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رؤوس أقلام

- نموذج تجريبي من عصر البرونز الوسيط في إبلا
٨..... فرانسيس بينوك.

On *Uš-ra-sá-mu* Again: Trying to Answer Two Debated Questions*

Uš-ra-sá-mu is a name recorded several times in some texts of the archives L.2769 and L.2712 of Palace G of Ebla (Tell Mardikh, Syria, 24th century BC). Since this name, and its variant spellings, are mentioned in different contexts and are qualified by different roles, the question of whether the name *Uš-ra-sá-mu* refers to more than one individual remains debated. The subsequent discovery, in 2007, of a cylinder seal engraved with *Uš-ra-sá-mu*'s name led to another debated question: who among the individuals referred to as *Uš-ra-sá-mu* was the owner of the cylinder seal? Therefore, this article aims to provide answers to these two questions, proposing that the name *Uš-ra-sá-mu* refers to one individual only, who was one of the Ebla's high-ranking officials who could own a cylinder seal.

Introduction

Uš-ra-sá-mu is one of three officials whose name is attested both among the clay tablets of Ebla's archives and on cylinder seals or sealings found in Palace G.¹ Actually, the only inscribed cylinder seal found so far in Ebla's Palace G is engraved with *Uš-ra-sá-mu*'s name,² but no impression of this seal is known so far.

Uš-ra-sá-mu is the subject of a recent study by Maria Giovanna Biga,³ which has raised interesting issues. The aim of the present article is to propose answers to two debated questions concerning this official:

1) Does the name *Uš-ra-sá-mu*, and its variant spellings, refer to more than one person?

* This article has been written in the framework of the activities of the Florence unit of the PRIN 2017 project "Big Data and Early Archives (Big-DEA). Measuring Settlement Dynamics and Environmental Exploitation in the Ebla Region during the 3rd Millennium BC: Archaeological Record, Cuneiform Texts, and Remote Sensing".

1 The other two officials are *Ip-du-ra/lu* and *Ré-i-na-im*.

2 This cylinder seal of fine workmanship in white marble was discovered in 2007 during the investigation of room L.9583 in the Northern Quarter of the Palace G. In this same room also two beautiful miniature female figures and elements belonging to the queen's standard, together with a cuneiform tablet have been found, see Matthiae 2010a: 274. For the Northern Quarter and L.9583 storeroom see Matthiae 2009a: 777ff.; 2013; 2014: 214, fn 23. For the queen's standard see Matthiae 2009b: 126–129; 2009c and, also for a suggestion about its use, see Pinnock 2015: 4–5 and 20–22. The tablet (TM.07.G.201), dealing with 5,930 copper spearheads (*giš-gu-kak-gid*), has been published in *Archi* 2008: 1–2.

3 See Biga 2020.

2) Who was the owner of the cylinder seal?

In order to propose an answer to these questions, an overview will first be provided below on what is known about *Uš-ra-sá-mu* from the texts of the archives L.2769 and L.2712.

1. Several Functionaries, or only One High-Ranking Official?

The name *Uš-ra-sá-mu* recorded in the texts of the archives L.2769 and L.2712 is generally considered to indicate several different individuals,⁴ due to two main factors:

1) The number of variant spellings of the name, amounting to two: *Uš-la-sá-mu* and *Û-aš-ra-sá-mu*.⁵

2) The variety of administrative and non-administrative roles qualifying this name.

In fact, regarding this last point, while in the texts from the archive L.2769 *Uš-ra-sá-mu* is mainly, but not only, mentioned in connection with the temple called é dingir-dingir-dingir,⁶ in the texts of the archive L.2712 this name is recorded in contexts of foodstuffs and also in connection with some women.

Anyway, I would like to propose that all the texts in L.2769 and L.2712 archives recording *Uš-ra-sá-mu*, deal always with the same person, that is to say the *Uš-ra-sá-mu* qualified as *ur*₄⁷ of the é dingir-dingir-dingir.

4 See Matthiae 2010a: 274, fn 6 (“If he is not the same personage, both the temple official and the king’s cup-bearer may have been important officials, and both may have owned the seal from the Northern Quarter”); Micale and Nadali 2010: 20, fn 34 (“We do not know if the two Ušrasámu are the same person.”); Biga 2020: 114 (“several functionaries with this name are cited in the texts”); Scarpa 2021: 74 (“More than one individual named *Uš-ra-sa₂-mu* existed during the age of the Archives: one is attested as a collector [...] one as a ‘priest’ [...] one as a military commander [...]. The identities of the other five remain unknown”).

5 A careful check of the personal name spelled *Uš-ra-sá-mu* in the available photographs of the texts mentioning it, shows that the first sign is always UŠ (see Catagnoti 2013: 16, No. 51) and not ÌR (see Catagnoti 2013: 16, No. 53). Therefore, this excludes the reading *Ìr-ra-sá-mu* of the name, which was adopted in TM.76.G.523 = *ARET* VIII 523 = *MEE* 5 3 rev. IV 21, TM.76.G.527 = *ARET* VIII 527 = *MEE* 5 7 obv. VIII 13, TM.76.G.542 = *ARET* VIII 542 = *MEE* 5 22 obv. III 11 and TM.75.G.10129+ = *ARET* XX 23 rev. X 14. The variant spellings *Û-aš-ra-sá-mu* (found in TM.75.G.3055+3056 = *ARET* III 44 V’ 6’ of L.2769), where an unexpected syllabogram *aš* appears, may be due to phonetic motivations, reflecting the perceived pronunciation of the name. It is interesting to note that, at present, there is no agreement on this name’s interpretation, see Krebernik 1988: 299; Pagan 1998: 20, 371, 374–375; Biga 2020: 114, fn 6.

