM.75.G.1685); see also [6] above (dumu-nita sikil).

54. As for ama₂₂₂-gal in the Ebla texts see Tonietti 2009.
wa-du in [28], and one A-zi from Nab-ra-ra-dašt in [25]: there is also the case of one Ib-gi-a-ḫa in [27].

As for the additional information that is sometimes found at the end of the record, it is níg-saš I-da-il Ma-ršt in [12], discussed above, and Mi-ḫa-NI lú gu-e-ḫa u-ša-ba-ti in [20].

The attestation of taḫ in [18], would seem to be very significant, as we find “5 shekels of silver, (paid by Ebla) in addition to the ransom of one soldier from Lu-wa-šum, at Ba-na-i-unš“. The comparison of [1-5] with [6-28] (and also with [29-37], see below) shows that the amount of silver that Ebla demanded for the ransom of foreign prisoners was much higher than the amount of silver it paid in ransom for its own prisoners detained by other Syrian powers. It is possible that when Ebla paid, the total price of the ransom was composed of the quota paid by the family of the detained person and an additional sum (taḫ) paid by the Ebla palace. Instead, when Ebla received silver, its scribes did not have reason to note if the total price was composed in the same way.

The information supplied by [18] confirms what is reported in two Ebla chancery texts. As for the passage in the Treaty between Ebla and Abarsal (ARET XIII 5 right edge 1-12) see the commentary below regarding [40], while, for the passage in ARET XVI 30 obv. II 14-III 7 see above.

The data in (c), (e) and (f) may be tabulated in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metals</th>
<th>Ransomed People</th>
<th>GN₁</th>
<th>Prep.</th>
<th>(PN) GN₂</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[27] La-ša-ma-ša šumug (Ebla?)</td>
<td></td>
<td>aš-du</td>
<td>Ib-gi-a-ḫa</td>
<td>Arr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[14] 1 lú šītim</td>
<td>Ab-ra₂₁₂-ti-unš</td>
<td>aš-ti</td>
<td>Ir-it₂₁³</td>
<td>Ibr. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[15] dumu-nita</td>
<td>Ù-de-buš</td>
<td>aš-ti</td>
<td>Kā-mi-unš</td>
<td>Ibr. 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[16] šēš</td>
<td>Ti-la-ši₂₁₂-šumš</td>
<td>aš-ti</td>
<td>Tēr₂₁₂-ḫa₂₁₂-ti₂₁₂-unš</td>
<td>Ibr. 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[17] 2 dumu-nita</td>
<td>Bar-ša₂₁₂-šaš</td>
<td>(aš-ti) [...]</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ibr. 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[18] 1 guruš</td>
<td>Lu-wa-šumš</td>
<td>aš-ti</td>
<td>Ba-na-i-unš</td>
<td>Ibr. 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[20] 5 na₂₁₅-ši₁</td>
<td>Ib-laš</td>
<td>aš-ti</td>
<td>Ir-it₂₁³</td>
<td>Ibr. 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[28] I-šar</td>
<td>Ha-labš</td>
<td>aš-du</td>
<td>Mi-su-wa-du Ma-ršt</td>
<td>Ibr. 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[22] 1 dumu-nita</td>
<td>Na₂₁₂-garš</td>
<td>aš-da</td>
<td>DUš</td>
<td>I.Z. 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[26] 2 dumu-nita (Ebla)</td>
<td></td>
<td>aš-da</td>
<td>I-šar wa Da-nu₂₁₂-LUM dam-gar Da-ra₂₁₂-unš</td>
<td>I.Z. 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fabrics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[23] dumu-nita</td>
<td>Na₂₁₂-garš</td>
<td>aš-da</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55. As for this man cf., in the same text TM.75.G.1923, the passage in obv. XII 1-17: 30 kū:babar níg-ba / Ar-rüm / 20 gín DILMUN kū:babar / níg-ba / Mi-su-wa-du / 20 gín DILMUN kū:babar / En-na-da-gan / 1 ma-na 30 kū:babar / níg-ba / ābba / Ma-ršt / in ud / ničba / i-ši₂₁₂-šaš / Ib-laš / wa / Ma-ršt.

