

THE ASSYRIAN PORSCHE?

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One of the reasons why no really satisfying account of the Assyrian army has yet been written is the confusion caused by new scribal habits introduced in the 1st millennium, which are not explained in the regular Babylonian lexical repertoire. No doubt if we had a much more complete text of the Practical Vocabularies of Assur and Nineveh we should be less confused, but in many cases we can only penetrate the abbreviations and newly invented logograms of the Neo-Assyrian scribes by patient collection of examples and comparison of usages. The present note is an attempt to elucidate just such an obscurity which has hitherto left us very puzzled about the terminology of different types of chariot.

The proposal is simply to identify the epithet *pattute*, applied to the hunting chariot of the Assyrian kings from Tiglath-pileser I until Shalmaneser III, with the logogram DUH^{MES} which is found after LÚ^{GIS} GIGIR (and sometimes just after *ša* in later Neo-Assyrian administrative texts and letters. A selection of occurrences is given at the end of the article. It makes no claim to completeness, but the picture it gives is quite consistent. The instances for *pattute* are taken directly from *AHw.*, p. 849. The suggestion made there that this word is the feminine of *pattû*, i.e. the verbal adjective of *petû* D, is surely correct. Note in particular that it is applied to a single chariot before Assur-našir-apli II, and therefore that the ending in *-te* cannot be a plural, but must be feminine, so that the original form of the word must be *pattu'u* (otherwise there is no reason for the *u*). These chariots are therefore described as “open”, or rather, “opened”.

In the Nimrud Wine Lists three types of chariot troop are listed together, *ša* DUH^{MES} , *ša* GIR^{II} , and GIS^{TAH} KAL (*NWL* 6, 34; same three in a different order in *NWL* 19, 9). Since I do not believe in “foot-chariots”, I think these are classes of troops, not classes of chariots, and that the *ša šēpē* are (as long understood) a chariot contingent attached to the person of the king (hence my doubts expressed in *CTN* 3, p. 34 n. 44). On the other hand, I agree with Dalley (*ibid.*) that Borger has hit upon the right explanation of GIS^{TAH} KAL , i.e. to read *tah-lip* and compare the word *tah-li-pi* “(armour-)cladding” in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic. There remains the *ša* DUH^{MES} (often transcribed GAB^{MES}). It cannot (despite, most recently, Kwasman in *NALK* p. 498a) be another writing for

tahlipi because, as we have seen, it occurs side by side with ^{GIŠ}*tah-líp* in *NWL*. Instead, it must be a different type of chariot, and by far the most elegant solution is to read ^{MEŠ}DUH as *pattu'u*, feminine *pattutu*: *non sunt multiplicandi aurigae praeter necessitatem*.

There are two points to be discussed about the logogram: the use of ^{MEŠ}DUH or ^{MEŠ}DU₈ for a form of *petû*, and the plural sign. The normal logogram for *petû* is ^{MEŠ}BAD, and ^{MEŠ}DUH stands more usually for *paṭāru*. It is possible that ^{MEŠ}BAD was rejected because of the — significant — risk of confusion with ^{MEŠ}SUMUN, “old”. If the scribes were looking for an alternative Sumerian equivalent, ^{MEŠ}DUH was not far to seek: the *AHw.* article for *petû* gives us for instance *gag ì-du₈ = pe-tu-ú sikkati* from *lú = ša*, and the equation ^{tu-uh}tuh = *pe-tu-ú ša pi-i*; also referring to *MSL* 4, 37: [111] (Emesal vocab.). For some bilingual passages see Deimel, *ŠL* 167, 26. As for the plural sign, it is important to note that it occurs in almost every case, both where a single chariot is mentioned and with the professional designation ^{MEŠ}LÚ.^{GIŠ}GIGIR (in the two cases where just ^{MEŠ}DUH is used, it refers to a man who is elsewhere given the full ^{MEŠ}DUH). Particularly suggestive are the *NWL* passages where neither *ša GÌR^{II}* nor *ša^{GIŠ}tahlip* are given a ^{MEŠ}, although in parallel usage. Note also that we never meet a writing like (^{MEŠ}LÚ.)^{GIŠ}GIGIR^{MEŠ} ^{MEŠ}DUH^{MEŠ}: this may not be conclusive, but it would be surprising if only the plural adjective and never the plural noun were given the ^{MEŠ}. The explanation must surely rather be that as in other examples (^{MEŠ}zī for *nasāhu D*, *AHw.* p. 751b; ^{MEŠ}KUD for *parāsu D*, *AHw.* p. 831b), the ^{MEŠ} is here the marker of the D stem — hence a welcome convergence with the proposal to identify ^{MEŠ}DUH with *pattu(tu)*.

The distinction between an “opened” chariot and an “armoured” one should be recognizable in the reliefs and other representations. The kind of chariot used by the king to hunt in Middle and early Neo-Assyrian representations can hardly be considered “closed” (cf. Ninurta-tukulti-Aššur, e.g. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* p. 192). In fact, though, the chariots used by the kings in battle, to judge from the reliefs, differed from their hunting chariots only by the addition of a heavily bossed shield at the back (see for instance B. Hrouda, *Kulturgeschichte des Assyrischen Flachbildes*, p. 94 with Taf. 23 Nos. 22-3; M.A. Littauer - J.H. Crouwel, *Wheeled Vehicles and Ridden Animals in the Ancient Near East* p. 103 — “Lion-head-bossed or toothed shields are often seen in profile as hung at the rear of these chariots”). Although it does not seem to me certain that these are shields, rather than a specially designed ‘back-door’ for the chariot cab, this single difference between the hunting and the battle version hardly appears sufficient to justify so clear and long-lived a polarity in the terminology, so that I cannot consider the issue resolved. Nevertheless, it is perhaps justifiable to wonder whether the “opened” sports-chariot was adopted by the army only later, after it had shown its worth in the hunt.