6 On this temple see Biga 2006: 24; Archi 2016: 148; Bonechi 2016a: 34; Archi 2020: 58.

7 The *ur*₄-officials were “collectors (of goods)”, whose main duties were to receive and deliver textiles and precious goods such as metals, harnesses and equipment for equids and carts, or purchase exotic goods at fairs meant for the most high-ranking people of Ebla, including the

1.1. Uš-ra-sá-mu in the Texts of the Archive L.2769

As said, in the archive L.2769, *Uš-ra-sá-mu* is mainly recorded as *lú é dingir-dingir-dingir*, together with *A-šu-ur-NI* and almost always together with *I-ti-ne* (whose name is also spelled *I-da-ne*).⁸ Some attestations have already been discussed;⁹ to them, the following five passages should be added:

[1] TM.75.G.3597 = *ARET* III 530 II' 4'-9': 3 aktum-TÚG 3 íb-III-TÚG gùn / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / *A-šu-ur-NI* / *I-ti-ne* / *lú [é*] ʾdingir*-dingir*-[dingir*]¹⁰ / [...]* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, no month)

[2] TM.75.G.5213 = *ARET* XII 802 rev. I' 1'-5': [...]'x' / 3 [sal-TÚG] 3 aktum-T[ÚG] 3 íb-III-[TÚG] sa₆ g[ùn] / *Uš-ra-[sá-mu]* / [*A*-šu*-ur*-NI**] / [*I*-ti/da*-ne**] (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, no month)

[3] TM.75.G.10129+ = *ARET* XX 23 rev. X 13-18: 3 'à-da-um-TÚG-II 3 aktum-TÚG 3 íb-III-TÚG sa₆ gùn / *Uš*-ra-sá-mu* / *A-šu-ur-NI* / 'T-da-ne / *lú ʾé* / [din]gir-dingir-dingir (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, no month)

kings and members of their families. In fact, some of the *ur₄*-officials were part of the personal staff of the Ebla princesses married to foreign kings, as already noted by Waetzoldt 1984: 428. They acted as intermediaries between the princesses and Ebla, exchanging news on these women's state of health and on key events in their lives in foreign courts, such as the birth of their children. Moreover, the *ur₄*-officials carried out their activities also for people residing and working in residences and in temples, as is the case of *Uš-ra-sá-mu*. For a study devoted to these officials see Cianfanelli 2020.

8 These two spellings are considered variants of the same name in Biga 2020: 114. For a brief insight on this matter see Cianfanelli 2020: 145, fn 111.

9 See TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 obv. II 20-III 9: 3 aktum-TÚG / 3 íb-IV-TÚG gùn / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / *A-šu-ur-NI* / *I-da-ne* / 1 gu-mug-TÚG / *Iš-[]a-BAD* / *maškim* / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / *lú é dingir-dingir-dingir* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*'s year 5, iti *ga-sum* = 7th month); TM.75.G.1763 obv. VIII 15'-19': 3 'à-da-um-TÚG-2 3 aktum-TÚG 3 íb-II-TÚG sa₆ gùn / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / *I-ti-ne* / *A-šu-ur-NI* / *lú é dingir-dingir-dingir* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, no month, see Biga 2020: 114); TM.75.G.1770 = *ARET* XX 6 obv. XIV 15-XV 4: 3 'à-da-um-TÚG-II 3 aktum-TÚG 3 íb-IV-TÚG gùn / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / *A-šu-ur-NI* / *I-ti-ne* / *lú é* / *dingir-dingir-dingir* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *Ib-rí-um/I-bí-zi-kir*, no month, see Archi 2018: 33); TM.75.G.1780 = *ARET* XX 18 obv. II 20-III 4: 3 'à-da-um-TÚG-II / 3 aktum-TÚG 3 íb-IV-TÚG gùn / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / *A-šu-ur-NI* / *I-da-ne* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*'s year 8, iti *ga-sum* = 7th month); TM.75.G.2273 = *ARET* XX 16 obv. X 12-15: [2+]1 'à-da-um-TÚG-II [1+]2 aktum-TÚG 3 íb-III-TÚG sa₆ gùn / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / *A-šu-ur-NI* / *I-da-ne* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*'s year 14, iti *i-ba₄-sa* = 10th month); TM.75.G.2460 = *ARET* XX 10 obv. I 8-12: [3 ak]t[um]-TÚG [3 íb-I] II-TÚG [gù]n / *U[š-r]a-sá-[m]u* / *A-šu[-u]r-NI* / *I-ti-ne* / *l[ú] ʾé* [dingir-di]ngir-dingir (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, iti *i-rí-sá* = 6th month). This *Uš-ra-sá-mu* is to be identified with the namesake recorded in TM.75.G.1394 = *ARET* II 33 = *ARET* XVI 12 rev. IV 10-V 7: 10 la-ḥa i-giš / è / *wa* / 1 dumu-nita / *En-na-NI* / *wa* / 2 dumu-nita / *dingir-dingir-dingir* / *wa* / 2 dumu-nita / *lú Uš-ra-sá-mu* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*), see Catagnoti and Fronzaroli 2010: 98. *A-šu-ur-NI* is recorded as *lú é dingir-dingir* in TM.75.G.10234 obv. VI 27-VII 1: *A-šu-ur-NI* / *lú é dingir-dingir* / *si-in* / ÉXPAP (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, see Archi 2012: 8, fn 17; Biga 1997: 41, fn 19). All these passages have been already discussed in Biga 2020: 114-115.

10 I thank Amalia Catagnoti for this collation.

[4] TM.76.G.530 = *ARET* I 5 = *MEE* 5 10 rev. VIII 22–IX 2: 4 `à-da-um-TÚG-II 4 aktum-TÚG 4 íb-II-TÚG sa₆ gùn / 2 mu₄^{mu} / Uš-ra-sá-mu / A-šu-u[r]-NI / lú é dingir-dingir-dingir (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister I-bí-zi-kir, iti za-LUL = 9th month)

[5] TM.76.G.542 = *ARET* VIII 542 = *MEE* 5 22 obv. III 10–14: 3 `à-da-um-TÚG-II 3 aktum-TÚG 3 íb-III-TÚG sa₆ gùn / Uš*-ra-sá-mu / A-šu-ur-NI / I-ti-ne / é dingir-dingir-dingir (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister I-bí-zi-kir, iti i-ba₄-sa = 10th month)

The restoration proposed in [2] is based on the recording of three sets of three textiles meant for three persons, in a pattern comparable with the other passages in which Uš-ra-sá-mu is mentioned with A-šu-ur-NI and I-ti/da-ne.