56. Is this man the same Ib-gi-a-ḫa KA-TIL mentioned in ARET VII 16 obv. IV 2-3, a tablet where almost all the men mentioned are foreigners?

57. ARET XIII 5 (1’) has been translated by Fronzaroli 2003:55 in the following way: “... (Quando) il mercante sarà presente, il padre del dipendente dovrà provvedere il riscatto; qualsiasi somma manchi tu la consegnarei per intero”. The passage in ARET XVI 30 (4-6) has been translated by Catagnoti - Fronzaroli 2010:186 in the following way: “E (quell’uomo) [dará] una mina d’argento. (Se) invece (lo) portò via (dopo) averlo colpito, daranno (l’argento) i suoi figli. E quello (lo) completerà l’insieme del Damu”.

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This table shows some interesting facts.

The toponyms on the left and on the right of the preposition are, almost always, non-homogeneous. With the exception of Nagar, the toponyms on the left (GN₁) are not foreign kingdoms or cities, while, the toponyms on the right (GN₂) are foreign kingdoms or cities, with the exceptions of Ma₇ru₂ki and Da-ra-um₂ki.

The toponyms before the preposition are Ebla itself (and Saza), Aleppo or small towns (rarely attested), which were probably located near Ebla, and under its control (further information on these toponyms is available in the administrative texts only for A-dab₂ru). On the contrary, the toponyms that come after the preposition are Syrian capitals (Ḫa-su-wa-an₂ru, Maᵣ-iᵢ-tw₂ru, Ir-i-ib₂ru, Kak-mi-um₂ru; also DU₂ru), or cities far from Ebla (Ter₇-ḫa-ct₂-im₂ru and Ir₇-ki₂ru, whose localizations are not always known), in the Habur Triangle (Ba-na-i-um₂ru) or along the Euphrates, probably downstream from the Tutul (Nab-ra-ra-da₂ru).²⁸

Therefore, this table seems to establish a more general criterium: in the context of ransoms, a toponym found in the syntactical position of GN₁ meant that it was under Ebla’s control. On the other hand, a toponym in the position of GN₂ meant that it was not under Ebla’s control. It would follow then, for example, that in Iriium 18 Aleppo was under Ebla’s control. Furthermore, the GN₂ may indicate the place where the ransoms actually happened. A correlation can be supposed to exist between these foreign places, these years and the various Syrian wars.²⁹ Although this topic will not be discussed further here, it may be concluded that the ransomed people were almost always prisoners of war (notice for instance, that a war between Ebla and Mari happened in the same year as [28]).³⁰ It is also possible, however, that the prisoners were sometimes soldiers (guruš in [18] and probably [13]), although the majority of the ransomed people still seem to be civilians. The women and their children detained far from the Ebla kingdom may correspond to the women who were held, probably as prisoners of war, in the wool manufacturers’³¹ at Ebla.

The cases of Nagar, of Ma₇ru₂ki and of Da-ra-um₂ki noted above require some comments.

In [22] / [23] Ebla ransoms one prisoner at DU₂ru, who is a Nagar boy. Although not from Ebla, Ebla may have paid given that, during the period when TM.75.G.2508 and TM.75.G.1436 were written, Nagar was a close ally of Ebla.³² In such a case, Ebla may have paid its quota of the total price of the ransom, similarly to what had occurred regarding tab in [18].

Ma₇ru₂ki occurs in some Ebla chancery texts.³³ Although evidence of direct control by the Ebla king on Ma₇ru₂ki does not clearly emerge from them. Rather, it seems that Ma₇ru₂ki was under Iriium family control. It seems that the Ebla king granted Iriium the role of judge in a case of a violation of a sworn agreement between the local chief (ugula) of Ma₇ru₂ki and one I-r₇-i₂-ig₂ (ARET XIII 12, see below) who may have been a foreigner (if he was the ugula of Ni-ra-₃₃-ᵢ₂-NI mentioned in the administrative text ARET III 261). Furthermore, Gi₉-r₉ and Nab-₇-ha₂-NI, two of Iriium’s sons, owned estates (ē) at...