Appendix

A. Syllabic writings (after *AHw.*)

1. Tiglath-pileser I: *ina qitrub meṭlūti-šu ina* ^{GIŠ}GIGIR-*šu pa-at-tu-te*, “In his valiant onslaught in his open chariot ...”.
2. Aššur-dan: *i]na* ^{GIŠ}GIGIR-*ia pa-tu-te ina* ĠIR^{II.MEŠ}-*ia lasamāte adūk*, “In my chariot (and) on my fleet feet I killed.”.
3. Tukulti-Ninurta II: *ina* ^{GIŠ}GIGIR-*ia pa-at-tu-ti ina libbi-ia ekdi ina qitrub meṭlūti-ya ... adduak*, “In my open chariot with my raging heart in my valiant onslaught I killed.”.
4. Adad-nirari II: *ina* ^{GIŠ}GIGIR-*ia pa-at'-tu'-te ina qitrub meṭlūti-ia ... adūk* (emended after *AHw.*), “In my open chariot in my valiant onslaught ... I killed.”.
5. Assur-našir-apli II: *ina* ^{GIŠ}GIGIR^{MEŠ}-*ia pa-tu-te ina qitrub EN-ti-ia ...*, “In my open chariot(s) in my valiant onslaught ...”.
6. Shalmaneser II: *ina* ^{GIŠ}GIGIR^{MEŠ}-*ia pa-tu-te/i ... adūk*, “In my open chariot(s) ... I killed.”.

Note: These all refer to hunting wild animals, in stereotyped phraseology persisting for over 2 centuries. Note that only in the texts of the last two kings is there a ^{MEŠ} written after GIGIR. It is not clear (as *AHw.*'s query implies) whether a plural is really intended, however, since we would need *pattu'āte* (^{GIŠ}GIGIR is certainly feminine in NA, see 1-*et* ^{GIŠ}GIGIR in *ABL* 241 and 242, even if it is to be read *mugerru*; unless it can still be read both *mugerru* and *narkabtu*, and the former is masculine, in which case one could postulate *patt(u')ūte* in the Assur-našir-apli and Shalmaneser passages).

B. Written DUH^(MEŠ)(-te)

in administrative texts:

1. *ša* DUH^{MEŠ} *NWL* 6, 34 // *ša* ĠIR^{II} and *ša* ^{GIŠ}*tah-líp*;
 2. *ša* DUH^{ME} *NWL* 19, 19 // *ša* ĠIR^{II} and *ša* ^{GIŠ}*tah-líp*;
 3. *PAP* 28 DUH^{MEŠ} *CTN* 3, 111, 2' // ĠIR^{II} (Sargon);
 4. 2 *qur-but* ĠIR^{II} DUH^{MEŠ} *ADD* 834(+), I, 4' (cf. 9');
 5. 3 *qur-but* ĠIR^{II} ^{GIŠ}_x[(x)], 1 ... DUH^{MEŠ} *ADD* 971, II, 5;
 6. [^{GIG}IR DUH^{MEŠ} *ADD* 835, 2';
 7. PN LÚ. ^{GIŠ}GIGIR DUH^{MEŠ} *ADD* 857, IV, 2 (cf. II, 24-27);
 8. PN LÚ. ^{GIŠ}GIGIR DUH^{MEŠ}-*te* *ADD* 912, I, 2;
- (nos. 4-8 are post-Sargon).

in legal texts, witness lists:

9. PN ... LÚ.^{GIŠ}GIGIR DUH^{MEŠ} NALK 100 (=ADD 354), 11'; 236 (=ADD 60); 244 (=ADD 185), r. 18' but cf. 11'; 249 (=ADD 421), r. 21' (same man as 244 r. 11');
 10. PN ... LÚ.^{GIŠ}GIGIR DUH NALK 244 (=ADD 185), r. 11'; 256 (=ADD 470), r. 35'.

Note: Although examples 1-3 show that “personal (chariotry of the king)” (*ša šēpē*) was sometimes distinguished from the “open-chariotry”, it seems from example 4 that the two categories could be merged — “personal open-chariotry”? We are still inadequately informed to be sure of this, however.

There is a graphic problem with the sign group LÚ.^{GIŠ}GIGIR, since Parpola has shown fairly convincingly that it should be read *susānu* in NA texts (see SAAB II, p. 78 fn. 2, referring to his discussions and duplicate passages now in A. Livingstone, SAA III No. 38,15). It may be hard to conceive that LÚ.^{GIŠ}GIGIR DUH^{MEŠ} is to be read **susān pattute*, but note that examples 1-4 omit ^{GIŠ}GIGIR, rather implying that we should read *ša pattute*, “Open-chariot man”. If so, there is nothing too implausible in reading DUH^{MEŠ} as *pattute* even where not preceded by *mugerru/narkabtu*, and this leaves the way open to take LÚ.^{GIŠ}GIGIR here as *susānu* after all, i.e. “open-chariot groom”. Nevertheless, this is far from certain.