As already noted,¹¹ in TM.75.G.1328 = *ARET* XIX 11 rev. II 7–13: 3 `à-da-um-TÚG-I igi-tum / Uš-ra-sá-mu / A-da-ma-lik / I-ti-ne / “ur₄” / é / dingir-dingir-dingir-dingir (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister Ib-rí-um, iti i-rí-sá = 6th month), Uš-ra-sá-mu lú é dingir-dingir-dingir, and the homonymous ur₄-official, who is also recorded in a few texts of L.2769,¹² are all the same person. The qualification of Uš-ra-sá-mu as lú or ur₄ of the é dingir-dingir-dingir most probably shows his working relationship with this temple.¹³

Other three attestations from L.2769 record Uš-ra-sá-mu in different contexts:

[6] TM.75.G.5844 = *ARET* XII 1250 III' 1'–5': [...] `Gul'-la / Du-la-ad / Ír-péš-zé / Iš₁₁-a-ma-lik {“ur₄”}*¹⁴ / Uš-ra-sá-mu (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, most probably minister Ib-rí-um, no month)

[7] TM.75.G.1381¹⁵ obv. VIII 8–12: 1 [... 1 gu]-mug-TÚG / En-na-NI / maškim / Uš-ra-sá-mu / lú geštin (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister I-bí-zi-kir's year 6, iti ha-li = 5th month)

[8] TM.76.G.523 = *ARET* VIII 523 = *MEE* 5 3 rev. IV 16–22: 1 dùl-TÚG Ma-rí^{ki} 1 aktum-TÚG / Du-bù-ḥu-^d `À-da / 1 gu-dùl-TÚG / 1 dam / en / Uš*-ra-sá-mu / šu-ba₄-ti (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister I-bí-zi-kir, iti za-LUL = 9th month)

11 See Biga 2020: 114–115; Cianfanelli 2020: 144–145.

12 As an ur₄-official, Uš-ra-sá-mu is recorded also in TM.75.G.3055+3056 = *ARET* III 44 V' 5'–6': 1 gu-mug-TÚG 1 íb-III-TÚG gùn / Ú-aš-ra-sá-mu ur₄ (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, no month); TM.75.G.3741 = *ARET* III 667 I' 1'–2': [...] 1 íb-III-TÚG gùn Uš*-ra-sá-mu ur₄ (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, no month; I thank Amalia Catagnoti for the collation of this name, previously read “Ír-uš-ra-sá-mu” in Archi and Biga 1982: 286); TM.76.G.527 = *ARET* VIII 527 = *MEE* 5 7 obv. VIII 11–15: 1 TÚG-NI.NI / ama-gal / Uš*-ra-sá-mu ur₄ / si-in / ÉXPAP (king Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister I-bí-zi-kir, no month).

13 For a different opinion see Archi 2020: 59, fn 13: “(PN/Prof.N) lú é dingir-dingir-dingir means instead: ‘(someone) who belongs to the temple’”.

14 Collated from the photograph.

15 Quoted in Archi 1993: 28. See also Biga 2020: 115, in which it is specified that this text is parallel to the annual account of metal TM.75.G.10074+.

There's a good chance that these three passages may always record the same *Uš-ra-sá-mu* who was *ur₄ lú é dingir-dingir*. In fact:

a) As for passage [7], the qualification *lú geštin*¹⁶ has been considered to refer to *Uš-ra-sá-mu*, identified as distinct from the homonymous *ur₄-official*.¹⁷ It is equally possible that the qualification *lú geštin* rather refers to *En-na-NI*,¹⁸ who would have acted as "representative", *maškim*, of *Uš-ra-sá-mu*. In any case, neither hypothesis contradicts the proposed identification of this *Uš-ra-sá-mu* as the *ur₄-official*. Indeed, *ur₄-officials* and young "ur₄ apprentices" (*dumu-nita-dumu-nita ur₄*) occasionally acted as *lú geštin*,¹⁹ an office that does not seem to conflict with their duties as *ur₄*: they might have been in charge of the collection and delivery of wine. Similarly, numerous attestations document that *ur₄-officials* had *maškim*s in their employ.²⁰ Therefore, *Uš-ra-sá-mu* might have been directly or indirectly involved in the delivery of wine, as well as other goods. Perhaps, the place where his cylinder seal was found, i.e. room L.9583, could be a clue as to his duties: in fact, L.9583 is close to storeroom L.2617, where jars were found with capacities averaging 52, 66, 74 and 82 litres, supposedly having been used for transporting and storing oil or wine.²¹

b) Passage [8] records *Uš-ra-sá-mu* receiving textiles for *Du-bù-hu-d'À-da* and an unnamed dam of the king. As said, the receipt and delivery of goods, and acting as intermediary for their procurement on the behalf of people at the top of Ebla society, such as the king, the ministers, their sons and some *lugals*, were among the activities performed by the *ur₄-officials*. Moreover, *Uš-ra-sá-mu*'s activity here performed for *Du-bù-hu-d'À-da* recalls what is recorded in some of the texts from the archive L.2712 (see below § 1.2).

16 For the interpretation of *lú geštin* see "addetto al vino" (Biga and Milano 1984: 308; Lahlouh and Catagnoti 2006: 560), "vintner" (Sollberger 1986: 62), "official in charge of wine" (Archi 1993: 28; Archi 2018: 275), "vinaio" (Bonechi 2006: 80), "celui du vin" (Catagnoti 2008: 42), "uomo del vino" (Pomponio 2013: 448), "the one in charge of the wine" (Bonechi 2020a: 151).