58. Notice that Ḫa-su-wa-an₂ru and Kak-mi-um₂ru are mentioned in the Treaty between Ebla and Abarsal ARET XIII 5 and in the letter by En-₃₃-na-da₉-ₙu king of Mu₉₉-na-wa-u₆t₉ I to a Mari king ARET XIII 10, that Ir₉-i₂-ib₂ (Catagnoti - Fronzaroli 2010:10ff.) occurs in the chancery text ARET XIII 9 and XVI 13 and 22, and that other chancery texts concern the relationship between Ebla and DU₂ru (ARET XIII 14, XVI 22). As for Ba₃₉-na-i-um₂ru as a GN not far for Nagar see Archi 1998a:5-8. As for Nab-ra-ra-da₂ru, attested to in the chancery texts ARET XIII 14 and XVI 22, as a GN not far from Mari see Fronzaroli 2003:155 and Catagnoti - Fronzaroli 2010:137. As for Ter₇-ḥ₃a-ct₂-im₂ru as a GN not far from Arm, see Bonechi 1990:28, and Archi 2011:14, 27 and 32. As for Ir₇-₃₃-₃₃-ᵢ₂ as a GN not far from Emar, see Bonechi 1997:531 and Archi 2005:16.


63. They are ARET XIII 12, XVI 21, VII 152 and 153. See the discussions in Fronzaroli 2003:129ff. and Catagnoti - Fronzaroli 2010:129ff.
Muṣṣu₂ (ARET VII 153 and 152), and Hū-zu-um (who was surely a dependant of Ibrium and probably one of his son-in-laws) was involved in various affairs concerning Muṣṣu₂ and its ugula, Ma-ya-gi-la (ARET XVI 21). It remains unclear if, prior to all these texts (when ArruLUM was alive and [6] was redacted) Muṣṣu₂, a center probably not far from Tell Mardikh, possibly between Ebla and NI-ra-ar₂, was autonomous, or by that time, under Ibrium’s control. In any case, this example seems similar to the following.

It has been argued that Da-ra-um₂, another center not far from Ebla, was “probably the ancestral home of Ibrium’s family where he possessed estates,” and also that it “non risulta controllata da alcun funzionario [eblaita] di livello alto o medio”. In [26] I-sar may be the “gate-keeper of Ibrium’s house at Da-ra-um₂ (KĪD.SAG é Ḫu-rī-um Da-ra-um₂)” who is mentioned in two unpublished texts,” while Da-nu-LUM may be an otherwise unattested merchant of Da-ra-um₂. It seems that the two Ebla boys had previously been ransomed somewhere else, probably by the merchant Da-nu-LUM. Once the boys had been accompanied to Da-ra-um₂ and left with the gatekeeper I-sar, the Ebla Palace G paid both these men to bring the boys back home.

3.2.4. The prepositions diš-tī, diš-da, diš-du do not occur in other attestations of records of ransoms ([29-39]). This is due to the fact that the toponym mentioned after these prepositions in the passages discussed above ([12-28]) is not present here.

Notwithstanding syntactical differences, some of these passages ([29-33]) are similar to more complete passages (that include prepositions) in which ransoms of anonymous women, boys and girls occur:


In [29-32] the anonymous ransomed persons are probably always people from Ebla. In [33] the boy came from Ti-in₈ lū A-da-su₉, a place likely under Ebla’s control. In [33] Ebla paid one I-sar from Da-ti-um₉ (a toponym likely to be identified with Old Akkadian Da-tam₉), later Ta-idu, in the Ḫabar Triangle. It seems that in this record the preposition diš-tī (or diš-da or diš-du) has been omitted before I-sar and replaced by šu-ba₉-tī at the end. The preposition has most likely been omitted also before Lā-da-il in [32]. While this man from Mari is well known from the Ebla administrative records dating