17 Matthiae 2010a: 274, fn 6; Biga 2020: 115.

18 One *En-na-NI* is actually recorded as *lú geštin* in TM.75.G.1379 rev. XI 1–2 and TM.75.G.2593 rev. VIII 3–4. See Archi 1993: 28.

19 TM.75.G.1276 = ARET IV 7 obv. V 18–VI 1 records a certain ^dKU-*ra-ma-i-da* as *lú geštin*. ^dKU-*ra-ma-i-da*, a seldom-attested personal name, is qualified as *ur₄* in two lists of personnel (TM.75.G.3249+ = ARET III 214 rev. ? 12' and TM.75.G.1770 = ARET XX 6 obv. XIII 3). Moreover, passage TM.75.G.2593 rev. VIII 2–10: (1+1+1 fabrics) 1 *dumu-nita "ur₄" lú geštin wa* 1 *dumu-nita En-na-NI lú geštin in Da-na[...^{ki} šu-ba₄-ti]* (quoted in Archi 1993: 28, fn. 66) records a *dumu-nita "ur₄" lú geštin*. On the contrary, *Zi-la-BAD lú geštin*, attested in TM.75.G.559 = ARET X 65 rev. IV 14–V 1 (quoted in Archi 1993: 29), is probably to be distinguished from the homonymous *ur₄-official* recorded in TM.76.G.527 = ARET VIII 527 = MEE 5 7 rev. IV 22–24 and TM.76.G.532 = ARET VIII 532 = MEE 5 12 rev. VI 9–11, who is defined as *ur₄ lú Bù-kù: babbar* (on the connection between *ur₄-officials* and Ebla high-ranking women see Cianfanelli 2020: 145–151).

20 See Ibidem: 134–135.

21 See D'Andrea and Vacca 2013: 113–114.

c) The fragmentary list of functionaries recorded in [6] suggests, again, an identification of *Uš-ra-sá-mu* with the same *ur*₄-official. In fact, a prosopographical analysis of the names recorded in [6] shows that *Ìr-péš-zé* and *Iš₁₁-a-ma-lik* are names qualified as *ur*₄²², which, counting also *Uš-ra-sá-mu*, would make them three consecutive *ur*₄-officials. Moreover, the designation “*ur*₄” was written, and partially erased, immediately after the name *Iš₁₁-a-ma-lik*.

1.2. *Uš-ra-sá-mu* in the Texts of the Archive L.2712

Uš-ra-sá-mu is here recorded dealing with quantities of barley and foodstuffs, but he does not seem to supervise groups of workers. In fact, the food recorded is meant for him to be brought as “travel provision” (*níg-kaskal*)²³ to the king of Ebla:

[9] TM.75.G.240 = *ARET* IX 91 obv. II 9–IV 4: 2 ½ *gú-bar* ‘x’ [x (x)] ‘x’ / 11 *gú-bar* še-zì-gú / 1 ½ *gú-bar* zì-zìz / 11 *gú-bar* ninda-bappir / 4 *gú-bar* ninda bar / 10 ½ *gú-bar* munu₄ / 10 pisan bappir / 14 ninda-sikil / 10 ninda ù-NE-zu / *níg-kaskal* / en / si-in / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, no month)

[10] TM.75.G.783 = *ARET* X 132²⁴ obv. I’ 1’–3’: ...] *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / ìl / [*níg-kaskal** e]n / [...] (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*)

This activity seems to be well in accordance with the typical duties of an *ur*₄-official.

22 For *Ìr-péš-zé* as *ur*₄ see TM.75.G.1770 = *ARET* XX 6 obv. XII 9–XIII 12; TM.75.G.1855 = *MEE* 10 18 obv. III 6–8; TM.75.G.2249 = *ARET* XV 50 obv. VIII 5–6. For *Iš₁₁-a-ma-lik* as *ur*₄ see TM.75.G.1770 = *ARET* XX 6 obv. XII 9–XIII 12; TM.75.G.1940 = *ARET* XV 43 rev. X 6–8; TM.75.G.4529 = *ARET* XII 332 rev. V’ 4’–6’; TM.76.G.523 = *ARET* VIII 523 = *MEE* 5 3 rev. X 15–XI 9 and most probably also TM.76.G.542 = *ARET* VIII 542 = *MEE* 5 22 obv. II 1–17. See the name index in Cianfanelli 2020: 159–162. *Ìr-péš-zé* is also the name of an official in charge of an *ir-a-núm* of *guruš*-workers amounting up to 1000 units, see TM.75.G.1732 = *ARET* II 30 rev. II 1–13 and rev. III 8–13; TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 obv. XI 9–XII 4 (1000 *na-se₁₁*); TM.75.G.1899 = *ARET* XX 11 rev. III 7–IV 1 (912 *guruš*); TM.75.G.1903 = *ARET* XX 12 obv. IX 11–X 7 (520 *guruš*); TM.75.G.2331 = *ARET* XX 19 obv. VI 8–11; TM.75.G.2460 = *ARET* XX 10 rev. II 1–3 (909 *guruš*). As for *Du-la-ad*, this name is not attested elsewhere in published texts, while *Gul-la*, instead, is here to be distinguished from the identically-named brother of *En-na-^dDa-gan* king of *Ma-ri^{ki}* (recorded in TM.75.G.1271 = *ARET* VII 17 = *MEE* 2 6 obv. IV 4–6). He might rather have been an official working for Ebla (the one recorded in TM.75.G.1562 = *ARET* II 28 rev. IV 2–3, to whom *Iš₁₁-a-ma-lik* is connected, and perhaps the one in TM.75.G.1257 = *ARET* VII 38 obv. VII 8–10; TM.75.G.1368 = *ARET* VII 16 obv. II 4–7; TM.75.G.1434 = *ARET* XV 20 obv. XII 18–XIII 1 and rev. VI 17–18; TM.75.G.2236 = *MEE* 12 25 obv. II 6–7, obv. VIII 8–9, rev. I 5–8 and rev. IV 9–11; TM.75.G.2412 = *ARET* VII 1 rev. III 4–9), but a further identification is difficult to propose.

23 For an in-depth study on *níg-kaskal* see Milano 2014. For another interpretation of this term as “transport fee” see Biga and Steinkeller 2021: 11 and fn. 9.

24 The restoration here proposed for TM.75.G.783 = *ARET* X 132 obv. I’ 1’ (quoted in Biga 2020: 115 as *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / ìl / [...] [e]n / [...]) is based on the syntactic structure of the subsequent passage in obv. II’ 1’–4’: *NI-ba-NI* / ìl / *níg-kaskal* *I-bí-zi-kir*, (also quoted in Biga 2020: 115).

Three passages mention *Uš-ra-sá-mu* in relation to a few women, who were most likely among the workers under his control. In any case, *Uš-ra-sá-mu* is never qualified by the term *ugula*, “overseer”.²⁵

[11] TM.75.G.446 = *ARET* IX 53 obv. I 1–VI 2: 10 dam / *Íl-zi* / 8 da[m] / *Ì-da-AN* / 5 da[m] / *Ti-da* / 2 dam / *Na-da-ba-du* / 2 dam / *Gàr-ra* / 4 dam / *A-zi-kir* / 1[+2 d]am / *Du-bí-ga-lu* / 4 dam / [En]-na[-ni]-NI / [2+]1 dam / [Ib]-du-ma-lik / 5 dam / *Ír-ì-ba* / 3 ‘dam’ / *Ib-ḥur*-NI / dar / 2 dam / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / 3 dam / *Bù-da*-NI / dam / *Ì-lum-bal* / 4 dam / *Su-ma-bàd*^{ki} / 2 dam / *Ì-a-ar* / 2 ‘dam’ / *Za-nu-du* / 4 dam / *A-da-bad-du* / 2 dam / KAL / 1 dam / *A-sa-du* / 3 dam / *BAD-sù-ne-àr* / 2 dam / *Bù-ba-du* / 4 dam / *Lu-du-ù-na* / 2 dam / *Dar-a* / 1 dam / *A-zi-kir* / lú NI-za-ra / 2 dam / *Dab*₆-bù-ma-lik / 1 dam / *Ba-zi-da-ḥu* / 2 dam / *A-a-du* / AN.ŠË.GÚ 90 lá-2 dam / GÁxGI / dam:dingir (king *Iš*₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, no month)

[12] TM.75.G.547 = *ARET* X 96²⁶ obv. I 1–V 3: [10+]10 I[á-]1? dam / *Íl-zi* / ‘12’ dam / NI-da-‘ba’-du / ‘3’ dam / *Uš*-ra-sá-mu*²⁷ // 5 dam / ‘x’-‘na’-‘i’ / 3 dam / *Am*₆-mi-ru₁₂ / 10 lá-3 dam / *Ti-r[a-NI]* / 10 [dam] / [PN] // 4 ‘dam’ / *Zu-[ma]-b[àd*^{ki}] / 5 dam / *Lu-du-‘ù’-[na]* / 2 [+x’ dam] / [PN] / [x dam] / [PN] / [x dam] // [PN] / 1 dam / ‘A?’-zi-kir / [AN.ŠË].GÚ / 62 dam / GÁxGI / dam:dingir // [] / [] / [(x-x)] AN (king *Iš*₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, no month)

[13] TM.75.G.755 = *ARET* IX 110 obv. II 1–rev. I 2: *Uš-ra-‘sá’[-mu]* / (column broken) / [x-]da [...] / [...] / [...] / [...] / 1 dam *Mi-na*-NI / 1 dam / [...] / 1 dam / NI-a-BAD / 2 ‘dam’ / *Puzur*₄-ra-ma-lik / 1 mi 13 dam / *I-ti*-NI (king *Iš*₁₁-ar-da-mu, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, no month)

Most striking are passages [11–12], which, as far as it is known, are the only ones²⁸ that record a list of women, 88 and 62 respectively, qualified as dam GÁxGI dam:dingir. Therefore, it might be useful to briefly discuss here this matter.

The Sumerogram GÁxGI, corresponding to ‘*a*₅-za-ru₁₂’²⁹ identifies a workshop in which female personnel worked. There was more than one GÁxGI, as shown by the plural spellings GÁxGI-GÁxGI and ‘*a*₅-za-ru₁₂-‘*a*₅-za-ru₁₂’ recorded in some texts;³⁰ these workshops were connected to topographical terms,³¹ the women of

25 Differently see Micale and Nadali 2010: 20, fn 34; Pinnock 2013: 68.

26 I thank Maria Giovanna Biga for having informed me of this passage.

27 I thank Alfonso Archi for the collation.

28 The fragmentary passage TM.75.G.3468 = *ARET* III 404 V 1’-5’ has to be added. It does not record a list of women qualified as dam GÁxGI dam:dingir; however, it mentions the term dingir:dam qualifying, as it seems, only one person.

29 For the equivalence GÁxGI = ‘*a*₅-za-ru₁₂’ see Bonechi 1999: 26; 2020b: 333; Biga 2014: 145; Archi 2018: 230.

30 See for instance GÁxGI-GÁxGI in TM.75.G.252 = *ARET* IX 60 obv. II 4–III 5; TM.75.G.261 = *ARET* IX 47 rev. V 1–VI 2; TM.75.G.524 = *ARET* IX 61 obv. II 2–11; TM.75.G.537 = *ARET* IX 44 rev. X’ 5’-8’; TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 rev. X 3–4 (on these passages, Bonechi 1999: 23–24). For ‘*a*₅-za-ru₁₂-‘*a*₅-za-ru₁₂’ see *ARET* XX 9 rev. X 3–4.