68. Notice that Waetzoldt 2001:426 correctly translates “bei lāsar und Dunu-Lumm, dem Kaufmann (aus) Dara’um”, a solution also suggested by the presence of the conjunction wa. In other texts Da-nu-LUM is the name of an ugula kā (ARET III 402 III 5’-6’) and of a gatekeeper (TM.75.G.10183, quoted in Archi 2002:24).
70. See Archi 1985:78 131).
71. In [30] the man called I-tī-NE is defined as ʿur₉, “colleitore, agente commerciale” by Catagnoti - Fronzaroli 2010:274, with literature, and he probably acted as intermediary for the ransom of the (Ebla) “women (dam-dam)”. Further prosopographical research is needed in order to identify Ḫu-mi-lu and Ar-si-a-lāṣ of [29] and [31].
from the period of ArruLUM to the beginning of Ibrium’s period\textsuperscript{33}, Zi-rî-gû can probably be identified with Zi-rî-gu. We can then surmise that Zi-rî-gû is probably the same person as Zi-rî-gu: a man from À-du \textsuperscript{(a kingdom located between Ebla and Mari), who was attested to in the unpublished text TM.75.G.2502,\textsuperscript{74} and not the Ebla “musician (nar)” Zi-rî-igî-gû.\textsuperscript{75}

There are no anonymous people mentioned after níg-du in [34-39]. Kingdoms such as Manuwat, Kiš and Abaršal occur in the final part of the records in [35], [36] and [38], and are probably the places where the Ebla emissaries paid for the release of people from Ebla. Instead, the records in [34] and [37], which are particularly short, do not record toponyms:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [34] TM.75.G.2011 = ARET II 6 (Artr.) obv. V 4-6: 20 gîn kû:babbar níg-duû / A-ba-da-an;
  \item [35] TM.75.G.1904 (AAM, lbr. 7) obv. XV 10-16: 2 gîn kû:babbar níg-duû Û-ba-ti kar kû-sîgûû en Ma-na-wa-at\textsuperscript{2};
  \item [36] TM.75.G.2359 (AAM, lbr. 9) rev. VII 2-9: 20 gîn kû:babbar níg-duû Dam-da-il Ûl-sîûû lû Na-za-mu nûk-dûû;
  \item [37] TM.75.G.1654 obv. I 4-II 1: 15 gûn kû:babbar níg-duû In-gûr;
  \item [38] TM.75.G.1920 = ARET XV/2 42 (Artr.) rev. V 3-7: (2 fabrics) UR-a-ţa níg-duû A-bar-salûû šû-mu-takû;
  \item [39] TM.75.G.1363 (lbr.) rev. XIII 3-IV 3: (2 fabrics) I-ti-um Ûl-sûûû mašîkû Za-ba-rûm nûk-duûû mašîkû Ḥu-ra-il.
\end{itemize}

These passages are difficult. For instance, what is the precise meaning of [35]? “2 shackles of silver, ransom, Û-ba-ti, to take away, gold, king of Manuwat”? Or, why in [36] is the preposition in, “in” used before the GN\textsubscript{2} and not ûš-ti or ûš-da or ûš-du\textsuperscript{27}

However, a preliminary prosopographical analysis gives some information,\textsuperscript{83} and leads to exclude that the men mentioned in [34-39] are the ransomed people. In-gûr of [37] is most likely the member of the Ebla elite who is also mentioned in various chancery and administrative texts.\textsuperscript{29} It seems fairly certain that he is not, then, the ransomed person, but rather is either the Ebla emissary in charge of the redemption of the people from Ebla or the Ebla person that was paid by Palace G for this redemption (as seen above in the case of the gatekeeper Lû-šar).