31 There was more than one GÁxGI structure, each connected to different places, such as the é of ‘*À-da-ti*’ (TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 rev. IX 11–15) and the é maḥ (TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 rev. VI 9–12; TM.75.G.3558 = *ARET* III 492 III 1’-4’). See in general Bonechi 1999: 22 and

these workshops were controlled by more than one person. Since only [11–12] record lists of women whose total constitutes the GÁxGI dam:dingir, it seems that each Palace official, both men and women³² involved in the control of working personnel, provided some women to the GÁxGI dam:dingir. This same pattern applies to TM.75.G.446 = *ARET* IX 53 obv. VI 4–rev. V 2 as well, which again records a list of women, connected to other male and female functionaries, whose final total summary qualifies them as part of another GÁxGI, not specified by any personal name or topographical term. Once they were part of a GÁxGI, these women were most likely supervised by a person, be it the priestess (as in the case of the GÁxGI dam:dingir),³³ an appointed ugula,³⁴ or other male or female functionaries.³⁵ The three passages [11–13] show a precise administrative and organizational practice which, however, still eludes us and deserves further investigation.

It has to be pointed out that the texts of the archive L.2712 record foodstuff allotments distributed to all the people residing and working in the Palace, from the king and his family to the administrative functionaries and the working personnel they controlled. Therefore, in addition to his cylinder seal, also the recording of *Uš-ra-sá-mu* in these texts further confirms his position as one of the high-ranking officials operating in the Palace, as it will be addressed in § 2 as well.

Uš-ra-sá-mu is recorded in other three passages from L.2712 (his name is spelled *Uš-la-sá-mu* in [16]):

- 26; Bonechi 2016a: 18 and fn. 94; Archi 2019: 29.
- 32 Among the personal names recorded in [11], the majority of which are male names, there are also some feminine ones, as: *A-a-du*, *A-da:bad-du*, *Lu-du-ù-na* and *Na-da-ba-du* (all four recorded among the dam en), *A-sa-du*, *Bù-ba-du* and *Za-nu-du*. These women controlled female workers.
- 33 The GÁxGI dam:dingir has been interpreted as the workshop of enclosed women supervised by *A-ma-ga*, the priestess of the god ^aNI-*da-bal* of *Lu-ba-an*³¹ at the time of king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu* and minister *I-bi-zi-kir*, see Archi 2020: 62.
- 34 See TM.75.G.2525 = *ARET* I 1 rev. VI 10–14, which records the death of *Ù-ba-a-bù*, the ugula ^a*a₅-za-ru₁₂*. Passage TM.75.G.1770 = *ARET* XX 6 obv. IX 20–23 records *Za-li*, one of the women of the king, qualified as nin GÁxGÉME-[g]i and interpreted as “lady (i.e. at the head?) of the enclosed women(?)” in Archi 2018: 230.
- 35 The term GÁxGI was connected to people most probably charged with supervision, both men, as *A-ga-me-nu* (TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 rev. VI 3–6), *Ba-a-ga* (TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 rev. V 12–15), *Gú-da-da-aḥ* (TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 rev. V 24–27), and women, as *Ha-lu-du* (TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 rev. V 18–21; TM.75.G.3847 = *ARET* III 759 I’ 2’–5’) and *Mi-na-du* (TM.75.G.1743 = *ARET* XX 9 rev. IX 16–18). Receiving wool and malt, the women, who were part of the GÁxGI, could have been involved in the weaving (see Biga 2014: 145) and beer-making processes. Anyway, only in one text the working duties of these women are specified: 2 dam KAL in TM.75.G.446 = *ARET* IX 53 obv. IV 3–4 and 2 dam ^{sis}sim in TM.75.G.446 = *ARET* IX 53 rev. II 5–6. As for the dam ^{sis}sim they most probably were women involved in the preparation or storage of the products derived by this plant (they “prepared perfumes” for Archi 2002a: 2); see also a forthcoming study on ^{sis}sim by Amalia Catagnoti. As for the dam KAL, they most probably were women involved in the processing of einkorn (on KAL identified as “einkorn” see Marchesi 2013: 280–281). Therefore, the various GÁxGIs were probably constituted by women who carried out various types of works.

[14] TM.75.G.412 = ARET IX 22 rev. I 4–II 3: 1 *mi-at* še-GIŠGAL-titab / 12 še bar GIŠGAL-titab / *Du-bù-ḥu-d'À-da* / 10 lá-2 še bar / *Ḥa-ra-NI* / [n...] še [...] / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / (blank) (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, no month)³⁶

[15] TM.75.G.519 = ARET IX 103 rev. IV 1–V 2: 33 *zi-lum* še-zi-gu' / 5 ninda-bappir / 1 ½ *zi-kur* / *Ar-šè-a-ḥu* / *A-du-ga-mu* / *ká Nu-ga-mu^{ki}* / *Uš-ra-sá-mu* / àga-ús (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, no month)

[16] TM.75.G.543+809 = ARET X 127³⁷ rev. I 2: *Uš-la-sá-mu* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*)

Among these three passages, [15] is of particular interest. Other Ebla texts show that *ur₄*-officials could perform, simultaneously with their office and temporarily, a military or guard duty.³⁸ The temporary nature of the office of àga-ús also has been already underlined,³⁹ taking into account passages such as TM.75.G.1776 obv. V 4-9 and TM.75.G.2245 obv. VII 6-14, in which, respectively, *Ir-ti lú Ib-rí-um* is recorded as šèš-II-ib and àga-ús at the same time, and *Du-bù-ḥu-d'À-da*, son of *I-bí-zi-kir*, receives textiles on the day he performed the function of àga-ús during the šu-mu-nígin of the god ^dNI-*da-bal* of *Lu-ba-an^{ki}*. It seems, therefore, that one could be àga-ús on particular occasions. Thus it is possible that *Uš-ra-sá-mu*, the same *ur₄*-official, also held a military office as àga-ús for a fixed period of time on a special occasion.

2. One Seal for One Official

Possessing a seal meant controlling access to warehouses or the opening of containers of valuable goods. Such an important administrative role was carried out by a few Ebla top officials. Therefore, a cylinder seal, made of marble and of such

36 In this passage *Uš-ra-sá-mu* is recorded in association with *Du-bù-ḥu-d'À-da*, receiving quantities of cereals, which were “Quantitativi aggiuntivi, per Dubuḥu-’Ada ed altre due persone”, see Milano 1990: 74.

37 See Biga 2020: 115. The context in which this name is registered is currently not known. However, according to Archi and Biga 2003: 28, fn 74, this text lists some fields (*gána-ki*), see also Archi 2002b: 23. Assuming that *Uš-la-sá-mu* is a variant spelling of the *ur₄* *Uš-ra-sá-mu*, and assuming his connection with some *gána-ki*, this passage can be added to others documenting a connection between an *ur₄* and fields. There are, indeed, cases in which *ur₄*-officials are connected to agricultural lands, in particular, they are assigned to the administration and supply of goods for residences and for those who lived or worked there. On this matter see Cianfanelli 2020: 142–144.

38 In TM.75.G.1560 = ARET XV 28 rev. X 9–17 the *ur₄* *Ìr-ì-ba* is also qualified as KÍD-sag, “gatekeeper” (on this function see Fronzaroli 1984: 150; Archi 2002b; Bonechi 2012). *Ìr-ì-ba* performed the two functions of *ur₄* and KÍD-sag at the same time, see Cianfanelli 2020: 151–152. As for the temporary nature of other guard duties as en-nun-ak and igi-sig see Catagnoti 2019: 38.

39 See Archi 2018: 227; Bonechi 2016b: 47. The àga-ús military function was most probably held by high-ranking people. They were few and always recorded by their personal names, see Bonechi 2016b: 27ff.

fine workmanship, is befitting an official as *Uš-ra-sá-mu*, whose high status is shown in the following three passages from L.2712:

[17] TM.75.G.559 = ARET X 65⁴⁰ obv. I 1–III 8: *Íl-zi / Ip-du-ra / Uš*-ra-sá-mu*⁴¹ / *En-na-^dRa-s[a]-ap / lú ge[štin] / [...] / [...] / [...] / [...] / [x-x (-x)]-lu / NI-da-ba-du / A-su-[ur]-NI / I-da-NE-ù* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, iti BAD-li = 5th month)

[18] TM.75.G.558 = ARET X 64⁴² obv. I 1–II 2: *Íl-zi / Ip-du-ra / Uš*-ra-sá-mu*⁴³ / *Puzur₄-ra-Ma-lik / En-na-^dRa-sa-ap / lú geštin / En-na-NI / ^rA[˘]-šur_x-NI / I-da-NE-ù* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*, iti *ì-la-mu* = 9th month)

[19] TM.75.G.549 = ARET X 61⁴⁴ obv. I 1–VI 7: [*Íl-zi*] / [*Ip-du*]-ra / [*U*]š*-ra-sá-mu⁴⁵ / *En-na-^dRa-sa-ap / lú geštin / En-na-NI / Puzur₄-ra-ma-lik / NI-da-ba-du / A-šú<ur->NI* (king *Iš₁₁-ar-da-mu*, minister *I-bí-zi-kir*)

In these three passages *Uš-ra-sá-mu* is listed among well-known Ebla functionaries and in particular after *Íl-zi* and *Ip-du-ra*, two of the Ebla's best documented high-ranking officials.⁴⁶ Between them, *Ip-du-ra* is extensively documented both in the Ebla texts and in cylinder seals impressions, the study of which has led to the reconstruction of three cylinder seals bearing his name.⁴⁷ No impressions of a seal engraved with the name *Íl-zi* are known. However, considering that he is frequently recorded in the Ebla texts, together with *Ip-du-ra* and with other high-ranking functionaries, who worked for the king and controlled working personnel, he is an excellent candidate for having owned a cylinder seal.⁴⁸

40 I thank Maria Giovanna Biga for having informed me of this passage.

41 I thank Alfonso Archi for the collation.

42 I thank Maria Giovanna Biga for having informed me of this passage.

43 I thank Alfonso Archi for the collation.

44 I thank Maria Giovanna Biga for having informed me of this passage.

45 I thank Alfonso Archi for the collation.

46 On *Íl-zi* see Bonechi 2016a: 11. A study on *Ip-du-ra* by the author of this article is forthcoming.

47 In Palace G, 56 out of more than 200 fragments of *cretulae* bear the seals' impressions of *Ip-du-ra/lu* and *Ré-i-na-im*, both attested among Ebla's tablets. These 56 *cretulae* come for the most part from storerooms L.2716 and L.2617 of the Palace G Northern Quarter, but also from some rooms of the Administrative Quarter, such as L.2769 (the Great Archive), L.2764 (the Trapezoidal Archive), and L.2913, in the inner courtyard. Unfortunately, the corresponding cylinder seals have not been found. See Peyronel 2006: 265; 2016: 55; Micale and Nadali 2010: 9.

48 The iconographic analysis of approximately two hundred clay *cretulae* and fragments of *cretulae* bearing cylinder sealings has made it possible to reconstruct at least fifteen cylinder seals, see Matthiae 1977: 83; 2010a: 274; 2010b: 173; 2020: 130. See also Peyronel 2006: 263 ("il numero dei sigilli è relativamente basso, con una quindicina di sigilli con partito figurativo interamente ricostruibile e pochi altri con raffigurazione parziale"); Pinnock 2013: 67 ("The original seals identified from all the preserved impressions are fifteen or sixteen"); 2015: 15, fn 47 ("From the sealings it is possible to reconstruct fifteen, or perhaps sixteen seals");

So, regarding the answer to the second question: according to what has been presented so far, I would like to propose that the cylinder seal found in the room L.9583 of Palace G belonged to the only *Uš-ra-sá-mu* attested in the Ebla documentation, who was the one mostly known as *ur₄ lú é dingir-dingir-dingir*.