The same could be said of A-ba-da-an, found in [34], who was probably the Ebla “merchant (dam-gûr)” whose son went to Kiš to purchase fabrics.\textsuperscript{80} This identification of A-ba-da-an is suggested by the content of ARET II 6, a text dealing with Ebla and Mari in which another ransom is mentioned (see [27] above). Moreover, the occurrence of two men from šû-sûûû\textsuperscript{2} in [36] and [39] is of additional interest, since in this place, certainly not far from Ebla,\textsuperscript{81} there was an Ibrium’s estate.\textsuperscript{82} Furthermore, Na-za-mu is an Ebla man whose travel(s) to Kiš are recorded in other texts.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{73} As for Lû-da-il from Mari see ARET XV 27 rev. VII 14, 33 obv. II 11, TM.75.G.10276 rev. VII 9; his name is written Lû-da-Nû in ARET XV 38 obv. XII 10. Notice that one A-da-il from Mari occurs in ARET XV 29 obv. V 19, while one A-da-Nû is a “merchant (lû-kâr)” of Mari in ARET III 940 obv. III 6\textsuperscript{'}.

\textsuperscript{74} See Archi 1998:8. On A-duûû, attested in to the chancery text ARET XIII 19, see Frondzaro 2003:196, with literature.

\textsuperscript{75} On these persons see Tonietti 1998:89.

\textsuperscript{76} Not TM.75.G.2357 as cited by Archi 2003a:79.

\textsuperscript{77} Perhaps in GN means that the ransom happened in the GN, while ûš-ti or ûš-da or ûš-du means that the ransom was carried out by people from GN, resident in a different place (there are in fact cases of ûš-ti or ûš-da or ûš-du PN, but, of course, never of in PN).

\textsuperscript{78} Further prosopographical research is needed in order to identify Û-ba-ti of [35], UR-a-ţa of [38] and the mašîkû of Ḥa-ra-il of [39].

\textsuperscript{79} As for In-gûr see Catagnoti - Frondzaro 2010:184.


\textsuperscript{81} See Archi et alii 1993:302f., and Bonechi 1993:193.

\textsuperscript{82} See ARET XII 1010 obv. IX 1'-6': dumu-mûû / gâbû-rûû / Ûl-rî-um / in / û / Ûl-sûûû.

3.3. A different phraseology is found in passages regarding níg-du₈ in the Ebla chancery texts, which have
haptic nature and frequently do not use the formulaic language of administrative documents. In
general, the relevant passages (concerning Abarsal, Māru₉⁸ and Mari) have been discussed in the
commentaries regarding the texts published in ARET XIII and XVI, but a few brief remarks on them ([40-
47]) may be useful here.

3.3.1. In the Treaty between Ebla and Abarsal níg-du₈ occurs in three passages, dealing with people ([40-
41]) and animals ([42]):

[40] TM.75.G.2420 = ARET XIII 5 right edge 1-11: [...] / 1-[ti] / dam-gár / níg-du₉ / a-bā / guruš-āi / i-ti / ʾme₁ nu-ma
(nu gāl) / (erased) / ʾdu₂-ma-lā;₈₄


In [40] (a passage which confirms the involvement of “merchants (dam-gár)” in case of ransom)
the king of Abarsal has to “pay in full (tumālla’, *māl’, 0/2)” if the payment for the ransom is not
completed (mtnu-nunma nu gāl). This clause is reminiscent of what has already been seen above in ARET
XVI 30 § 6 and in [18]. It is interesting to note that in [41], a passage dealing with the ransom of people
from Abarsal (dumu-nita and dumu-mū) detained at Ebla as slaves, sheep rather than silver are
mentioned. If du-tum means “blood money”,₈₇ as suggested by other passages of the Treaty that deal
with homicides, it may be that [41] refers to prisoners who died or were killed at Ebla (this implies that
Ebla detained Abarsal prisoners of war). In such a case, it may be that the payment of the ransom of
living persons and animals was generally made in silver, while the death or killing of detained persons or
animals was indemnified by means of 50 sheep. Thus, I suggest the following translation of [41]: “(In the
case in which a boy from Abarsal or a girl from Abarsal arrives (i-ti) as slave at Ebla (and) a man from
Abarsal [goes] to the house of an Eblaite [for ransom] (them), [if they are dead] for each female or male
captured (šu-du₉) slave the Eblaite will give (hi-na-sum) 50 male sheep as payment of blood money (Sub
du-tum)”. The passage [42] may refer to a kind of compensation, because dead oxen have to be
substituted by cattle in good health.