The owning of a cylinder seal befits the role of an *ur₄* official, which *Uš-ra-sá-mu* performed mainly on behalf of the *é dingir-dingir-dingir*, together with other *ur₄*-functionaries⁴⁹ and also on behalf of the king and *Du-bù-ḫu-d'À-da*, collecting goods that might have been necessary for them as well as for the people working in the *é dingir-dingir-dingir*.⁵⁰ The administrative function performed by the *ur₄*-officials was marked by high mobility; therefore, the absence of *cretulae* with the impressions of *Uš-ra-sá-mu*'s seal may indicate that he controlled goods in Tell Mardikh unexplored areas, including areas not directly connected to the lower levels of Palace G.

3. Sketching *Uš-ra-sá-mu*'s Profile

In conclusion, based on the attestations examined so far, it is possible to propose that the personal name *Uš-ra-sá-mu*, and its variant spellings *Uš-la-sá-mu* and *Ū-aš-ra-sá-mu*, recorded in the two archives L.2769 and L.2712, refer to only one person. The fact that *Uš-ra-sá-mu* is not qualified by any function term in the texts of the archive L.2712 could be seen as an objection to this proposal. However, this peculiarity is part of the more interesting problem of the total absence of the term *ur₄*

Peyronel 2016: 54; 2021: 236 (“about fifteen seals with the complete scene and a few with fragmentary figurative patterns”). According to Pinnock 2019: 335, the number of cylinder seals might have been higher: “The sealings were preliminary presented by P. Matthiae in several occasions, and he identified at least 17 original cylinder seals, numbering them in succession”.

- 49 The other *ur₄*-official are recorded in TM.75.G.1259 = *ARET* IV 3 obv. I 18-II 1: 1 *à-da-um-TÚG-II* 1 aktum-TÚG 1 íb-III-TÚG sa₆ gùn / *A-šu-ur-NI* / “ur₄”* [lú]* *é dingir-dingir-dingir*; TM.75.G.10052 = *ARET* XX 22 rev. IX 8-14: 4 KIN siki / *Ga-da-NE* / *En-na-ba-al₆* / *Ib-ḫur-NI* / *I-da-ni* / “ur₄” / lú *é dingir-dingir-dingir-dingir*; TM.76.G.530 = *ARET* I 5 = *MEE* 5 10 rev. XI 19-21: 1 *à-da-um-TÚG-I* 1 aktum-TÚG 1 í[b-n]-TÚG gùn / *En-na-ba-al₆* “ur₄” / *é dingir-dingir-dingir*; TM.76.G.539 = *ARET* VIII 539 = *MEE* 5 19 rev. VIII 1'-4': ...] 8 kù-gi / NU₁₁-za-sù / *A-šu-ur-NI* “ur₄” / lú *é dingir-dingir-dingir*. *En-na-ba-al₆* is recorded also in TM.75.G.1216 rev. V 3: (6 tessuti) dumu-mí NE-di *En-na-ba-al₆* ur₄ šu-ba₄-ti (quoted in Archi 1992: 194) and TM.76.G.529 = *ARET* VIII 529 = *MEE* 5 9 obv. X 15-17: 1 *à-da-um-TÚG-I* 1 aktum-TÚG 1 íb-III-TÚG sa₆ gùn / *En-na-ba-al₆* “ur₄” / lú dumu-mí dumu-mí <NE-di>*, who was in charge of delivering necessary goods for the “apprentice dancers” (dumu-mí NE-di), who were probably part of the *é dingir-dingir-dingir* personnel, performing their duty during cultic festivities. In general, on the connection between cults and dancers see Catagnoti 1989: 178-179, 180-182; Milano and Tonietti 2012: 50.
- 50 The *ur₄*-officials carried out activities also for those who resided and worked in the “residences” (*é*) of minister *Ib-rí-um*, *Du-bù-ḫu-d'À-da*, and probably also of the king of Ebla (see Cianfanelli 2020: 142-144), as well as for cultic places such as the *é dingir-dingir-dingir* and the *é-nun en*, see *Ibidem*: 144-145.

in the texts of the archive L.2712⁵¹, as far as it is known from the published texts.

Therefore, it is possible to sketch a profile of *Uš-ra-sá-mu*.

As ur_4 -official he worked especially on behalf of the é dingir-dingir-dingir together with other ur_4 -functionaries, but he also performed duties for the highest members of Ebla's elite. He received textiles for a woman of the king and for *Du-bù-ḫu-d'À-da* (in [8]) and, again, he was in charge of the required travelling provisions for the king of Ebla (in [9–10]). For a limited period of time he also held a military position as āga-ús (in [15]) and he might have been a lú geštin, or at least he might have employed a maškim as lú geštin (in [7]). He might have controlled Palace G female working personnel as well, just like the “royal major-domo” *Īl-zi* – even if, as pointed out above in § 1.2, it is uncertain whether *Uš-ra-sá-mu*'s dams recorded in [11–12] either belonged to the Palace working personnel he was entrusted to supervise, or were women in the personal service of his own household. *Uš-ra-sá-mu*'s association with the king and *Du-bù-ḫu-d'À-da*, the offices he held, and the ownership of a cylinder marble seal, certainly make him a high-ranking official involved in the administration of Palace G.

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51 This issue has already been pointed out in Cianfanelli 2020: 149. Actually, not only the term ur_4 , but also other function names are absent in the texts of the archive L.2712, as is the case of *Īl-zi*. The function term BAD é en, “majordomo of the house of the king”, which qualifies *Īl-zi*, is frequently omitted in the texts from L.2769, L.2875, and always in the texts of the archive L.2712; on this matter see Bonechi 2016a: 9 and 15.

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