3.3.2. As for the passages [43-44], from a text concerning Māru₉⁸, see what has been said above about
BAR.AN-SŪ / níg-du₉ / ʾi-ri-ig-NI₉⁸;

84. In Fronzaroli 2003:55 the passage has been translated as follows: “[...] (quando) il mercante sarà presente
(i-ti), il padre del dipendente dovrà provvedere il riscatto; qualsiasi somma manchi tu la consegnerai per intero”. As
for the reading of i-ti and its meaning derived from ti, “to approach”, see Sallaberger 2008:104 and Catagnoti
-Fronzaroli 2010:21 and 242 (the first part of this passage requires further clarification).

85. In Fronzaroli 2003:52 the passage has been translated as follows: “(Quando) il figlio di un uomo di
Abarsal o la figlia di un uomo di Abarsal è (i-ti) servo di un eblaite (e) l’uomo di Abarsal [va] alla casa dell’eblaite
[per riscattarlo, se] l’eblaite rilascia la serva (o) il servo catturati, egli darà come prezzo 50 montoni”. As for i-ti see
the previous note. We propose the insertion of [ug]₉ at the end of column IX.

86. In Fronzaroli 2003:47 the passage has been translated as follows: “[Se bovini] in cattiva salute senza mio
ordine nel (tuo) paese sono morti, bovini in buona salute come riscatto per il fatto che (quelli) nel (tuo) paese davvero
morirono, nella regione di Wari morirono (ug)'i”. Rather than ug₉, TIL in obv. XI 15 should probably be read as til:
“in the Wari region you have to deliver in payment”.


88. In Fronzaroli 2003:128 the passage has been translated as follows: “Quanto a Muru il suo argento, i suoi
buoi, le sue pecore, i suoi muli (saranno) il riscatto per Yrisq-It”.

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3.3.3. The passages [45-47] once again concern Mari ([5] has been discussed in § 2):


In [46] Ib-git₄₅ may be identified as the "merchant (là-kar)" from Mari attested in ARET IV 2 rev. III 1. In the chancery text he acts as an intermediary, just as other merchants have in previous passages. The passage in [47] is less clear.

3.4. In another group of passages, from chancery and administrative texts ([48-55]), níg-du₅₈ occurs in cultic contexts:


98. In Fronzaroli 2003:129 the passage has been translated as follows: "(Se) invece Muru avrà osservato l’ostilità di Yirīq-II, il suo rame, i suoi buoi, le sue pecore, i suoi muli, i suoi figli (saranno) il riscatto per Muru".
99. In Catonatoni - Fronzaroli 2010:189 the passage has been translated as follows: “Come riscatto di un uomo 20 sicli d’argento agli ispettori di Ebla e di Mari”.
101. In Fronzaroli 2003:144 the passage has been translated as follows: “E gli uomini di Batin diedero 10 sicli d’argento per il lo[ro] riscatto [a] Yippidum di Mari”.
102. In Catonatoni - Fronzaroli 2010:135 the passage has been translated as follows: “20 sicli d’argento riscatto (versato) a un funzionario-ir₃₁ di Mari, in Šalbatu egli li riscattò”. Previouly see Milano 2003:418, “20 sicli d’argent, dépôt du fonctionnaire-ir₃₁ de Mari, dans la ville del Salbadu il les a déposés”.
103. The passages [49], [51-52] and [54-55] are quoted in Archi 2003a:80ff.
104. In Pomponio 2008:313 the passage has been translated as follows: “1 pugnale ammorcio d’argento come dono di ND, offerto da ...”.
105. In Archi 2003a:80 the passage has been translated as follows: “1410 gr of silver for doing a statue (for) the ransom of the king (in) the temple of the god Hadda”.
106. Archi 1996b:108 dates this text to Igri₇-Ḥalab or to the early years of Irkab-damu.
107. In Pettinato 1980:315 the passage has been translated as follows: “6 mine d’argento per fare statue per il tempio di Nidadal di Luban; 8 mine d’argento per fare statue in dono a Rasap di Atanni: “dono” del sovran, e “dono” della regina e “dono” di Ebla”.
108. In Archi 2003a:80 the passage has been translated as follows: “39 gr of silver for doing 1 statue (for) the ransom of (the priestess) Tirin-damu (in the temple of the god Hadabal of) the town Luban”.
109. In Archi 2003a:80 the passage has been translated as follows: “8 gr of silver for doing a statue (for) the ransom of Zarig-damu”.

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3.5. It seems likely that the Ebla Semitic equivalent of níg-du₈ was a form of paṣṭûrum (cf. nam-du₈ = īpiṭûrum) “ransom (money)” in the Mesopotamian sources.₁⁰⁰ It has been suggested that forms of paṣṭûrum, meaning “to ransom”, occur in two passages of the chancery text ARET XIII 1 ([56-57]):₁⁰⁶

These passages refer to a failure in respect to the temple and the god, and are reminiscent of the cultic contexts of [48-55]. It is important to note, however, that ARET XIII 1 is probably an Ebla copy of a Mari text.₁⁰⁹

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102. In Archi 2003a:80 the passage has been translated as follows: “20 sheep (for) the god Enki in the garden, the king has offered on the occasion of the ransom of his feast”.  
104. In Archi 2003a:81 the passage has been translated as follows: “[x sheep (for) the god X.] Ir’ag-damu has offered on the occasion of the ransom of his 2 ...”.
107. In Fronzaroli 2003:5 the passage has been translated as follows: “Inviatemi un riscatto eccellente! E mi sarò stato inviato un riscatto eccellente”.
108. In Fronzaroli 2003:10 the passage has been tralated as follows: “[...] e la gente venga per il no[stro] ri[scatto] e sia versato il [ri]scatto dell’orzo”.


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ABSTRACT

The text TM.75.G.10195 (= ARET XVI 30), which refers to a post-war period, allows us to better understand some aspects of the troubled relations between Ebla and Mari at the time of the Palace G Archives, giving interesting legal information such as the consequences of injuries and assaults. The analysis of the text also led to new results concerning the redemption of prisoners, whose names were never recorded. Thanks to the information in various chancery texts and especially in several administrative texts, we can determine some of the ways redemption was carried out by Ebla, and by other Syrian authorities. Philological discussion focuses on níg-du₈ (the term “Redemption”) and the lexical and syntactic aspects of contexts in which it is attested. Among the historical implications of this study is the ascription of some Syrian toponyms to different areas of political influence and the finding that the practice of redemption of prisoners was common throughout the life of the Palace G Archives.

RÉSUMÉ

Le texte TM.75.G.10195 (= ARET XVI 30), qui fait référence à une période d’après-guerre, permet de mieux comprendre quelques aspects des relations troubles entre Ébla et Mari à l’époque des archives du Palais G, en donnant des informations intéressantes d’ordre juridique, par exemple sur les conséquences de blessures et d’agressions. L’analyse du texte conduit, entre autres, à des nouveaux résultats concernant le rachat des prisonniers, toujours anonymes. Grâce à l’apport d’autres textes de chancellerie et surtout de plusieurs textes administratifs, on peut déterminer quelques modalités du rachat, soit de la part d’Ébla soit de la part d’autres pouvoirs syriens. La discussion philologique se concentre sur níg-du₈ (le terme pour “rachat”) et sur les aspects lexicaux et syntaxiques des contextes dans lesquels il est attesté. Parmi les conséquences historiques de cette étude, il y a l’attribution de quelques toponymes syriens à différentes aires d’influence politique et la constatation que la pratique du rachat des prisonniers a été courante pendant toute la durée de vie des archives du Palais G.

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